ISSN 2291-5079 Vol 13 / Issue 3 + 4 2025

COSMOS + TAXIS

Studies in Emergent Order and Organization

COSMOS + TAXIS

Studies in Emergent Order and Organization
VOLUME 13 / ISSUE 3 + 4 2025

COVER IMAGE
Seven Virtues.
Francesco Pesellino and Workshop: c. 1422–1457. Birmingham Museum of Art. Public domain.

IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial Introduction 1
Isaac Radner

Address to Entering Students on Politics and Liberal Learning 7
Timothy Fuller

Liberalism, Modernity and Liberal Education 12
Timothy Fuller

Oakeshott and Newman on Liberal Education. 18
Elizabeth Corey

The Hidden Hand: What John Dewey Learned from Rousseau and Its Implications for Liberal Learning . . . 29
W. J. Coats

Beyond Impediments to Empedocles: Notes Toward a Post-Postmodern Liberal Education 38
W. L. Prehn

Liberal Learning and the Legacy of Colonialism: Revisiting Michael Oakeshott's Conversational Conception of Education 55
Kevin Williams

Faith, History, and Anti-Racism: Reclaiming Black Liberation Through Christianity and the Western Tradition. 70
Anika T. Prather

The Meaning of Plurality in Liberal Education 81
Isaac Radner

From Liberal Education to Liberation: The Togetherness Wayfinder and Aesthetic Literacies 96
Sheena Michele Mason and Trevor Aleo

"The Fastest Known Way to Get Rid of Enemies": Children's Literature, Forgiveness, and the Liberal Arts 112
Neil Dhingra and Pamela Callahan

Teaching For Freedom. 130
Marsha Familaro Enright

Articles

Future is Past: The Enduring Weight of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. 148
David A. Eisenberg

Author Index 162
Back Issues 165
Editorial Information 167

EDITORIAL BOARDS

HONORARY FOUNDING EDITORS

Joaquin Fuster
University of California, Los Angeles

David F. Hardwick*†
The University of British Columbia

Lawrence Wai-Chung Lai
University of Hong Kong

Frederick Turner
University of Texas at Dallas

EDITORS

Leslie Marsh*
(managing editor)
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Laurent Dobuzinskis*
(deputy editor)
Simon Fraser University

Giovanni B. Grandi
(deputy editor)
The University of British Columbia

Nathan Robert Cockeram
(assistant editor)
The University of British Columbia

CONSULTING EDITORS

Thierry Aimar
Sciences Po Paris

Nurit Alfasi
Ben Gurion University of the Negev

David Emanuel Andersson*
National Sun Yat-sen University

Theodore Burczak
Denison University

Per Bylund
Oklahoma State University

Gene Callahan
New York University

Chor-Yung Cheung
City University of Hong Kong

Francesco Di Iorio
Nankai University

Gus diZerega*
Taos, NM

Lenore T. Ealy
Charles Koch Institute

Péter Érdi
Kalamazoo College

Peter Gordon
University of Southern California

Lauren K. Hall*
Rochester Institute of Technology

Marek Hudik*
University of Economics Prague

Sanford Ikeda
Purchase College,
State University of New York

Andrew David Irvine
The University of British Columbia, Okanagan

Byron Kaldis
The Hellenic Open University

Peter G. Klein
Baylor University

Paul Lewis
King's College London

Ted G. Lewis
Technology Assessment Group, Salinas

Joseph Isaac Lifshitz
The Shalem College

Alberto Mingardi
IULM University in Milan and Istituto Bruno Leoni

Stefano Moroni
Milan Polytechnic

Edmund Neill
The New College of the Humanities at Northeastern University

Mikayla Novak
Mercatus Center at George Mason University

Christian Onof
Imperial College London

Mark Pennington
King's College London

Jason Potts*
RMIT University

Don Ross
University of Cape Town/ Georgia State University/ University College Cork

Scott Scheall
Arizona State University

Virgil Storr
George Mason University

Stephen Turner
University of South Florida

Nikolai G. Wenzel
Fayetteville State University

Corey Abel†
Denver, CO

Gloria Zúñiga y Postigo†
University of Arizona

**Executive committee*

Editorial Introduction

ISAAC RADNER

This issue of *Cosmos + Taxis* is devoted to a discussion of liberal education. The essays here address this type of education's aim, its methods, and what it has to offer in our contemporary educational context. However, it may be helpful to begin with a very brief overview of the history of liberal learning, for the ideas discussed in the essays here are each part of a tradition and conversation that has been ongoing for many hundreds of years.

The first usage of the term "liberal arts" (*artes liberales)* was in Rome, although the Romans took many of their educational cues from the Greeks. In the first century BCE, the Roman polymath Terence Varro published his (now lost) *Disciplinarum Libri IX* (Nine Books of Disciplines) where he outlined nine essential liberal arts. This list was soon narrowed down to seven, which were broken up into the *trivium* (rhetoric, dialectics, and grammar) and the *quadrivium* (astronomy, arithmetic, geometry and music). In Rome, these seven liberal arts were seen as preparation for one of three specialized branches of learning—philosophy, medicine, or law (Weisheipl 1965, p. 55).

While liberal education's septempartite division persisted in some form throughout the Middle Ages, in practice the details of each of these seven areas of study were subject to persistent contestation and revision. Significant modifications were made after Christianity became dominant in the West. For example, St. Augustine reframed the liberal arts as not only preparation for studies in law and medicine as his own Roman tradition viewed them, but as necessary for the proper understanding of Christian doctrine. Thus, scripture and other Christian texts became standard parts of the liberal arts curriculum (Kimball 1996, pp. 14-5). Over the next several centuries debate continued over liberal learning's content (Should physics be included? What about politics and ethics?), and the rediscovery of some of Aristotle's works by people like Boethius laid the groundwork for the emergence of Christian scholasticism which dominated European universities for much of the medieval period (Weisheipl 1965, pp. 58-59).

The beginning of the second millennium marked another pivotal turning point in the history of liberal education: the influence of Islamic thought. It was around this time that scientific and philosophical works from the Muslim world first made their way to Europe. Through these works, Europeans discovered both the novel advances of Islamic science in areas like mathematics, astronomy, and optics, and the works of Islamic philosophers (Weisheipl 1965, pp. 68-72). These philosophers, such as Ibn Rushd (Averroës) were often writing about Greek works, like Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, that

had been mostly unknown to Europeans for centuries but had been discovered by Muslims in the second half of the first millennium during the Muslim conquests of Byzantine territories. That these Islamic thinkers and their works—especially their translations of and commentaries on Aristotle—represented a truly new direction for Western thought can be seen in the often hostile reception they received. Many of these works were initially condemned and banned. But by the 13th century, their influence had become so great that Aristotle became known simply as "the Philosopher", and Averroës as "the Commentator" (Kimball 1996, p. 16).

The next centuries continued to see many other innovations and developments in Western education—the creation of the university as a major institution of centralized learning; what today we call the "Renaissance" movement of "humanism" and the identification of a specific approach to and a curriculum of learning called the "humanities" (Grendler 2022); the invention of the printing press; the rise of modern scientific and rationalist methods of analysis; and the self-styled era of "enlightenment", which had profound effects on Western education, such as increased calls for public schooling and formal education for women, skepticism about the necessary role of religion and religious beliefs in education, and an increased divide between humanities and science education (Gilead 2020).

Throughout these centuries, what was meant by "liberal education" was far from a static ideal. The content and structure of education in the West shifted and adapted in response to historical circumstance and developments in philosophic, religious, or scientific thought. As a result, the tradition of liberal learning contains within it many different and often competing approaches to education. As Bruce Kimball writes, "…the tradition of liberal education is not uniform and continuous, but full of variety, discontinuity, and innovation. It has been and is a conflicted tradition" (Kimball 1996, p. 11). Discussions of liberal education often focus on one particular strand within this larger tradition—e.g., the development of virtue, the preparation for the practice of politics, the progressive advancement of human culture. Thus, it is worth briefly considering, when surveying the long and heterogeneous tradition of liberal learning, if it is possible to make any claims to its overall character that bridge the various sub-traditions and historical moments that compose it.

One feature of liberal education that is consistent throughout its history is that it is distinguished from an education whose sole purpose is preparation for a particular craft or a trade. In Greece, Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle used the education of the craftsmen or the *banausoi* as a kind of foil for liberal education (Nightingale 1996). For these philosophers, "craftsman" was often a pejorative term applied to those that, though not always slaves, were not a part of the wealthier class that primarily ruled Athens at the time. Although this betrays an elitism that is not characteristic of all approaches to liberal education today (and indeed, craft learning may be an essential component of a liberal education—see Martin 2022), it is worth considering this distinction between liberal and craft learning.

An important difference between these two types of education is the relationship between the subject matter being taught and the curriculum's goal. In craft learning, this relationship is often relatively direct. To learn pottery, one practices pottery; to learn to become a car mechanic, one practices fixing cars. In contrast, the relationship between the curriculum and goal of liberal education (whatever that goal may be) is rarely so clear. For example, in Aristotle's discussion of liberal education in Book XIII of his *Politics*, he claims that one of the primary goals of this type of education is training in "things contributing to virtue" (Aristotle 2013, 1337a). One of these "things", in Aristotle's mind, is music. He writes, "just as gymnastics makes the body of a certain quality, so also is music capable of making the character of a certain quality…" (Aristotle 2013, 1339a). But the relationship between music and virtue is by no means obvious to all, and Aristotle devotes much of Book XIII to a discussion of it.

This indirect relationship between curriculum and goal can be seen in many approaches to liberal learning. Take, for example, the idea that a liberal education is meant to produce, as Martha Nussbaum puts it, "…free citizens, citizens who are free not because of wealth or birth, but because they can call their minds their own. Male and female, slave-born and freeborn, rich and poor, they have looked into themselves and developed the ability to separate mere habit and convention from what they can defend by ar-

gument. They have ownership of their own thought and speech…" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 293). Though one can find echoes of this conception of liberal education in the writings of the Ancient Greeks, it has become popular in the United States where it dovetails with the American political ideals of equality, individualism, and republicanism (see Eva Brann's book *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*, Brann 1979). The curriculum of such an education is concerned with, as Nussbaum titles her book on liberal education, "cultivating humanity", and though curricula that achieve this "fit no general mold" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 295), they focus on instilling in students an understanding of topics like "narrative imagination". An education in narrative imagination, as Nussbaum lays it out, is partly fostered by reading Greek tragedies, poetry, and modern literature in an effort to expose students to experiences and ways of thinking different than their own. This leads to the development of the ability to compassionately imagine and empathize with the lives of others—an essential skill in a modern, diverse republic. However, like the relationship between virtue and music argued for by Aristotle, the connection between narrative imagination and, say, reading a novel by Charles Dickens is hardly straightforward.

This sometimes-indirect relationship between curriculum and goal can make it difficult to advocate for the importance of liberal learning. Administrators, parents, and students often have a hard time understanding the connection between what is taught and what a liberal education hopes to achieve. As evidenced by Aristotle's lengthy defense of music instruction, this is not a new phenomenon. But today, proponents of liberal learning must justify, not only the content of a liberal education, but its goals as well. This too is not necessarily a new challenge, but it has taken on a heightened intensity as universities and colleges have come under increased pressure to offer an education that is more directly concerned with equipping a student with a set of marketable skills. The question, "Will this education help me get a job when I graduate?" has begun to overshadow questions like, "Will this education prepare me to be a good citizen?", or "prepare me to better understand myself?"

Laying aside a discussion of the social and economic factors that might be driving this dynamic, it is important to point out that in this environment proponents of liberal learning find themselves in a difficult situation. The tradition of liberal education has always contained within it some admission of its non-utilitarian character. As Aristotle wrote, "That there is a certain sort of education…in which children are to be educated, not as being useful or necessary but as being liberal and noble, is evident" (Aristotle 2013, 1338a). This does not mean that liberal learning is useless in a profound sense, but that its main concern has rarely been with building a set of skills to put on a job application or fetch a high salary. And yet, many advocates of liberal learning today find themselves arguing for why hiring students who have had a liberal education would actually bring more value to one's banking or marketing firm. For those committed to a non-utilitarian vision of liberal education, it is difficult not to give in to feelings of cynicism when reading (or making) these arguments. However, it is helpful to put these kinds of arguments in their historical context, because they reflect a radical shift in our culture's overall approach to education that is, many would agree, for the better.

For much of its history, liberal learning was, in practice, mainly for those who did not have to spend their lives working for a wage as a tradesman. It was, in other words, "aimed at freeborn gentlemen of the propertied classes" (Nussbaum 1997, p. 293) (and, in medieval Europe, for the religious elite and monastic communities). This was certainly the case in Ancient Athens where Aristotle explicitly connected "unfree" education with that of the craftsman or laborer. But in relatively recent times, views about education have changed such that most advocates of liberal education today believe that everybody, not just the wealthier classes, should have access to an education that is more expansive than a trade school—recall Nussbaum's words above that it should be an education for, "Male and female, slave-born and freeborn, rich and poor". That expansion has in fact already taken place to some extent, and this means that most students in colleges and universities, while they may be looking for some kind of general education that is not *only* focused on a specific trade, are also in a position where they need to find employment after graduating. In this environment, it makes sense that advocates of liberal learning are asked to justify its worth, perhaps not simply on the basis of marketable skills or expected salary, but this justification should have something to say about

the role of liberal education in the contemporary educational landscape—one that is filled with a much more diverse range of students, traditions, cultures, and educational aims than 50 or 100 years ago.

I have briefly detailed three features of contemporary liberal education: 1) It is a concept with a heterogeneous history that has repeatedly adapted to new influences like Christianity, Islamic philosophy, and enlightenment values. Because of this, liberal education contains within it a variety of traditions that each have their own, sometimes competing ideas about what liberal learning should look like and what its goals should be. 2) In liberal education, the relationship between the curriculum and its goal, like the relationship between music and virtue, is rarely direct. And 3) a stable feature of liberal education throughout its history is that it has generally *not* been an education offered to all members of a given society. Instead, until relatively recently, it has been for those who are neither wage workers nor craftsman, but were predominantly political, religious, or economic elites. Because of this, there is a need today to advocate for liberal learning's role in places where a general education is now available to and sought by a much wider range of students than has historically been the case. These features informed the approach to assembling the collection of essays contained in the journal issue.

The essays here represent a variety of approaches to liberal learning, giving voice to a number of the traditions found within its long history. The first two pieces in the issue are by Timothy Fuller, who has been a professor at Colorado College for six decades. These pieces, "Address to Entering Students on Politics and Liberal Learning" and "Liberalism, Modernity and Liberal Education", explore the relationship between liberal learning and modern politics. By differentiating liberal education from the practical and progressive disposition of modern politics, Fuller places himself in the long lineage of thinkers who have identified a non-utilitarian impulse in liberal education, and who view it as a venture that is importantly sheltered from the practical demands of politics. However, as Fuller notes, this secluded character is only partial in nature, and liberal learning is necessarily connected to the larger political culture in which it is situated. In this way, Fuller's essays are an excellent introduction to the paradoxical position of liberal education in our culture today.

Fuller's essays also introduce the reader to the ideas of Michael Oakeshott, an influential voice in modern discussions of liberal learning, and known for his claim that liberal learning is an initiation into a "conversation" between various "modes" of experience (e.g., the mode of poetry, science, etc.). Oakeshott's thought features prominently in several essays throughout this journal issue. In her essay "Oakeshott and Newman on Liberal Education" Elizabeth Corey examines the similarities and differences between the approaches to liberal education of these two significant thinkers. In doing so, she explores two prominent but sometimes competing approaches to liberal learning—the belief, held by John Henry Newman, that all knowledge is part of a transcendent whole, or unifying structure (in Newman's case, this belief was informed by his Christian commitments), and Oakeshott's claim that the conversation of liberal learning is inherently plural and non-teleological. Additionally, in her explication of the three "escapes" facilitated by Oakeshott's description of liberal education, Corey, like Fuller, asserts the view that liberal education is separate and distinct from the larger world around it in important ways.

The essays by Wendell John Coats and W. L. Prehn examine two further influential but distinct traditions of liberal learning. Coats's essay "The Hidden Hand: What John Dewey Learned from Rousseau and Its Implications for Liberal Learning" compares the educational ideas of Rousseau and John Dewey and provides a critical treatment of progressive approaches to education that aim to externally guide the development of a person in a particular, preconceived direction that is believed to be better for the student and society as a collective whole. Prehn's essay "Beyond Impediments to Empedocles: Notes Toward a Post-Postmodern Liberal Education" examines the educational ventures of William Augustus Muhlenberg and the church-school movement, which were representative of a distinctly American approach to liberal learning that combines a strong Christian foundation with a republican ethos and the Aristotelian concern with the cultivation of virtue.

A number of essays also examine liberal education's relationship with ideas like plurality and diversity, undertaking the important task of advocating for liberal learning's place in an educational landscape that

looks very different than it did a century ago. As stated above, this is a world in which a larger and more diverse range of young people are seeking higher education, but are also still sensitive to the economic realities of the job market. In different ways, the essays by Kevin Williams, Anika Prather, Isaac Radner, and Sheena Michele Wilson and Trevor Aleo advocate for liberal education's salience in this contemporary educational context.

Like the essays by Fuller and Corey, Kevin Williams's essay "Liberal Learning and the Legacy of Colonialism: Revisiting Michael Oakeshott's Conversational Conception of Education" examines the thought of Michael Oakeshott. But Williams's primary concern is showing that Oakeshott's conception of liberal education is amenable to anti-colonialist critiques that seek to broaden the curriculum of works and languages that are taught. Williams's essay represents an attempt to wed a more traditional understanding of liberal education with contemporary worries about this education's narrowness. Anika Prather's essay "Faith, History, and Anti-Racism: Reclaiming Black Liberation Through Christianity and the Western Tradition" is a critical, though sympathetic, treatment of the work of Ibram X. Kendi. Much of this essay traces Prather's own, sometimes difficult relationship with Christianity and the Western tradition. As Prather's own experience reveals, criticisms of this tradition, like Kendi's own, often utilize resources from within the tradition itself. Prather's essay addresses the difficulty, and perhaps futility, of trying to reject the cultural context of Western liberal learning whole cloth. Isaac Radner's essay "The Meaning of Plurality in Liberal Education", which again prominently features the thought of Oakeshott, argues that plurality has always been a necessary feature of liberal education that informs its goals and methods. This essay also shows how clarifying the role and function of plurality in liberal learning helps to answer questions about the place in education of a traditional canon of texts to be studied. "From Liberal Education to Liberation: The Togetherness Wayfinder and Aesthetic Literacies" by Sheena Michele Mason and Trevor Aleo also takes up questions of diversity and identity, arguing that it is only by rejecting the concept of race in education that we can truly move towards an "anti-racist" society.

In Mason and Aleo's detailed examination of pedagogies like The Togetherness Wayfinder and aesthetic literacies, including examples of classroom lessons and interactions with students, their essay, and the other final essays included here, examine what liberal learning might look like in practice. Neil Dhingra and Pamela Callahan's essay "'The Fastest Known Way to Get Rid of Enemies': Children's Literature, Forgiveness, and the Liberal Arts" employs a unique combination of political theory and quantitative analysis to explore the ways in which forgiveness is articulated within children's literature. In doing so, they demonstrate how this literature can serve as an important avenue for teaching children complex ideas. Like Aristotle's argument for the relationship between music and virtue, Dhingra and Callahan's essay traces the sometimes-indirect relationship between liberal learning's goals and its methods. In "Teaching for Freedom", the final piece in this collection, Marsha Enright argues that the Montessori Method, established by Maria Montessori, is an effective educational approach to teaching students to be free individuals and free citizens. Through a detailed analysis of this method, Enright demonstrates how a relatively modern pedagogy can support a traditional approach to liberal education that has its roots in Ancient Greece and Rome.

Oakeshott describes a liberal education as one in which a multitude of voices are joined in a "conversation—an endless unrehearsed intellectual adventure". In this conversation, every voice represents, "a distinct and conditional understanding of the world and a distinct idiom of human self-understanding" (Oakeshott 1989, p. 30). Each of the essays here contribute another distinct voice to this conversation. None of them represent the final say on what liberal education is, or how it should be taught. If there were such an essay, it would signify the death of the entire enterprise of liberal learning. This collection as a whole is instead another addition to the conversation, one that is offered only with the hope of keeping the conversation going a bit longer in the belief that liberal education still has something essential to offer students today.

REFERENCES

Aristotle. 2013. *Aristotle's Politics* (C. Lord, Tr.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Brann, E. T. H. 1979. *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Gilead, T. 2020. Introduction: Enlightenment and Education. In: *A History of Western Philosophy of Education in the Age of Enlightenment*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Grendler, P. F. 2022. *Humanism, Universities, and Jesuit Education in Late Renaissance Italy*, pp. 9-29. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
Kimball, B. A. 1996. A Historical Perspective. In: *Rethinking Liberal Education*, pp. 11-35. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Martin, T. 2022. An argument for the Necessity of Craft Learning in Liberal Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 42(2):163-179.
Nightingale, A. W. 1996. Aristotle on the "Liberal" and "Illiberal" Arts. *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium of Ancient Philosophy*, 12(1):29-58.
Nussbaum, M. 1997. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
Oakeshott, M. 1989. A Place of Learning. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Weisheipl, J. A. 1965. Classification of the Sciences in Medieval Thought. *Mediaeval Studies*, 27:54-90.

Address to Entering Students on Politics and Liberal Learning

TIMOTHY FULLER
Colorado College

Abstract: Included here are two distinct, but related pieces by Timothy Fuller. Fuller has been a professor at Colorado College for 60 years, and the first piece here is an address to students, written but never delivered, on politics and liberal learning. The second piece is an essay instead of an address, but both pieces explore the tension, central to liberal learning, between the demands of a liberal education and the demands of liberal politics.

Keywords: Liberal Learning, Liberal Education, College, Liberty, Modernity, Liberalism, Michael Oakeshott

I

You are students, initiates in a great tradition of liberal learning of which your college is an agent, and you are on the threshold of formal recognition as citizens with the right to be heard and to vote. It is a coincidence worthy of serious reflection.

Your stay in a college or university is an interval within the passage of a lifetime. It is a period offering release from the pressures of the here and now for the purpose of conversation with teachers, one's fellows, and oneself. Here you are not asked to equate education with training for a profession, with learning the tricks of a trade. Preparation for future service in society is significant but not by acquisition of an ideological program invented in abstraction from the complexity of our situation.

Perhaps only during this part of your life will you have the privilege of extended time to explore new ideas and activities without having to exhaust the scarce resources of your time and energy. What is offered here is the opportunity to think about, and not only engage in, immediate responsibility for the worldly tasks that will inevitably come to you.

You are offered an interval in the intrusive course of events; a period in which to look around upon the world and oneself without the sense of an enemy at one's back or the insistent pressure to make up one's mind; a moment in which to taste the mystery of life without the necessity of at once seeking resolution. And all this, not in an intellectual vacuum, but surrounded by the inherited learning and literature and experience of our civilization; not alone, but in the company of kindred spirits, combined with the discipline of studying a recognized branch of learning. This is neither a first step in education, nor final preparation for the day of judgment, but as a middle.

Yet, at the same time, the world calls you to begin to think seriously about its hopes and fears, its responsibilities and chosen adventures. Already in this interval there is the taste of what is to follow, and we cannot ignore it. The art of the situation will be to acknowledge this, recognizing that each is a distinctive, essential part of life. We must never forget that to know justice in words only is insufficient, for the virtue of justice is in putting it into practice. The test of one's capacity for justice is in resisting the temptations of injustice that the world will put in our way. This interval presents the opportunity to look for, and clarify, the fundamental questions that lie concealed behind the current opinions. You need not make up your minds too quickly about the fundamental questions, and here you need not do so. But you might begin to be aware of the continual presence of the fundamental questions in every experience of life. You might use the resources thrown open to you here to learn to resist the language of appetite, to be impatient of mere "points of view" and of lifestyles that are taken up and dropped; and to perceive the difference between eloquence and wisdom.

If you find the way to harmonize your dual obligations as citizens and students, you may also find the strength to resist superficial compromise without ceasing to be considerate of the world's variety. And, not least, you will have the support of the serious and sober who know that eccentricity is not to be attributed to those who restrain their speech, any more than those who listen attentively, because they know that a mighty saying can be as well whispered as shouted.

||

Politics is the activity of attending to the arrangements of a collection of people held together by a combination of chance circumstances and choices as to how they will respond to their circumstances, what they wish for and attempt to realize. Inevitably in attending to these arrangements, there will be arguments and differences of opinion. Politics is pre-eminently a realm of opinions about how we ought to live, about what purposes, aims, goals, or interests we might pursue in each other's presence. Politics is the realm of the hoped-for which is not yet—the place where, in sometimes dreary, and sometimes dramatic, fashion, we experience the discrepancy between what is and what we think ought to be.

Often, it is the experience of tomorrow's "truth" turning into yesterday's "falsehood". Politics necessarily involves attempts either to alter or to maintain our situation in the face of threatened change. It imposes upon us the pretense of knowledge with respect to the task of realizing our dearest hopes and dreams. It is the encounter with an image of completion intimated in the unfinished. It is a world of mutability, transiency, and the unceasing imagination of what we do not possess as the heart's desire. Each new moment is pregnant with possibilities and transformation, in the unforgiving fatal chain of transformation, offering the key to a perfected world—a world transformed for the last time.

In this condition every individual human being is an agent of evaluation. Each of us knows ourself as one self in contrast to other selves. Everything that goes on in the world is something potentially to be considered in seeking a coherent self-understanding. Each of us establishes identity in part by knowing what we are not. What we are not is what others may be, and the coherency of our opinions is dependent on making them intelligible to others. No one is able simply to have opinions about important things without suffering the challenge of alternatives because having opinions about important things is to experience the urgency of taking them up with others in the hope of confirmation. To float our opinions in the presence of each other is to acknowledge that human self-understanding is not to be found in pure privacy. Pure privacy is the harbinger of madness. Not all virtue is to be found in exalting the private at the expense of the public. On the contrary, some of the most important virtues are to be grasped and practiced only in interacting with others. Politics may be understood, therefore, as the realm of selves among other selves, as the place where we engage in the endless effort to understand ourselves by trying to make ourselves understandable to each other.

There is in this a paradox. On the one hand, we may find politics to be a peculiarly unsatisfying activity; even if it is unavoidably intrusive, it can seem irredeemably flawed. On the other hand, politics is an ac-

tivity in which different kinds of people live in close contact with each other, seeking to make themselves creditable to those who are different. In this quest for mutuality is an important element of our humanity, both frustrating and necessary.

One way of looking at this is to consider that what is important is not perfection that has never yet been achieved anywhere in the world; what is important is the way we draw out of this confusing experience of life the ingredients of an understanding of what it means to be a human being. Perhaps what is most important is the recognition that this paradox is a common one for human beings—that it is this very ambivalent experience which holds us together as opposed to some hypothetical release into uncontroversial homogeneity.

The explanation of our ambivalence about politics is that on the one hand, we know that politics is an essential characteristic of human beings distinguishing human beings from other creatures, while, on the other hand, it constantly reminds us that we are peculiarly unsatisfied and unsatisfiable beings, and we don't like to be reminded of that. The life of human beings can seem both a blessing and a curse, experienced as both.

In the political world, where what was thought false yesterday might be thought true today and false again tomorrow, it is not surprising that we strive for an enclave of stability and permanence. It is not hard to conclude that everything is either coming into being and not yet fully accessible, or beginning to die before it is born. We look around the world and we see the multiplicity of attitudes, sects, judgments, opinions, laws, and customs. That ought to teach us some moderation about our own judgments, neither to despise nor overrate them. It does not follow that, because there is a dizzying variety of opinions about values and beliefs, there are no better or worse opinions on what is good or bad, just or unjust. On the contrary, the fact of this variety is just a beginning point for human reflection.

The serious person who thinks carefully will immediately perceive that the variety of opinions about right and wrong does not settle the question whether there is anything that is truly right or wrong. The complex variety certainly does not prove that all values are relative or that everything is merely a matter of opinion. Properly speaking, the variety of opinions leads to the desire to know whether the opinion that everything is merely a matter of opinion is itself a sound opinion.

To put it another way, the biggest mistake would be to suppose that this fact about the diversity in the human condition answers the most important question about the meaning of life. It does not answer that question. Rather, it forces us to see the seriousness of the question whether all ideas of right and wrong are arbitrary. In short, the facts of our condition do not speak for themselves, and they do not answer the most important questions. They dramatize the importance, and the necessity, for human beings to seek out the answers to these questions.

If we think that, by pointing to the vast variety of opinions about how we ought to live, we have relieved ourselves of intellectual difficulty about being human, we are at the very least intellectually lazy, perhaps more importantly, refusing to seek the fulfillment of our humanity. No less an authority than Aristotle thought it natural for human beings to be political. Aristotle thought we would understand ourselves not by trying to get rid of the experience of the political life—that would be like trying to get rid of our distinctively human qualities—but by discerning within that experience what is worthwhile and what is not. What is important is not the brute variety of values, interests, and beliefs, but the adventure of trying to answer the question: Which among these opinions are the really worthy ones? What is involved is not simply committing oneself to a certain opinion with dogmatic and dogged determination. The answer is not in opposing the world's anarchy with one's own private tyranny. It is more appropriate for us to seek agreements among ourselves about how we ought to live and what we should expect of each other. In seeking agreement, it is not necessary, or indeed possible, to begin with any assurance that agreement will be easy to come by, but it is essential to have the conviction that agreement is not impossible to come by.

In other words, if the vast variety of opinions implies the task of discovering the really worthwhile opinions, of separating sound from unsound values, of discerning the difference between what is base and what is excellent, we will condemn ourselves to failure if we give in to the prejudice that the basis for dis-

criminating the one from the other is hopelessly absent. Those who give in to this view have already made up their minds on the most important question. They argue with more or less openness that the brute variety is all there is. There is a question whether such people are to be taken seriously because there is some uncertainty as to whether they have taken the issue of the meaning of human existence seriously. To take the issue of the meaning of human existence seriously means not to start out with perfunctory answers to the most important questions. Yet those who take the multiplicity of human choices as having obvious implications of relativism and pure subjectivity do precisely that. In the pose of open-mindedness, they foreclose the conversation of human beings even while the level of chatter increases. The serious person will note the magnitude of the consequences that follow from the perfunctory relativist conclusion. For, if we cannot refer to any common value recognized to pertain to each of us, then we must be forever incomprehensible to each other.

As Americans we ought to be fully sensitive to the depth of this issue. It would be hard to think of any more elevated and weighty expression of the necessary conviction in these matters than that most familiar of all American pronouncements: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Do we still hold these truths to be self-evident?

Is it possible for us still to believe that there are truths about humanity that are, in principle, comprehensible in the deliberations of reflective men and women? Or are we to accept the alternative that renders this mighty pronouncement a mere product of the age in which it was produced, no better or worse than the products of successive ages, believable only to those who produced it, or relevant only in the country where the document is stored?

If we say that there is no right that transcends the limited circumstances of particular times and places, we are, in effect, saying that right is a matter of legal and judicial convention relative to local circumstances. Yet at the same time we constantly speak of unjust laws or unjust decisions. We imply in saying such things that there is a standard of right and wrong independent of what the legislature, the courts, or public opinion, say it is.

Many hold the view that the standard in question is in the best case simply the ideal adopted by our society or our civilization and embodied for now in its way of life or its institutions. But, according to the same view, all societies have their ideals, cannibal societies no less than civilized ones. If principles are sufficiently justified by the fact that they are accepted by a society, cannibalism is defensible. What besides habit could prevent us from accepting a change in the direction of cannibalism? Habit thus has virtue, but is something more required? The fact that we can raise the question of the worth of the ideal of our society shows that there is something in us that is not altogether in slavery to convention, and therefore we are able, and hence feel the urge to look for a standard with reference to which we can judge of the ideals of our own as well as of any other society. That standard cannot be found merely in the needs of the various societies, for societies have many needs that conflict; the problem of priorities arises. Such problems cannot be resolved in a rational manner if we lack or distrust standards with reference to which we can distinguish between genuine needs and wants which we imagine as possibilities beyond basic needs. The problem posed by the conflicting needs and desires of society cannot be resolved if we do not seek knowledge of what is right for human beings.

If our principles have no other support than our blind preferences, everything we are willing to dare will come to seem permissible. This is incipient nihilism. Nihilism does not mean there are no values; rather, it means there are only ever-changing values.

Now, I am aware of major objection to this line of reasoning. It will be said that to look for an independent standard against which to judge the laws and opinion of societies is to open the way to authoritarianism. But I consider this objection less than decisive. To make this objection is to commit oneself to the view that rationality consists in absolute tolerance—that only unlimited tolerance is in accord with reason. However, on the premises of this view strictly speaking, unlimited tolerance is just as much a blind preference as any other and is, therefore, self-contradictory. Moreover, if we decide to commit ourselves to the

cultivation of uninhibited individuality, we have to reckon with the intolerant and authoritarian expressions that inevitably emerge, requiring us to think more carefully.

But we have not yet plumbed the bottom of these intellectual depths. For, if we become convinced that our beliefs and actions have no other support than socially conditioned preferences, commitment to them can seem arbitrary. Suspicion of ourselves and others will arise. There are those who will respond by fanatical commitment to escape the ambiguities of the situation, covering over uncertainty.

It is inescapable that all the issues I have been mentioning are political issues in the profoundest sense of the term. To abandon seeking the best opinions among the opinions we encounter, is, in a way, to stop taking political questions seriously in a profound way. This demands reflection and thoughtfulness, not merely commitment. Does it not seem, further, that such a conclusion amounts to a caricature of ourselves? Politics, then, is fundamental but difficult to come to terms with. It is a distinctively human activity, and as such it reminds us of our limitations as well as our possibilities. It may be exciting but not necessarily endearing. Nevertheless, it is where, in often dramatic terms, we confront the perennial human question: Is there anything genuinely just or right?

To dismiss political activity is impossible. The issues can be avoided for a time, but they inevitably reemerge for it is in the nature of the human condition that they should confront us. For these reasons, serious reflection on politics elicits philosophical reflection. The clash of opinions points beyond itself to the question of the right opinions, to the question, is anything unqualifiedly right, and can we articulate it? We have seen that politics, far from being trivial, is among the most important things, not least because it intrudes into many aspects of life. Instead of the depressing conclusion that political activity is the display of humanity at its lowest we have hit upon reasons for thinking that the very meaning of life is intimated in political engagement even if that meaning is hard to see and clarify.

Liberalism, Modernity and Liberal Education

TIMOTHY FULLER
Colorado College

The inspiration of liberalism begins from the idea of the natural liberty and equality of all human beings. Within the liberal tradition, we expect liberal education to advance the capacity of human beings to make liberty and equality fruitful without simply identifying with liberalism. Liberalism and liberal education are friendly, without being identical, in sharing a commitment to freedom and human dignity. Both are, however, also bound up with "modernity". The relationship of the liberal tradition, liberal education and modernity is what I wish to explore in what follows.

To thinkers, like Hobbes and Locke, who paved the way toward liberalism, natural liberty and equality meant that there is no necessary ordering of the human character. Human beings so understood find themselves surrounded by a nature which guides only in part, the bulk of the formation of our character requiring active construction through the exercise of intelligence. Conceiving of ourselves this way, we confront a recurrent, vexing problem: How are we to achieve peaceful and virtuous association amidst unboundedly divergent self-interpretations? How do we decide how we ought to live?

Both Hobbes and Locke agree that God made us in his image in making us creative beings. Just as nature is the creator's artifact, so man is the being within nature who can produce further artifacts not made or necessitated by nature. If human artifices were dictated by necessity, they would not be our creations but emanations from antecedent conditions—occurrences independent of human deliberation and will. Artifice implies will, and the reality of will emerges in creative action, the capacity to do what, in the absence of human willing, would never be done. Human beings define human purposes and goals.

This does not mean that we are unlimited. We are, in the Hobbesian-Lockean description, physical, passionate beings, moved by desire and aversion, by pleasure and pain. We also inescapably carry cultural inheritances and habits of understanding. Freedom appears, amidst these limitations, in the exercise of intelligence in imaginatively interpreting and reinterpreting what these conditions mean to us, in discovering possibilities lurking in a resistant environment.

Individuality of meaning asserts itself in the endless adaptations of conventions of expression within societies. Cultural unity is an artifice, a creation of human ingenuity that must be as it is only because it has been made by particular people in particular historically contingent circumstances. Thus, the liberal tradition both acknowledges the artificiality of human associations and also establishes their legitimacy on the ground that they are self-imposed.

Whatever cultural unity we achieve cannot be at the expense of individuals' claims to self-regulation and self-development. Belief in individuality and liberty implies belief in the capacity for self-regulation. The art of the liberal tradition is to strike anew, in every moment, the balance between separation from and association with each other. Whatever balance we strike is informed by an intention to minimize favor to some preferences at the expense of others. Substantive notions of virtue must not be imposed for such imposition endangers individuals' acting as agents of their own destiny.

Liberal individuals are both self-centered and dependent. They find this dichotomous experience both natural and inevitable; yet they also seek a unified experience of the world. The art of life for such individuals is to reconcile the desire for self-satisfaction with the desire for association.

This we must do for ourselves because understanding ultimately resides in individuals and nowhere else. The conventions of association are tenuous but manageable relations among individuals each of whom must engage in a constant process of adjustment to the others.

The tentative nature of this civil association is echoed in the tentative nature of each individual's reconciliation of the self- and other-regarding impulses. Starting from the fundamental individuality of every human being, we must accept that our sociality cannot be actualized without conventions; abandon them and there are no standards other than one's own.

In seeking to define the "praiseworthy", as we must, we are at risk of exalting either mere conformity or mere rebelliousness. Conceptions of virtue vary. The public conception of virtue, being conventional, must alter through time; it cannot remain static. Rather than emphasizing substantive virtue, then, we speak of propriety or self-command, the display of self-restraint, of civility and moderation, the marks of the person who prudently pursues self-development in the company of others.

The liberal outlook, then, seeks virtue without undermining freedom and individuality in the pursuit of self-chosen purposes. The capacity to live this way liberalism ascribes, in principle, to every human being. This is attractive. Yet anxiety arises from the fear of finding no coherent and sustainable cultural expressions, no fit between procedures and substance. To identify moral virtue with civility will not altogether allay the odor of arbitrary definitions or the felt need to reexamine those definitions repeatedly.

The liberal tradition, in short, urges us to our own purposes and ideas of good, admitting a constant proliferation of purposes and goods. Self-expression is intrinsically good, but particular self-expressions, in principle, enjoy no special privileges. The exercise of agency by individuals is intrinsically valuable, but no particular acts of agency are easily or unarguably set apart as exemplary.

Alongside this complex of thought we encounter "modernity". Although occasionally used affirmatively, this term often designates some kind of misdirection in liberalism. Peter Berger (1977) provides us with a particularly lucid description of "modernity". He identifies five dilemmas that "modernity has imposed on human life". They are abstraction, futurity, individuation, liberation and secularization.

Abstraction means the replacement of "concrete and relatively cohesive communities" with overpowering technological, economic, and bureaucratic institutions. *Futurity* means "a transformation in the experience of time" wherein the future bewitches us at the expense of the past and is understood to be "precise, measurable...subject to human control...it is time to be mastered." Clock time dominates, lives become careers, societies become raw material for designs and plans. Futurity dictates "endless striving, restlessness, and a mounting incapacity for repose." The counterculture, Berger argues, was an insurrection "against the tyranny of modern futurity." *Individuation* is the derangement of the art of self-regulation described earlier: As "concrete communities have been replaced by the abstract megastructures of modern society, the individual self has come to be experienced as both distinct and greatly complicated—and, by that very fact, in greater need of the personal belonging which is difficult in abstract situations." That is, the gap between self and other is too wide to permit the moderating response to function adequately. *Liberation* is experiencing everything as a matter of choice, what Berger calls the Promethean element or the multiplication of options and the increasing invisibility of traditions. But, at the same time, the anguish of open-ended choice prompts an attempt to escape from freedom, leaving moderns caught between liberation from fate and the anomie of a life without fate. Finally, *secularization* incites antagonism "to the dimension of tran-

scendence." Secularization "frustrates deeply grounded human aspirations" and particularly "the aspiration to exist in a meaningful and ultimately hopeful cosmos."

Berger's symptoms of modernity convene in the inability of individuals to be able to rely with certainty on any particular interpretation of what the surrounding world is supposed to mean. To be immersed in this condition is to become suspicious of the validity of any self-enactment whatever, sensing that:

The situation of our time
Surrounds us like a baffling crime

Auden's line captures the anxieties Berger investigates. There is, in modernity, no obvious symbolic program encompassing life's pilgrimage. Poetic lines do not interpret and clarify the world—they dramatize the world's opaqueness.

What then of liberal education? In the first place, we must accept that what we have just been describing manifests itself no less in educational institutions than elsewhere. Some of those entering colleges and universities today, it is true, hope to rise above the preoccupations of the age. Many more come in search of a more exact, scientific analysis of modernity in order to succeed on its terms.

This is true not only of students but of faculty who must suffer the temptation to serve contradictory demands simultaneously. In this situation, liberal education risks the loss of its independent meaning or reason to exist. It begins to appeal to prospective students merely as the already familiar world, briefly relieved perhaps of immediate responsibilities, but always mindful of the apparent primacy of those responsibilities. It is no wonder, then, that many come to feel that much in the academy is not really real. Worth is attributed to the evanescent, the contemporary, to knowing very well what everyone thinks now, to learning to think of oneself as a potential manager of a "social system" under the tutelage of a putative "role-model".

There are no easy remedies for reestablishing the distinctiveness of the educational engagement. First, we must try to detach the word "liberal" from the word "modern" in order to recapture its broader, more ancient meaning. From the wandering scholars of the twelfth century, who inaugurated the educational adventure as we have since known it, the renaissance humanists who recovered ancient learning and the natural philosophers of the scientific revolution, modern students are offered a wealth of invitations to explore the languages of learning and the modes of self-understanding. As Michael Oakeshott puts it, learning began to be:

> …identified with coming to understand the intimations of a human life displayed in an historic culture of remarkable splendor and lucidity and with the invitation to recognize oneself in terms of this culture. This was an education which promised and afforded liberation from the here and now of current engagements, from the muddle, the crudity, the sentimentality, the intellectual poverty and the emotional morass of ordinary life (Oakeshott 1989, p. 30).

That what we once called the torch of learning is not snuffed out entirely, we see periodically when, recalling that we used to be about something, we huddle together to conjure it up again. Almost every curriculum has something called a distribution requirement, often tacked on to an increasingly pre-professional, technique-oriented body of courses. We speak often of "general education" as if it were meaningful to say that someone is educated "in general". But "general education" is not necessarily "liberal education" if it implies not liberation from the merely current but liberation from learning anything specific in detail. Committees spend vast amounts of time compiling lists of useful skills, attributes of good socialization, broadening options, and the like. The point is not that these things are in themselves wrong; the point is that these things are nothing in themselves and have no independent status.[1]

Sometimes, no doubt, general education implies concern for the substance of a culture. Too often, however, it means that everything of possible importance is given its curricular moment in the sun, the

student getting no more than a fleeting glimpse of anything in particular. This is education as recognition, what we have taken to calling "cultural literacy", but it is not liberal learning, not an authentic encounter with distinguished thinking and writing.

Put in a positive light, these efforts may be signs that there is hope for us yet, that we have not forgotten completely the exhilaration of the original adventure to understand and not only to understand, but to understand from the vantage point of the highest accomplishments of substantive knowledge, to seek liberation not from culture, but liberation as the freedom to explore forever within a culture, to be at home in it, and yet to know that each particular dwelling shows the mark of its owner.[2] This mode of individuals in association with each other is a high achievement of liberal learning, appearing long before the advent of modern liberalism or of "modernity". Liberal education is not merely modernity intellectualized; it is the experience of that spirit which wants to discover a truly human life and wants to participate in the great conversation respecting the variety of ways to live it. Liberal learning thus understood is not a technique or a list of courses—it is an education in imagination.[3] It is the attempt to broaden our ways of seeing the world, but not by making anything and everything an object of formal study. It is not many objects of study that we require, but the art of imaginative response in encountering expressions which are themselves the consequences of imaginative response.

What, then, should we, as the current trustees of liberal learning, be doing? First, we have to acknowledge that our inheritance is in disarray; this seems increasingly admitted. The burgeoning of "higher education"—not to be equated with liberal learning—has dissolved the common understanding that teachers formerly could assume to exist among themselves. Students quickly learn to exploit the resulting variability in standards, expectations and requirements. In large measure, the blame lies with teachers and not with students. Students respond to what is expected of them, even if often their response is inadvertent. However, when they arrive in colleges and universities today, they are likely to be asked what they would like to find there. They meet teachers who, even if they have high personal standards, may think it wrong to impose those standards on others.

This is exacerbated on the other side by the disastrous gap between the requirements of professional, graduate school training and the requirements of liberal learning. In liberal arts colleges, where we might least expect to find this, it shows up in the fears of young faculty that their professional research will not or cannot be supported. The difficulties of recruiting faculty with a commitment to the traditional priority of excellence in teaching are well known, particularly when the institutions' commitments are equivocal. And, increasingly, teaching institutions succumb to the temptation to allow professional aspirations, emanating from sharply opposed standards of success and reward, to dictate the shape of the curriculum.

The first line of defense of liberal learning is to make sure we are clear about who we are and what we are defending. A clear idea of the college or university is indispensable to preserving it. We must also be willing to assume responsibility to educate newcomers into the traditions of liberal education, without compromise of its idea.

On the other hand, we must also acknowledge the centrality of professional training even though it is not an end in itself. If we are to avoid the spurious general education and transdisciplinary discussions of everything but what we know well, training and continuing research are indispensable. But professional work presents us with two perils: first, it often ignores, or deals superficially with, the distinguishing assumptions of disciplines. The result is too many faculty members who may transmit the present contents of their disciplines but either cannot explain, or are indifferent to the task of explaining, why their disciplines are as they are, their significance, and their limits. Perhaps over the door of each faculty office we should affix the haunting remark of Max Weber: "To choose a method is to choose a way of life." Do we reflect such seriousness in our undertakings?

The second peril follows from the first: Professional training seldom encourages conversation among practitioners of different disciplines. Reluctance to converse must not characterize those committed to liberal education.

The conversational attitude is, I think, the key to understanding the task of liberal education in our current circumstances. That attitude begins in the recognition that we cannot speak in a single voice or rely on a single method of knowing. We are participants in the liberal tradition. The ways of knowing are plural. Inevitably, we must differ, but the faculty of conversability affords us the prospect of difference with a minimum of antagonism. An institution of higher learning should be understood as a great conversation among voices who have learned conversational procedures. A college or university will be truest to itself in attending to its conversational inheritance. Human beings enter the world with the capacity for but not the art of conversation. Insofar as this is among the highest of all human attainments, distinctive to the human species, it is essential to learn how to attain it and thus essential that there be places which, in the midst of all else going on, exemplify it. In conversation, we quickly pass beyond formulas and propositions to the lore that lies behind them. This is the greatest and, in principle, the least dogmatic learning, combining openness with precision. Conclusions are seen to be momentary accomplishments, brief releases from adventurous uncertainty, in the effort of all involved to understand ourselves in relation to what we have so far learned, and in relation to our conversational partners without whose conversational gambits we are diminished.

Academic disciplines, in this view, are voices in a collegial conversation—and to the degree we are conversationally adroit, the students who come our way will know by observation and apprenticeship what is required in a place of learning. If instead we erect intellectual kingdoms of the proud, turning conversation into speeches, we will diminish ourselves and our students, and we will, even if unintentionally, cease to distinguish ourselves from the barbarous of our time who turn every conversational opportunity towards self-assertion. That we are often intimidated nowadays into thinking that the speechmakers are serious while we are inconsequent reasoners, is a sign of our forgetting that the human is to be found in every moment of consciousness, not only in moments yet to come, that if we do not have resources for self-understanding now, they are not likely to be imparted to us later.

What I am proposing is that we seek to transform the curse of indirection in our plurality into a conversational blessing. Diversity guarantees the fecundity of human discovery, allowing us to engage in a continuous endeavor to abate the human mystery by recognizing that each conversational partner may potentially explicate that mystery even while extending it.

In the course of this procedure, we cannot explore all possibilities. Choices to do this rather than that must be made. It is the understanding we bring to the task of choice that is crucial. The metaphor of conversation intends to show that each of us can refer to, and order our work in accordance with, the good of the institution of learning, not under an imperative to sacrifice distinctiveness, but with the understanding that no discipline or conversational voice refutes its alternatives merely by revealing its own premises and asserting them. But each voice can contribute to the enhancement of the faculty of appreciation and enjoyment of the others and, in so doing, enhance itself.

Without foreclosing the future, conversational habits build the bridges among us that create the attractions of the academic institution and make it attractive for beginners to explore. The prospective entrant can then see that, in conversation, each of us begins anew in each moment and here above all, therefore, beginners are welcome. They bring fresh nuance to a long-standing conversation. Here they can test what they have to say not with the promise of a certain destination, but in mastering a way of navigating the sea of human utterance. Here disciplines need not be abstract, futurity can be tempered with the experience of present delight, individuation can be accepted as promoting conversational partnership, not loneliness, liberation is of the imagination, and the aspiration to meaning and hope is neither rendered formulaic nor ruled out but itself becomes a matter to be clarified among conversational partners.

The vocation of the teacher today demands self-confidence in the midst of continual self-examination. Open-ended conversationality, especially to be hoped for in institutions of higher learning, is not an escape from the human condition but the resolve to embrace it in a comprehensive way. It is true that the price of such comprehensiveness is a certain detachment, particularly from political decision-making and prophecy. To some this means that the habits of conversationality are abstract and not those of a fully human life.

This criticism is natural and perennial and requires us always to be ready to assess what we are doing. On the other hand, whatever fate may otherwise befall us, we are the trustees of a reflective insight that is to be had in no other way. So that future generations will know that we have not unwittingly allowed this insight to be lost from sight, we must remember that we are neither mere truants nor mere echoes of modernity. We dwell in places in sight of the latter but set apart for liberal education.

NOTES

1 Oakeshott, who exemplifies liberal and not general education, writes: "A culture is not a set of abstract aptitudes; it is composed of substantive expressions of thought, emotion, belief, opinion, approval and disapproval, of moral and intellectual discriminations, of inquiries and investigations, and learning is coming to understand and respond to these substantive expressions of thought as invitations to think and to believe" (Oakeshott 1989, p. 32)

2 It is hard to know what exactly liberation from culture could mean. A being without culture is not a human being. If it means altering an unsatisfactory situation, where do people suppose the criteria to direct the change come from? Do they not emerge from standards already learned which provide a basis for judging satisfactoriness in the first place? What, in the second place, makes a critique intelligible to others if not a shared experience and discourse that already makes it intelligible? Whatever else is going on, even the process of liberation is and must be within a culture.

3 One finds an excellent evocation of this in Northrop Frye's The Educated Imagination (1964). Recently, many of those unfamiliar with Oakeshott's idea of the "conversation of mankind" have learned of it through Richard Rorty's appropriation of the term, and thus they assume that Oakeshott is a sheer relativist. This is incorrect. Oakeshott has a powerful and constructive political theory about which he is not at all relativist. Oakeshott's point is that the open-ended conversation, where everything is eligible for discussion, is the distinguishing feature of the university, not of all of life nor of politics in particular.

REFERENCES

Berger, P. 1977. Toward a Critique of Modernity. In *Facing up to Modernity*. essay, Basic Books.
Frye, N. 1964. *The Educated Imagination*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
Oakeshott, M. 1989. A Place of Learning. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Oakeshott and Newman on Liberal Education

ELIZABETH COREY
Baylor University

Abstract: Michael Oakeshott and John Henry Newman wrote at length about liberal education. For both, experience was best understood from the perspective of different sciences (Newman) or modes (Oakeshott). Ultimately, they viewed this education as something that aimed at perfection of the intellect, not necessary at moral goodness. However, the "minimal" moral good of the gentleman remains a significant achievement. It seems to be essential for engaging in what Oakeshott called "civil association."

Keywords: Liberal Education, Liberal Learning, Michael Oakeshott, John Henry Newman, Integrity

Both Michael Oakeshott (1901-1990) and John Henry Newman (1801-1890) were concerned with the idea of liberal education. They believed that there was something intrinsically valuable about it, and that it was "useless" in the normal sense of the term. Newman described liberal education as an activity that aimed at the perfection of the intellect, and he distinguished it from the pursuit of both moral goodness and religious salvation. Oakeshott, likewise, saw liberal education as an activity that took place in retreat from the world, during an interim or interval between youth and adulthood, conducted without thought of career or future prospects of any kind. For both men liberal education was an "end in itself", something of great value for human beings.

In this essay, I explain the thought of the two men to show how both understand liberal education as producing the "cultivated intellect" or a desirable "habit of mind". Strictly speaking, it is not quite right to say that liberal education *produces* this habit of mind; for it isn't as if one does the liberal education first and then at the end the habit appears. Rather, in the doing and the learning one becomes, almost imperceptibly, the possessor of a set of characteristics and personal traits that are never fully fixed or finished. Newman's shorthand for this is the idea of the "gentleman", famously described in his fifth discourse of *The Idea of a University*. Oakeshott uses the word "integrity" to describe this character. It is not exactly moral or religious goodness, though it might be a precondition for these greater virtues. Yet I want to argue that this "minimal" moral good—of the gentleman, or of the integrated personality—inheres in such an education.

In this essay I consider two major aspects of their views. First, Newman describes a "circle of knowledge" that is made up of different sciences, each independent of

the others but also requiring their existence. Oakeshott likewise speaks of experience as having "modes". Second, both thinkers describe liberal learning as an "end in itself". It is not the only human end, but it is nevertheless an end that is desired by human beings, or at least by human beings who have the sufficient leisure, security and inclination for it. Crucially, this kind of liberal education encourages the development of a particular kind of human character. It is valuable because self-governance and civil association depend upon cultivating such a character.

THE CIRCLE OF KNOWLEDGE AND MODALITY

Newman employs the image of a "circle of knowledge" as a way of explaining the relationship of the discrete sciences that combine to make up a university curriculum. He uses the word "science" to designate not only physical sciences but all branches of knowledge that are studied in a university, including theology, math, and literature. Each science offers its own distinct view of the whole of experience, but each is only partial in scope. Newman did not invent this image of the circle, but borrowed it from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who employs it in his "Preliminary Treatise on Method" (1818), which is the introduction to the *Encyclopedia Metropolitana*. In this essay Coleridge justifies the production of a new encyclopedia organized systematically and by topic instead of alphabetically.

In trying to systematize all that can be known, Coleridge rejects the disorganization and randomness that he sees in alphabetical compendiums of knowledge, instead proposing that knowledge should be understood as a metaphorical "circle". He wants to "present the circle of knowledge in its harmony" and to "give that unity of design and elucidation, the want of which we have most deeply felt in other works of a similar kind [i.e., other encyclopedias], where the desired information is divided into innumerable fragments scattered over many volumes, like a mirror broken on the ground" (Coleridge 1818, p. 42). Coleridge does not set out the sciences as cafeteria offerings. Instead, they appear in an ordered structure that gives pride of place to the most important modes of knowledge.

Newman and Coleridge share a desire for "wholeness and unity", which both understand as "fundamentally a religious or spiritual quest" (Quinlan 1996, p. 223). In his *Philosophical Lectures*, Coleridge maintains that an encyclopedia should be "a co-organisation of the sciences, as so many interdependent systems, each having a life of its own, but all communicating with philosophy as the common centre or brain" (Newsome 1974, p. 69). This anticipates Newman, who writes as follows: "[T]he comprehension of the bearings of one science on another, and the use of each to each . . . this belongs, I conceive, to a sort of science distinct from all of them, and in some sense a science of sciences, which is my own conception of what is meant by philosophy, in the true sense of the word, and of a philosophical habit of mind" (Newman 1982, p. 38). Both Newman and Coleridge share a capacious view of knowledge, and for both men philosophy is the architectonic science that structures the whole.

This larger whole cannot be absorbed all at once by any human mind. "Now, it is not wonderful [i.e., surprising]" writes Newman, "that, with all its capabilities, the human mind cannot take in this whole vast fact at a single glance, or gain possession of it at once". Our intellectual capacities are unavoidably limited, he continues, and "as we deal with some huge structure of many parts and sides, the mind goes round about it, noting down, first one thing, then another, as it best may, and viewing it under different aspects, by way of making progress towards mastering the whole". In such a process we view reality through "partial views or abstractions" called sciences, which "embrace respectively larger or smaller portions of the field of knowledge" (Newman 1982, p 34).

He speaks of knowledge as divided and yet unified not only in his discussion of university education, but with respect to epistemology as a whole. In his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman observes that it is "characteristic of our minds, that they cannot take an object in, which is submitted to them simply and integrally". Whole objects, he continues, "do not create in the intellect whole ideas, but are, to use a mathematical phrase, thrown into series, into a number of statements, strengthening, interpreting, correcting each other, and with more or less exactness approximating, as they accumu-

late, to a perfect image". Nobody can see the whole of reality at once; and therefore we "cannot teach except by aspects or views, which are not identical with the thing itself which we are teaching" (Newman 1989, p. 55).

Newman offers the idea of "man" as an example of what he means. We may view man in a variety of ways: "in relation to the material elements of his body, or to his mental constitution, or to his household and family, or to the community in which he lives, or to the Being who made him". Each view is good so far as it goes, but incomplete. In consequence, Newman continues, "we treat of [man] respectively as physiologists, or as moral philosophers, or as writers of economics, or of politics, or as theologians" (Newman 1982, p. 36). But, he warns, each of these sciences—moral philosophy, economics, politics, theology—is both illuminative and limited. It illuminates certain aspects of "man" while necessarily ignoring others. An example of this in our own time is modern behaviorism, which studies man quantitatively but omits what might be understood through philosophy or theology.

The danger, of course, is that a practitioner of one science may mistake his partial view for the whole. He then becomes "a man of one idea", whose extensive specialized knowledge hinders him from recognizing his ignorance in other areas. To sum up his view of wholeness and abstraction, Newman comments thus: "I have hitherto been engaged in showing that all the sciences come to us, to use scholastic language, *per modum unius*, [in the manner of one thing] that they all relate to one and the same integral subject matter, that each separately is more or less an abstraction, wholly true as an hypothesis, but not wholly trustworthy in the concrete" (Newman 1982, p. 45). Students will not be well-served by becoming "men of one idea" who specialize without appreciating the concrete whole of knowledge. But they will be "the gainers by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle" (Newman 1982, p. 76).

Now how does this relate to Oakeshott's view? Oakeshott does not use the "circle of knowledge" imagery, but Newman's fundamental idea is strikingly similar to Oakeshott's idea of modality, in which each way of viewing the world is something like a particular discipline—good in what it offers, but partial. Each mode, as he writes in his early work, or "voice", as he calls them later, complements the others but does not speak back to them on their own terms. Instead, it speaks in its own "language" and each language can potentially be mastered—or at least appreciated and understood—by students who want a liberal education. Oakeshott's languages or modes (science, history, and practice, and later poetry or aesthetics) are broader in scope than Newman's. Yet each language or mode views the world in its own distinct way that cannot be appropriated by the others.

For Oakeshott, certain modes tend toward the domination and usurpation of other modes. Most dominant of all is the mode of "practice", which, in focusing on desire, aversion, and moral conduct, always presents itself as the most important mode—certainly far more important than the modes of history or poetry. Newman similarly fears that dropping any one science out of the circle of knowledge would mean that the circle would close up, with other sciences taking over the place of the one that had been omitted. "[I]if you drop any science out of the circle of knowledge", observes Newman, "you cannot keep its place vacant for it; that science is forgotten; the other sciences close up, or, in other words, they exceed their proper bounds, and intrude where they have no right" (Newman 1982, p. 55). And in discourse three of *Idea*, "Bearing of Theology on Other Branches of Knowledge" he observes that "no science is complete in itself, when viewed as an instrument of attaining the knowledge of facts … every science, for this purpose, subserves the rest; and, in consequence … the systematic omission of any one science from the catalogue, prejudices the accuracy and completeness of our knowledge altogether, and that, in proportion to its importance" (Newman 1982, p. 39).

One major difference from Newman is that Oakeshott does not think that all experience points toward a transcendent whole. Oakeshott's "conversation of mankind" as an image for education is resolutely nonteleological; no "voice" or "language" is better than any other (at least not explicitly) and "there is no symposiarch" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 490). As Timothy Fuller has put it, Oakeshott's conversation "among different disciplinary voices" is an "indirect approach to the quest for wisdom. The quest for the whole lurks in the background, echoing elements of Newman's argument, but the fulfillment of the quest may or must be

delayed indefinitely in deference to the human conversation" (Fuller 2004, p. 44). Still, the important point here is that both Newman and Oakeshott see the university as obligated to offer all the sciences that make up liberal learning. Each contributes something distinctive that the others cannot. Yet each on its own is incomplete and needs the others, if a student is to have a complete view of the world.

LIBERAL LEARNING AS AN END IN ITSELF: NEWMAN

Newman is famous for arguing that liberal learning is an activity that ought to be valued fully as an end in itself, with no thought of subsequent rewards, and indeed no consequences at all. This radical idea is expressed most famously in discourse five of *The Idea of a University.* Oakeshott does not use the phrase "end in itself", but he does argue for the strict separation of learning from practical concerns.

What might it mean to say that liberal learning is a good in itself? The good of learning must accrue either to the learner, or to the things learned (the science), or perhaps to other people, to society as a whole. We are accustomed to saying that someone has advanced the cause of science in his research, and here the good attained appears as a contribution to a body of knowledge. The person who does the research is less important than the product he produces, and in principle the research could have been done by anyone, or by a machine.

Another option is that the good of learning accrues to society as whole, as it surely does in finding cures for disease or safer methods of transportation. In all but the most unusual cases, people learn computer coding not for its own sake but to facilitate some kind of advance in technology. Education in engineering aims at the production of better bridges and airplanes. In short, the good of learning understood in this way means that benefits flow from the learner to other people, and only incidentally to the learner himself.

The third and most radical option is that learning might be valued neither for its contribution to a body of knowledge nor for the improvement of man's estate, but instead for its effect on the learner. Liberal learning for its own sake is formation of the person, the perfection of an innate human potentiality. Newman laments that there is really no name for this perfection of the mind, in the way that health stands for the perfection of the body. And of course he knows that learning for its own sake is never the only thing a learner does. In the course of every person's education there must be extraneous purposes for learning, whether these are grades, tests, or the prospect of a career.

Nevertheless, unlike many theorists of education, and unlike many students and teachers, Newman vigorously promotes the idea that there is something desirable about the perfection of the intellect simply for its own sake. "We are satisfying a direct need of our nature in its very acquisition", Newman writes, "and, whereas our nature, unlike that of the inferior creation, does not at once reach its perfection, but depends, in order to it, on a number of external aids and appliances, Knowledge, as one of the principal of these, is valuable for what its very presence in us does for us after the manner of a habit, even though it be turned to no further account, nor subserve any direct end" (Newman 1982, p. 78). The good in liberal education is not external but accrues directly to the person himself, who pursues self-perfection through a long and sometimes arduous process.

The classical view of learning is that the pursuit of knowledge "of itself" fulfills a human need that is just as urgent as our needs for health, love or friendship. Paraphrasing Cicero, Newman maintains that knowledge is "the very first object to which we are attracted, after the supply of our physical wants" (Newman 1982, p. 79). And quoting Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, he sums up his argument as follows: "Of possessions, those rather are useful, which bear fruit; those *liberal, which tend to enjoyment.* By fruitful, I mean, which yield revenue; by enjoyable, where *nothing accrues of consequence beyond the using*" (Newman 1982, p. 82). Though ancient in its origins, this view has always been difficult to grasp. We are so accustomed to thinking about the utility of things, and the ways we might store up goods for future use or security, that it is hard to accept this notion of "enjoyment" and self-sufficiency. Far easier to comprehend is education as a means to virtue or profit.

In enjoying knowledge for its own sake we also develop what Newman calls "a habit of mind". In being exposed to the many different sciences that make up a university, students watch the conduct of their practitioners. Although few people, if any, can pursue all the sciences, every student nevertheless gains "by living among those and under those who represent the whole circle". Newman's ideal view of the university is worth quoting in full:

> [a university is an] assemblage of learned men, zealous for their own sciences, and rivals of each other, are brought, by familiar intercourse and for the sake of intellectual peace, to adjust together the claims and relations of their respective subjects of investigation. They learn to respect, to consult, to aid each other. Thus is created a pure and clear atmosphere of thought, which the student also breathes. . . . He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called "Liberal." A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are, freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom; or what in a former Discourse I have ventured to call a philosophical habit (Newman 1982, p. 76).

A philosophical habit, or habit of mind, cannot be acquired by merely collecting knowledge and facts about the world. At the same time, it cannot be acquired *without* knowledge and facts, as if we could learn a skill like "critical thinking" without thinking about any subject in particular. Instead, the acquisition of knowledge and the character traits of equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom go together.

Crucially, Newman's desired habit of mind requires more than wide learning and a good memory. It requires a process of "digestion", perhaps recalling Thomas Cranmer's famous exhortation about scripture readings: we should "hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them". The desirable enlargement of mind is not merely passive reception of facts and theories but involves "the mind's energetic and simultaneous action upon and towards and among those new ideas". It asks that we take what we have received and make the knowledge ours; "it is a digestion of what we receive, into the substance of our previous state of thought; and without this no enlargement is said to follow". The ultimate aim of all this is to gain knowledge not only of things, "but also of their mutual and true relations; knowledge, not merely considered as acquirement, but as philosophy" (Newman 1982, p. 101).

Newman's ideas about liberal learning as an end in itself—learning pursued for the pure enjoyment it offers—and the cultivation of a habit of mind also point toward an implicitly moral character formation. While Newman plainly states that the aim of liberal knowledge, unlike religious knowledge, is *not* "to make men better", it nevertheless does seem to produce an admirable moral character. This is not the kind of character fit to equip someone for the day of judgment—liberal learning does not yield goodness per se—but it may yield character traits that could be called "ambiguously" moral, like steadiness, moderation, civility, and self-command. Taken together these comprise the character of "not the Christian, not the Catholic, but the gentleman". They are "no guarantee for sanctity", for they may as often attach "to the man of the world, to the profligate, to the heartless" (Newman 1982, p. 91). Far more is required to contend against "the passion and pride of man" than the morality of a gentleman.

Yet the character Newman describes as the result of a liberal education is perhaps not as void of content as he sometimes implies. The liberally educated person possesses "[g]ood sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, candour, self-command, and steadiness of view …a faculty of entering with comparative ease into any subject of thought, and of taking up with aptitude any science or profession" (Newman 1982, p. XLIII). The philosophical habit of such a person implies "freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom" and "a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life" (Newman 1982, p. 91). All of this taken together is a not insig-

nificant set of political and social virtues. Sobriety, dispassion, reason, self-command: these characteristics are vital to civilized interactions with other people. Or as Newman quotes Ovid, *"Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros"*: [A careful study of the liberal arts refines manners and prevents them from being savage] (Newman 1982, p. XLII).

The liberally educated person therefore stands opposed to the "man of one idea", who believes that his specialized knowledge in one area entitles him to pronounce on matters that lie outside his realm of expertise. He is also distinguished from the man of no ideas, who has received no significant education, as well as the man whose entire intellect has been focused on things that are of practical and moral interest: the ideologue, the money-maker, the seeker after honor. The liberally educated person has cultivated a kind of disinterest, and in so doing he can see himself alongside other people, not as the center of the universe.

OAKESHOTT ON LIBERAL EDUCATION AND INTEGRITY

Oakeshott takes up a similar set of characteristics, which may be understood in general as the idea of "integrity". He did not argue explicitly for integrity as a motivating idea or *telos* for liberal education. Indeed, prior to the publication of his *Notebooks*, it would have been difficult to appreciate the centrality of this idea, for it is only mentioned in passing in *On Human Conduct*'s discussion of the activity of "self-enactment" and in a few other places throughout his corpus.

Nevertheless, integrity may properly be deemed both a central aim and the intrinsic satisfaction of an Oakeshottian liberal education. A sense of integration, of wholeness, is enjoyed by the person who, through learning, comes to understand the world he has inherited. Such a person recognizes and appreciates both the potentialities and limitations of his own mind and character. This achievement is not an endowment of nature. Nor do we accede to it as a matter of course upon reaching adulthood. It comes only in a process of learning, which is sometimes difficult and at other times delightful. Liberal education thus offers (but does not guarantee) liberation and identity, and release from slavish submission to politics, convention, and career.

The end of this liberal education therefore is not encyclopedic knowledge, as if its purpose were to produce people who retain many facts and can provide limitless answers to concrete inquiries. Nor does it aim only at conveying "the best that has been thought and known in the world," *a la* Matthew Arnold and T. S. Eliot. Of course the great works are to be read and studied, but they are not idolized. Other contemporary works—of art, music, literature and philosophy—may prove as worthy as the traditional "greats". Oakeshott thus flatly rejects the idea of education as acquisition. Instead, culture must be filtered through a person's mind and made one's own through a process of reflection. The aim is to develop "an integrated self whose purpose is not to remember, adopt or assimilate, but to live a life contemporary with itself" (Oakeshott 1930, p. 367).

This vision differs from the conventional and sometimes platitudinous character of many contemporary discussions of liberal education. Some commentators place liberal education in the service of some other relatively clear moral or political end, like good citizenship or social change. Others talk about it in terms of skills and aptitudes like critical thinking or problem-solving. Still others say that liberal education offers the best preparation for successful careers after formal education is complete. All these descriptions contain elements of truth, and all are somewhat empirically accurate.

Yet these justifications do not offer the inspiration or excitement of Oakeshott's vision. His idea of liberal learning is conservative and romantic at once, indebted to tradition and ongoing practices but not subservient to them. Education yields a deep sense of existential meaning for Oakeshott, because it offers multiple lenses for seeing the world. We might, for example, come to understand love and marriage not just in the relationships of our parents or our friends, but in the images of Odysseus and Penelope or Abraham and Sarah, in van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait, or in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*. These are modally different ways of seeing the world: practically, historically, and aesthetically.

Oakeshott's vision of education also requires learners to adopt a skeptical stance toward the very things they have probably taken most for granted. In this sense, he is quite definitely "questioning authority". The authorities Oakeshott questions, however, are not simply the political or social authorities of a particular place or time. They are the dominant ideas that govern most of us: that we should orient ourselves toward the future; that we should understand career and accomplishment as markers of human flourishing; and that ambition is unambiguously good.

This view also contrasts sharply with the imperatives of contemporary identity politics, because Oakeshott questions all categorical explanations of human conduct. Instead of adopting various *personae* based on one's race or sex, he expects people to engage in the difficult work of developing character through a process of learning. Ascriptive characteristics can explain only part, and perhaps little, of an individual's experience. Oakeshott's notion of integrity thus requires both a process of clearing away and of taking on. It also requires detachment from ordinary moral life even as it ultimately promises a durable and satisfying moral self-understanding.

What sorts of ideas, pressures, and conventions must one escape to become liberally educated? Oakeshott believes that one must both embrace and reject the present. I shall say more below about what he thinks is to be embraced. What must be rejected are certain deformed and harmful aspects of living in our contemporary place and time: for example, an excessive focus on practical concerns, self-obsession, and preoccupation with career and achievement.

First, although he recognizes that the "practical mode" (in which ordinary moral and political life takes place) offers certain satisfactions, Oakeshott also considers it depressing and limited. Here people are caught up in the "deadliness of doing", as if life were one long, unending list of tasks. In this mode we are subject to the incessant and never-ending news cycle, to fads in fashion and in education, and we may be enslaved to the pursuit of comfort, material needs, pleasure, ease and speed—in short, to a whole host of experiences that offer instant or short-term gratification.

In his essay, "A Place of Learning," Oakeshott describes the need for escape from these afflictions in vivid terms. Liberal education "promise[s] and afford[s] liberation from the here and now of current engagements, from the muddle, the crudity, the sentimentality, the intellectual poverty and the emotional morass of ordinary life" (Oakeshott 1989, p. 18). Liberal education, as he wrote in his essay, "Education: The Engagement and its Frustration," offers emancipation "from the mere 'fact of living,' from the immediate contingencies of place and time of birth, from the tyranny of the moment and from the servitude of a merely current condition." Such education is emphatically not "learning the latest steps in the *danse macabre* of wants and satisfactions" (Oakeshott 1989, p. 104). It is something quite different.

Second, we must escape a pathological preoccupation with ourselves and our circumstances. Self-obsession has probably been a temptation since the race began, but it is extraordinarily magnified in modernity. We worry about image, about how we appear to others, how we compare with others, and we may even attempt to curate our "brands". This yields a tremendous sense of insecurity about how one stacks up compared to others, and we look outward for approbation. We become distracted and disinclined to do the kind of patient, reflective self-examination that is necessary for a durable and stable sense of self.

The politics of personal and group identity is an example of this excessive self-concern. In this realm we are encouraged always to think about ourselves and our personal characteristics, and even to make *ourselves* the subjects of academic study. Thus, women major in women's studies, gays and lesbians in gender and sexuality studies. This explains the metastasizing of many new "grievance studies" departments in universities, which Oakeshott would have deplored. These fields take as given the idea that oppression and privilege are the primary facts of social life. They also assume certain deterministic outlooks on human conduct—i.e., someone of a certain race or sex *will* (or should) think particular things and hold particular views.

These classes and majors therefore approach academic inquiry as investigation of the self in the terms of unchosen characteristics. They are not liberal or free in character because they focus only on certain categories deemed important over the past fifty years (race, sex, sexual orientation, for example, but never reli-

gious commitment). Finally, this self-examination in terms of ascriptive characteristics and group identity aims at political activism and social change. Gone is the notion that the university is a place of retreat and contemplation; it is instead the generator of "changemaking", to use an ugly modern term. All these developments point to an overemphasis on self in terms of image and in terms of characteristics that may have little to do with individual self-understanding.

The third "escape" that Oakeshott's vision requires is from the modern obsession with career, ambition and achievement. Oakeshott is scathing in his critique of careerism and he rejects the idea that value is embedded primarily in one's professional life. He maintains that locating self-worth in work entails abandoning our most important human activity, which is the conscious and intentional living of life. The essential challenge is to dwell neither on the past nor to live in the fantasy of a future, better world, but instead to pay attention to what takes place in the present.

Oakeshott wrote in his notebooks that achievement is "the 'diabolical' element in human life; and the symbol of our vulgarization of human life is our near exclusive concern with achievements" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 468). In pursuing career at the expense of other things one might do, "[t]he safe way is pursued, prudence is made a virtue, and, for the sake of an hypothetical old man, who may bear his name thirty years hence, the young man hoards his energies and restrains his activities" (Oakeshott 1993, p. 31).

Liberal education, in Oakeshott's terms, therefore, cannot take place if students are caught up in the pathologies of the present or in the promotion of themselves as commodities. It also cannot occur in an environment where everything is valued solely for its productive, practical, future value. Insistent questions about "usefulness" and relevance for career tend to crowd out reading and thinking for its own sake.

Perhaps, though, these three escapes cannot be accomplished in advance of learning but take place in the process of becoming liberally educated. Maybe, indeed, they cannot be achieved until liberal education itself begins to loosen the vise grip of present concerns, showing students that everything has not always been the way it is now, and that seeing one's own littleness and insignificance in the sweep of history offers a kind of liberation all its own.

Oakeshott summarized this sentiment in his notebooks: "Dante met somewhere in hell a man whose crime was that he did not love the sweet light of day. It is the crime of our civilization. Instead of the sweetness of the present day, the light of today, we love what is gone or is to come. We despise all that is not productive, contributory: we do not understand what is simply for itself" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 148). In liberal learning, students begin to see that some activities are not productive—and need not be productive—but instead may simply be enjoyed. They may even learn to value these activities more than all others.

The preceding catalogue of escapes offers a beginning point for describing Oakeshott's positive vision of character, and of the liberal education that produces it. While rejecting many aspects of modern culture, he nevertheless embraces a view of life that is grounded in immediate and *present* experience. In the hope of escaping self-obsession, he describes an alternative, positive way of thinking about the self, which takes detachment, humility and moderation as first principles. This positive vision is what he designates as integrity.

Integrity has two important aspects: first, it is the development of moral character; second, it is the acquired disposition to engage in certain kinds of activities. Oakeshott often writes about the importance of acting in a certain *manner*. He therefore describes integrity in terms of "adverbial" conditions: the person of integrity acts humbly, disinterestedly, "punctually, considerately, civilly, [and] candidly" (Oakeshott 1975, p. 56). As a group, these characteristics summarize Oakeshott's positive moral vision, which is remarkably similar to Newman's description of a gentleman. As courage is a supreme virtue in action, integrity "seems to be [its] intellectual counterpart . . . something like *amour propre*, *phronesis*, or "Honour". A person with integrity is the "honnête homme." It is a "rediscovery of the Democritian *aidos*" and conveys a sense of self-sufficiency (Oakeshott 2014, pp. 461-2). All these suggestions are different ways of getting at the essential meaning of integrity: self-sufficiency, honesty, and understanding of oneself and others.

To fill out this description, Oakeshott quotes a detailed description of Pierre Charron, the French skeptic and friend of Montaigne. Like Montaigne, Charron exhibited the characteristics that Oakeshott

admired so much. According to the description by scholar John Owen, Charron possessed true integrity or "Prud'homie"—a combination of wisdom, balance, moderation, honesty and in general, *phronesis*. The person who possesses this Prud'homie is "free, candid, manly, generous, cheerful, pleasant, *self-possessed*, constant . . . [he] walks with a firm tread, is bold and confident, pursuing [his] own path…not changing [his] gait & pace for wind or weather or any other circumstance". (Oakeshott 2014, p. 461). This image combines many of Oakeshott's favored characteristics, which are also summed up in the old ideas of the gentleman and the Stoic.

Charron's integrity is self-sufficient and disinterested. In an integrated soul, virtue and religion are not "a means to self-interest, but [are] their own privilege and their own reward . . . the duties suggested by them should be performed entirely for their own sakes, for their own inherent nobility and excellence, and not for any extraneous motive, of whatever kind" (Owen 1893, p. 584). Here again, the emphasis is on activity undertaken for its own sake, not for reward or honor. Integrity moreover "denotes a combination of the highest goodness, with the greatest amount of veracity, both moral and intellectual". For Charron, it marks "that attitude of the soul or mind which answers to the perfect health of the body" (Owen 1893, p. 582). Again, in the moral sphere we praise courage, and in athletics, strength and health. Yet in the intellectual realm we lack a word that denotes wisdom combined with a certain moral temperament. For integrity is not *solely* intellectual; it also reflects the intellect as it appears to others in a person's actions and temperament.

In the words of the more famous French skeptic, Montaigne, whom Oakeshott often quotes: "The greatest thing in the world is to know how to belong to oneself". This is potentially, though not necessarily, at odds with the pursuit of career and honor because Oakeshott maintains that knowing "how to belong to oneself" requires "no less singleness of purpose, no less concentration of effort, no less discipline . . . than to produce a homogenous piece of work" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 152). If we are consumed with work and achievement, we likely fail to attend to the intentional living of life. The person of integrity, in contrast, seeks a life that is "unimpeded by this fatal, but seductive, mistress – achievement, purpose, destiny, progress" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 244). As Oakeshott puts it in an early essay, life in the present requires the "religious" sensibility of someone who is "free from the encumbrance of extraneous motives and parasitic opinions, which is the sole condition of the intellectual integrity he values more than anything else" (Oakeshott 1993, p. 32).

In his earliest work Oakeshott describes the essential human task as the cultivation of "insight" and designates as its aim "the realization of a self". Against the imperatives of career and success, he protests that the "vulgar mass called work" and "things done" are not valuable for what they produce, "but only insofar as they could prove themselves of worth as elements in the present experience of the most permanent and stable thing in life—our selves". Ambition, he continues, "and the world's greed for visible results . . . would be superseded by a life which carried in each of its moments its whole meaning and value" (Oakeshott 1993, p. 32). The worth of life, here, is measured in insight and sensibility, and it is cultivated by someone fully engaged in a present-focused life. The most vital human activity, Oakeshott maintains, "has a certain semblance of integrity when it is engaged in, not for profit, nor for any practical purpose, but for the glory of doing it, as play" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 506).

Also in his notebooks, Oakeshott references chapter two of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, where Nietzsche explains the importance of educating students so that their talents, inclinations and potential come together into a harmonious whole. Nietzsche observes that the true educational task of a teacher is "to mold the whole man into a living solar and planetary system and to understand its higher laws of motion" (Nietzsche 1910 p. 110). Personal character here is not disorganized and flighty, but well-ordered and stable, with all parts accounted for, all circling around a coherent center. As Oakeshott writes in "Rational Conduct," to say "that a man has a character or a disposition is to say, among other things, that his activities of desiring compose a more or less coherent whole" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 125). To summarize: the person of integrity is supremely self-aware. He is not deceived about the importance of achievement, nor does he hope for post-

humous fame. He is conscious of his want of greater perfection and has understood his talents and weaknesses alike. He is content to live in the world he has inherited.

The second important aspect of integrity has to do with how one chooses to live once this temperament has been cultivated. Do we subscribe to an investment theory of happiness, in which enjoyment of life is postponed while we better ourselves through strict discipline, save for the future, and establish a career and reputation? Or do we choose instead to embrace life's contingency, see ourselves as we are, and enjoy the poetic intimations of the present? Of course, neither of these options can be pursued absolutely to the exclusion of the other. Life requires insurance, investment, and perseverance, not just cultivated enjoyment. Nevertheless, Oakeshott thought that most people were almost entirely disposed toward the "investment" option and therefore missed much of the beauty and meaning that is part of any ordinary human life, if only we are inclined to pause and look for it.

Oakeshott's corpus is full of references to poetry, religion, aesthetics, play (as opposed to work), conversation, love and friendship. These were the things he valued, and he thought certain characteristics—the ones I have described as integrity—disposed people to engage in them. Oakeshott is known for thinking in terms of dichotomous ideal types, and one might observe simply that the person with integrity enacts himself "into" these valuable non-utilitarian practices. The contrasting type is someone caught up in the worldliness of all the things Oakeshott rejects, like the future, achievement, worldly success, career, ambition, and fame.

Oakeshott's most mature statement about integrity appears in his 1975 masterwork, *On Human Conduct*, where he describes two aspects of moral conduct. One he calls "self-disclosure", which is conduct as it is normally understood in ordinary moral life. Here one speaks, acts and expects responses from other people; we may attempt to bend others to our will, or we may choose to act selflessly or charitably. What distinguishes self-disclosure, though, is an agent "seeking what he wants *from* conduct" (Oakeshott 1975, p. 72). Self-disclosure is interminable and hazardous because it depends on others.

Self-enactment, on the contrary, offers an alternative understanding of moral conduct. Someone who engages in self-enactment is "indifferent to consequences of any sort". For here, "what the agent chooses to think is related to his understanding and respect for himself, to the *integrity* of his character". Where agency "is self-enactment, where the consideration in doing is not what is intended to be achieved but the sentiment in which it is done, conduct is released from its character as a response to a contingent situation and is emancipated from liability to the frustration of adverse circumstances" (Oakeshott 1975, p. 73).

Integrity therefore describes a manner of life that presupposes an understanding of self-sufficient human activities, a disposition to engage in them, and a clear-sighted assessment of one's own gifts, talents, and possibilities. It also requires a sober view of one's inadequacies and, as a Christian might say, our unavoidable fallenness.

CONCLUSION

In many ways Oakeshott and Newman are quite different thinkers. Newman's thought is, of course, explicitly Christian; and he believes both that theology deserves a prized place in the "circle of sciences" and that only philosophy can integrate all the sciences. Oakeshott is far more ambivalent about religious experience, and resolutely committed to the idea that the "modes" or "voices" do not speak directly to the concerns of any other. This does not mean that they cannot converse, but they must do so only "obliquely". No mode can explain away any other mode; all must be part of a liberal education. But there is no hierarchy of subjects among Oakeshott's modes.

However, both men believe that liberal education offers something of distinct value to human beings. It neither makes human beings virtuous nor promotes their worldly success. Instead, it satisfies, in Newman's terms, "a direct need of our nature." Just as there is a flourishing of the body (health) and of the moral sense (goodness), there is excellence of the intellect, and this is what such an education can produce in a person. We simply desire *to know*, and to know as well as possible.

Nevertheless, an exiguously moral character often appears in those who have undergone a liberal education. This is what Newman calls "the gentleman" and what Oakeshott designates as "integrity". Such a person has certain commendable character traits. To quote Newman again, he is likely to possess "[g]ood sense, sobriety of thought, reasonableness, candour, self-command, and steadiness of view," as well as "equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom". These characteristics also describe Oakeshott's man of integrity. Can such a character contend adequately with pride, or overwhelming grief, or with lust, or envy? Newman says no, and Oakeshott does not answer. But one thing is clear: the gentlemanly character, were it prevalent, would certainly facilitate a more civil political and social climate. In this sense, I believe liberal education has a direct connection to civility, and also perhaps, to our hope for peace and compromise among people who may otherwise differ markedly from each other.

REFERENCES

Coleridge, S. T. 1818. *General introduction; or Preliminary Treatise on Method* (Ser. Encyclopedia Metroplolitana).

Fuller, T. 2004. The Idea of the University in Newman, Oakeshott, and Strauss. *Academic Questions*, *Winter*, 37-54.

Newman, J. H. C. 1982. *The Idea of a University*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

_____. 1989. *The Development of Christian Doctrine*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

Newsome, D. 1974. *Two Classes of Men; Platonism and English Romantic Thought*. London: John Murray Publishers.

Nietzsche, F. 1910. Schopenhauer as Educator. In: *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Edinburgh and London: T. N. Foulis.

Oakeshott, M. 1930. Review of John Cowper Powys *The Meaning of Culture*. *Cambridge Review*, *51*.

_____. 1975. *On Human Conduct*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____. 1989a. A Place of Liberal Learning. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 1989b. Education: The Engagement and its Frustration. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 1991. The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind. In: *Rationalism in Politics*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press.

_____. 1993. Religion and the World. In: *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 2014. *Notebooks, 1922-86*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Owen, J. 1893. *The Skeptics of the French Renaissance*. London: MacMillan & Co.

Quinlan, T. 1996. Coleridge and Newman: A Shared Vision. *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 85(339):222-230.

The Hidden Hand: What John Dewey Learned from Rousseau and Its Implications for Liberal Learning

W. J. COATS
Connecticut College

Abstract: This paper argues that the educational project of the American 19th and 20th century philosopher and psychologist, John Dewey, owed several intellectual debts to the educational work of the 18th century Swiss-French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, "The Emile," (1762), with implications inimical to general, liberal learning. Arguably, Dewey, the father of American public education (with the help of the Rockefeller Foundation and the Columbia University Teachers College) took from Rousseau three central ideas: 1) the need for deception ("the hidden hand") in effecting vast cultural change displacing the classical and biblical Inheritance, 2) the strange idea that early education should parallel the historic evolution of the human species, and 3) aversion to teaching the young general ideas (even in the form of parables) in order to not have to later unlearn the cultural baggage this would entail. In brief, Dewey's educational project to collectivize the American psyche implied that high literacy and numeracy in the young led to self-reliance and individualism, and away from collectivism. The paper also briefly explores the way in which IT and AI support the Deweyan and Rousseauian aversion to teaching general ideas to the young, an essential step in the cultivation of liberal learning and self-discovery.

Keywords: Liberal Education, John Dewey, Rousseau, Progressive Education, Information Technology, IT

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the similarities between Rousseau's "educational" work, *The Emile* (1762) and the views *on* public education in a modern industrial democracy of John Dewey, "the father of American public education" (with the help of decades of Rockefeller Foundation funding and colleagues and students of the Columbia University Teachers College for most of the twentieth century). The paper argues that in spite of some of Dewey's criticisms of Rousseau's project, he shares some central themes of Rousseau, saliently:

1) the importance of concealing one's aims when attempting to effect an entire cultural reformation ("the hidden hand" "*la main cachée*");
2) the rather strange view that the education of the young should follow the stages of "natural" human evolution, and ignore or minimize cultural inheritances putative-

ly embodying the wisdom of the ages, in the primary interest of correcting unfair advantages in society at large, *not* cognitive mastery of subject matters;

3) as a corollary of this, that high literacy, mathematical competence and general and formal reasoning should be delayed for as long as possible in order not to have to "unlearn" later their embodiment of outdated and/or false religious, ideological and unscientific content (and this regardless of life-long negative effect on student literacy); and
4) in the case of Dewey (more complex for Rousseau) an attempt to "collectivize" gradually an entire population's behavior and thought, on the belief that all language, thought, and "consciousness" are social, and that *everything* one is as a person is what one is as related to others.

Finally, this paper will indicate the implications and baneful effects on liberal learning of Dewey's and Rousseau's "progressive" pedagogy, where liberal learning is seen as an initiation into a culture united by *general* ideas, distinguished from "education" understood primarily as socialization of particular behavior through inculcation of collectivized motor skills directed toward constant adaptation to environmental changes, a process Dewey defines as endless "growth" through sharing. The paper's central argument will be to suggest that delaying cognitive achievement until late childhood was a conscious strategy of both thinkers to inhibit high literacy and numeracy in the "masses"—for Rousseau because it would only confuse them, and for Dewey because it would lead to self-reliance and thence to individualism, and away from behavioral collectivization. Both thinkers put their hopes in the materialism of modern, empirical science as bulwarks against the influence of traditional philosophy and religion. The paper will also briefly, indicate ways in which Information Technology (IT) supports some goals of progressive education, especially its hostility toward rote memorization, an important component of intelligent and creative problem solving, and *avoidance* of *general* ideas.

I: ROUSSEAU, DEWEY, AND "THE HIDDEN HAND"

The eighteenth century Swiss-French intellectual Jean-Jacques Rousseau is reported to have told the Scottish philosopher David Hume that the secret to his writings was the intent to create in his readers a sense of "marvel" and the "marvelous". Whether this is a good recommendation for the soundness of Rousseau's arguments, we shall have to put to one side here, but there is no doubt Rousseau's rhetorical abilities have made his published work influential from the beginning—his early discourse on the baneful moral effects of the development of the arts and sciences having drawn scores of replies from European-wide critics, including even the king of Poland. This kind of response included reactions to his "educational" work *The Emile*, as well, (including even a book-length critical reply from an intellectually talented Roman Catholic priest—later Cardinal—recently translated into English for the first time)[1]; and included as well positive experiments throughout Europe applying Rousseau's ideas for a child-based curriculum recognizing childhood as a distinct developmental stage.

What was Rousseau's teaching on the "hidden hand" in bringing about cultural and political change, given his implicit view that writing was a form of political action (a view supported by Dewey)? Let us attempt a summary statement of Rousseau's teaching on this practice, drawing upon especially three of Rousseau's influential works—*The Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, *The Emile*, and *The Social Contract*.

Despite Rousseau's reputation as a champion of democracy, sincerity, and the common man, this is not the whole story. Rousseau's complete view was closer to his contemporary Vauvenargue's maxim that intellectuals and philosophers, by teaching the masses to think reflectively, had "set them on the road to error". Although Rousseau claimed to be a friend of truth, part of that truth was the need for deception and deflection when dealing with, especially, the majority of human beings, concerning education, personal relations, and politics. Rousseau says in *The Emile* that the child must do only what he wants to do, but he should only want to do what the tutor has conditioned him to want through control of the learning environment.[2] His argument for this practice is that deception is necessary to bring about what is good for most people (given

human pride and lack of intellectual ability), since if you tell someone what to do it will only create a power dynamic of dependency which is unhealthy for all concerned. And what is true in childhood education extends to personal relations and political and social life.

For Rousseau, salutary illusions are necessary for the majority of human beings to do what is best for all, as in the case of Plato's Socrates' "golden lie" in *The Republic*, which provided a mythical basis for political hierarchy. For Rousseau, the idea of individual choice and autonomy for most people is a salutary lie necessary to create a viable republic, which depends on the hidden conditioning of the majority of citizens by philosophy and civil religion, in order that they "choose" a republican form of constitution and government.[3] Similarly, in personal relations, Rousseau says that although love is an illusion, it is a salutary one, since the illusion of love leads people to be their better selves in order to make them worthy of being loved by another. (Such a relationship apparently avoids personal dependency, since on Rousseau's account what one is loving is an idealized version of oneself in the spatial location of another body).[4] Rousseau also supports the idea of duplicity as the best strategy for control of women over men, a viewpoint attacked by feminists ever since Mary Wollstonecraft.

Now, there are many aspects of all this, especially the emphasis on the autonomy of the genuine philosopher and scientist, which Dewey rejects, but, in my view, Dewey implicitly accepts Rousseau's account of the necessity of the "hidden hand" in bringing about radical political and cultural change. An excellent example of this is Dewey's 1898 article "The Primary-Education Fetich" arguing against high literacy as an educational goal for children, where Dewey cautions the need to proceed incrementally with such a policy, in order to avoid violent reaction by parents and traditional educators:

> Change must come gradually. *To force it* unduly would compromise its final success *by favoring a violent reaction* … the New Education … is a compromise and a transition … (emphasis added)

In my view, this is not hyperbole on Dewey's part. If perceived, a project *to displace* cognitive learning (the 3 "R's" of "reading, 'riting and 'rithmatic.") in literacy and numeracy in primary public education (ages 4-9) *with collective projects* to foster motor and sensory skills, could arguably have led to a violent reaction on the part of those who perceived its potential negative effects on future cognitive development for masses of people (on this, much more below in section III on the Deweyan project to lower cognitive abilities *en mass* as a step in equalization and collectivization of an entire population). At this point, I simply want to suggest that Dewey's intellect showed (like Rousseau's) an unusual mixture of political realism and utopian hopes. Another instance of Dewey's political prudence and use of the "hidden hand" is in his treatment of religion and especially Christianity. This is not the place to go into that subject, except to note that in the 1890s he was still trying to show that the meaning of the Christian message was the conception of "God incarnate" in all of humanity (not simply in Jesus) and was realized in modern democracy's "community of action". Yet by 1916 (*Democracy and Education*), Dewey could simply come out and say there was something "rotten" about all religion and non-collectivist philosophy such as that of Plato, Hegel, and Bradley since it implied an attempt to have a realm of experience exclusively one's own, and not shared with others.[5] And yet another instance of Dewey's rhetorical prudence was his instinctive distancing of his own position from the "hedonistic behaviorism" of Wundt, Watson and Thorndike (pleasure-pain, stimulus-response conditioning)[6] apparent in Dewey's Hegelian-like attempts to synthesize apparent polarities such as "stimulus vs response", traditional vs progressive education," and so on.

II: PRIMARY EDUCATION AND "NATURAL" DEVELOPMENT

Rousseau's *The Emile* (1762) can be taken as a child-rearing manual for the average person, as an allegory for the evolution of the human species, or a mixture of both. Since it has been widely taken as a child-rearing manual, and it had concrete effects on school curriculum by way of writings of thinkers such as Herbert Spencer, John Dewey, and Jean Piaget, I think we are justified in treating it as such especially in the theme of its correspondence with the "natural" evolution of the species (carefully speaking, there can be no human nature for Rousseau, only earlier and more recent human history, but he sometimes refers to early humans as the "natural man").

The sinews of Rousseau's argument in the 1st and 2nd Discourses, *The Emile*, and *The Social Contract* is that primitive (pre-urban) human beings were naturally good in the sense that they tried to preserve themselves with as little harm to other humans consistent with that aim (*contra* Thomas Hobbes and St. Augustine). However, owning to some historical accidents such as static agriculture and the invention of metallurgy, huge inequalities and dependencies had arisen among them, driven by the passion for social status and power, leading to corruption in the realm of appearances. This bourgeois culture flourished in large urban centers such as Paris and London with "role players" displacing more "natural" human types such as mother, father, soldier, etc. In brief, the source of human corruption for Rousseau was <u>not</u> in the moral short-comings of human beings (*a la* Plato and the Bible) but in the contradictions of social life in large urban centers (vs rural communities), with the new human type (*the bourgeois*) hopelessly alienated (splintered between self and others) in a way the ancient Spartans in their dedication to the city were not.[7] Rousseau proposes in *The Social Contract* a strategy for avoidance of this extreme, corrupting dependency of the majority of human beings on the rich and powerful in large urban centers. In brief, the solution is a republic in which the people as the sovereign power, avoid the effects of dependency and natural human inequalities by becoming civic equals as part of the sovereign General Will, obeying laws which they helped create, and thereby remain independent (to obey a law which you give yourself is to remain free, in theory, according to Rousseau and the ancient Stoics).

Now, the project of *The Emile* is to propose a curriculum for the education of an average person which inures him and her (different curriculum for women), from the alienation of bourgeois existence, without attempting to make them into philosophers (an impossibility) through reliance instead on inculcated habits of common sense grounded in sensory experience, and practical particulars *vs* philosophic generalities and abstractions which are irrelevant in this project for the happiness of the common man and woman. Here we start to see the parallels with Dewey—both thinkers want to rely upon natural and spontaneous childhood impulses to distance children for as long as possible from formal reasoning, literacy, and numeracy, and undermine a classical and a biblical heritage, in order to move toward a new political culture (different goals for Dewey than Rousseau).

Let us take a moment to inspect the cogency of this strategy of both thinkers to "starve" children during their first ten years or so of logical reasoning, mathematical reasoning, rules of grammar, ethical reasoning, history, concepts of duty (a subject of Section III) and so on, by way an odd, counter-intuitive claim that school curricula should follow or mirror the evolution of the discoveries of the human species from more primitive times to the present. Rousseau's project is to make people more *independent* as individuals by giving them (non-philosophic) standards by which to escape the corrupting bourgeois radical dependency on social status; Dewey's project is to make children even more mutually dependent on one another through collective exercises geared to training of appropriate motor skills, but both thinkers want to minimize teaching children aspects of the culture they are born into. For example, the only book Rousseau will allow the pre-adolescent Emile to read is Dafoe's *Robinson Crusoe* which teaches him necessary physical survival, and motor skills, useful for judging the follies of modern cities without buying unknowingly into their bourgeois value system.

In Dewey's 1915 book *Schools of To-morrow*, the first chapter is entitled "Education as Natural Development", and includes lengthy quotations from certain passages in Rousseau's *Emile* (though *noth-*

ing about the tutor's hidden control over the child's learning environment). Dewey chooses themes from *The Emile* which emphasize that the child's "native capacities" for its own creative growth (as defined by Dewey or Rousseau) rather than on a stultifying formal teaching of the "three R's"—"reading, 'riting and 'rithmatic." He quotes Rousseau that "our real teachers are experience and emotion" and that "the child should remain in complete ignorance of those ideas that are beyond his grasp." He praises Rousseau as well for the idea that the teacher is *guiding* natural growth (not imposing adult accomplishments), by inculcating firsthand acquaintance with the real relations of things themselves, including bodily development (and motor skills) as part of that educative experience. Without comment yet on the wisdom of this approach to early education, my point thus far is that both Dewey and Rousseau emphasize a teaching method for children which follows the child's "natural development" and respect for the child's natural creative impulses and growth, *as defined by the teacher/tutor*. For Dewey the ultimate aim of this "natural" education is greater sharing and dependency with/on one another (his definition of "democracy"); for Rousseau the aim is greater individual independence from the values of urban, bourgeois culture. Yet both saw the advantage for purposes of comprehensive cultural change, of using the idea of a natural process of development as a reason for minimizing knowledge in the young of the dominant culture, in particular its classical (Greek and Roman) and biblical inheritance. And I note here that for neither Rousseau nor Dewey, is there any attempt to acquaint young children with any *general* ideas, even in the form of parables or myths. All early education is focused on practical engagement with the *particulars* of the sensory world, a good beginning for initiation into the worldview of modern, empirical science, and behavioral psychology.

III: COGNITIVE EFFECTS OF PEDAGOGIC DELAY OF LITERACY, NUMERACY AND HISTORY

We have seen Dewey's project (on the grounds that people are shaped by experience and environment), to reduce cognitive learning in early school years as a way of remedying the inequalities of the "rugged individualist" ethos for the new age of industrial democracy. Unlike 19th century liberals such as J. S. Mill who hoped to raise those on the bottom of the social ladder to the middle, Dewey's more collectivist project aimed (in the name of fairness) to lower the middle and upper as a way of equalizing and collectivizing popular consciousness and behavior. Non-collectivist philosophy and religion, and its early pedagogic focus on literacy and *general* ideas, led to self-reliance and individualism, and would have to be gradually displaced with an emphasis on conditioning motor skills through cooperative group projects inculcating habits of service and sharing. It is instructive at this point to look in some detail at Dewey's arguments in his 1898 article, "The Primary—Education Fetich" (*sic*).

Dewey begins this article by *calling* the practice of spending the first three years of primary education primarily on the study of the English language, *the equivalent of a religious cult* or fetish, which needs to be gradually changed in the name of progress, on the grounds that it is not natural or inevitable but simply a response to past environmental conditions which have changed.

Arguments Dewey makes in advancing this claim are: (1) book learning was more necessary in previous centuries when reliance on the works of the great minds was the only avenue available to understanding the natural world prior to development of the collective project of scientific investigation; (2) as a consequence, learning to read and write, in the curriculum of the three R's, was interesting and exciting, and this is still true (1898) in rural areas; (3) but now universal urban access to cheap and easy news makes civilization no longer dependent on books but rather on the existing circulation of ideas, which requires a new educational model if it is not to become a dead, mechanical formality; (4) it is now possible to initiate the child from the beginning into experiments making direct contact with nature, rather than in abstract and symbolic ways (very similar to Rousseau's methods in *The Emile*!); (5) as a consequence there is no longer a need for the study of history and literature of the past, when the child can gain insight into the scientific method through direct access in group experiments; (6) this kind of practical training in schools is more necessary in urban populations than in rural setting in which the problems of daily life provided naturally

for practical insight and learning, and motor skills; (7) early urban learning now needs to focus primarily on training sensory and motor centers in individuals through group projects; (8) any specialization in literacy and numeracy before the age of eight or nine is crippling of further intellectual development as in time will be established by physiological and psychological discoveries; (9) it is more important for the child to grasp the "idea" of texts, (reminiscent of contemporary debates over phonic vs "whole language" approaches to reading)[8] rather than achieve cognitive mastery of the content; and (10) the *primary* aim of education from the ages of four to nine should be on group projects inculcating efficient and orderly motor skills, not on cognitive learning of subject matters.

Now, all of these claims are problematic and have consequences for the ability to read and reason. Given children's natural aptitude for language learning, the question arises about the future costs of minimizing the emphasis on cognitive achievement at this critical stage of development. To take a dramatic example, Laurence Rockefeller, who attended a Dewey Lincoln primary school funded by his family foundation complained that he never learned to read properly, and was never able to master reading owing to the Dewey school's early pedagogic techniques.[9] As a way of getting to a more systematic critique of this issue, let us look at some of the arguments of the Canadian educator Kieran Egan, in his 2002 book "*Getting it Wrong From The Beginning*": *Our Progressivist Inheritance from Herbert Spencer, John Dewey and Jean Piaget*. Egan argues that the progressivist arguments about stages of learning development are simply mistaken for the most part, and that they are a costly mistake for public education to make. Let us look at some of his arguments.

Egan addresses his criticisms against the founders of progressive education (Herbert Spencer, John Dewey and Jean Piaget) at two levels, based on both his own experience as an educator and on contemporary scholarly research. At a *general* level, his argument is that it has been a mistake to think that schools can be responsible and useful for "complete living" at "the expense of traditional intellectual education":

> The trouble is that schools can be quite good institutions when they concentrate sensibly on intellectual education, but they are less good at developing the whole person or producing good citizens or ensuring parenting skills … (Egan 2002, p. 135).

Egan quotes John Locke on the point that the principles "of justice, generosity… sobriety … and industry … are qualities … which school boys do not learn from one another," and goes on to argue that unless a school has enormous power and authority over children (which democracy does not allow, in spite of progressive hopes), the values and norms will be "those which children bring to school; and that the "teachers of democratic virtues are those of the family and society". In brief, Egan's judgement on the goals of progressives such as Dewey is that they simply went too far for a (political) democracy to achieve (hence, by implication, the preference of many progressive educators such as Dewey, for incremental achievement of political socialism and collectivization as the real meaning of "democracy" as "growth" (Egan 2002, p. 135).

The second level of Egan's criticism is pedagogic and empirical, and it suggests that progressivism has been mistaken about the stages of learning, and that there are good reasons why children should continue to learn the principles of grammar and mathematics as well as study history and even Latin. Among his noteworthy, supportive insights and arguments for these recommendations are the following:

The assumption of early progressivists such as Spencer and Dewey that the path to knowledge of primitive human beings to contemporary children will be similar, ignores the fact that "the cognitive universe of the modern child is quite unlike that of primitive children" and gives us "no guidance on how to design a sensible curriculum" (Egan 2002, p. 121).

That the progressive practice was wrong in arguing that the teaching of grammar and grammatical rules was "stupid"—"grammar is still our best description of the rules by which whole language works, and contemporary research shows that "children begin to reflect on these rules almost as soon as they begin to speak" (Egan 2002, p. 127). Progressive educators have confused methods of teaching with the educational

value of grammar—instead of ignoring it, the problem is to work out ways grammar can be made more accessible and meaningful to children.

Experience with young children shows that study of history is not "developmentally inappropriate" when it is about the achievement of great leaders ("heroes"), but since Spencer and Dewey thought that social change occurred through aggregate social and economic forces, they either ignored history entirely or treated it obliquely in a bland mixture of sociology and biology called "social studies" (apparently, the child's instincts are to be trusted *unless* they go against the progressivist ideological canon that the only history worth inclusion in primary *curricula* is that which has contemporary "social worth") (Egan 2002, pp. 130-131).

A final noteworthy point Egan makes, largely by implication in this case, is the moral problem with the emphasis by Spencer and Dewey on the worth of a curriculum as related to whether it induces "pleasurable excitement in the pupils" (up to an ideological limit as we just saw). The implied danger here is that this approach boarders on the kind of "hedonistic behaviorism" one finds in the behaviorists Wundt, Watson and Thorndike, in which students are taught (or conditioned) to see the *good* as pleasurable and the *bad* as painful or boring. What happens to students so conditioned in circumstances where the good is painful (Egan 2002, p. 130)?[10]

One could cite many more of Egan's arguments on the pedagogic mistakes of progressivist educators, but my point here is that he thinks the appropriate role for primary and all public education in a democracy is cognitive achievement in the subject being taught, in my view, a very sound judgment.

IV: IMPLICATIONS OF DEWEY'S PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION FOR LIBERAL LEARNING

Whatever the changes in the meaning of Liberal Arts education since the Middle Ages, a meaningful distinction it still makes is the idea that it is *general* education suited for a person free (*liberales*) enough to have some choice over their life path, and hence requiring knowledge of the relations among various occupations and life spheres, and enough self-knowledge to evaluate their own suitability for one of these. (And when I say *general* ideas and concepts, I mean general enough that they do not specify any single, particular course of action)[11] I have been trying to show in this paper that the (especially early) education models of both Rousseau and Dewey are not going to achieve these kinds of outcomes, nor were they intended to. The early schooling for both is "intellectually barren" and intended to stifle formation of general concepts though concentration on sensual particulars and motor skills. In the case of Dewey, this is for the sake of diminished literacy and numeracy as a step in the way to greater social equality; in the case of Rousseau's Emile, for the sake of a set of common-sense standards for recognizing and avoiding the follies of 18th century bourgeois cultural values. The intent of both strategies was arguably to undermine both the classical (Greek and Roman) and biblical inheritances in Western civilization in the interest of more egalitarian political and social arrangements, and at the expense of a demonstrable decline in individual cognitive achievements of populations where they have been influential. And also, at the expense of a decline in the availability and depth of *general* learning.

I'll finish the paper with the suggestion that the widespread effect of Information Technology (IT) has been to exacerbate two bad tendencies in the progressivist education model of Dewey and others. The first is that their attack upon rote memorization is magnified in the extent to which students and adults are "outsourcing their memories" to their computers. The result is arguably an aggregate decline in intelligent, creative problem solving, since creative solutions tend to come during sleep when the unconscious mind works on data stored in the conscious mind (which is now increasingly stored on the computer).

The second bad progressivist tendency intensified by widespread computer use is its hostility to teaching *general* ideas and the arts of *judgment* in subsuming particulars under general ideas and adverbial qualifications. Computers do not need to make judgments issuing in general advice. In the twinkling of an eye, IT can perform millions of computations and give one a specific answer to a specific question, evident for

example in navigation by GPS. This is changing what people want from the knowledge industry (and arguably changing the human brain itself, especially its memory capacity). As relations between and among human beings depend less on implicit general ideas and practices, and more on explicit particular role performances, the taste and opportunity for liberal learning will likely also become more rare, and with it the taste and opportunity for activities and practices which require acts of *general* judgment, such as the art of politics (vs. mere governance and central administration of populations) which Aristotle says was an invention of middling kinds of peoples as an alternative situated between Asian despotism and Celtic anarchy.

As for remedies to the combination (in both higher and primary education) of progressivism, Information Technology (IT), and Artificial Intelligence (AI) combatting what is left in schooling of liberal learning, it is important to see what Rousseau, Dewey and IT all have in common. As I have been trying to show in this paper, for different reasons, they are all hostile to teaching both the young and old general ideas as a basis for a comprehensive outlook on a human life. For Rousseau and Dewy, this is to prevent learning of cultural baggage they mean to discard, at the "justifiable" loss of individual and collective cognitive skills essential for preserving a national meritocracy in a world of nations.

In the case of IT, its very internal "logic" is to bypass human judgment bridging from general ideas to particular cases and actions (as in a law court deciding whether starting a particular fire belongs to the general, adverbial qualification of lighting a fire in an arsonous manner). What IT and AI have made clear is that acts of judgment subsuming particulars under general ideas are a kind of short-hand of the limited human mind, and that computers which can sort millions of cases in seconds do not need general ideas.

In my view the "logic" of IT tends to support the goals of political progressivism in public education at all levels, especially its argument that the academy is now a part of society, not an ivory tower above it, as a recent President of Harvard University characterized it in her resignation remarks. If these are the prevailing academic winds, those who would preserve liberal learning's focus on general ideas in acts of human judgment would do well to see all that they are up against and how long it has been germinating since its inception in Rousseau's *Emile* (1762). Only individuals who can think in generalities and employ them imaginatively to evoke their own individual place in the whole, can conceive of themselves as ends in themselves, and structure their lives politically and socially in such a way that they are treated as such, as much as is practically possible in their particular circumstance.

NOTES

1 See Gerdil (2011).

2 For development of this theme, see Melzer (1990, pp. 244-49).

3 For this theme, see BK II, Ch. 7 of Rousseau's *The Social Contact*, any edition

4 For this rendering of Rousseau's teaching on love, see Charvet (1975, pp. 114-115).

5 Dewey's teaching on the complete social construction of the individual is curious. It could be seen as a confused rendering of Hegel's claim that the "truth is the whole"; it could be seen as simply another version the Marxian claim that society is made up of relationships, not individuals; or it could be seen as an example of Nietzsche's claim that the source of the passion for equality is resentment and self-hatred.

6 Here is a statement from Dewey's former student, J. B. Watson in 1913 on the view of behavioral psychology: "Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science … The behaviorist, in his efforts to set a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizing no dividing line between man and bruts …." For a fascinating account of the influence of 19th century German behavioral psychology on U.S. public education, see Lionni (1980), *The Leipzig Connection*. See also Dewey's colleague, Edward Thorndike, *The Principles of Teaching* (1906, p. 7): "The art of teaching (is) giving and withholding stimuli with the result of producing or preventing certain responses."

7 Rousseau was fascinated with the case of ancient Sparta (during its healthy period) since he believed it overcame the tension between private and civic interest so characteristic of the modern, urban bourgeoisie.

8 For a critical account of Dewey's influence on the 20th century movement to teach "whole language" learning vs the phonetic alphabet approach, see Samuel Blumenfeld, *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud* (1996).

9 Cited in Lionni (1993, p. 80). One goal which Dewey shared with his corporate benefactor, J. D. Rockefeller (who wanted "workers, not thinkers") was the avoidance of high literacy for the masses.

10 The basic indictment by Egan and others of this approach to learning is that it conditions motivation to learn on excitement and gratification rather than on reason and responsibility. It would appear that it is only in athletics that the maxim of "no pain, no gain" still has any traction in U.S. public education.

11 This is an important point for this paper's argument. A culture based on general ideas is a subtle one, like the ancient Roman allegiance to the "old ways" or *mos maiorem*. It requires the ability to make judgments bridging from general ideas to particular actions and creates and preserves a realm of freedom arising in that gap. General ideas such as "freedom" or "equality" cannot be definitively achieved in any single, particular action, in the way that a particular idea such as "getting in the harvest" can be. Dewey's eschewal of teaching general ideas to the young is intended to turn them into role performers in a common enterprise. This is a possible form of human association, but not as free and creative as one based on allegiance to a set of implicit (and codified) general practices.

REFERENCES

Baker, M. 1955. *Foundations of John Dewey's Educational Theory*. New York: Kings Crown Press.
Blumenthal, S. 1995. *The Whole Language/OBE Fraud*. Boise: The Paradigm Company.
Charvet, J. 1975. *The Social Problem in the Thought of Rousseau*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Dewey, J. 1916. *Democracy and Education*. London: MacMillan.
_____. 1915. *Schools of To-Morrow*. North Haven: e-artnow 2022.
_____. 1898. The Primary—Education Fetich. In: J. Boydson, ed., *The Early Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 254-269. London: Southern Illinois University Press.
Egan, K. 2002. *Getting it wrong from the beginning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Gerdil, H. 1764/2011. *The Anti-Emile*. Tr. W. Frank. South Bend: St. Augustine Press.
Hook, S. 1939. *John Dewey, An Intellectual Portrait*. New York: The John Day Co.
Lionni, P. 1993. *The Leipzig Connection*. Sheridan: Heron Books.
Rousseau, J. J. 1978/1762. *Emile*. Tr. A. Bloom. New York: Basic Books.
_____. 1762. *The Social Contract*. BK II, Ch. 7, any edition.
Thorndick, E. 1906. *The Principles of Teaching Based on Psychology*. Syracuse, NH: The Mason Henry Press.
Watson, J. 1913. Psychology as the Behaviorist Views it. *Psychological Review*, 20:158-177.
Melzer, A. 1990. *The Natural Goodness of Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beyond Impediments to Empedocles: Notes Toward a Post-Postmodern Liberal Education

W. L. PREHN
Independent Scholar

Abstract: This essay is about a problem for which one solution is a certain unique kind of scholastic community. The author argues that the rationalism that is at once effect and cause of the imbalance in Western culture and in our education can be successfully overcome with a school model created two hundred years ago. Part I presents the problem and discusses a few of those who saw the problem clearly. Part II is a brief description of a historically-rooted alternative to the status quo in the North Atlantic world.

Keywords: Virtue, Liberal education, Transcendentals, Rationalism, Commercial culture, Faith, Christianity, Incarnation, Grace, Modernity, Postmodernity, Secularism, Brain Hemispheres, Culture.

> "Two extravagances: to exclude Reason, to admit only Reason."—Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*
>
> "All things are double."—*Ecclesiasticus*, 42.25, an epigraph for Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion* (1736)

PART I: THE PROBLEM–AN IMBALANCE IN WESTERN CULTURE

In 1921, the Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford published an article on education. Gilbert Murray (1866-1957) was invited by R. W. Livingstone (1880-1960), the first-ever "professor of education" in the university, to contribute to a collection of essays entitled *The Legacy of Greece*. It is obvious in his *Legacy* chapter that Murray was concerned that education in the early twentieth century was less and less providing the means for students to apprehend what he believed was indispensable to an education worthy of the name: "eternal values."

Murray did not wish to be misunderstood. His essay was not an argument for mandatory classical study. In fact, Murray voted against such a requirement when it came before the university faculty a few years before. For a century and more, there had been "utilitarian" attacks on the traditional—i.e. classical—curriculum, but Murray's essay was not a response to the boosters of "useful knowledge". He had another motive.

Murray's objective in "The Value of Greece to the Future of the World" was to simply use examples from the

resources he knew best to make the point that "eternal values" are definitely imparted to a person when the greatest products of human artifice and ingenuity are diligently studied. If the mystic is correct that "heart speaketh unto heart", it is reasonable for the classical scholar to believe that the "permanent" parts of a truly fine work of human making can mysteriously enter into the human nature of other persons.[1] Murray believed that the acquisition of these eternal verities is an end in itself. If the values or principles are irreducible and foundational, we need not, in his view, consider that there is something beyond them or that we should look for anything else to better situate us in our search for meaning and fulfilment.

It is startling that Murray uses Euclid's geometry to make his point. Murray of course knew that many aspects of Euclid's geometry are "progressive" knowledge, and that progressive knowledge becomes obsolete. Such scientific knowledge is indispensable for a season, then becomes dated when new knowledge replaces it. Clearly a portion of Euclid's geometry was superseded by 1921, because knowledge had progressed beyond it. Yet Murray shows how even Euclid's ancient geometry contains comely features and beautiful dynamics. These "eternal values" can be gained through committed study.

Murray also used the Venus de Milo and Homer's *Iliad* to make his point. The student can sit or stand before the classic sculpture created in the second century BC. The student can take up his or her notebook reserved for rational descriptions of world-class art, use instrumental reason to observe it, think on it, then write about its appearance, dimensions, effects, and so on. But Murray insists that something else is happening to the student all along: He or she is *moved* by it. What moves us as we experience a classic work of art? In any case, the observer *experiences* some quality in the sculpture which goes well beyond rational description, and this experience mysteriously includes the eternal value of beauty.

It is obvious that Murray was anxious about curricula and pedagogy in his time. It was increasingly geared to always-changing progressive knowledge. Hence, he thought it very important to ask the question of how well the emergent orthodoxy in schools would give students the educational experience wherein progressive *and* fixed knowledge are acquired. The good, the beautiful, the true, the one: such durable objects do not progress and evolve, even if our comprehension of them does develop cumulatively. They are never unimportant. The religiously agnostic Murray considered them to be eternal.

That liberal knowledge, and the eternal verities especially, are ends in themselves is one of the very principles of the liberal education as most advocates conceive it. The doctrine is seldom departed from, even today when liberal education is in hasty retreat. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) wrote in the *Idea of a University*:

> That alone is liberal knowledge which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be *informed* (as it is called) by an end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation (Newman 1976, I.v.4).

The late Jaroslav Pelikan glosses on the Newman quotation by urging that too much utilitarianism in education is actually "a threat to utility", and he uses several paragraphs to illustrate the difference between real knowledge and mere information (Pelikan 1992, pp. 34-35). Pelikan, Newman, and Murray certainly knew the work of Joseph Butler (1692-1752), one of the greatest thinkers of the eighteenth century, who advised, "Of education, information is the least part" (Butler 1745). The idea is also evoked by Henry John Newbolt in *The Twymans*, his *roman à clef* about Clifton under headmaster John Percival in the 1860s. In the novel, a boy's guardian arrives to withdraw him from the school. When asked why this must happen, the guardian explains to the house-master that he wants the boy to get a "practical" and "modern" education. "Useful information" is what the boy should have. The house-master is very courteous to and patient with the guardian as he enthusiastically rehearses the benefits of modern, manly training. At last, the house-master replies, "For information, you purchase a text-book; for education, you live in a society" (Newbolt 1911, p. 90).

Murray and all the contributors to *The Legacy of Greece* were concerned that educational policy-makers and institutional administrators might inadvertently expunge learning's very heart. They knew what

every sensible educator in the history of the world knows: that some non-rational (or let us say *supra*-rational) aspect of the mind can indeed give us a knowledge that no other part of the mind can deliver. It is "the light by which we see light" (*Psalm* 36.9).[2] Such an education is the most practical of all, for it frees the mind and makes a person "intensely interested in life and full of hope, trying in every direction for that excellence which the Greeks called *areté* [virtue], and guided by some peculiar instinct toward Temperance and Beauty (Murray 1921, p. 19).

Such an education is never done all at once. It is a most involved occupation. Leisure is required, and many years of time allotted just for this purpose. Considerable patience is required of both student and teacher. The liberal education is about neither calculable production nor academic episodes but veritable peregrinations through other times and places. Getting to know other *personalities*, living and dead, is crucial. Thus Murray:

> The things that we have called eternal, the things of the spirit and the imagination, always seem to lie more in a process than in a result, and can only be reached and enjoyed by somehow going through the process again. If the value of a particular walk lies in the scenery, you do not get that value by taking a short cut or using a fast motor-car (Murray 1921, p. 7).

Goodness and greatness; eternal verities; values durable across generations and centuries; liberty *for* and not only liberty *from*—these were the priorities of Murray, Livingstone, and the other distinguished scholars who contributed to *The Legacy of Greece* published a century ago. Murray clearly wanted the democratization of education to result in a *complete* education for everyone. He did not want children and youth to be robbed of the opportunity to experience the qualities, insights, and tools that make life worth living. Training and specialization can come later in a person's life. This world-renown Regius Professor was no "elitist". He only wanted *the best* education for every child and youth in the land. He had a real "faith" (of sorts) in the education that had delivered countless benefits to the individual and to society for centuries. He was confident that children and youth can gain such an education *if* the right scholastic circumstances are established for them and if the necessary school *environment* is bravely created and sedulously maintained.

What Causes the Imbalance in North Atlantic Culture?

Murray, Livingstone, and so many others recognized long ago what one present-day sage names "the barbaric functionalizing of education" (Williams 2023). Some of the most learned and wise educators in the world feared the worst and hoped for the best, but their side of the moon was growing quickly dark.[3] As they published luminous books on the soundest ways to educate the young, schools and universities on both sides of the Atlantic were very far gone along the path of educating the instrumental reason and leaving the tuition of all the other aspects of human nature in a truly haphazard state. It is increasingly obvious that the modus vivendi in modern, progressive education is at root ideological; it is based on a very late-coming assumption that *reality* is by definition what can be seen, thought, touched, felt, smelt, tasted, and measured. In this ideology, *Homo sapiens* is reducible to his rational faculty and his appetites.

What happened? It is extremely tempting (but we must resist the temptation) to make the "rationalism", mentioned already here and there, the cause of our Western imbalance. It is true that the emphasis on instrumental reason and its needs and tools is the great preoccupation of North Atlantic society, if not of the entire Western world, and that this form of rationalism or over-emphasis on reason is the most obvious problem with our schools. But such a plan would require that we demonstrate how an *effect* is a *cause*, which is nonsense.

To make rationalism or science or technology the cause of the Western imbalance would require a rehearsal of the history, science, and philosophy that tendentiously impugns the character of some of the greatest women and men of Western civilization, and this would lead to a condemnation of the West itself.

Imperfect as we are, we Westerners are not all bad. Honest science and good philosophy can never be a bad thing. It never hurts to "get at" reality. Francis Bacon, Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, Kant, Fichte, and Hegel, no less than Comte, Bentham, Mill, Marx, Russell, Wittgenstein, the British analytical philosophers, and the quantum heads and nuclear gurus, cannot be held to account for our cultural out-of-whack-ness. The cause is something else, something as pervasive and yet "invisible" as the air we breathe.

If poets are the "antennae of the race" (Ezra Pound), then we can trust that Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Goethe, and other strongly right-brained prophets likely gave us *accurate* pictures of a seismic change occurring in front of their eyes. At the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, we take the changed culture for granted. We cannot easily conceive of a culture without burning-hot business, steady production of consumables, and *technic* applied to every aspect of life. But contemporaries watched it appear more suddenly than we who are used to it have supposed.

In two works of profound explanatory power summarizing two centuries of social science and discourse, the moral philosopher Charles Taylor uses the phrase "commercial culture" to establish an idea of the powerful cultural formation of which we are a part.[4] Historian Neil McKendrick writes that just the twenty-five years between 1750 and 1775 brought "as great a change in the lifestyle of the population as was brought about by the Neolithic revolution in agriculture of 8,000 BC" (McKendrick 2018, p. xii). This was a pan-Atlantic disruption of culture. The peoples, cultures, and economies of the entire Atlantic basin were soon sliding into the vortex of a spider's web. The extensiveness of the web can be illustrated almost randomly. For instance, the data assembled by historian Stuart Bruchy shows how closely woven was the warp and woof of the pan-Atlantic fiber industry. In the late 1790s, fifty-six million pounds of cotton were imported by British mill-owners from various warm-weather countries; by 1850, this datum was 660 million pounds. In 1843, eighty-five percent of British textile cotton was grown in and exported from the American South. In the same year, fifty percent of England's export economy was the popular cotton fabric produced in textile mills. This fabric was softer than wool, easily dyed, and inexpensive (Bruchy 1967, pp. 7-17). A similarly deep and complex Atlantic network obtained in the sugar industry. Everyone, everywhere, was associated with this North Atlantic system. It shaped them all and still does.

William Blake's "dark Satanic mills" may have been a nightmare, but they were not a fantasy. The change was colossal. The new situation suddenly appeared as a storm in the daylight. If Wordsworth thought that "the world is too much us", he was not meaning to be quaint. We are used to the heat in this kitchen, but Wordsworth was alarmed in 1807.

The work of another able poet, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), is especially important to us because he was an astute critic of commercial culture in the mid-nineteenth century anglophone world. This gifted essayist, poet, and school inspector not only spoke to many in the pan-Atlantic Victorian world; he believed it was his calling to speak *for* them. Arnold longed deeply for *wholeness* and *completeness* for himself and for his society. His native sensitivity equipped him to sniff out rationalism, which also worried him.[5]

Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna* (1835) was a poetic drama the author knew fell far short of artistic perfection, but for Arnold, Empedocles was and remained a vital symbol of intelligence, learning, culture, balance, harmony, and human "totality". The poet suggests that Empedocles had an attitude we might adopt. We too ought to look more often for the *Both-And* instead of the rationalist's *Either-Or*. Merely aiming for "totality", as Arnold called it, improves any person's life.

In the poem, Empedocles teaches his pupil Pausanias that, if he would be a true disciple, he must "be neither Saint nor Sophist led, but be a man." The problem is that the Sophists—i.e. facile thinkers and materialists—have "got empire in our schools" but the Saints appear to be afraid of life. The Victorian reader was supposed to know that Empedocles spent his life showing how a single thing is related to all other things, each thing arising from one of the primal elements—earth, air, water, fire—or various combinations of the same. But the old Greco-Sicilian philosopher laments the one problem he never solved: What is the primal element from which mind and thought arise and are related to the world? Empedocles admits that he cannot figure it out. The question points to transcendental Mind and eternal Thought (topics Aristotle and

Plotinus pondered). These are realities beyond the ken of a man dedicated to the doctrine of *sola ratio*; so, despairing, Empedocles puts an end to himself.

Arnold saw a parallel between Victorian England and the world Empedocles faced in the fifth century BC. Change was fast and constant. Business was good. The young were being well prepared by Sophists for success in commercial life, which does not always require virtue as traditionally understood. In terms of religious change, it is ironic that Arnold saw faith receding at a time when its outward manifestation—stupendous new church buildings, for example, and convents of nuns in the Church of England!—could not have been more impressive. But it is the calling of prophets to see below the surface of things. If Arnold wished to see how high culture might become the means by which his contemporaries and he could move across the abyss of disintegrating (in his mind) Western civilization, I submit that this program was an attempt at remediation rather than replacement by a perceptive person more pragmatic than sometimes supposed.

Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) impressed a few of his peers and infuriated many. It has often been said that the cultural unity of the West engendered by Christianity was destroyed by modern knowledge; hence Arnold's great desideratum was to work with others to create a new unifying force he called "culture."

This interpretation of Arnold's agenda is partly true and (likely) partly propaganda. DeLaura astutely saw that the central point of Arnold's contrast of "Hebrew" and "Hellene" in *Culture and Anarchy* was "the Victorian phase of one of the great recurrent 'myths' of European history: the conflict of Apollo and Christ, Rome and Jerusalem, intelligence and belief, the secular and the sacred impulses of society" (DeLaura 1969, p. xvii). In his "heterodox" studies of Christianity and the Bible, Arnold not only failed to purge Christianity of its putatively impossible doctrines, but he failed to purge Christianity from himself. DeLaura therefore proposes that Arnold's real objective was to figure out a way to retain "those qualities of mind, emotion, and imagination which have defined what it has meant to be fully 'human' in the European past" (DeLaura 1969, p. xviii). Hence his program to have the public consider "the best that has been thought and said" (Arnold 1869, *passim*). Gilbert Murray wanted the same outcome but was post-religious.

The condition of North Atlantic culture experienced negatively by the sensitive thinkers and writers mentioned above can be historized. There was a time when it was not. What we are calling commercial culture *emerged* at a particular time under certain conditions, and these conditions too can be historicized and have been. The entire thing was historically contingent. It was not surprising, neither was it inevitable. It may well be that entrepreneurialism based on available discoverable resources, free-trade, and capital-sparked economics are as old as the human race (I believe they are), but capital*ism* as the engine of unlimited consumption (and vice versa)—this is something different. Like scientism and moralism, it is a wholly modern phenomenon. It was firmly in place by the year 1800, if not earlier. It grew into a more elaborate system in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At the end of the first quarter of the twenty-first century, we are only waiting for Han Solo to put his hand on the throttle of this merry-go-round and push it forward.

To assume that the status quo we know is what "Western civilization" is by definition is to ignore meaningful data derived at once from scholarship (historical and socio-scientific), the poets and artists, and religious tradition. The phenomenon was caused by neither modern science, nor superstars of the "Age of Reason", nor PoMo *philosophes*, nor sado-nuclear engineers, nor Wall Street and City "capitalists", nor Mrs. O'Leary's cow. Rather, the problem was caused by *ourselves*—our appetites, our fears, and our deathless mimetic impulses.

Rationalism

Rationalism is "produce" from the garden of modern commercial culture. Once produced, it can be consumed or worked to good effect back into the soil. We like the way it tastes. We see how it can work for us. We want more of it. In turn, rationalism bellows air into the machine. The massive economic change in the West (especially after 1750) naturally altered old ways of life. We might then see rationalism as one of the "new matrix of modern attitudes" which accompany commercial culture (Appleby 2011, p. 139). Such "modern attitudes" and virtues are adaptations allowing human beings to "fit" the modern commercial culture.

Since one point of this article is to assert that rationalism has ruined our schools in the North Atlantic world, we must now hasten to more concrete definitions of rationalism. There are too many. 'Rationalism' can denote the good use of reason *contra* allowing our emotions to rule us. Rationalism can mean the assumption that *a priori* ideas in the mind are the best foundation of real and lasting knowledge (thus Descartes, Leibniz, Wolff, *et al*.). In his classic essay "Rationalism in Politics" (1947), Oakeshott's 'rationalism' is reductionism and the bureaucratic oversimplifications that suck life out of a social groups or society. My reading of Montaigne is that his rationalism is a healthy skepticism serving as an amulet against believing *too much*. More germane to the present essay is rationalism as preoccupation with the human rational faculty and its needs and tools. This appears to be the first purpose or mission of most schools and universities in the Western world. I believe Gilbert Murray would have liked this definition, just as he would deplore the terrible situation to which it refers.

I have another definition of *rationalism* which I have derived from the extant writings of two who are crucial to this essay, John Henry Newman (1801-1890) and William Augustus Muhlenberg (1796-1877). I propose that rationalism is *the inordinate self-reliance of a being possessed of reason*.

Self-reliance is a virtue, not a vice. However, just as counter-Enlightenment thinkers saw that all the wonderful goods of the Enlightenment can morph into their opposites (e.g. experimental science can become *scientism* and liberty can half-life into mere license and selfish individualism), so the good and crucial modern virtues of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, hard work, rational application, *etc*., can devolve into *vices*. The smart-thinking person's vice is *rationalism*.

Modern virtues such as self-reliance were the appropriate adaptative responses of colonists, pioneers, settlers, farmers, town and village citizens, and agriculturalists rising into the middle class, and of middle-class folk who wished to rise higher in the sacred chain of being. Anticipating welcome returns on their labor, their anxiety, and their prayers, such people developed new ways to face the fairly harsh and fast-moving world they met every day, whether in the industrializing "free market" mother country or in New World wildernesses, Asian forests, or African vastnesses. It is only natural that the requisite moral virtues took up residence in the command center of the mind. Rationalism as a rational soul's *inordinate self-reliance* was thus a predictable development in the West. It is a problem.[6]

In the increasingly competitive North Atlantic system, being tough-minded and correct, projecting confidence and absolute accuracy, giving others the impression that one cannot be mistaken, the need to be mathematically perfect in one's counting, calculations, and relationships, and the intense pressure to never wander off from the herd: these opened the door to what I am calling rationalism. In the altogether new environment that obtained in the North Atlantic world after about 1800, it would have been most unusual and perhaps impossible for educators to fail to see their duty and to ensure that their schools were tooled up to produce just the kind of children and youth for such a "real world".

The thesis gains corroboration from a perhaps unlikely source: brain science. It is easy to see rationalism as we have defined it as a clear indication of "left brain dominance" in the Western world. Iain McGilchrist is a literary scholar turned neuroscientist. (He thus embodies the *beau ideal* of the proffered educational program sketched in Part II, below.) For about twenty-five years, Dr. McGilchrist has reported "the war of the hemispheres" from the front (so to speak). He shows in his work how the left hemisphere has "usurped" the right hemisphere's preordained right to rule the human person. Think *left* for calculation

and *right* for making sense of it all. Both are necessary. Each has its role in all thinking. McGilchrist has lately averred that an imbalance in the Western brain goes far to explain our "predicament" (McGilchrist 2024). A physician would never believe that modern attitudes, modern science, and modern institutions have not brought a great deal of good to persons and peoples, but McGilchrist wants us to know about, and acknowledge, and do something about the less than spectacular effects of the dominant culture.

Using a story from Nietzsche, McGilchrist compares the left hemisphere of the brain to the "emissary" of the king who cleverly convinces loyal subjects out in the provinces that he is in fact the king and they should obey his commands. The emissary is the left brain. While teaching English literature at Oxford and working as a literary critic McGilchrist noticed that too much rational application destroys a work of art. Deep analysis often *prevents* students from experiencing the very qualities the poet or the painter hoped to give others when he made the work of art. In *The Master and His Emissary*, McGilchrist writes that:

> Many important aspects of experience, those that the right hemisphere is particularly well equipped to deal with—our passions, our sense of humor, all metaphoric and symbolic understanding (and with it the metaphoric and symbolic nature of art), all religious sense, all imaginative and intuitive processes—are *denatured* by becoming the objects of focused attention [left brain], which renders them explicit, therefore mechanical, lifeless. The value of the left hemisphere is precisely in making *explicit*, but this is a staging post, an intermediate level of the "processing" of experience, never the starting point or end point, never the deepest, or the final level. The relationship between the hemispheres is therefore highly significant for the type of world we find ourselves living in (McGilchrist 2009, slide 294).

McGilchrist writes in his recent two-volume opus that "the brain's left hemisphere is designed to help us apprehend—and thus manipulate—the world; the right hemisphere, to comprehend it—to see it all for what it is" (McGilchrist 2021, slide 339). The left hemisphere, intended always for a servant, "makes a very poor master" (McGilchrist 2021, slide 1271).

While the science backing McGilchrist's musings on large questions is state-of-the-art and granite solid, the use to which he puts the science is in places speculative and is already controversial. It is a full-bore contestation of modern rationalist culture. He admits this and welcomes the dialogue. By all accounts he is an unpretentious, humble, and authentically scientific person. Good questions do not alarm him in the least.

Rationalism as the rational creature's *inordinate self-reliance*, which is a moral imbalance, fits hand in glove with McGilchrist's proposal that left-hemisphere dominance is a major problem in the Western world. McGilchrist observes that a world dominated by the left hemisphere "would become a heap of data bits", its only meaning coming "through its capacity to be used" (McGilchrist 2024). McGilchrist deepens our understanding of how commercial culture gave rise to rationalism and how both have a lot to do with the out-of-whack-ness of the West.

It is impossible that such a strong cultural imbalance would not be characteristic of schools and educational programs throughout the North Atlantic world. An increasing number of parents on both sides of the Atlantic are dissatisfied with the schooling their children and youth are getting. Many thoughtful persons have had a hunch that something is amiss in our schools and colleges. Some tacitly embrace the dominant rationalism of the age and only want schools—private as well as public—wherein the STEM or other sorts of technical curricula are a larger portion of the program, are better funded and more ably administered, and are more justly and consistently offered. But likewise, a growing number of parents are demanding much more out of schools than the cultivation of the instrumental reason and the development of the tools and accoutrements of the "left-hemisphere" of the brain. What follows is a brief description of a kind of school that once thrived in the United States and can with adequate backing do so again.

PART II: ONE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

William Augustus Muhlenberg (1796-1877) never did brain research and would have only wondered at many of the propositions offered in the paragraphs above. There is evidence that, were his sensibility and intellect not ballasted by Christian convictions, ideas, and practices, he might have given himself to his "left-hemisphere". He hailed from an admired and patriotic family of Philadelphians who were adept parliamentarians, naturalists, clergy, and major generals. Muhlenberg believed his school-making venture was exceedingly practical.

But he did see the imbalance, smelled the rat in rationalism, and decried both under the rubric of "Mammon". He was exceptionally learned, but he lived prior to the time when Tönnies, Weber, Geertz, Charles Taylor, *et al*., provided concepts and vocabulary to explicate the world. His mission in education was indeed a direct assault on rationalism and the cultural imbalance whence rationalism comes. His close acquaintance with the sermons, articles, and tracts of John Henry Newman and like-minded writers only confirmed his suspicion—way back in the 1820s—that concentration on the light provided by the instrumental reason would eventually eclipse the tuition of other important aspects of human nature in American schools. Muhlenberg feared the power of "Mammon". He hated the way it pulled on children and adolescents. He decried the emerging market culture as culturally decadent and morally repugnant. He didn't use the word but would have heartily agreed that the market culture was already hegemonic in the United States. This is clear in the prospectus he published in 1928 to attract patrons to his new school at Flushing, New York. On the first page of *The Application of Christianity to Education*, he wrote:

> The progress of Education which distinguishes the present age is confined chiefly to its intellectual and physical departments. Improvement in moral respects is not unknown, but it is slow and to the mind of Christianity far from being radical. The system of our schools needs to be materially reformed (Muhlenberg, henceforth WAM 1828, p. 1).

Eight years later, when he laid the cornerstone for St. Paul's College and Grammar School at College Point, one mile north of Flushing, Muhlenberg reiterated that his school would not raise a sail to catch the *Zeitgeist* but would be, like the Flushing Institute, counter cultural. "If knowledge is power, then with every increase of knowledge there should be additional security for the right direction of that increase of power" (WAM 1836). This motive and message stuck to the ribs of the Muhlenbergian school men. Over five decades later, Henry Augustus Coit (1830-1895), one of Muhlenberg's most successful school-making disciples, remarked in a national news magazine, "When one faculty of the mind is inordinately used and developed, the result is very like the excessive development of some member or organ of the body" (Coit 1891, p. 10). Overplay leads directly to imbalance.

Before sketching *The Thing*, it is important to state right up front that the language I am constrained to use to describe Muhlenberg's school-making mission is not in every case the language he would have used: Yet I hasten to say that almost all of his scholastic heirs, upon whose extant literary remains we very much depend, did and do use this vocabulary and discourse to articulate the phenomenon Muhlenberg set in motion.[7] Muhlenberg and his companions created eleven schools in six states.

Explaining the phenomenon of Muhlenberg's scholastic projects and those of his protégés is not a simple matter. It is very true that the 1828 prospectus listed eight "principles", but extant sources show that he had moved well beyond these principles by 1831. The solid principles remained but became stepping-stones into a deeper understanding of the unfolding vision and practical life of the schools. They learned, grew, compared notes, and swapped personnel. Their philosophy and practice gained depth and momentum by trial and error. The Doctor was the pioneer, and his disciples the perfecters, of a new kind of American school. Great and life-giving institutions do not mature overnight.[8]

Muhlenberg was an exact contemporary of Horace Mann (1796-1859), leader of the common school movement in the United States. Typical of most Protestant clergy in America, Muhlenberg was an enthusi-

astic booster of the new common schools. As a very young man, he was elected a director of the first public school district in his hometown of Philadelphia. He founded the second public district in Lancaster and served as its superintendent while also serving as a pastor of the local Episcopal parish.

In 1826, Muhlenberg walked away from public education. Seeing that religion in the schools would eventually become lowest-common-denominator, which made sense if a religiously diverse population would be educated together in the same schools, he worried that the souls of children and youth would be neglected during all those hours spent in school. A reform-minded person anyway, Muhlenberg decided that this developing situation would not do at all. He did not believe that the typical American academy was any better. Less than humane pedagogical practices and a woefully dated understanding of the nature and needs of children obtained in these proud old schools up and down the Atlantic seaboard. Hence, Muhlenberg decided to start his own school by which he would educate youth his way.

In the spring of 1826, Muhlenberg sailed for Europe. He wanted to investigate up close several innovative schools attracting international attention, notably the remarkable schools established by Pestalozzi and von Fellenberg. He was welcomed by school leaders. He took notes. He critiqued the schools, noting pros and cons. As he imagined the tight-knit community he would establish, he was mindful that an American school must have a republican ethos while maintaining the crucial principle that there is but *one authority* in the school, the principal or headmaster.

Departing the Alps, Muhlenberg was not encouraged by what he found across the channel. He thought the great old English schools impressive but too much wed to old ways. Thomas Arnold (1795-1842) had not yet been elected headmaster of Rugby; so Muhlenberg did not meet any school leader given to reform. Muhlenberg wished to see exactly how the Christian faith could be combined with the traditionally best education in the world. He was loath to say he had found what he was looking for. Something rather new was required. Well-studied and well-versed, W.A. Muhlenberg returned to America and began planning.

The Muhlenberg-Type Church School: A Sketch

The balance of this essay is dedicated to sketching the superstructure and some of the sinews of Muhlenburg's scholastic vision and practice. Muhlenberg's two school projects were deeply considered, comprehensive attempts to overcome every sort of lopsided, unbalanced, and excuse-making secular approach to teaching and learning. While Muhlenberg received in Philadelphia a superlative and full-blooded liberal education, he knew that every school in America could be improved. Muhlenberg's Church school concept was fleshed out in the work of four principal disciples between 1828 and 1865. With Muhlenberg in command until 1845, these educators together made an ambitious and successful national school-making movement yielding eleven schools in six states.[9] To educate *the whole person* to excellence: this was their definition of the liberal education.

Any scholarly description of the Muhlenberg-type school necessarily involves extant sources produced by or associated with Muhlenberg's four principal disciples. It was they who took "the Doctor's" *beau ideal* and developed it in time, space, and at least five different American regions. Please note that mine is *an interpretation* of the phenomenon from the perspective of one living 197 years after Muhlenberg founded the Flushing Institute. As an educator who hoped to carry on the vision of Muhlenberg and company, *mutatis mutandis*, I feel the liberty to use my own philosophical language and theological vocabulary to "unpack" and expose the ideas, ways, and means of the remarkable schools established by Muhlenberg and his heirs. This approach makes it much easier to persuade the reader that this sort of school is a compelling model for our own time.

The High Aim

"Academic excellence", intellectual prowess, and teenagers creating new knowledge by spending all day indoors: These were never the objective of Muhlenberg and his protégés. They aimed *above* "academic excel-

lence" and got it in the bargain. Their high-aim philosophy made *Virtue* in the Christian sense of the word the Target of education. *Character* is a useful word in this context but does not quite suffice as a synonym of Virtue as these Christian educators defined it (see two sections below). This might be regarded as common sense. If the long-bow archer is ambitious to hit the bull's eye far away and down the course, she or he must *aim high*. This was the number-one point of the schools: to hit the target that is Virtue—with the capital 'V'. Since such a mission requires that *every part* of human nature be considered, addressed, exercised, challenged, refined, honed, rehearsed, and, in a word, *educated*, Muhlenberg and his heirs had to conceive, create, and maintain unique school communities that could do the job. Perhaps it is rationalism that causes us to be quite surprised to learn that the schools committed to this high-aim philosophy got remarkable *academic* results. Muhlenberg's high-aim philosophy was not derived from the attractive idealism of the ancients. Its source was the New Testament. "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness", said Jesus, "and all these other things will be added to it" (*Matthew* 6.13). One of the best ways to understand the entire project of Muhlenberg and company is to use a quotation from C. S. Lewis: "Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in'; aim at earth, and you will get neither" (Lewis 1952, p. 73).

Christianity and the Perennial Philosophy of Education

The Muhlenbergians were Christian school folk who refused to replace Virtue as the first purpose of education, so they had to marry Christianity to the perennial philosophy of education in the West. Their commitment to the classical curriculum—at least until midway through the twentieth century—is an outward and visible sign of this marriage. What I call the perennial philosophy is 2,500 years old at least. Put simply, this very traditional education makes *Virtue* the first purpose or goal of education, as stated above. From even before the days of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, *et al*., the ancient sages defined Virtue as "general human excellence", skill or proficiency at being human as such. The Sophists made a lot of money teaching their students a particular skill or art; this they named "Virtue". As Plato has it in the *Meno* and the *Protagoras,* Socrates was very unsatisfied with the Sophist definition of Virtue.

In the Muhlenberg-type Church school, even the much-valued academic work was ancillary to the first purpose of developing Virtue. The assumption here is that, if the priorities are straight, all the other "natural goods" of education (Aristotle) which parents want for their children will fall into place as a matter of course, and such acquisitions will in fact be improved and made more valuable because the community is pursuing Virtue as the top priority. Those who put this philosophy into practice are never disappointed of gaining the other goods of education; for example, sound learning, useful skills, and practical knowledge with real cash value.

Pursuing Virtue Creates a Problem

The marriage of the perennial philosophy to Christianity created a problem from the get-go: In contrast to Plato, Aristotle, and other good pagan sages, Christians do not believe that it is possible for human beings to attain the envisioned Virtue, even as reason indicates that it is the proper aim and human destiny. Following Bible and Creed, orthodox Christians hold the doctrines that: (1) human nature is permanently disabled by "the Fall", and (2) the resulting "sin" prevents humankind from attaining Virtue. Muhlenberg and company were rather Augustinian in this regard, but it does not necessarily follow that they affirmed the Calvinist doctrine of *total* depravity. Muhlenberg possessed something of Enlightenment optimism about human nature, providing the right steps are taken to make amends with God. In any case, they took it for granted that Christ alone possesses Virtue and that, as the New Testament puts it, Christ *is* our Virtue. Muhlenberg thus recognized that, in some manner or other, and by God's initiative alone, *Christ's* Virtue must become our Virtue. We must become part of Christ if we are to gain Virtue. Is this even possible? These educators actually believed that "nothing is impossible for God" (*Matthew* 19.26).

Incorporation into Christ

The problem of Virtue is solved by recourse to the most important resource in such a school: God's Grace. In the Christian scheme in which Muhlenberg rooted his schools, both humankind's existential disability and our inability to overcome it to attain Virtue are overcome by God's help. This benefit occurs in a certain *kind* of community or social body wherein Grace abounds and is given the maximum number of opportunities to freely operate. Incorporation into Christ and the life and work of the school are thus bound up together.

The Meaning of 'Church' in the Church School

If incorporation into Christ is essential to the stated purpose of a Church school, which is Virtue in the Christian sense of the word, then it follows that, for the Muhlenbergian school men, the school *is* the Church in the Church's scholastic or teaching-and-learning mode. They took it for granted that the school is the "academic aspect" of the Body mystical of Christ. In this particular Body scholastic, Grace is mediated in Christ to *and by* each member of the fellowship. They espoused the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church" of the Creed, which is a living thing and a great mystery; the Church is its own entity with its own history and ways. The Church is infinitely more than a mere bureaucratic institution. If invited, Grace is everywhere; and *Grace completes nature*, one of the oldest and mostly lovely maxims of Christianity.

'Church' does not then denote a mere denominational institution in this philosophy of education. 'Church' denotes the Body mystical as it is constituted in the scholastic brotherhood.

Religion

While the schools created by William Muhlenberg and his heirs were superlative academic institutions, religious life was not a side-show. Unlike many latter-day schools, there was at Flushing, College Point, and the other schools no profession of Christianity followed by a wink and grin. Muhlenberg wrote at the end of his third year of operations:

> The zeal to make scholars, should, in the minds of Christians at least, be tempered by the knowledge that it may repress a zeal for better things. The head should not be furnished at the expense of the heart. Surely, at most, it is exchanging fine gold for silver when the culture of gracious affections and holy principle is neglected for any attainments of intellect, however brilliant or varied (WAM 1831, p. 5).

Yet Muhlenberg writes in the same place that:

> if the inquiry be made, how far any evidences of decided Christian character have been the result of our care, I would premise an answer by remarking, that, as the promise of spring is rather its blossoms than its fruits, so in a youthful community, it is unreasonable to expect much of mature and ripened piety. Precocity is as rare in religion as in learning (WAM 1831: p. 5).

Without exception, the religion of these schools was intelligently and thoughtfully planned and pursued. These educators were men of their time, which is to say that there was much more religion in the school than would fly today (and they worshipped twice on Sunday), but Muhlenberg was extremely careful to not overburden adolescent souls. In this he was ahead of his time.

Daily chapels were "short and sweet". Liturgy and formal worship were brilliantly planned to impart basic dogmas in a beautiful way. Since these educators understood that incorporation into Christ means the grafting of a branch onto the root, the root was something in *particular*. "There is no such thing as

Christianity in the abstract", Muhlenberg astutely wrote in his first prospectus (WAM 1928, p. 4). Religion is not real if it is watered down. Teenagers can know what is authentic—what is taken seriously by the older members of the school—in approximately five minutes. A particular form of Christianity must be allowed its integrity, and the community grows and differentiates religiously on that basis. For his time and day, none was more "ecumenical" than Muhlenberg. He is considered one of the early leaders of the ecumenical movement in the United States which eventually gave rise to the World Council of Churches. But he understood that a genuinely welcoming community must first be something definite in terms of beliefs, ethos, and piety: From this "position of strength" it becomes possible to foster diversity and welcome many sorts of persons into the fellowship.

Curriculum and Instruction

From the beginning, Muhlenberg's curriculum was designed to serve the mission of the school which was to educate *the whole person* to excellence. The formation of Virtue was not the means to "academic excellence", but the "academic excellence" a means to realizing Virtue. This is a subtle but monumentally important principle, and there is a huge difference between a school which pursues the second goal and a school focused on the first. These American educators would have heartily agreed with a famous Harrow master who insisted on "the moral value of exact scholarship" (B. F. Westcott quoted in Honey 1977, p. 127). The academic hours of a student's day were spent learning the Greek and Latin classics, the fundamentals of mathematics and geometry, and the practical skills for mastering each of these subjects. In this way, the student gradually gained confidence, sound knowledge, personal effectiveness, and the traits of a person we in our day would call "a life-long learner". Drawing and draftsmanship were required, as were elocution and a host of duties on behalf of the community (e.g., various chores including maintaining a garden plot).

All of this appears to us as very traditional and lacking in innovation. But in fact, Muhlenberg brought teachers to his schools who could teach the classics with enthusiasm and in such a way that the students saw the acquired knowledge as immediately applicable to their lives. Though firmly established and maintained, the rich, challenging, and rewarding course of study did grow and develop over the decades. By 1895, when the great Henry Coit of St. Paul's, Concord, died, the old Church-school curriculum included considerably more natural science, higher math, modern languages, and a few electives, but the basic curriculum was still in place as the best means to *making students strong* in every aspect of their human nature.

Instruction no less than every other activity of the schools was prosecuted under the aspect of the mission or first purpose. The school-making disciples never wavered from the fundamental principle of their rabbi that the secret to high-quality tuition is high-quality teachers. It is always the case that an excellent teacher will have his or her own methods. The Muhlenbergian school men believed that the teacher must embody the ideals of the scholastic fellowship. Since the standards were very high indeed, the search for such human beings was never easy.

Educators who favor classical studies insist that the translation of a single line of Greek or Latin into English, or an English sentence into Latin or Greek, involves a student in *many* operations simultaneously. Carefulness, mindfulness, and attention to small things—punctuation, the vowels at the end of words, diction)—and basic willpower are mandatory. A good work ethic goes a long way toward the acquisition of serious learning and to the experience of those "eternal values" to which Professor Murray referred.

Similarly, the daily recitations required of every student twice or three times every day (and, until the 1970s, on Saturday mornings) killed many birds with one stone. When a student is asked to stand among his peers and recite twenty lines of Vergil in well-spoken Latin, then to offer his own English translation, then to answer the questions of other students and the teacher *about* the choice lines (e.g., whether the sentiment expressed is morally beautiful, morally repugnant, or something indifferent), he or she is gaining an education *par excellence*. And let us imagine how important it is for every student in a class to watch the student, who requires three times the work others in the class must do to memorize those lines from

Homer's *Iliad*, yet astonish them all with her poise, eloquence, and comprehension of the poet's purpose. In a good school, this kind of experience happens every day.

What's the Hurry?

Because incorporation into Christ and "secular" education went on side by side in these schools, there was no thought that they would not be boarding schools. Such an education requires long days, multiple years, and plenty of scheduled leisure. The highest standards could be and were set, because Grace *via* the brotherhood enabled each member of the school to acquire the virtues to successfully attain the standards. In this sense, the school was "a little image of the Church", since the standards were lowered for none but Grace to attain them was always available. The mysterious benefits of committed life in the fellowship would ensure that everyone made the grade; some would do so more quickly than others, which is only fitting. Ample time and lots of space are necessary for such a school philosophy to be enacted in real life. This is because the standards are high, the community is ambitious, and a bona fide *Church* school is unthinkable without students of all description, including those deemed—at first—"less promising".

The plan succeeded. By the time St. Paul's was opened (1836), Muhlenberg was nationally admired for his work in education. Boys were sent to him from all over the land, even from the slave-holding South, in spite of the Rector's strong opposition to slavery. Witnesses who attended the public expositions at the schools in July were amazed at the learning of the students. Young men with Flushing or St. Paul's diplomas frequently matriculated into higher education as third-year collegians.

This was not a "system", a word Muhlenberg hated as much as he hated supporters and parents who wished for his schools to be seen as "fine literary institutions". What he created was neither a machine (God forbid!) nor a prisoners' camp where Latin was beaten into the pupils. These schools were *families*. They were the most humanely prosecuted, and likely the most outstanding academic, schools in America at the time.

A poster-boy for the entire mission was James Lloyd Breck (1818-1876). Breck hailed from Philadelphia and was with Muhlenberg and company on Long Island for five full years (excluding the Long Vacations taken in August and September). By all accounts a boy of average to just above average intellectual power, he yet developed the virtues and skills of a scholar and of a leader. He matriculated into the University of Pennsylvania as a junior and graduated *magna cum laude* in classical literature two years later (1838). He again distinguished himself academically at the General Theological Seminary in New York (an Episcopal institution) but also impressed persons with his humility and winsome piety. Breck was captivated by the story of St. Columba of Iona (*ca*. 521-597), a missionary educator. While under Muhlenberg's tutelage at Flushing, Breck committed himself to serving as a missionary and educator on the American frontier. When he died—some say of exhaustion—in 1876, he was mourned from coast to coast, remembered as a "Galahad", and compared to his "school father" who commissioned each one of his mission enterprises.

It is manifest that what Muhlenberg and his most important disciples established was more than a network of very good schools. They established scholastic brotherhoods, and those who lived in them never forgot the experience. Each school was "a life" entered into by those who believed they were suited to such a program and up to its demands, regardless of what later came to be called their "IQ" or their social standing. What mattered was the desire. Slackers did not last, but students whose education had been heretofore haphazardly done were not turned away for that reason. If he had the faith and the *willpower* to make use of the program, he was invited to join the brotherhood.

These educators produced no treatises (to speak of) on liberal education, nor did they publish tractates on pedagogy. When people wanted to know what they were up to, or how they were able to achieve so much with adolescents, the standard reply of Muhlenberg and company was: "Come visit us and see for yourself". This is characteristic of any of those rare and deeply life-giving fellowships that appear for a season and then, all too often, disappear—usually for lack of adequate financial support.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

William Augustus Muhlenberg and his protégés recognized that, if human beings are more than their rational faculty, a school must educate the other parts of human nature. Such a vision is in fact the perennial philosophy of education in the West: to educate the whole person to excellence. Muhlenberg was a well-educated person and considered reason a great gift, but if education makes the reason "captious", if a school educates the head at the expense of the heart, then the school has failed to do its proper work.

Muhlenberg was neither a philosopher nor a political activist. His solution to the imbalance already developing in American education was to establish two model schools on Long Island. These were an experiment in education by which the founder hoped to address the imbalance in western life and the concomitant rationalism, as well as problems and issues facing educators in the new republic.

Muhlenberg's model schools were replicated by his closely mentored protégés in six American states. Extant explanations of Muhlenberg's educational work are rare. His way was ever that of personal influence and teaching others. He did want to *show* the world his *beau ideal* of a school, and he did so whenever possible; because his greatest statement on education was, truly, the exceptional schools he presided over for seventeen years. In our own time, the best way to understand the Doctor's powerful and most effective vision for American education is to go see what he envisioned in the legacies of his closest fellows who founded schools still in operation, several of them among the very best in the United States. It is likely that Muhlenberg did not want to publish a prolix tractate on education because he felt himself unqualified to describe a kind of school—the *Church school*—that to his knowledge had never existed before. But his scholastic heirs did describe their work and their schools.

This facile sketch of the Muhlenberg-type school is submitted to readers as something new, innovative, and worth considering in our time.

Perhaps the motto Dr. Henry Coit and Dr. George Shattuck adopted for St. Paul's School in New Hampshire (1856) is a good way to end this essay. The motto was taken directly from the Latin grammar Dr. Muhlenberg personally prepared and gave to each student upon matriculation into the school. Henry Coit was given this little book when he came to be educated by Muhlenberg and the brethren in 1843. I have seen a copy of this Latin grammar in the Smithtown, New York, archives. The epigraph, taken from one of St. Jerome's letters, was intended to define the very essence of the first and the second St. Paul's School.

> Ea discamus in terris quorum scientia perseveret in coelis.
> "Let us learn those things on earth the knowledge of which will last in Heaven."

NOTES

1 "Heart speaketh unto heart" is the motto John Henry Newman (1801-1890) chose when he was made a cardinal in the Roman Catholic Church. According to Claire Ward, a Missionary of La Salette writing in the order's blog, Newman thought the source was Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* but it was a phrase of the mystic bishop St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622).

2 *Psalm* 36.9: "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light" (New Revised Standard Version).

3 Allow me to reiterate that this essay is not necessarily advocating the study of the Greek and Latin classics. What Murray, *et al*., stood for, and the sort of education they advocated—the complete or liberal education—may well involve learning Greek and Latin and studying classical literature, but their, Newman's, and Muhlenberg's vision does not require an exclusive commitment to classical studies *necessarily*.

4 In Taylor (1989, 2007) and many other utterances over the years, the phenomenon of "commercial culture"—one outcome of modern scientific rationality and the revolutions in finance, industry, and markets in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—is an ever-present horizon. "Commercial Culture" is not a chapter heading in either of the books just named, because (I aver) the phenomenon is like the gnat on an elephant's back: the reality assumed is too big, obvious, and complex to describe. Four superb works of historical scholarship will suffice to orien-

tate the reader to American history in this period of economic "firing up". They are: Howe (2007); Larson (2010); McDougall (2004); and Sellers (1994). For a penetrating assessment of how the commercial culture gained a new momentum during the Civil War, when the states of the Confederacy were not sitting in Congress, and the years after the Civil War—i.e. the years between the death of Muhlenberg and Gilbert Murray's gentle alarm, see Lears (2009).

5 In this he reminds us of Michael Oakeshott (1901-1990), another great believer in the liberal education, whose "integrity" is rather more similar to Arnold's "perfection" and "totality" than (I believe) some readers of Oakeshott usually allow.

6 There are plenty of other definitions of rationalism. I was once taught that rationalism is by definition the tendency to assume that the human reason gives us the power to know things clearly, and thus what the reason cannot know clearly is of no vital importance and may not exist at all. Reason itself is not impugned in this definition; what is implicated is a certain overconfident attitude. Similarly, a rational person will never impugn experimental science, even as we hope to avoid scientism, which is the assumption that science—even the best experimental science—will answer all of our questions and solve all of our problems. This is Baconian confidence taken too far. If, as implied, scientism and rationalism tend to exclude metaphysics and God, making theology and perhaps revealed religion a waste of time, then modern moralism fits rationalism and scientism like white on rice: because moralism is the tendency to forget theology and doctrine in order to reduce all religion to a matter of morals and personal ethics.

Newman and Muhlenberg saw the same thing on different sides of the Atlantic, but Newman likely assumed that rationalism arose centuries earlier, whereas it would have been impossible for Muhlenberg—the great-grandson of the founder of Lutheranism in America—to take Luther for a rationalist.

7 It is a commonplace that the creator of something new, impactful, and important often requires another or others to articulate the very phenomenon for which the creator is responsible. Creators of truly great works of art (for example) are often startled by what a critic finds in that production – and the poet or painter will often agree that what the critic saw was "there all along". We must always bear it in mind that a historical actor is a diachronic figure. In the case of Muhlenberg, we must remember that his religious views were central his school-making projects but he (like anyone would) went through religious *phases*. It is a fact that, during the years that he was schoolmastering, Muhlenberg was deeply smitten by the personalities and religious ideas of the Tractarian or Oxford Movement, also known as "the Catholic Revival" in Anglican Christianity (see below). Though he was likely not in lock-step with every Tractarian dogma (e.g. Baptismal Regeneration), Muhlenberg admitted in a document he wrote in 1872 that he was definitely under the influence of the Oxford Movement from the late 1820s into the 1840s; and it is crystal clear that not a few students and teachers who worked with "the Doctor" during these years became what is called "Anglo-Catholics". Of Muhlenberg's four principal school-making disciples, three were "High Church" at the least and embryonic Anglo-Catholics. Muhlenberg was especially influenced by John Henry Newman (1801-1890), with whom he had much in common – e.g. a commitment to celibacy and a deep, affecting devotion to the Person of Jesus. It is significant that Muhlenberg would read Newman's sermons in chapel to his boys. Muhlenberg met Newman in person on three occasions in the late summer of 1843. He wrote home to a colleague at College Point that Newman reminded him of Christ. Many hundreds of people were similarly affected by Newman, now Saint John Henry Newman, including Matthew Arnold. Arnold and Muhlenberg more or less renounced Newman when the latter converted to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845, but such an affection and influence can never be effaced entirely. *Suffice it to say that the Muhlenberg-type Church school was indeed created and developed under the aspect of the Catholici Revival in Anglicanism*. This is why it is entirely appropriate to employ "catholic" usages to explain the phenomenon and its often-subtle reality.

8 This is a good place to impress upon the reader that Muhlenberg believed he was creating something somewhat *de novo*. The historian James McLachlan (*op. cit.*) demonstrated that the schools Muhlenberg and his fellows created were *not* based on, or replicas of, the great old English schools such as "The Nine" (Winchester, Eton, St. Paul's, Shrewsbury, Westminster, Merchant Taylors, Rugby, Harrow, and the Charterhouse). Muhlenberg was such a pragmatist that he took up anything good and wholesome he found in the English schools; his first lieutenant J.B. Kerfoot began calling the grade-level classes "forms" when he founded Saint James in Maryland; and his disciples

were generally wont to borrow good ideas from the English when they were instrumental to the original concept. But the influence of schools such as Rugby or Harrow on the original Muhlenberg-type school was minimal until much later in the nineteenth century. From about 1870, we begin to see a proliferation of boarding schools in the USA, many of them unabashedly Anglophilic.

9 The most important heirs (who understudied Muhlenberg both as students and staff) were: Libertus van Bokkelen (1815-1889); John Barrett Kerfoot (1816-1881); James Lloyd Breck (1818-1876); and Henry Augustus Coit (1830-1895). Including Muhlenberg's two, the schools founded were: the Church Institute at Flushing, Long Island (1828); St. Paul's College and Grammar School at College Point, Long Island (1836); the College and Grammar School of St. James at Hagerstown, Maryland (1842, by Kerfoot); the Grammar School at Nashotah, Wisconsin (1844, by Breck); St. Timothy's School at Catonsville, Maryland (1845, by van Bokkelen); St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire (1856, by Coit); the Shattuck School at Faribault, Minnesota (1858, by Breck); St. Mary's School at Faribault, Minnesota (1859, by Breck); St. Mary's School at New York City and later Peekskill (1865, by Muhlenberg and Harriett Starr Cannon); Saint Mark's School at Southborough, Massachusetts (1865, by Kerfoot and his nephew John Kerfoot Lewis); St. Augustine's College and Grammar School at Benecia, California (1868, by Breck); and St. Mary's of the Pacific at Benecia, California (1870, by Breck). Many other American school founders looked to Muhlenberg and company as the creator of the American *Church school* which they wished to replicate and sometimes succeeded beautifully. The trustees of the Episcopal High School in Alexandria, Virginia, asked Muhlenberg to come start their school. The founders of Groton, St. George's, St. Andrew's in Tennessee, the Blue Ridge School in Virginia, and the Kent School took the schools of the Muhlenbergians as their model.

REFERENCES

All quotations from the Bible are taken from the *New Revised Standard Version Bible*, copyright © 1989, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Appleby, Joyce. 2011. Moderation in the First Era of Popular Consumption. Joshua J. Yates and James Davison Hunter, eds. In: *Thrift and Thriving in America: Capitalism and Moral Order from the Puritans to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Arnold, Matthew. 1853. *Poems*. 2nd ed. London: Longmans, Brown, Green, and Longmans

_____. 1869. *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism*. London: Smith, Elder and Co.

Ayres, Anne. 1875. In *Evangelical and Catholic Papers: Addresses of the Reverend William Augustus Muhlenberg, DD.* First Series. Queens Co. New York: St. Johnland Press.

Berlin, Isaiah. 1979. The Counter-Enlightenment. In: *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas by Isaiah Berlin*, pp. 1-24. Henry Hardy ed. London: Hogarth.

Brazeale, Daniel. 1990. Introduction. In: *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*. Tr. Daniel Brazeale. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press.

Breck, Charles. 1883. *The Life of the Reverend James Lloyd Breck, D.D., Chiefly from Letters Written by Himself*. New York: E. & J. B. Young.

Bruchy, Stuart. 1967. *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy, 1790*-1860. New York: Harcourt.

Butler, Joseph. 1745. Sermon Preached … [for] the Yearly Meeting of the Children Educated in the Charity Schools in and about the Cities of London and Westminster, Thursday, May 9, 1745. In: *The Whole Works of Joseph Butler: Public Sermons, No. 4*. Wikisource.org/wiki/Whole_Works_of_Joseph _Butler/Sermon_19.

Coit, Henry Augustus. 1891. An American Boys' School—What It Should Be. In: *The Forum*. September number.

Cunningham, Valentine. 2000. *The Victorians: An Anthology of Poetry and Poetics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Honey, John Raymond de Symons. 1977. *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the Victorian Public School*. London: Paragon.

DeLaura, David J. 1969. *Hebrew and Hellene in Victorian England: Newman, Arnold, Pater.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

Harrison, Hall. 1883. *Life of the Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot, D.D., LL.D, First Bishop of Pittsburgh*. Two vols. New York: James Pott & Co.

Holcombe, Theodore I. 1903. An *Apostle in the Wilderness: James Lloyd Breck, D.D., His Missions and Schools*. New York: Thomas Whittaker.
Honan, Park Matthew. 1981. *Matthew Arnold: A Life*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
Howe, Daniel Walker. 2007. *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815–1848*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Kingsley, K. Scarlett, and Parry, Richard. 2020. Empedocles. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* online.
Kripal, Jeffrey J. 2022. *The Superhumanities: Historical Precedents, Moral Objections, New Realities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Laing, R. D. 1960. *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*. London: Tavistock.
Larson, John L. 2010. *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Lears, Jackson, T. J. 2009. *Rebirth of a Nation: The Making of Modern America, 1877-1920*. New York: HarperCollins.
Lewis, C. S. 1952. *Mere Christianity*. p. 73. London: Geoffrey Bles.
McDougall, Walter A. 2004. *Freedom Just Around the Corner: A New American History, 1585–1828*. New York: HarperCollins.
McGilchrist, Iain. 2009. *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Archive.org online version.
_____. 2021. *The Matter with Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World*. United Kingdom: Perspective Press.
_____. 2024. *Ways of Attending: How Our Divided Brain Constructs the World*. Echo Point Books & Media LLC, audio edition.
McKendrick, Neil. 2018. *The Birth of Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*. Brighton: Edward Everett Root.
McLachlan, James. 1970. *The American Boarding School: A History*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
Muhlenberg, W. A. 1828. *The Application of Christianity to Education. Being the Principles and Plan of Education to be Adopted in the Institute at Flushing, L.I.* Jamaica NY: Sleight & George.
_____. 1831. *Christian Education*. New York: Protestant Episcopal Press.
_____. 1843. Letter from WAM to Samuel Seabury Jr. in New York, September 16. MS. in the Archives, General Theological Seminary, New York City.
Murray, Gilbert. 1921. The Value of Greece to the Future of the World. R. W. Livingstone, ed. In: *The Legacy of Greece*, pp. 1-23. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Newman, John Henry. 1841. Private Judgment. In: *The British Critic*, July 1841. Newmanreader.org.
_____. 1852/1976. *The Idea of a University Defined and* Illustrated. Ian Ker, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
_____. 1871. Parochial *and Plain Sermons*, vol. I. William Copeland, ed. London: Rivington's.
Newbolt, Henry John. 1911. *The Twymans: A Tale of Youth*. London: William Blackwood and Sons.
Oakeshott, Michael. 1989/2001. *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. T. Fuller (ed.). Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
Pelikan, Jaroslav. 1992. *The Idea of a University: A Reexamination*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
Prehn, W. L. 2005. Social Vision, Character, and Academic Excellence in Nineteenth-Century America: William Augustus Muhlenberg and the Church School Movement, 1828-1877. PhD dissertation, University of Virginia.
_____. 2015. A high Aim is Better Than a Low One. In: *The Head's Letter*. November.
Skardon, Alvin. 1971. *Church Leader for the Cities: William Augustus Muhlenberg*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
Sellers, Charles G. 1994. *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1915-1846*. New York: Oxford University Press.
Smith, James K. A. 2016. *You Are What You Love*. Ada, MI: Brazos Press.
Taylor, Charles. 1989. Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
_____. 2007. *A Secular Age*. Cambridge MA: Belknap/Harvard.
Ware, Kallistos. 1988. A Still Small Voice. Film produced by Owen and Julie Jones and Brian Boyer, and narrated by Bill Kurtis. Atlanta: Foundation for Faith in Search of Understanding.
Williams, Rowan. 2023. Review of McGilchrist, *The Matter with Things*. *Los Angeles Review of Books*. January 8. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/a/a-brain-of-two-minds.

Liberal Learning and the Legacy of Colonialism: Revisiting Michael Oakeshott's Conversational Conception of Education

KEVIN WILLIAMS
Centre for Evaluation, Quality and Inspection, School of Policy and Practice, Institute of Education, Dublin City University

Abstract: There are four strands to the argument of this paper. The first explores the nature of conversation and its role in education in Oakeshott's work. The second examines his conception of liberal education as it applies to language and literature and addresses the plausibility of the charge that he neglects the role of colonialism in his vision of the curriculum. The argument of strands three and four is that in principle Oakeshott's conception of liberal learning can be hospitable to colonialist concerns in respect of the profile of literature and of the place of marginalized languages in the curriculum.

Keywords: Non-Western cultures, Literature, France, Africa, Ambivalence, Languages, Marginal, *Bildung*

Oakeshott's commitment to the educational potential of conversation is clear in the title of the essay "The Voice of Conversation in the Education of Mankind" (2004), first published in 1948. In another major essay, "The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind" (1991), first published in 1959, he gives further explicit and eloquent expression to the relationship between conversation and education. The metaphor of education as a conversation is attractive and remains popular. There is, however, a problematic dimension to the version of the educational conversation to be found in Oakeshott's work. This finds expression in demands to decolonize education, demands that have led academic disciplines in the West to explore both the consequences of colonialism and the possible complicity of some scholars in the colonial enterprise. In philosophy of education, this involves critical scrutiny of conceptions of education, especially in respect of curriculum content (Daniels and Enslin 2023).

I am conscious that Oakeshott's work should be read as reflecting an era when the issue of colonialism featured little in academic writing. Nonetheless, Aline Nardo suggests that his work may enable us to "re-examine the idea of 'canon' and radically reform long-held perspectives about 'dominant culture' in educational discourses and institutions" (Nardo 2022, p. 110). Though she acknowledges that it may appear "strange" on account of his conservatism, Nardo draws attention to the potential of Oakeshott's work in "renewing the liberal education tradition for today" (Ibid.). This argument is consistent with that of the radical, left-wing thinker Maxine Greene (2005) who finds fertile Oakeshott's metaphor of education as initiation into a conversation. She argues to telling effect in an essay on the fu-

ture of the American public school that the Oakeshottian conversation can be interpreted broadly enough to include colonialist, female and working-class voices as well as popular and folk arts (Greene 2005, pp. 161-163). The purpose of this paper is tease out these suggestions by demonstrating the compatibility of the curriculum proposed by Oakeshott in respect of literature and languages with the decolonizing impulse of our time.

The paper focuses on the curricular implications of Oakeshott's work rather than on his failure to foreground European nations' historical involvement in colonialism. His tendency to concentrate on Western sources can be seen in the literature and languages that he usually draws upon. Yet the curriculum of liberal learning that he espouses can include the critique of colonialism in important classical and contemporary Western literary texts and can be shown to be hospitable to the inclusion of non-Western literature. This curriculum can also embrace the worlds of marginalized languages. Accordingly, Oakeshott's version of the conversation that makes up liberal education can accommodate the challenge of colonialism. The paper contains four sections. The first examines the concept of "conversation" and its role in education. The second addresses the role of language and literature in Oakeshott's curriculum of liberal learning and considers the challenge of colonialism in respect of this curriculum. The third and fourth sections argue that in principle his vision of the curriculum of liberal education is hospitable to literature that challenges colonialism and to non-Western literary sources, and that it can also include marginalized languages.

At this point it will be helpful to provide a brief overview of Oakeshott's ideas on education. Education is central theme in his writings and even his writings on general philosophical issues offer much that is of direct educational interest. In this perspective he tells us in "Learning and Teaching", one of the essays in a collection of his writings on education, that much of his epistemology "springs from reflecting upon teaching and learning rather than from reflecting upon the nature of knowledge" (Oakeshott 1989a, p. 57). Of course, this relationship between general philosophy and education is hardly surprising in that the central concerns of philosophy, the nature and purpose of the human person and the identification of the good life for her or him, are also the central questions of education. His essays on education are then firmly rooted in a coherent and comprehensive position in the general philosophical areas of epistemology, philosophy of mind, and moral and political philosophy. His essays on education affirm the centrality of these broad areas in philosophy to issues in education and exemplify the manner in which philosophy is related to education and education to philosophy.

The educational tradition from which Oakeshott speaks and of which he is such an eloquent advocate is one of great historical importance. It is the tradition which was represented in the educational practice of the schools of Athens, the Grammar school, the *lycée* and the *Gymnasium*. It is also the tradition upheld by such writers as Cardinal Newman and Thomas Arnold in the nineteenth century. It is also worth noting that R. S. Peters and P. H. Hirst, who offer a more recent expression of this tradition of liberal education, have been profoundly influenced by Michael Oakeshott as writer and teacher (Hirst 1974; Williams 2009).

LIBERAL EDUCATION AS A CONVERSATION

As the notion is complex and fluid, it is necessary to ask what Oakeshott means by liberal education. He explains that the term refers "above all else" both to "an education in imagination" and "an initiation into the art of … conversation" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 39). This education of the imagination offers a "release" that takes learners beyond the parochial concerns of the "getting and spending" (Wordsworth 1966) of everyday living. Liberal education enables a "release…from the tyranny of the moment and from the servitude of a merely current condition" and it offers "the reward of a human identity and of a character capable in some measure of the moral and intellectual adventure which constitutes a specifically human life" (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 93). The force of liberal in his conception of education is then its power to take us beyond the parochialism of the present. Enjoying this liberation is not an easy achievement. It is:

> at once a discipline and a release; and it is the one in virtue of being the other. It is a difficult engagement of learning by study in a continuous and exacting re-direction of attention and refinement of understanding which calls for humility, patience and courage. And its reward is an emancipation from the mere 'fact of living', from the immediate contingencies of place and time of birth (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 93).

This liberation from the world of "getting and spending" distinguishes liberal from vocational education. The learning in vocational education is tied to the world of practical endeavor rather than liberated from it.

Oakeshott chooses the metaphor of conversation as particularly apt to capture the spirit of liberal education. Oakeshott's commitment to the educational potential of conversation is articulated in the title of the essay "The Voice of Conversation in the Education of Mankind" (2004), where he gives explicit and eloquent expression to the relationship between conversation and liberal education. How, then, does he understand this relationship? He puts it as follows:

> Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of … conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation (Oakeshott 1991, pp. 490-491).

Conversation and liberal education share an open-ended character because the principal activities with which education is concerned, in particular science and history, have no terminus prescribed or prescriptible in advance (see Williams 2007, pp. 27-44). The educational conversation is "an endless unrehearsed intellectual adventure in which, in imagination, we enter into a variety of modes of understanding the world and ourselves …" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 39). Further:

> As civilized human beings, we are the inheritors, neither of an inquiry about ourselves and the world, nor of an accumulating body of information, but of a conversation, begun in the primeval forests and made more articulate in the course of centuries. It is a conversation which goes on both in public and within each of ourselves … It is the ability to participate in this conversation, and not the ability to reason cogently, to make discoveries about the world, or to contrive a better world, which distinguishes the human being from the animal and the civilized man from the barbarian. … [T]he final measure of intellectual achievement is in terms of its contribution to the conversation in which all universes of discourse meet (Oakeshott 1991, pp. 490-491).

Conversation, he writes, appears "whenever talk is indulged in for its own sake, without ulterior motive" (Oakeshott 2004, p. 187), and must be distinguished from transactional or instrumental discourse, that is, discourse where our concern is with the expeditious satisfaction of wants. With genuine conversation, as he explains, "we do not ask what it is 'for'" (Oakeshott 1989d, p. 98), because the point of conversation lies within the activity of conversing itself, i.e., in the pleasure, stimulation, and enlightenment that it provides. "Conversation is not an enterprise designed to yield an extrinsic profit, a contest where a winner gets a prize, nor is it an activity of exegesis; it is an unrehearsed intellectual adventure" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 490). This is why we can speak of conversation as valuable in itself or for its own sake. Elizabeth Corey explains the spirit of conversation in Oakeshott's thought very well. It embraces "a focus on living in the present, a rejection of purpose and achievement in favor of enjoyment, a reading of the human condition that is both limited and expansive …" (Corey 2006, p. 229). Many conversations are also open-ended in the sense that they have no definable end point, and they can be suspended and taken up again on future occasions.

> In conversation:
>
> 'facts' appear only to be resolved once more into the possibilities from which they were made … Thoughts of different species take wing and play round one another, responding to each other's movements and provoking one another to fresh exertions (Oakeshott 1991, p. 489).

In all of the forementioned respects, conversation mirrors exactly the activity of teaching and learning that characterizes liberal education. As noted earlier, Oakeshott's attractive metaphor of liberal education as a conversation remains popular and continues to be explored and applied in philosophy of education. This is reflected in the very title of a volume, published some years ago, edited by David Bakhurst and Paul Fairfield (2016), *Education and Conversation: Exploring Oakeshott's Legacy*. The twelve chapters of the book offer original and exciting perspectives on the relationship between conversation and education in his work. But probably the classic and most influential statement on the metaphor was made by Paul Hirst (1974):

> Perhaps the most suggestive picture of the outcome [of a liberal education] is that used by Professor Michael Oakeshott, though for him it has more literal truth than is here intended. In this the various forms of knowledge are seen as voices in a conversation, a conversation to which they each contribute in a distinctive way. If taken figuratively, his words express more succinctly than mine can precisely what it seems to me a liberal education is and what its outcome will be (Hirst 1974, p. 52).

It is indeed true that conversation is a central activity in teaching and learning. Even exploring thoughts and ideas with others in itself could be said to be educative. In the context of organized learning, conversation, as the shared exploration of ideas, features in much moral education and also in the teaching of many subjects across the curriculum. It can be fruitful in promoting understanding within the major school subjects and is an essential aspect of the teaching of religion, literature, history, geography, economics, and social studies. Indeed, the relationship between education and conversation is captured in the term 'conversant' used to describe someone who is very informed in an area.

LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE IN OAKESHOTT'S CURRICULUM

This essay concentrates on the role of language and literature in Oakeshott's vision of the curriculum. His comments on this role appear in detail in "Education: The Engagement and its Frustration" (1989c), first published in 1973, and are elaborated further in "A Place of Learning" (1989b), first published in 1975:

> But what I have been describing is what the ancient Athenians understood as *paideia*; and, sometimes more narrowly and at others more generously, it was what was passed (with appropriate changes) from the schools of the Roman Empire to the cathedral, the collegiate, guild and grammar schools of medieval Christendom. Moved by a vivid consciousness of an intellectual and moral inheritance of great splendour and worth, this was the notion of education which informed the schools of renaissance Europe and which survived in our own grammar and public schools and their equivalents in continental Europe (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 71).

He elaborates on the rediscovery of the Greek and Latin inheritance in "A Place of Learning" (1989b). This "almost lost culture" was to reveal itself as "one of great intellectual splendour, variety and reflective energy" within which individuals could "identify" themselves through gaining access to "a wealth of hitherto unheard-of invitations to explore and understand … [themselves]: Languages recognized as investments in thought; epic, dramatic, lyric and historical literatures, which gave a new dimension to human relation-

ships, emotions, aspirations, and conduct" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 30). The cultural inheritance has subsequently "been extended to include new and substantial vernacular languages and literature" (Ibid.).

Even where education was conceived as a preparation for a role in society—what he calls "socialization"—perhaps the one significant element of culture that it offered was "catechetical teaching" (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 83). This was "the only suggestion made to those who enjoyed it that they might recognize themselves as something more and other than potential units in what was coming to be thought of as a 'productive system'". This "religious instruction":

> frowned upon in France, but elsewhere part of the curriculum … cannot have been very inspiring, but it at least intimated an identity and a 'quality of life' beyond the 'fact of life'; in Biblical stories something like an inheritance of human understandings was at least dimly to be discerned; and for many the Bible was the only 'literature' they were acquainted with (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 83).

For example, study of the Bible allowed young people imaginatively to engage with "the sufferings of Job" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 40).

Regarding the study of languages, these were conceived:

> not as the means of contemporary communication but as investments in thought and records of perceptions and analogical understandings; [where] literatures [were] recognized as the contemplative exploration of beliefs, emotions, human characters and relationships in imagined situations, liberated from the confused, cliché-ridden, generalized conditions of commonplace life and constituting a world of ideal human expressions inviting neither approval nor disapproval but the exact attention and understanding of those who read (Oakeshott 1998b, p. 33).

He further explains that the aim of the:

> educational engagement in respect of languages is to initiate learners into a language as a source and a repository of human understandings and sentiments, and it was this which the collegiate and grammar schools of England and their equivalents elsewhere undertook in respect of Latin and Greek and to a lesser extent in respect of a native language. What the learner submitted himself to was not a 'linguistic discipline' but an initiation into exactitudes of thought and generosities of feeling, into literatures and into histories in which the 'fact of life' was illuminated by a 'quality of life'. And when modern languages became part of our educational engagement (first, perhaps, in schools for girls) they were chosen for their literatures and they were designed to provoke the learner to identify himself in terms of a larger European culture: it was to read Lessing and Goethe, Moliere and Racine, Dante and Leopardi, Cervantes and Calderon (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 89).

Elsewhere he writes of the response of young learners to the events recounted in the *Iliad* or "the terror, the complication and the pity of the human condition revealed in a drama of Shakespeare or Racine" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 40). The study of great literature has a role in shaping the moral sensibility, and he draws attention to the different sensibilities likely to be developed by young people in the English-speaking world through exposure to Shakespeare and to that likely to be acquired by young French people through study of Racine (Oakeshott 1991, p. 536). The study of literature and languages is central to what he refers to on several occasions as the "ordeal of consciousness" that constitutes a liberal education (Oakeshott 1989b, pp. 23, 28; 1989c, p. 93). Note, however, that Oakeshott in this passage makes no reference to literature in languages other than German, French, Italian, and Spanish. This is a very significant omission, as it excludes many distinguished authors in minority languages—for example, Jaroslav Hašek who wrote in Czech, C. P. Cavafy who wrote in Greek, or Henrick Ibsen, who wrote in Norwegian.

Is Oakeshott's literary inheritance of "great intellectual splendour, variety and reflective energy" hegemonic?

It is true that Oakeshott concentrates on the major languages of Europe and the literary traditions of Europe and Judaism, and he writes of learners identifying themselves "in terms of a larger European culture" (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 89). This makes him vulnerable to the criticism of Eurocentrism. There is a view, expressed, for example, by Gail Lewis (2006, p. 88) in a series of claims that shall be challenged later in this essay. She alleges that European culture is racist and "exclusionary" of non-white voices and that Europeans consider their culture superior to other cultures. Defending the view that European culture is elitist, racist, and exclusionary, Lewis challenges the very concept of Europeanness. She argues that on account of the "instability and constructedness" of the concept:

> it is more appropriate to think of 'Europe' as an idea that privileges a particular spatial configuration and also attempts to claim a specific – and superior – way of being human as its especial characteristic (Lewis 2006, p. 91).

She argues that the:

> attempt by the European Union (EU) to construct a common European identity, grounded in claims that Europe is the cradle of civilization, inscribes an imaginary of Europe that is exclusionary and elitist (Lewis 2006, p. 88).

Another strand to Lewis's criticism is her claim that one "consequence of the idea of Europe as the land of 'modern' nation-states and 'civilization'" is that it also endorses racism (Ibid.).

Before addressing Lewis's claims, it is important, however, to note that the denigration of others in Europe is not just colonial in character. It can also be internal to these nations whereby the needs of minority groups living within national borders are denied. In the Bakhurst and Fairfield volume, Shaun Gallagher (2016) argues that the "conversation of mankind" is a "hegemonic" project tied to the interests of the establishment (Gallagher 2016, p. 156). He is thinking both of socio-economic vested interests within Western countries and of imperialist interests. This attitude is captured in the words of Hyacinth Robinson, a character in Henry James's novel *The Princess Casamassima*, who expresses very aptly the elitist aspect of much of European culture. "The conquests of learning and taste, the general fabric of civilisation as we know it", he remarks, are "based … upon all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies, and the rapacities of the past" (James 1887, p. 380). These depredations are visited upon both the victims of colonialism and upon the poor within Western countries. But, as explained earlier in this essay with reference to the work of Nardo (2022) and Greene (2005), Oakeshott's conversation of humankind is hospitable to colonialist voices and this is precisely the argument of this paper

It is true, as Fred Dallmayr (2001) puts it in another context, that Oakeshott's conversation has to "steer a difficult path" between, on the one hand, a "hegemonic universalism" and, on the other, "an array of self-enclosed, ethnocentric particularisms" (Dallmayr 2001, p. 332). The burden of the argument of the two sections that follow is that Oakeshott successfully steers this "difficult path". Just as the curriculum came to be extended beyond the study of Greek and Latin culture "to include new and substantial vernacular languages and literature" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 30), it can also accommodate non-Western literature and languages. Moreover, as shall be shown in the section that follows, it is simply inaccurate to describe the Western literary inheritance as an instrument of a supremacist endeavor.

CHALLENGING THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

Before proceeding, it will be helpful to say something about an issue that is centrally relevant to the discussion of literature. It concerns the notion of canonicity in respect of literary texts and the criteria for inclusion within it. This is a very complex issue, and it has engaged the attention of many commentators, so it is not necessary to address it in detail. Suffice it to make two observations. First, the works deemed worthy of inclusion in the canon must be distinguished from literature that serves as mere entertainment to be read, then discarded like used ink cartridges from a printer. Canonical literature offers challenge and even resistance, though texts need not be as difficult as *Finnegans Wake*. Second, the canon refers to works that critics and readers judge to be most worthy of canonical status, though there will never be unanimity about which texts such be included. The notion of canonicity is contested on the grounds that it confers privileged status on male, Western authors (Anim-Addo, Osbourne, and Sesay 2010). This claim overlooks many great female authors from Sappho to Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf, Toni Morrison, and Elizabeth Bishop, whose works have a place in the canon. Toni Morrison provides an example of how an author can assimilate the canon and extend it. She studied Classics at university and wrote her M.A. on Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, but her work captures powerfully the Black female experience. As Anika Prather (2025) notes in her essay "Faith, History, and Anti-Racism: Reclaiming Black Liberation through Christianity and the Western Tradition" in the present issue of this journal, black authors can derive insight from classical works in their writings and "texts of the classical tradition" can serve "as invaluable tools" in the educational project. It is also important to bear in mind that the literary canon is not limited to Western authors. The volumes by Anim-Addo, Osbourne, and Sesay (2010) and by David Damrosch (2022) are replete with powerful examples of non-Western authors. A number of these will be examined later in this essay, as will Oakeshott's references to this literature.

Western Critique of Colonialism

This takes us to another issue that tends to be disregarded by writers such as Gail Lewis (2006), namely, the challenge to colonialism in many classic texts. These undermine occidental preconceptions regarding the status of European civilization and have a contestatory impulse that opposes racism and perceptions of European cultural superiority (Williams 2021, Chang 2020). Imaginative encounters with cultural difference and the experience of cultural asymmetry have been a feature of some classic works of fiction in the Western tradition, for example, *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift 2001), *Candide* (Voltaire 1993), and *Lettres Persanes* (Montesquieu 2001) and in *Bel-ami* (2012a), and "Allouma" by de Maupassant (2012b). The accusation of collusion in the colonial project arises particularly in respect of the depiction of non-Western cultures in Western literature. This charge is well captured in the debate about the status of Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (Achebe 1988). Critics of Conrad claim that he endorses a belief in white superiority, although Conrad's novel can be read differently (Williams 2021). Some of his work challenges racism and perceptions of cultural superiority, but this is not to deny the failure in his representation of black characters and his tendency to treat them as background figures. Yet one of his short novels, *An Outpost of Progress* (2019), captures very powerfully—to draw on the words of Hannah Arendt (2022)—"the banality" of the "evil" of the perpetrators of colonialism.

Twentieth and Twenty-First Century Texts

One of the great plays of the last century, *Translations* by Brian Friel (2000), explores aesthetically and with great insight issues concerning language, culture, identity, and the role of colonization in Ireland. This modern classic drama captures imaginatively how the process of linguistic and cultural assimilation occurs. The similarity between what might be called internal colonization and colonial intervention beyond Europe is a fascinating backstory in *The Colony* by Irish novelist Audrey Magee (2022), where she compares

the colonial intervention of the French in Algeria with that of the British in Ireland. This is also a theme in the novel *The Tainted* by Cauvery Madhavan (2020), where she also notes the similarity between Britain's colonial intervention in India and Ireland (Madhavan 2020, pp. 172-173).

Two interesting texts reflect a complex aspect of colonialism in respect of Canada. The first is *Manikanetish: Petite Marguerite* by Naomi Fontaine (2017) and the other is a short story "Pleure, Pleure!"/"Cry, Cry!" by Andrée Maillet (2012). The protagonist in the former is an Innu woman who returns to her home place, Uashat, the native reserve next to the city of Sept-Îles, Quebec, to work as a teacher, having spent most of her previous life in Quebec City. French rather than Innu became her first language, and its culture became hers. Growing up in Francophone Canada, she felt acutely her difference from the descendants of French colonists. Innu characters in the novel refer to these descendants as "*les blancs*" (white people), though no doubt this term could apply also to Anglophone Canadians. Yammie, the protagonist, does not labor her difference from *les blancs*, though she did feel obliged to avoid attention from her teachers and fellow students as much as possible. In Maillet's (2012) short story, there is an intriguing exploration of tension between *les blanc*s regarding colonization. A Quebecois father is so troubled by the colonizing impact of English on French language and culture that he is unable to reach out in sympathy to his daughter following the breakup of her engagement.

A "Wealth of Hitherto Unheard-of Invitations to Explore and Understand": Texts by Non-Western Authors

Despite the presence of impulses contesting Western superiority in many classic texts, the curriculum needs to include texts that extend beyond the remit of this canon (Anim-Addo, Osbourne, and Sesay 2021) and thereby offer new imaginative experiences to students. As David Damrosch (2022, p. xiii) explains, the curriculum has long concentrated on a "handful" of European authors but has now been expanded to include a "host" of other "classic works". These works, however, tend to be read within "specialized area studies programs" (Damrosch 2002, p. xiii). Including non-Western voices in the canon is not a matter of attempting to assuage guilt about past racial prejudice or to engage in virtue signaling; rather it is to offer to students a "wealth of hitherto unheard-of invitations to explore and understand" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 30). Many texts by non-Western authors offer an opportunity to readers to expand their imaginations. It is noteworthy that Oakeshott, with his deep respect for tradition to be found in the European authors mentioned previously, also draws on the work of non-Western writers. Very frequently in his writing he references Saint Augustine, whose work he greatly admired (for example in Oakeshott 1991, pp. 278, 279, 292, 537). Though a seminal figure in the Western tradition, St. Augustine was in fact North African. Moreover, Oakeshott also draws on Chinese thinkers (Confucius and Chuang Tzu or Zhuangz), and his thinking is informed by their work. He invokes the latter's work to affirm the importance of practical over theoretical knowledge in craftwork and in morality (Oakeshott 1991, pp. 14, 41, 480; Williams 2014a).

An important benefit of reading non-Western authors is to allow readers to enjoy access to the colonial experience. Nevertheless, here it is wise to enter a note of caution and to recall a lesson that Oakeshott has well taught, that is, to be extremely circumspect, in making blanket judgements about social, political, and moral life (Williams 2014a). Colonialism has quite rightly been indicted for its predations, but the concept is complex, and the ambivalence of its character should not be overlooked. It is undeniable, however, that colonialism has a very negative aspect, for example, it can engender subservience on the part of the colonized. Cauvery Madhavan (2020) in *The Tainted*, mentioned previously, captures the colonial mentality of the Indians that resulted from British rule in a manner that recalls E. M. Forster's (2010) classic *A Passage to India*. This attitude is communicated in the words of one of the characters. "Indians made a great servant class—they were biddable and faithful" (Madhavan 2020, p. 172). Even thirty-five years since India became independent, many "still haven't been able to shake off that colonial mentality—the unquestioning acceptance of any higher authority, the deference, the fatalistic acceptance that someone else knows what's better for you" (Madhavan 2020, p. 172). Yet the ambivalence of colonialism concerns the extent to which

Europeans become embedded in the countries in which they settle. Many French settlers and their descendants in Algeria and Morocco came to consider themselves as belonging to these countries. They felt the same experience of belonging to the land as the descendants of the seventeenth-century British settlers or planters in Northern Ireland. Camus captures very well the sense of being an Algerian in his autobiographical fiction *The First Man* (1995). It is not that the working-class people of French ancestry among whom Camus's alter ego Jacques grew up had a highly developed sense of cultural belonging. They lived in Algiers and their main concern was simple survival. The influence of France, like that of the Catholic Church, was light touch, "an abstraction" (Camus 1995, p. 162) that had little bearing on their lives. There was no sense that in school young people were being introduced to a superior civilization.[1]

Beyond the Remit of the Western Canon

I turn next to more texts beyond the remit of the Western canon that would fit well within the educational conversation. In his wonderful survey of literature from around the world, David Damrosch (2022) chooses some striking poems originally written in Nahuatl, a Mayan language. The speaker represents the Pope as greedy for gold rather than as a spiritual person and man of God, with "his cross and golden staff. . . shining in the world" (Damrosch 2002, p. 320). Despite the cultural difference the poems touch on themes familiar to Western readers. One is that that life is but a dream: "We come here only to sleep, we come here only to dream;/it is not true, it is not true that we come to live on earth" (Damrosch 2002, p. 321). Another theme is the transience of life. The speaker wonders if we have "sprung up on earth in vain" and if he shall "perish like the flowers". He asks: "Will my fame eventually fade away,/Will my renown be nothing on earth?" (Ibid.).

The collection *Poems from the Edge of Extinction: An Anthology of Poetry in Endangered Languages*, edited by Chris McCabe (2021) discloses cultures embodied in marginalized languages that finds expression in literary form. The collection offers many examples of poetry as an important conduit to the most fragile of endangered languages. It is replete with beautiful poems in marginal and minority languages that affirm these cultures, and which embrace a whole way of naming the world. For example, John Smelcer writes with difficulty in the Ahtna language of Alaska, whose words "are scattered like clouds" (McCabe 2021, p. 65). He cannot speak "like an Ahtna elder,/but I hear the voice of a spirit,/hear it at a distance/speaking quietly to me" (Ibid.). Another of many memorable poems is "Jesus Never Understood My Grandmother's Prayers" by Micheas Sánchez and translated into English by David Shook. The speaker's grandmother explains that, because she is unable to speak Spanish, her prayers in the Zoque language cannot be heard by the Christian God and saints (McCabe 2021, p. 99). These poems would consort well within Oakeshott's curriculum of liberal learning, which can be made more expansive and inclusive by the additions of non-Western voices. It is important for students to encounter imaginative worlds that are inscribed in languages other than English and other major Western languages and to learn that these texts are also a vital part of the earth's literary and linguistic ecosystem. Students may then come to avoid the kind of cultural alienation that Anika Prather (2025) describes so poignantly in her essay in the present issue of this journal.

'Exactitudes of Thought and Generosities of Feeling': Extending the Language Curriculum

The languages represented in the volume just mentioned are either minority or marginalized. As already noted, however, Oakeshott considers only the languages of Western Europe, though, in principle, his curriculum can include languages beyond the boundaries of the Occident and indeed minority Western languages—for example, Hungarian, Dutch, and the Baltic and Balkan languages—and also marginalized languages such as Sorbian, Livonian, and Scots Gaelic. The argument of this paper is that in principle the school curriculum can be hospitable to the inclusion of marginalized languages such as First Nations languages in the Americas and Antipodes and marginalized languages such as Frisian and Breton. My concern here, however, is not with minority languages such as Hungarian, Dutch, or the Baltic and Balkan

languages. These languages are not widely spoken, but they are not marginalized or subordinated by major languages. Nor is the role of heritage languages (by which is meant the family languages of immigrants) a primary concern, because these languages are normally widely spoken (for example, Arabic, Turkish, or Tagalog) in the home countries of immigrants.

Every language offers "an initiation into exactitudes of thought and generosities of feeling" (Oakeshott 1989c, p. 89). The study of all spoken languages offers the same linguistic and psychological benefits, and these benefits have been examined in detail elsewhere (Williams 2017, 2019). Languages introduce learners to new worlds of thought by revealing different linguistic maps for representing the world and by making them aware of the nature of language. To paraphrase the words of the dwarf referenced by the extraordinary polyglot and author Joseph Conrad (1971) in the Preface to his novel *Youth*, languages represent something dearer than "the wealth of all the world". Knowledge of other languages also increases our capacity to rejoice in the wonder of words used by humankind. And, in as far as the study of a second language has a specific and unique contribution to make to the linguistic education of young people, one language will serve as well as another. Mastery of a marginalized language is unlikely to attract the same esteem as command of German, Spanish, or French, yet success in acquiring facility in the former languages is as likely as success at learning any other language to increase the confidence necessary to learn new languages. Initiation into the riches of marginalized languages can be an essential feature of the *Bildung* or self-formation of some young people whose languages have been suppressed or subordinated. It is a form of epistemic injustice to deny speakers of these languages the opportunity to use these languages. This initiation may be necessary to allow them fully to participate in the conversation of humankind.

The specific grounds for teaching marginalized languages include the following. Every language that we speak is a source of personal enrichment and brings its own intellectual benefits. Languages allow for unique speech acts that cannot be replicated exactly in translation. They are part of the ecology of their cultures and offer a connection to the past. These precious linguistic spectacles give access to unique windows on the world, especially where the languages are under threat as a result of colonization. This can be internal or external. China offers an example of internal colonization. Unlike in countries constituted in large part by immigrants and Indigenous people (e.g., the United States, Canada, and Australia), ethnic minorities in China have always been part of the country. As Cong and Jackson (2021) explain, language assimilation has occurred among minority groups in the country. They found that "many minority languages have changed, declined, and vanished due to the influence of Mandarin and assimilation" (Cong and Jackson 2021, p. 338).

A Philosophical Perspective

The place of marginalized languages and the necessity to respect unique linguistic cultures have been matters of concern for philosophers who have written on the theme of multiculturalism. Ethan Nowak (2019) examines much of this work in an essay on the subject where he draws on the contributions of Will Kymlicka and Ronald Dworkin. Nowak's central claim is that each "language makes a distinctive range of speech acts possible, speech acts that cannot be realized by means of any other language" (ibid., pp. 2-3). Accordingly, "people who share a language share the ability to perform and recognize actions of a set of types that non-speakers cannot perform or recognize" (ibid., p. 305). This means that preserving and protecting a language entail preserving and protecting a culture. He describes language as the "most fine-grained tool we have for making our inner lives public and for making our personalities manifest in a way that other agents can recognize and engage with" (ibid.). Consequently, "our social identities are in large part constituted by the decisions we make about how to speak" and there is, therefore, "an important sense in which self-determination depends on our having access to a community of others who speak our language" (ibid.).

It is necessary, however, to avoid exaggerated claims about the relationship between languages and the world. Languages do offer their own windows on the world, but they do not imprison speakers in a solip-

sistic universe. There is a very balanced view of the role of language in shaping world views in the wonderful Shetlandic poem by Christine de Luca (2024) where the speaker explains the relationship between languages and conceptions of the world. (Shetlandic is Old Scots that is strongly influenced by Norwegian. The quotations are from the author's English translation.) The speaker notes that languages indeed provide "more than one way of speaking, of making sense of things". By contrast, monoglots "never taste even a morsel from other tables". Command of two languages provides speakers with "unconscious feasting: two ways of thinking". The speaker explains that one "extends the other; can show us another world", but the speaker affirms that the worlds revealed are all "just the same", although they are simultaneously also "different". As Norma Dunning writes in her poem "Inuit", "Inuit breathe in two worlds./Past and present./Yesterday and today./North and South./We are one in two ways" (McCabe 2022, p. 69).[2]

This is consistent with the rejection of extreme versions of linguistic determinism whereby the life choices that a culture makes available are necessarily determined by the language we speak. Nowak draws on a passage of Ronald Dworkin's to make a more nuanced version of the argument on the relationship between language and culture:

> People need a common culture and particularly a common language even to have personalities, and culture and language are social phenomena. We can only have the thoughts, and ambitions, and convictions that are possible within the vocabulary that language and culture provide, so we are all, in a patent and deep way, the creatures of the community as a whole (Dworkin 1989, p. 488).

Two aspects of Dworkin's argument offer plausible grounds for preserving and protecting marginalized languages, first that "we are all, in a patent and deep way, the creatures of the community as a whole", and second that we require "a common language even to have personalities". Nowak goes on to explain the role that language plays in how we conceptualize our world and how we project this conceptualization to others. Oakeshott's two terms—"self-enactment" and "self-disclosure"—are helpful here (Oakeshott 1975, pp. 70-78). The former refers to how we understand ourselves and the latter refers to how we present ourselves to others. These terms capture very well the two aspects of the process that Nowak has in mind. A shared language allows us to present ourselves to the world and allows others to perceive us in a much fuller sense as we really are. It thus enables us most fully to enter into the educational conversation.

It is indeed possible to convey to others a sense of one's personality and for others to see that we are cheerful, positive, generous, and good humored or else glum, negative, mean-spirited, and impatient. Yet when we are not speaking our mother tongue, the full, rich, and fine-grained dimension of our personalities may not necessarily be apparent. Use of our first language allows us most fully to interact with others. Nowak offers a striking musical analogy to make this point. He invites readers to imagine a community where every member is gifted at playing the piano and where social relationships are shaped by "musical interactions" (Nowak 2019, p. 327). Then he asks us to consider a situation where your piano is taken away and replaced by a tin whistle. You become competent at playing this new instrument.

> [Y]ou might be able to do pretty well in interactions with pianists, but there is no question that you are condemned for the rest of your life to play in a much lower resolution than everyone else. The reduction in your space of expressive possibilities here seems especially lamentable given that you have this incredible piano music inside you, this latent expressive capability that now, no one can ever recognize (Ibid.).

This shows that using one's language and learning to become more skilled in expressing oneself in that language are important features in self-formation or *Bildung*. There is another aspect to this defense of the place of marginalized languages and this is their role in fostering a sense of belonging. As noted previously, depriving young people of access to these languages is a form of epistemic injustice.

This is because marginalized languages provide access to communal life that is part of individual *Bildung*. A central theme of Friel's *Translations* (2000), mentioned above, is the importance of language in naming the natural world and giving people a sense of belonging to their habitat—a theme that has been the focus of significant academic attention in various cultural contexts (Chiblow and Meighan 2023). Mairi McFadyen makes this point very point forcefully with regard to Scots Gaelic:

> Language and its creative expression through song, story, poetry and rhymes … encodes human experience and memory, honed to the rhythms and patterns of speech which are connected to the land itself. Together they form a cultural ecology which passes on knowledge of flora and fauna, geological forms and weather patterns, revealing ecological rhythms on which our life depends (McFadyen 2020).

This connects with the research of Paul J. Meighan (2022), who argues that there is a crucial difference between learning major languages and Indigenous languages because the latter are "place-based" and embedded in a "land, culture, community and worldview" (Meighan 2002, p. 13). A similar argument is made regarding Irish by Manchán Magan. In an interview about his book *Thirty-Two Words for Field: Lost Words of the Irish Landscape*, Magan explains that the language is deeply woven into the fabric of the land and its inhabitants (O'Connell 2020). For example, original place names reveal much about "the history, topography and folklore of the land" (ibid.). By being anglicized, these names have been "rendered into garbled and discordant forms" (ibid.). Despite the importance of these languages, it is necessary to be realistic about their place in the conversation of humankind. Indeed, one lesson that Oakeshott teaches is the importance of being realistic about language policy. He indicts the extreme efforts of the Irish government to impose the Irish language upon the majority of English speakers (Williams 2014b).

Realism and Aspiration

Realism is necessary about the challenge posed by recovering a marginalized language simply because it is part of one's heritage. It may well be that participation in the conversation of humankind does not require facility in the marginalized language. In my own case, in certain areas of my life—in academic discourse, for example—I am probably more comfortable in English than in Irish, which is my native language. For some people the marginalized language may be too distant from them. For example, the author Jenny Colgan (2022) made serious attempts to learn Scots Gaelic, the language of her ancestors and of her husband, but in the end admitted failure, largely on account of difficulties with pronunciation. The enthusiasm and desire to learn a language may not be matched by willingness to do the hard work involved. This realism is relevant when it comes to including marginalized languages in the curriculum. It is important to warn against exaggerated expectations of what might be achieved in schools. It is appropriate to offer an opportunity to young people to learn these languages while, at the same time, avoiding imposition of the excessive and largely unproductive burden that the policy of compulsory Irish has entailed for many young Irish people (Williams 2014b). This also applies to teaching the children whose parents are immigrants from Indian, Turkish, North African, or other backgrounds. Study of their heritage language in school extends access to their cultural patrimony as well as many of the other educational benefits of language learning. But it is misguided to assume that all young people will be keen to learn these languages, some because of the pressure of curriculum overload and others because they wish to leave their parents' culture behind them. The pressure due to curriculum overload is articulated very well in an interview with Mrs. Chen, a Chinese mother in the United Kingdom:

> Because of our busy life, we have the aspiration but not the energy. Seriously, (we) have the heart and will but not the strength. We have two children …[with] so much homework from their

> schools, so there is really little time left for Chinese (Curdt-Christiansen, Wei, and Hua 2023, p. 392).

This quotation captures very well the dilemma of immigrant families who wish to preserve their heritage language and foregrounds the conflict between aspiration and realism.

CONCLUSION

Having explored the concept "conversation" and its role in education in Oakeshott's writing, this essay examined the role of literature and language in his curriculum of liberal learning. It then addressed the challenge of colonialism in respect of this curriculum. It is argued that in principle Oakeshott's vision of the curriculum of liberal learning can accommodate literature that challenges colonialism as well as texts by non-Western authors. This vision is then shown also to be hospitable to the teaching of marginalized languages but concludes with a warning against having excessive expectations about their place in school.[3]

NOTES

1 By contrast, the role of the school as a more general vehicle of colonization in Senegal is one of the important themes in *L'Aventure Ambiguë* by Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1961, pp. 57-61).

2 Readers should note the distinction between the Inuit and Innu, referenced earlier. The Inuit are the Indigenous people who live in the Arctic regions of Canada, Alaska, and Greenland. Innu are the Indigenous people who live in the eastern part of Quebec and Labrador.

3 I would like to thank Isaac Radner and for his valuable suggestions on a earlier draft of this text and Anika Prather for helpful insights on literature. Ba mhaith liom buíochas a ghabháil freisin le Gráinne Treanor as a comhairle ar an téacs. Any deficiencies in style or argument are entirely my own responsibility.

REFERENCES

Achebe, C. 1988. An image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In: R. Kimbrough (ed.), 3rd Edition. *Heart of Darkness*: *An Authoritative Text, Background and Sources Criticism* (pp. 251-261). London: W. W. Norton and Co.

Anim-Addo, J., Osbourne, D., and Sesay, K. 2021. *This Is the Canon: Decolonize Your Bookshelf in 50 Books*. London: Greenfinch.

Arendt, H. 2022. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. London: Penguin.

Bakhurst, D. and Fairfield, P. (eds). 2016. *Education and Conversation: Exploring Oakeshott's Legacy.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Camus, A. 1995. *The First Man*. London: Penguin.

Chang, D. 2020. What to do with Eurocentric Curricula: An example from 'Antigone in Ferguson'. *Philosophical Inquiry in Education* 27(1):62-67.

Chiblow, S. and Meighan, P. J. 2023. Anishinabek Giikendaaswin and Dùthchas Nan Gàidheal: Concepts to (Re)center Place-Based Knowledges, Governance, and Land in Times of Crisis. *Ethnicities*:1-18.

Colgan, J. 2022. The Gaelic Language is Stunningly Beautiful, but I Just Can't Get My Tongue Around it. *The Guardian*. 25 July.

Cong, L. and Jackson, L. 2021. Assimilation Over Protection: Rethinking Mandarin Language Assimilation in China. *Multicultural Education Review* 13(4):338-361.

Conrad, J. 1971. *Youth: A Narrative; Heart of Darkness; The End of the Tether*. Dent edition. London: Everyman's Library.

_____. 2019. *An Outpost of Progress and Other Stories*. Mineola: Dover Publications Inc.

Corey, E. C. 2006. *Michael Oakeshott on Religion, Aesthetics and politics*. Columbia: University of Missouri.

Curdt-Christiansen, X., Wei, L., and Hua, Z. 2023. Pride, Prejudice and Pragmatism: Family Language Policies in the UK. *Language Policy* 22:391-411.

Dallmayr, F. 2001. Conversation Across Boundaries: Political Theory and Global Diversity. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30:331-347.

Damrosch, D. 2022. *Around the World in 80 Books*. London: Penguin Random House.
Daniels, S. and Enslin, P. 2023. Paul Hirst, Liberal Education and the Postcolonial Project. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 57(1):91-103.
De Maupassant, G. 2012a. *Bel-Ami*. French classics in French and English. London: Alexander Vassiliev.
_____. 2012b. Allouma. In: G. de Maupassant, *Le Verrou et autres Contes* Grivois, pp. 75-114. Paris: Folio/Gallimard.
De Luca, C. 2024. Same but Different. Scottish Poetry Library. https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/sam-but-different/.
Dworkin, R. 1989. Liberal community. *California Law Review* 77(3):41-64.
Fontaine, N. 2017. *Manikanetish: Petite Marguerite*. Montreal: Mémoire d'Encrier.
Forster, E. M. 2010. *A Passage to India*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
Friel, B. 2000. *Translations*. London: Faber and Faber.
Gallagher, S. 2016. Conversations and Processes of Recognition. In: D. Bakhurst and P. Fairfield (Eds.), *Education and Conversation: Exploring Oakeshott's Legacy*, pp. 143-158. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
Green, M. 2005. Imagining Futures: The Public School and Possibility. In: W. Carr (ed.), *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Philosophy of Education*, pp. 161-173). London and New York: Routledge.
Hirst, P. H. 1974. Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge. In: P. Hirst, *Knowledge and the Curriculum: A Collection of Philosophical Papers*, pp. 30-53). London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
James, H. 1887. *The Princess Casamassima*. London and New York: Macmillan.
Kane, C. H. 1961. *L'aventure ambiguë*. Paris.
Lewis, G. 2006. Imaginaries of Europe: Technologies of Gender, Economies of Power. *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13(2):87-102.
Madhavan, C. 2020. *The Tainted*. London: HopeRoad Publishing.
Magee, A. 2022. *The Colony*. London: Faber.
Maillet, A. 2012. Pleure, Pleure!/Cry, Cry! In: J. Wagner (ed.), *Great French Short Stories of the Twentieth Century/Les Grandes Nouvelles Françaises du Vingtième Siècle*, pp. 58-79. Mineola: Dover Publications.
McCabe, C. (ed.). 2021. *Poems from the Edge of Extinction: An Anthology of Poetry in Endangered Languages*. London: Chambers.
McFayden, M. 2020. Cainnt nan eun: Language of the Birds. Isle of Skye, Sabhal Mr Ostaig: Tobar an Dualchais—Kist o Riches, https://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/blog/cainnt-nan-eun-language-of-the-birds?l=gd.
Meighan, P. J. 2022. Indigenous Language Revitalization Using *TEK-Nology*: How Can Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Technology Support Intergenerational Language Transmission? *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 1-19.
Montesquieu, C-L. de S. 2011. *Lettres Persanes/Persian Letters (French/English bilingual text)*. Milton Keynes: Jiahu Books.
Nardo, A. 2022. Education as Cultural Inheritance: Using Oakeshott and Dewey to Explore the Educational Implications of Recent Advances in Evolutionary Science. *Philosophy of Education*, 78(1):100-114.
Nowak, E. 2019. Multiculturalism, Autonomy and Language Preservation. *Ergo: An Open Access Journal of Philosophy* 6(11):303-333. https://doi.org/10.3998/ergo.12405314.0006.011.
Oakeshott, M. 1975. *On Human Conduct*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
_____. 1989a. Learning and Teaching. In: T. Fuller (ed.), *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, pp. 43-62. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
_____. 1989b. A Place of Learning. In: T. Fuller (ed.), *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, pp. 17-24.
_____. 1989c. Education: The Engagement and its Frustration. In: T. Fuller (ed.), *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, pp. 63-94.
_____. 1989d. The Idea of a University. In: T. Fuller (ed.), *The Voice of Liberal Learning: Michael Oakeshott on Education*, pp. 95-104.
_____. 1991. The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind. In: *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, New and Expanded Edition, pp. 488-541. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund.
_____. 2004. The Voice of Conversation in the Education of Mankind. In: L. O'Sullivan (ed.), *What is History and Other Essays*, pp. 187-199. Exeter and Charlottesville: Imprint Academic.
O'Connell, J. 2020. 32 Words for Field and 50 Words for Penis. What the Irish Language Tells Us About Who We Are. *The Irish Times Magazine*. 29 August. https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/thirty-two-words-for-field-50-for-penis-what-the-irish-language-tells-us-about-who-we-are-1.4334904.
Prather, A. 2025. Faith, History, and Anti-Racism: Reclaiming Black Liberation Through Christianity and the Western Tradition. *COSMOS+TAXIS* 13(3+4)
Swift, J. 2001. *Gulliver's Travels*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions.
Williams, K. 2007. *Education and the Voice of Michael Oakeshott*. Exeter and Charlottesville: Imprint Academic.
_____. 2009. Vision and Elusiveness in Philosophy of Education: R. S. Peters on the Legacy of Michael Oakeshott. *The Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42, Supplement 1:223-40.
_____. 2014a. Oakeshott and the Complex Ecology of The Moral Life. *COSMOS+TAXIS* 1(3):27-24.

_____. 2014b. The Folly of Rationalist Politics: Michael Oakeshott and the Revival of Irish. *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 103(410):147-158.
_____. 2017. Language Learning: Its Moral and Civic Remit. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society* 25(1):59-71.
_____. 2019. The Place of Language Learning in a Liberal Education: Implications for Curriculum Policy in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies* 38(2):141-156.
_____. 2021. Voices of the Establishment or of Cultural Subversion? The Western Canon in the Curriculum. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 55(4-5):864-77.
Wordsworth, W. 1966. The World is Too Much With Us. In: Sir A. Quiller-Couch (ed.). *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, p. 626. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Voltaire. 1993. *Candide (A Dual Language Book)*. Tr. and ed. Shane Weller. Mineola: Dover Publications Inc.

Faith, History, and Anti-Racism: Reclaiming Black Liberation Through Christianity and the Western Tradition

ANIKA T. PRATHER
Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Elementary Education at Catholic University

Abstract: The rejection of the Western Tradition has often resulted in a rejection of Christianity, with many viewing the religion as intertwined with America's history of racism. Ibram X. Kendi's *How to Be an Anti-Racist* begins with his reflections on the difficulties he faced in Christian schools, an experience that led him to conclude that being anti-racist requires a rejection of anything tied to the West. This piece aims to demonstrate how both Christianity and the Western tradition are frequently misunderstood due to America's racist past, and it calls for a reevaluation of these concepts, as many figures in Black history have done. Investigating the role of Christianity and the Western tradition in the liberation of Black people can, in itself, be an act of anti-racism.

Keywords: Liberal Education, Ibram X. Kendi, Anti-racism, Western Tradition, Christianity

STORYTELLING AS METHODOLOGY

> *The story, then, is not just casual entertainment; it reflects a basic and powerful form in which we make sense of the world and experience.*
> — Egan 1989

Since the beginning of humanity, storytelling has been a tool to preserve the true hiSTORIES of our existence. Griots used storytelling to keep the stories of African people alive, stories that traveled across the ocean in the Middle Passage, helping us remember our true roots and origins. I follow this tradition in my writing and research through a methodology I call Academic Storytelling. This is different from simple storytelling, which is often used for entertainment and to spark the imagination. Academic Storytelling grew out of my training in phenomenology, which calls for dissecting narratives of lived experiences, zeroing in on one phenomenon within those experiences. Academic Storytelling doesn't focus on an individual's lived experience but instead centers on true stories of history and their connection to the present. While it may include the author's story and other modern stories, using primary sources and other credible sources, it's always interwoven with the stories of the past, revealing a truth that might otherwise remain hidden.

We must continue telling our stories, linking them to the past, to piece together the full tapestry of all human ex-

periences. In this piece, I will weave my story with that of Ibram X. Kendi and the ancestors who have sought to understand the best way to educate Black people. Ibram X. Kendi begins his book *How to Be an Antiracist* by recounting his experience with racism in Christian schools. Early on, he writes, "I cannot disconnect my parents' religious strivings to be Christian, from my secular strivings to be an anti-racist" (Kendi 2023, p. 17). This narrative serves as the foundation for the book's effort to dismantle racism by acknowledging the racism embedded in American Christianity, with Christianity being a clear symbol of Western influence. These early experiences with Christianity led Kendi to embrace a more African-centered faith, a journey that has profoundly shaped his perspective.

Despite our different life paths, I've found a deep kinship with Kendi's scholarship. Even though we have a generational gap of ten years, and even though our paths never crossed, both of us, as Black individuals, were shaped by Christian educational settings. We never exchanged narratives to reconcile our experiences, but, like Kendi, I remember teachers who perpetuated racial inequities by using biblical doctrines—such as the "Curse of Ham"—to justify beliefs in the inferiority of Black people. Their attitudes were evident in how they treated me and many of my peers. Because of this, I can easily understand, Kendi's eventual estrangement from the Christian faith.

American Christianity has played a central role in the debate over how to best educate Black people, perpetuating deeply ingrained beliefs that the supposed inferiority of Black people (due to the curse of Ham) and the supposed superiority of White people justify different educational treatment, and suggesting that our exposure to human history—past and present—should be unequal. By framing Christianity as the source of a hierarchy for mankind and positioning the White race as THE ethnicity of the Bible, a false narrative was created about a faith that began long before 1619. The Jesus of the West, or the Jesus of America, is not the Jesus of the Bible. The Jesus of the Bible was born in Bethlehem (close to Palestine) but spent his early years in Egypt before settling in Nazareth. These places are named in the Bible and reveal that the Western Jesus, often a figure who repels Black people and other people of color, actually comes from the Middle East and Africa, embodying all ethnicities within him.

I've always known that Jesus wasn't White. One of the first things my parents taught me was that Jesus was a man of color, a blend of every ethnic group. In fact, we weren't allowed to have pictures of Jesus in our home because my parents believed that no one truly knows what he looked like—he looks like all of us. They also taught me about Jesus' lineage, so I could see the many ethnicities woven into his family line. From this, it was clear to me that Jesus was a man of color, because only dark colors can produce light ones. This understanding shaped how I navigated the world, my country, and my faith. I saw the origins of humanity as coming from all of the continents, especially Africa. I was raised to have a raceless mentality when I thought of the Bible, the ancient world, and human history overall.

In his book *Before Color Prejudice*, Frank Snowden seeks to catalog Biblical texts and other ancient primary sources, documenting moments when races intersected and collaborated, even revealing an admiration for Black skin by Greeks and Romans. The ancient world did not look like the Jim Crow-scarred America that we live in today. He says:

> Color prejudice has been a major issue in the modern world. W. E. B. DuBois called it the "problem of the 20th century" and D. B. Saddington, among others, notes that racial difficulties are at their worst when associated with differences in skin color. Notable therefore, is the fact that the ancient world did not make color the focus of irrational sentiments or the basis of uncritical evaluations…nothing comparable to the virulent color prejudice of modern times existed in the ancient world (Snowden 1991, p. 63).

Unfortunately, Christianity, like other traditions appropriated by Western culture (i.e., the classical tradition), has become distorted, with its Whiteness being falsely seen as something that makes it irrelevant to Black people or other people of color. The purpose of my writing is to use my story, Kendi's story and the

stories of the Black ancestors to show that our misunderstanding of Christianity may also be the same misunderstanding that we have about the classical or Western tradition.

HOW WESTERN CHRISTIANITY SHAPED KENDI AND ME

In light of Kendi's and my parallel experiences, a poignant question arises: How did our paths diverge when it comes to faith and hope in America? Sadly, Kendi's negative experiences with faith in America diminished his hope for America. In contrast, I've learned to separate those racist Christian educational experiences from an authentic faith and to recognize that the schools I attended veered away from the orthodox Biblical worldview. Scripture itself speaks to the universal welcome of the Christian faith, and historical accounts show the early encounters of African people with the Gospel. One of the earliest recorded encounters is the story of the Ethiopian Eunuch and how he brought Christianity back to Ethiopia's Queen Candace, or the Kandake, as told in the book of Acts. Then there are the numerous African church fathers, like Augustine, Origen, and Tertullian (Hinson 2021).

However, Africa was not just the home of Christianity but also the birthplace of many other faiths. Contrary to common misconceptions, Africa's rich tapestry includes a diversity of beliefs and cultures, extending hospitality to Yahweh, Allah, Anyame, Jesus, Ra, and others. I reject the notion that the West or America exclusively shaped Christianity, as it's often portrayed by Kendi. His understanding of Christianity is limited, as it's tied only to slavery, racism, and imperialism without considering the broader historical perspective of Christianity before America. Some African church fathers were educated in Greece or Rome, but not through colonization. Christianity didn't begin in those spaces. There was a faith before the term "Christianity," born on the Day of Pentecost with a small group of Jesus' Jewish disciples—an ancient faith that welcomed Jews, Africans, Greeks, Romans, Asians, and many other groups. From this inclusivity, what we now call Christianity spread worldwide, reaching figures like Augustine, Origen, Tertullian, and others.

Understanding the history of Christianity, along with other elements of the Western tradition, like the classical tradition, is key to understanding African history. The two have been intertwined since the beginning of humanity.

Kendi quotes from a Christian leader named James Cone, who called Black Christianity, the Christianity of the enslaved, not the Christianity of the slaveholder (Kendi 2023, p. 17). Even though this seems like a noble definition at first, it does not reflect the Christianity of the ancient world, where it began in Africa and the Middle East. The Christianity I embrace aligns with the faith of my ancestors, alongside myriad other faiths that have found resonance in the Motherland. This perspective enables me to maintain hope in an America purporting to be a Christian nation, acknowledging that its history diverges from the teachings of the holy scriptures. Recognizing that American Christianity is based upon a false narrative, liberates me to view America through a lens of grace; my faith instills hope in its potential transformation, because I understand that its Christian roots are not Christianity at all, and once these truths are unearthed then we all can move forward in truth, healing and unity.

Kendi was intentional in opening his book *How to be An Antiracist* by reflecting on his experiences in America's Christian schools. For context, I had similar experiences in White Christian schools during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. These formative years were characterized by trauma and disillusionment, as overt racism pervaded the educational environment. From the moment I walked into the classroom, teachers and administrators unequivocally conveyed that people of color were not welcomed into the space, invoking biblical justifications for their prejudiced beliefs. The Christian schools I attended during the early 70s had been established to evade the court-mandated desegregation of the 1960s, only to be met with constitutional scrutiny (Blaiklock 2022). As we entered high school, my brother and I, despite our two-year age gap, shared a mutual disdain for Christian colleges' recruitment efforts within our schools, recognizing them as attempts to mask pervasive racism. Repeatedly, we declared, "There is NO WAY we are going to attend college in such a racist environment." At that juncture, my outlook lacked the grace and forgiveness that characterize my current perspective. I harbored a profound bitterness towards the Christianity I encountered

from pre-K through 12th grade, rejecting its presence within White communities and souring my perception of America.

But other messages also informed my growing-up years. Throughout my upbringing, my parents imparted knowledge of our African heritage, drawing upon biblical and world history. Thankfully, they equipped me to discern the flawed theology perpetuated by many White Christian churches. Anticipating the false narratives we would encounter within Christian schools, they provided us with an historical context of American Christianity's racist origins. They elucidated how the "Curse of Ham" was weaponized to justify our subjugation and oppression. Moreover, they illuminated scripture's affirmation of the universality of humanity, underscoring Christianity's intrinsic connection to Africa and the world prior to colonization. My experiences within Christian schools, though arduous to reconcile, helped me understand, and commit to rectifying, the historical wounds inflicted by racism within Christian theology.

Kendi's seminal work unveils his understanding of the entwined roots of racism and Christianity in America's past. America's first schools were "Christian" and formed a foundational framework for all of education in America. Denial of this historical reality only perpetuates the festering of old wounds. Acknowledgment of this past signifies a commitment to healing and progress, rather than an indictment of faith or country. Kendi's exploration of racism within Christian schools reveals the beginning of his critique of the West. He views Christianity as part of the Western tradition and uses his experiences to illustrate how the Western system of American education has harmed many. While many readers of his work might be tempted to reject all Western contributions based on Kendi's analysis, it's important to question whether this is a fair interpretation of his work. Is Kendi truly seeking to dismiss all Western achievements, or is he highlighting specific areas where the West has fallen short?

THE WOUNDS OF A WESTERN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Kendi's experiences with racism affected his ability to perform well in school, and it had a similar impact on me. In *How to Be an Anti-racist*, Kendi says:

> I could have studied harder. But some of my White friends could have studied harder, too, and their failures and irresponsibility didn't somehow tarnish their race…My problems with personal irresponsibility were exacerbated—or perhaps even caused—by the additional struggles that racism added to my school life, from a history of disinterested, racist teachers…to the daily racist attacks that fell on young Black boys and girls…(Kendi 2023, p. 93).

Throughout my years in K-12 Christian schools, I grappled with a pervasive sense of devaluation, which hindered my academic performance. I felt that my efforts went unrecognized and unappreciated, leading me to adopt a mindset of mere survival rather than academic excellence. Kendi's assertion that his personal irresponsibility was exacerbated by the additional burdens of racism rings true for me as well. The indifference and racism exhibited by teachers, coupled with daily racial attacks endured by Black students, only served to compound the challenges I faced in my educational environment.

My experience mirrored Kendi's sentiments of emptiness and dread throughout my school days. The anticipation of each school day filled me with anxiety and despair, a sentiment my mother vividly recalls as she feared finding me in tears upon picking me up from school. Consequently, my academic performance suffered, reflected in low SAT scores and a lack of ambition for college. However, my parents intervened, recognizing the detrimental impact of my schooling experience, and urged me to attend Howard University.

It was at Howard University that I experienced a transformative shift. Freed from the confines of K-12 Christian schools, I discovered a newfound sense of worth and purpose. Instantaneously excelling academically, I was inducted into the honor society and graduated cum laude. Reading Kendi's reflections, I found a mirror to my own life story, albeit with notable divergences. While I relate to his struggles against racism

in education, his departure from Christianity, rejection of Western influence, and loss of hope in America represented stark contrasts to my own journey. Nonetheless, the profound connection I felt with Kendi's narrative underscores the enduring impact of racism on the educational trajectories of Black individuals like me.

Kendi's scholarship sheds light on the interconnectedness of America's unresolved wounds and the racism inherent in Western Christianity. His firsthand experience in racist Christian schools serves as a tangible reminder of the dangers posed by Western influence to American progress. However, while Kendi's critique of the West identifies significant issues, he does not propose any viable solutions. It is crucial to recognize that the West, despite its role in oppressing Black people, remains an ancestral link intertwined with our collective history. To discount this connection risks severing the vital ties that are essential for collective healing. Octavia Butler's novel, *Kindred,* poignantly illustrates this interdependence through the metaphor of ancestral relationship, where the demise of one ultimately leads to the demise of the other. Kendi's tendency to dismiss all things associated with the West has led him to frame much of Black progress in America as mythical if it has its roots in the Western tradition.

For instance, in Chapter 17 of "The 1619 Project," entitled "Progress," Kendi outlines milestones in Black America's journey, such as the achievements of Thurgood Marshall, Martin Luther King, Jr., the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the presidency of Barack Obama as not authentic progress. He quotes Malcolm X, "How can you thank a man for giving you what's already yours?...You haven't even made progress, if what's being given to you, you should have had already. That's not progress (Hannah-Jones 2021, p. 503). While these achievements symbolize progress towards equality, they also highlight the ongoing struggle against racism. Without a thorough understanding of Kendi's broader context, demonstrating a skepticism of progress could be misinterpreted as discounting the sacrifices made by Black and White individuals who fought tirelessly to dismantle racism.

Although some passages in Kendi's work may appear to belittle the sacrifices of Black heroes, it's essential to consider the entirety of his arguments within their contextual framework to grasp their true intent. There is an interesting passage in his book that, to some, may appear to belittle the sacrifices of our Black heroes, but I do not agree, especially when you read the rest of the book and place this statement in context:

> I was not living up to my academic potential. As a Black teenager in the nineties, my shortcomings didn't go unnoticed or unjudged. The first to notice were the adults around me of my parents' and grandparents' generation. As legal scholar James Forman Jr. documents, the civil-rights generation usually evoked Martin Luther King Jr. to shame us. "Did Martin Luther King successfully fight the likes of Bull Connor so that we could ultimately lose the struggle of civil rights to misguided or malicious members of our own race?" Jesse Jackson told a group of Alabama prisoners, "... Dr. King died for you" (Kendi 2023, pp. 92-93).

Kendi discusses how reading about our heroes is necessary but insufficient. The book endeavors to unveil the persistent presence of racism deeply embedded within the fabric of our nation, advocating for its recognition as a crucial step towards addressing it. And in recognizing this, understanding giving equality to a human being is only the prelude to actually bringing about progress.

Regrettably, however, some interpretations of Kendi's work misconstrue its message, using it to argue against the vital role of sharing historical narratives of overcoming oppression with future generations. Instead, there is a tendency to interpret his work as advocating solely for the teaching of oppression and racism, neglecting to convey the agency of our people and the strategies they employed to combat it. Consequently, a generation of children risks being educated solely on despising racism and harboring anger towards it, devoid of an understanding of effective solutions gleaned from the experiences of those who came before them. It prompts reflection on whether Kendi comprehends the extent of this misunderstanding. Did he intend to foster a movement where young people are disconnected from their history, fail to honor its martyrs, and overlook the wisdom they imparted?

THOUGHTS ON HEALING THE WOUNDS OF WESTERN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I fear that many educators, with the best of intentions, use his work to undermine young people's sense of agency and the United States' promise - albeit a broken one. This is evident in my experience working with colleagues at the Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy, where we have analyzed social studies curricula in depth. An example of this is in my review of curricula for major school districts, where I observed a troubling pattern. The opening paragraphs of many curriculum guides discussed embracing anti-racism, which initially impressed me as a step towards inclusivity and acknowledgment of marginalized voices. However, upon further examination, I discovered that the lessons on US history solely focused on oppression, with no mention of Black activism or empowerment. Children cannot truly understand their history if they are only exposed to narratives of oppression; they also need to learn about the bravery and sacrifices of their ancestors who fought for change. Moreover, these curricula often excluded lessons on significant figures such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Mary McLeod Bethune, James Baldwin, Bayard Rustin or the Black Panther Party. They offered minimal coverage of the struggles and triumphs of other minority groups, such as the Latino population. Instead, the curriculum perpetuated a simplistic Black-and-White narrative that failed to recognize progress or improvement over time and excluded the struggle and agency of other marginalized groups.

In some instances, these curricula even disseminated misinformation, portraying historical figures such as Lincoln and Andrew Johnson in a distorted light. For instance, some curricula depict Lincoln as a racist and do not acknowledge his evolving views; others portray Johnson (incorrectly) as the sole architect of Reconstruction. Such narratives omit the contributions of Black politicians during Reconstruction and oversimplify complex historical events. Is this truly the message Kendi wants our young people to internalize? Using his work as a means to perpetuate ignorance about US history and the role of marginalized communities within it does not align with Kendi's intentions, I believe.

Another unfortunate curricular tendency I have seen is this: a pursuit of racial representation at the expense of quality. The inclusion of diverse characters is commendable, but the use of poorly written texts is not. Representation and quality are not mutually exclusive. A curriculum can and should strive to achieve both, without compromising one for the other. Does Kendi know that such decisions often purport to follow anti-racist methodology?

Kendi's straightforward approach often divides opinions, with some perceiving his work as a harsh critique of America's shortcomings, leading to a sense of despair about potential change. However, it may be more productive to view his work as a tool for addressing the gaps in our understanding caused by racist distortions of U.S. history.

The Christianization of slavery, which was part of early American education, resulted in an educational system with significant historical omissions. As American education split into public and Christian/private sectors, these false narratives about diverse human history persisted. Public schools were left to address the gaps with insufficient resources, while Christian and private schools continued to propagate incomplete histories, obscuring the painful truths of racism in America. Kendi's book aims to expose how this miseducation has impeded progress and racial healing. By blending historical evidence with compelling rhetoric, Kendi defends America's ongoing quest for a creating a more perfect Union by changing how we are educated. Nevertheless, his tone, marked by bitterness and guilt, can sometimes prevent readers from fully engaging with his message. Yet, when I think of students and how my bitterness from my K-12 experiences could be a hindrance to teaching the fullness of human history, I realize that I must see a much larger picture.

Many see Kendi as advocating for the rejection of the very educational systems that shaped his own intellectual prowess. This interpretation risks instilling a sense of hopelessness in children, portraying figures like MLK and Obama as ineffective and perpetuating a narrative of perpetual oppression. However, shouldn't we celebrate the possibility for progress, exemplified by individuals like Obama, irrespective of their background or ethnicity? Would Kendi deprive his own children of hope, or deny them access to a

knowledge-rich education that encompasses the wisdom of Black resilience and the universal insights of ancient thinkers? Obama and MLK may seem to be a myth, because the work remains unfinished. One obstacle to finishing the work is in how students are educated. Kendi, MLK and Obama, for example, all received an education that gave them an understanding of their own history AND the history of the rest of the world…even the history of their oppressor. This knowledge is imperative to finishing the work that our ancestors began.

IMPROVING, NOT CANCELING WESTERN EDUCATION

This paper began by examining the origins of American education within a Christian framework. Initially, Western Christian education was the dominant method of schooling in America. Over time, however, a division emerged: public education gradually distanced itself from Christian influence, while Christian schools developed as separate entities. Despite this shift, public education continued to be shaped by a fragmented approach to teaching, rooted in the Christianization of racism and slavery. Meanwhile, Christian schools persisted in fostering a form of Christian Nationalism, a legacy that endures today.

Christian Nationalism may trace its roots back to Martin Luther, who broke from the Catholic Church (Messinger 2015). The term "Catholic," meaning "universal," originally embraced the global nature of Christianity. However, the history of the Holy Wars and other efforts to spread Catholicism reveals a form of supremacy. In establishing Protestantism, Luther also became a champion of nationalism, taking pride in his German heritage. Nationalism has taken on various forms—some embodying a healthy love for one's country, while others promote supremacy over other ethnicities and groups. The Christian schools Kendi and I attended chose to embrace White supremacy over our Black heritage. This has led Kendi and many others to view Christianity—whether Catholic or Protestant—as racist or White supremacist, even though they overlook the original message of Christianity, where "all that believed were together, and had all things common" (King James Bible 1769/2019, Acts 2:44) and "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (King James Bible 1769/2019, Galatians 3:28).

We should aspire to provide our children with a comprehensive understanding of their collective place in the world, inclusive of diverse perspectives and histories. How do we achieve this balance—teaching the truth of history and the present without succumbing to bitterness, while nurturing hope grounded in reality. It is a complex endeavor, one that demands a delicate equilibrium between acknowledging past injustices and inspiring future possibilities. Indeed, my own experience indicates that we are failing to prepare the next generation for both racial healing and also hope.

Here is an example. When teaching at Howard University, I often posed a fundamental question at the start of each semester: What did MLK accomplish? The response was often met with silence, punctuated by sighs of disbelief as students grappled with their lack of knowledge on the subject. Eventually, hesitant whispers emerged, offering vague notions such as "He wanted us all to get along," or "He marched," but none could articulate his political strategy or the legislative achievements resulting from his activism. This concerning trend among freshmen suggests a generation growing up with limited awareness of the individuals who paved the way for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Kendi's *How to Be an Anti-Racist* aims to illuminate how widespread miseducation has hindered progress toward racial healing. While it might seem that Kendi advocates for dismantling all forms of Western influence in America to advance, it is worth examining whether this interpretation aligns with his intent. Given how his education has shaped his influential scholarship, a closer look at his message is warranted.

We should strive to offer our children a well-rounded education that includes diverse perspectives and histories. The challenge lies in balancing the truthful presentation of history and current realities without falling into bitterness, while fostering hope based on realistic expectations. This is a complex task that requires a careful balance between acknowledging past injustices and inspiring future possibilities. My own

experiences suggest that we are not adequately preparing the next generation for both racial healing and hope.

However, this exercise in remembrance is not meant to shame anyone. As Kendi reflects on his upbringing, where he was taught to see himself as a descendant of the Civil Rights Movement, we recognize the importance of understanding our history to guide our future actions. Misunderstanding Kendi's intentions has led many to sever any connection to the West in education. Similarly, in many Christian schools, misinterpreting Kendi causes some to limit access to the stories of diverse people in America. Both misunderstandings stem from fear—fear of teaching a curriculum rooted in assimilation and White supremacy, leading to the cancellation of anything Western, or fear of viewing Kendi's work as hostile to America or anything Western, resulting in the cancellation of diverse narratives. Sadly, this fear on both sides is nurturing a new generation without an understanding of the educational foundations that facilitated our liberation, the effective strategies employed by our predecessors, or the significance of collective action in bringing about legislative change.

Through my teaching, I witnessed a transformation in my students' understanding of MLK and his legacy over the course of the semester. They gained insight not only into MLK's contributions but also into the classical inspirations of other activists, empowering them to become participants in our democracy rooted in classical ideals. The concept of Sankofa, an Adinkra symbol, urging us to retrieve the wisdom of our ancestors, resonates deeply here.

Yet, there exists a complexity in Kendi's critique, particularly regarding assimilationist ideas, which he deems inherently racist. This perspective risks overlooking the nuanced experiences of Black individuals navigating a foreign society post-slavery, striving for survival and adaptation. To label their pursuit of literacy and comprehension of American culture and heritage as embracing racism or assimilation is to disregard their historical context and the imperative of survival in an oppressive and volatile environment.

Martin Luther King was not the only person of color inspired by the Western Tradition. Malcolm X even saw value in the literature. He recalls:

> A story that I read in prison, when I was reading a lot of Greek mythology, flicked into my head. The boy Icarus' father made some wings that he fastened with wax. "Never fly but so high with these wings," the father said. But soaring around, this way, that way, Icarus' flying pleased him so that he began thinking he was flying on his own merit. Higher, he flew—higher—until the heat of the sun melted the wax holding those wings. And down came Icarus—tumbling… I silently vowed to Allah that I would never forget that any wings I wore had been put on by the religion of Islam (Malcolm X and Haley 1965, p. 331).

Malcolm X devoted much of his speaking and writing to urging Black people NOT to assimilate or integrate. He believed our community should maintain its own nationality while consciously separating ourselves from the oppressor. However, despite these beliefs, he read everything—even works from the Western tradition—and in his autobiography, he reinterpreted the story of Icarus as a reflection of his own journey. He used it to express his humility before Allah and to highlight how Islam had transformed his life.

Kendi's own literary contributions, including "How to be an Antiracist" and "Stamped from the Beginning," underscore the paradox of his stance. Why, then, would he advocate for depriving the next generation of the education that has shaped his own intellectual prowess? Has his racist experiences in American Christian and public education caused him to discount how it equipped him to author the books that are inspiring the world to rethink human history and race relations? Learning the language and literacy of a foreign land is not synonymous with embracing racism or assimilationism; rather, it reflects the inherent human instinct to adapt and thrive in challenging circumstances. Before the abolition of slavery, we were denied citizenship and prohibited from acquiring knowledge of America's language and governance—a reality James Baldwin poignantly acknowledges:

> I know, in any case, that the most crucial time in my development came when I was forced to recognize that I was a kind of bastard of the West; when I followed the line of my past I did not find myself in Europe but in Africa. This meant that in some subtle way, in a profound way, I brought to Shakespeare, Bach, Rembrandt, the stones of Paris, the cathedral at Chartres, and the Empire State Building, a special attitude. These were not my creations, they did not contain my history; I might search in them in vain forever for any reflection of myself. I was an interloper; this was not my heritage. At the same time I had no other heritage which I could possibly hope to use—I had certainly been unfitted for the jungle or the tribe. I would have to appropriate these white centuries, I would have to make them mine—I would have to accept my special attitude, my special place in this scheme—otherwise I would have no place in any scheme (Baldwin 1998, pp. 7-8).

Alain Locke, despite being hailed as the father of the Harlem Renaissance, infamously disparaged his own people by using the derogatory term if they failed to speak English to his exacting standards. Without considering the full context and understanding of the historical and literary nuances embedded in Kendi's writings, it's easy to misconstrue his stance as discounting any Black individual who contributed to the advancement of the Black community, particularly if their efforts were intertwined with Western influences. However, as Octavia Butler illustrates in Kindred, our connection to the West is undeniable—something Ta-Nehisi Coates further emphasizes by highlighting the entwined nature of the Black diaspora with the Western world itself (Coates 2015).

While we cannot deny this connection, we have the power to shape our narrative and elevate it alongside the Western tradition. Rather than teaching our children to reject our ancestors for embracing the language, literacy, and culture of this oppressive land, we should honor their efforts in utilizing that knowledge to fight for the freedoms we enjoy today. Their legacy calls us to continue their work and embrace our roots, reframing our perspective from one of burdened double consciousness to that of bilingualism. Unlike how Baldwin aptly puts it, we are not "bastards of the West" but individuals learning a language crucial for navigating this foreign terrain. In this bilingual existence, the texts of the Western tradition serve as invaluable tools, equipping us with the language and literacy necessary to navigate the world and share our story in a universal tongue. As Chinua Achebe aptly states:

> ...English was the language of instruction at Government College, Umuahia. It was at Umuahia that I first truly understood the power and importance of that unifying language…Nigeria had over 250 ethnic groups…While African languages and writing should be developed, nurtured, and preserved, how else…would I have been able to communicate with so many…from different parts of the country and ethnic groups, speaking different languages, had we not been taught one language...I continued the introduction to the work of William Shakespeare that my father had first made possible, as well as to Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery,* Swift's *Gulliver's Travels,* Dickenson's *David Copperfield,* and Stevenson's *Treasure Island*…Reading these books was a transforming experience, and I have written elsewhere about the influence Umuahia had in educating many of the pioneers of modern African literature (Achebe 2012, pp. 24-25).

Kendi's personal journey has given him a deep understanding of the ongoing struggles faced by his ancestors. His time in Christian schools exposed him to how Christianity became a breeding ground for racism in America. Our experiences were parallel, but they had different effects. Kendi's encounter with Christianity led him to reject it as irrelevant to his life and his work in anti-racism. On the other hand, the Christian faith shaped my perspective on fighting racism, as the Black church was central to most Black liberation movements, from the Underground Railroad to the Civil Rights Movement.

This isn't to say that Christianity is the only path forward, but it is part of an arsenal of tools our Black ancestors used to fight oppression. Christianity, Islam, and other belief systems all worked together to bring healing to the Black community, and none should be discounted, even if they were influenced by the West.

The same applies to the Western tradition. There is too much evidence to show that the Western tradition played an integral role in the Black Panthers, Chinua Achebe, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and many other Black people who used their interpretation and translation of classical texts to give voice to their struggle and plight.

I do not reject my faith because it evolved under Western influence; I recognize that the Christianity of America is not the Christianity of the Bible. Christianity is the faith that on the day of Pentecost, the Christian faith was shared with every ethnicity at the same time:

> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?[9] Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome···Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues! (Berean Standard Bible 2023, Acts 2: 8-11).

The inclusivity of the early Christian faith stands in stark contrast to what Kendi and I were taught in our Christian schools. In fifth grade, my teacher was sharing a lesson about why God does not allow Blacks and Whites to marry. I raised my hand and when she called on me, I said, "But Moses was married to an African (Cushite) woman!"—a comment that got me in trouble. At school, I wasn't allowed to explore how the stories of the Bible connected to my identity as a child of African descent. Just like in other ancient texts, the Bible includes a plethora of stories of African civilizations. I'm grateful that my parents liberated me at home, but what if all children of color were taught the story of their origins, from ancient times through all of human history? Kendi calls on us to uncover the truth about our history. Recognizing the African roots of Christianity, the African and Middle Eastern lineage of Jesus, and its relevance to Black people is an act of anti-racism because it liberates us from worshiping a god that supports racial supremacy, nationalism, or the belief in the inferiority of Black people or any people of color. Even the enslaved were inspired to write the Negro Spirituals because, once they learned the Bible for themselves, they saw that the faith of their masters was not the true faith of the Bible. It was this very faith that gave them the strength to persevere and provided strategies for healing—strategies that were effective, though the work remains unfinished.

Kendi's frustration with the persistent specter of racism sometimes colors his articulation of anti-racism, potentially glossing over vital historical nuances. Despite this, he has effectively advocated for anti-racism, even utilizing tools he acknowledges as having origins steeped in racism. However, it's crucial for both him and his followers to critically assess the implications of this approach. Acknowledging the intricate dynamics of navigating a society deeply entrenched in Western influences does not diminish the value of our own cultural heritage and literacy. Kendi embodies this principle, embracing his African identity through his adorned locks and his name (he changed his name from Ibram Henry Rogers to Ibram Xolani Kendi), while fervently championing anti-racism (Poser 2024). His education, albeit influenced by the West, has been instrumental in advancing his cause, mirroring the strategies employed by his ancestors in their quest for freedom. Underscoring the importance of embracing diverse knowledge systems, Kendi's work serves as a powerful reminder of the enduring legacy of our ancestors and the ongoing struggle for racial equity.

REFERENCES

Achebe, C. 2012. *There Was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra*. New York: Viking Penguin.
Baldwin, J. 1998. *Baldwin—Collected Essays*. New York: The Library of America.
Blaiklock, V. 2022. The Unintended Consequences of the Court's Religious Freedom Revolution: A History of White Supremacy and Private Christian Church School. *Northwestern University Law Review*, 117.
Coates, Ta-Nehisi. 2015. *Between the World and Me*. London: One World.
Egan, Kieran. 1989. *Teaching as Storytelling*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Haley, A., and Malcom X. 1965. *The Autobiography of Malcom X*. New York: Ballentine.
Hannah-Jones, Nicole. 2021. *The 1619 Project*. London: One World.
Hinson, T. 2021. Fathers of the Reformation: Africans in the Early Church. TGC Africa Edition, Apr. 12. https://africa.thegospelcoalition.org/article/fathers-of-the-reformation-africans-in-the-early-church/
Holy Bible: Berean Standard Bible. 2023. Bible Hub.
Holy Bible: King James Version. 2019. Peabody: Christian Art Publishers.
Kendi, I. X. 2019. *How to Be an Antiracist*. London: One World.
Messinger, Dean. 2015. Nationalism and Nation-building in the Lutheran Reformation. Undergraduate Library Research Awards. 2. https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ulra/awards/2015/2
Poser, Rachel. 2024. Ibram X. Kendi Faces a Reckoning of His Own. *New York Times Magazine*, June 4.
Snowden, F. M. 1997. *Before Color Prejudice: The Ancient View of Blacks*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

The Meaning of Plurality in Liberal Education

ISAAC RADNER

Abstract: This essay explores the ways in which plurality and discourse are essential to the purpose of liberal education. By drawing on the work of Aristotle, Michael Oakeshott, and Jürgen Habermas, among others, the features and function of this plurality are explored at a theoretical level. This essay ends by applying this theoretical discussion to the more practical question of the role and place of a Western Canon within liberal education.

Keywords: Liberal Education, Liberal Learning, Plurality, Conversation, Discourse, Michael Oakeshott, Aristotle, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Charles Taylor, Western Canon

PLURALITY AND LIBERAL EDUCATION

Liberal education is inherently *plural*. This is partly a historical claim supported by the fact that over the course of its long history, throughout the many changes in content and pedagogy that it has undergone, liberal learning has always been an education in *multiple* subjects. This has distinguished it from other types of education such as those concerned only with preparing the student for a single craft or trade. This plurality of subjects means that students of liberal education are introduced to a variety of different ways and methods of understanding the world. Between and within these multiple disciplines of study, there are often conflicting and competing views to which students are exposed. Finally, the physical context of liberal education is often marked by a plurality of other students and teachers, each with their own preferences and backgrounds. The goal of this essay is to more closely examine the plurality at the heart of liberal learning, and in so doing, clarify the purpose and function of liberal education.

The first three sections of this essay lay the theoretical groundwork for thinking about the meaning of plurality in liberal learning. The first section, by looking primarily at the work of Aristotle and Michael Oakeshott, establishes an inherent connection between liberal learning and the practice of politics, if politics is understood broadly as the discourse or conversation that goes on within a community about how that community should arrange itself. The claim in this section is that liberal learning is an introduction to and initiation into this discourse. The second section examines the concepts of discourse and conversation through the work of Paul Ricoeur and Charles Taylor. This section

argues that an important feature of conversation is the way in which it leads to a "surplus of meaning" that allows for the creation of new ideas and new modes of understanding ourselves and the world. The third section, through a treatment of Jürgen Habermas's concepts of *communicative action* and *communicative rationality*, looks at the "rules" which govern this discourse. The fourth and final section of the essay applies the theoretical groundwork established in the previous sections to a concrete contemporary debate within liberal education—the question of the "Western Canon" and its place in education. This section aims to show how the concept of conversation and discourse as laid out here can provide some clarification and guidance when thinking through questions of curriculum design.

The main goal of this essay is simply to elucidate what liberal education is, what its goals are, and how it goes about achieving these. It is only after this is understood that meaningful discussion can be had about this type of education's value. This essay ends with some reflections on the value and promise of liberal education. There are many who will remain unpersuaded, convinced instead that the goal of liberal education—an initiation into the practice of cultural discourse—is a naive or frivolous one in today's world. For those people, the hope is that this essay at last clarifies what is at stake, for the alternative to discourse, the alternative to conversation, is manipulation, coercion, and war.

LIBERAL EDUCATION AND POLITICS

The image of conversation, or of discourse, and its connection with liberal learning informs much of what will be said here, and this connection can be attributed primarily to the work of Michael Oakeshott. In his essay *A Place of Learning*, which was first delivered as a talk at Colorado College in 1974, Oakeshott states:

> Perhaps we may think of [the] components of a culture as voices, each the expression of a distinct and conditional understanding of the world and a distinct idiom of human self-understanding, and of culture itself as these voices joined, as such voices could only be joined, in a conversation—an endless unrehearsed intellectual adventure in which, in imagination, we enter into a variety of modes of understanding the world and ourselves and are not disconcerted by the differences or dismayed by the inconclusiveness of it at all. And perhaps we may recognize liberal learning as, above all else, an education in imagination, an initiation into the art of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices; to distinguish their different modes of utterance, to acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to this conversational relationship and thus to make our *début dans la vie humaine* (Oakeshott 1989a, p. 30).

This image of a conversation appears across multiple works by Oakeshott, and it expresses his understanding of what it means to be a human who is born into, learns about, and participates in a particular culture and tradition, as all people invariably are and do. It is notable that the primary feature of this image is not the particular content or curriculum of the conversation, but rather the multiplicity of voices that compose it—in a word, the *plurality* of the conversation. As Oakeshott points out, a conversation is "impossible in the absence of a diversity of voices" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 490). While "there is no fixed number to the voices which engage in this conversation", the ones that Oakeshott addresses most explicitly across his own work are those of science, history, and poetry. Each of these voices represents a distinct mode of understanding the world. The voice of science, for example, is concerned primarily with constructing "a rational world of consequentially arranged conceptual images" (Oakeshott 1991, p. 506). In other words, it is interested in concepts like "causality" and "facts". Poetry, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with finding and expressing delight in the world and in human existence.

Since Oakeshott positions liberal education as an initiation into this practice of conversation, it is fair to ask: Why is it important for somebody to be familiar with multiple modes of understanding? Why should somebody not specialize in one mode at the expense of all others? The answer to this question lies in considering the connection between liberal education and politics.

This connection has been asserted since at least Ancient Greece. In Book Eight of his *Politics*, Aristotle distinguishes between "free" and "unfree" types of education, which has often been translated as "liberal" and "illiberal" education. The word he uses to describe a free education is *eleutherios* which is related to the word *eleutheros*, meaning freedom or a free person (e.g., not a slave). But *eleutherios* also carries the specific connotation of speaking and acting in a way that is befitting of a free person. In the context of Aristotle's Athens, this free speech and action is largely realized through participation in the democratic governance of the polis. It is notable, then, that even in its ancient form, liberal education was connected to a certain kind of speech and deliberation. However, Aristotle also claims that a free education is free because it is for its own sake, not for the sake of something or somebody else (Aristotle 2013, 1337b-1338b). As will be shown, these multiple types of freedom are connected.

In contrast to later thinkers like Hobbes who described the original and natural state of humans as one devoid of formal political communities, Aristotle famously claims that "man is by nature a political animal" (Aristotle 2013, 1253a). This statement reflects Aristotle's belief that politics is a natural result of the human inclination to pursue happiness because it is only within a political community that people can live well and be happy. Thus, a city (the most appropriate size for a political community according to Aristotle) is a naturally occurring human community that is "for the sake of a life that is the best possible" (Aristotle 2013, 1328a). An essential aspect of Aristotle's thought here is that, for him, happiness (*eudaimonia*), which is the ultimate goal of life, is not a kind of stupor or stasis in which people simply exist while doing nothing else, and it is not only the leisurely contemplation of philosophic ideals à la Plato. For Aristotle, happiness "is a sort of action" (Aristotle 2013, 1325a). Specifically, happiness is "the actualization of virtue and a certain complete practice of it" (Aristotle 2013, 1328a).

For this essay, the important aspect of Aristotle's theory of virtue is that he believed the practice of happiness and virtue was most fully realized within a political community, or, more pointedly, through *participation* in a political community. Now, the type of person who most fully participates in a political community is a citizen. A citizen, however, is not somebody who merely lives in a political community, but "in an unqualified sense is defined by no other thing so much as by partaking in decision and office" (Aristotle 2013, 1275a). A citizen, either by holding direct office or participating in political deliberation, takes part in the governance of their own political community. And in the best regimes where all participating members are equal citizens, citizens are therefore both "ruling and being ruled in turn" (Aristotle 2013, 1332b).

In this context, then, Aristotle positions a "free" education as one that prepares citizens to act virtuously and pursue happiness through participation in politics and in leisure (a still necessary ingredient for happiness in his mind). The content of this education that Aristotle proposes, brief though it is, is focused mainly on developing the character of a person so that they are able to act in ways that are conducive to virtue in various situations.

At this point it is possible to see how Aristotle can imply that liberal education is both for its own sake and for the sake of preparing citizens to govern. Because happiness is for its own sake and not the sake of something else, and because a political community exists to actualize the happiness of its citizens, an education that prepares citizens to be part of their political community, to be citizens who are both rulers and ruled, is itself free of utilitarian *illiberal* ends because it too exists for the sake of the happiness of its citizens.

By following Aristotle this far, the argument has diverged somewhat from Oakeshott's own beliefs regarding politics and education. In Oakeshott's writings, politics does not always have the same high status that it does for Aristotle, and political participation is certainly not the primary ingredient to happiness. In no uncertain terms Oakeshott writes, "A universal preoccupation with rights, interests, affairs of government, political questions in general is fatal to the public peace & individual happiness" (Oakeshott 2014, p. 429). However, when Oakeshott extricates political activity from its immediate concern with "affairs of government", his stance on it softens.

Oakeshott's essay *Political Education* contains what is perhaps his most well-known passage on politics:

> In political activity, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea; there is neither harbor for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep [the ship] afloat on an even keel; the sea is both friend and enemy; and the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behavior in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 177).

For the subject at hand, the important part here is that Oakeshott frames political activity as the use of a "traditional manner of behavior" that guides a community when it is confronting the various decisions it must make. Oakeshott understands *tradition* to be the entire corpus of customs, beliefs and behaviors that are characteristic of a community. It is neither a "fixed nor inflexible" thing, nor is it a "groove into which we are destined to grind out our helpless and unsatisfying lives". Instead, a tradition grows and adapts to the various circumstances in which a community finds itself. But though it may evolve and change, no person or group can ever be free of their tradition; the only resources a community has to guide its actions and decisions are the "fragments, the vestiges, the relics of its own tradition of behavior" (Oakeshott 1989b, pp. 176-178). This view of tradition is consciously broad and open-ended because, in Oakeshott's mind, any attempt to abridge a tradition into a clear and succinct form inevitably transforms it from a complex living reality into the ossified strictures of ideology (Oakeshott 1989b, pp. 167-172). It follows from tradition's capaciousness and the fact that political activity is primarily an exercise in putting tradition to work, that political activity encompasses an equally wide range of activities that go far beyond the day-to-day concerns of politicians, elections, etc. Oakeshott describes it as a "universal activity" in which "every member of the group…has some part and some responsibility" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 160).

From all that has been said, it should come as no surprise that Oakeshott views the type of education that prepares one to take part in politics, what he calls "political education", as precisely an education in a community's "traditional manner of behavior". This education's breadth should match that of the tradition itself, and so Oakeshott writes, "there is little or nothing in the world which comes before us as we open our eyes that does not contribute to it" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 180). However, given the capaciousness of Oakeshott's understanding of both political activity and political education, it makes sense to ask if there is much that distinguishes a *political* education from a *liberal* education. The answer, it seems, is mostly no. In fact, the image of a conversation, tied so closely to Oakeshott's description of a liberal education, appears again in his discussion of political education. He writes, "Political education is not merely a matter of coming to understand a tradition, it is learning how to participate in a conversation: it is at once an initiation into an inheritance in which we have a life interest, and the exploration of its intimations" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 179).

It is important to stress, however, that although liberal education is tied to a certain conception of politics, it is not the same thing as the actual practice of politics. This is because an essential aspect of liberal education is its semi-secluded character. When speaking of institutions of liberal learning, Oakeshott writes that they are "sheltered enough from the demands of utility to be undistracted in their concern with [learning]" (Oakeshott 1989a, p. 15). An institution of liberal learning is "a place apart" that allows those who inhabit it to engage in the practice of learning without the pressure to arrive at any clear conclusions or policy proposals. Thus, while political deliberation necessarily has a (momentary) end point in a particular decision, the conversation of liberal education is free from pressure to arrive at any kind of final resolution. It is open-ended, and places of liberal learning provide students the opportunity to *practice* the kind of deliberation that might occur in politics without the pressure to reach any kind of conclusion. What this deliberation looks like will be the topic of later sections of this essay.

However, though it might be importantly sheltered in certain ways, a liberal education is still one in which students learn to participate in a particular culture and tradition. Thus, this culture and tradition

are its object and its incitement. When students at last leave their institution of liberal learning behind, they will have gained a deeper understanding of this culture and of themselves—for they, being born into a particular culture, are shaped by it—and they will be better prepared to be participants in the conversation that is their cultural inheritance.

It is now possible to see some similarities between Aristotle and Oakeshott when it comes to their views on education, and these similarities point towards an essential task and purpose of liberal learning. For both thinkers, there is an inescapable link between education and politics. Though their views on the purpose and character of political activity differ somewhat, they both define politics in broad terms as the culmination of the entire way of life of a community. Liberal education is an education for those who are full participants in the community, and it is an introduction into and preparation for being a full member of a community, its culture, and its traditions. Both thinkers, though they identify a core connection between politics and education, remove liberal learning from the immediate questions of elections, candidates, and ideologies, and instead insist on a non-utilitarian aspect of liberal education. Still, this conception of education embeds it within a particular community since liberal learning is a formal and explicit introduction into a community's complex culture and tradition.

The preceding discussion sheds some additional light onto Oakeshott's image of a conversation and the various voices or "modes of understanding" that constitute it. Education is an exposure to the entire culture of a community, and, as Oakeshott writes in *A Place of Learning,* culture is composed of "a variety of distinct languages of understanding, and its inducements are invitations to become acquainted with these languages, to learn to discriminate between them, and to recognize them…as the most substantial expressions we have of human self-understanding" (Oakeshott 1989a, p. 29). But why should there be multiple modes of understanding in each culture? The answer to this question is perhaps obvious, but worth emphasizing. It is because, as Hannah Arendt succinctly puts it, "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (Arendt 1998, p. 7). It is because of the fact of *plurality*. Even the Greek city-state, which contained a relatively homogenous collective of citizens, is, as Aristotle observes, "made up of dissimilar persons" (Aristotle 2013, 1277a). The result of this *intra*-communal plurality is that a community's culture and tradition are actually a constellation of multiple ways of understanding and being in the world. It is these various modes of understanding that represent the "voices" in Oakeshott's conversation, and liberal learning's goal is a familiarization with these voices so that students can become full participants in the conversation of their community.

DISCOURSE AND THE SURPLUS OF MEANING

The brute fact of plurality is only the beginning of the story, however. The multiple voices that characterize a conversation are not each engaged in a monologue of which the other voices are unaware. A defining feature of conversation is that the participants *address* one another; they speak to each other and listen to what the other participants have to say. In other words, conversation is *intersubjective*. And so, an essential characteristic of a liberal education is that students are not only exposed to various modes of understanding through the courses and departments of a university or college; students are also asked, so to speak, to put these classes and disciplines in conversation with one another. Thus, a liberal education is not only multidisciplinary, but also *inter*-disciplinary.

It is worth pausing over this point and asking: Why? Why is it important that liberal education be interdisciplinary? To answer this question, it is helpful to first look at the effects of this intersubjectivity. This is not something that Oakeshott addresses explicitly, but in his more rhapsodic moods he seems to hint that something beyond just talking is happening when seemingly disparate voices engage in conversation. In his essay *The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind*, Oakeshott writes:

> In conversation, 'facts' appear only to be resolved once more into the possibilities from which they were made; 'certainties' are shown to be combustible, not by being brought into contact with other

> 'certainties' or with doubt, but by being kindled by the presence of ideas of another order; approximations are revealed between notions normally remote from one another. Thoughts of a different species take wing and play round one another, responding to each other's movements and provoking one another to fresh exertions (Oakeshott 1991, p. 489).

In his reference to "fresh exertions", Oakeshott seems to be gesturing towards an important function of conversation. It may be helpful to approach the precise nature of this function of conversation by looking at the 1976 essay *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* by French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. In this essay, Ricoeur discusses the nature and function of metaphor. It is striking how much his description of what happens in the linguistically brief instance of a metaphor—perhaps no more than a few words—mirrors elements of Oakeshott's description of the millennia-spanning conversation that is culture.

In Ricoeur's telling, the chief feature of a metaphor is *tension*—a tension between two seemingly disparate or incongruous images. An example he uses is that of "a mantle of sorrow". The terms "sorrow" and "mantle" do not, at face value, go together because sorrow is not a piece of clothing. Understanding a metaphor, then, depends on more than comprehending the individual words that make up the metaphor; it is a task of interpretation that begins with the "self-destruction" of the literal meaning of the metaphoric utterance. In place of this literal meaning, an unexpected kinship appears between two images "where ordinary vision does not perceive any relationship" (Ricoeur 1976, pp. 50-51). Or, as Oakeshott puts it above, "approximations are revealed between notions normally remote from one another". The effect of this tension and unexpected kinship is that a metaphor can cause, "a new, hitherto unnoticed, relation of meaning to spring up between terms that previous systems of classification had ignored or not allowed" (Ricoeur 1976, p. 51). In other words, the tension between seemingly incongruous images or competing voices of a conversation can be a fruitful one that reveals something new about the world.

Consider the following passage from Annie Dillard's *A Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*:

> Under the world's conifers—under the creek side cedar behind where I sit—a mantle of fungus wraps the soil in a weft, shooting out blind thread after frail thread of palest dissolved white. From root tip to root tip, root hair to root hair, these filaments look and wind...King David leaped and danced naked before the ark of the Lord in a barren desert. Here [where I sit] the very looped soil is an intricate throng of praise (Dillard 2007, p. 97).

The images that Dillard places in tension here are that of King David dancing in the desert and the web of fungus stretching underground—certainly two dissimilar images. But the effect of her decision to claim a resemblance between them is that the reader is invited to see the natural world as one whose very form is a song of praise to creation. For those responsive to this invitation, reading Dillard can engender a startlingly novel kind of experience where "a new vision of reality springs forth, which ordinary vision resists because it is attached to the ordinary use of words" (Ricoeur 1976, p. 68). As the author Ted Chiang, a self-avowed atheist, said about *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, "Reading that book gave me maybe the closest [experience] that I'm likely to get to understanding a kind of religious ecstasy" (Klein and Chiang 2021). In Chiang's case, then, it can be said that Dillard's writing truly produced a new kind of experience that was formerly inaccessible.

Metaphor, however, is only one example of productive tension. A similar dynamic can be found beyond the relatively self-contained level of the sentence in the much wider and turbulent level of culture writ large. In his book *The Language Animal*, philosopher Charles Taylor lays out the process by which the ancient Greeks may have first arrived at what they later called "equality":

> Citizens come to find certain established restrictions on speech, in favor of kings, or tyrants, or a narrow group of nobles, irksome and objectionable. They object, protest, and demand to be heard. The new norms arise out of this protest; they become internalized, and they find the appropriate

> new coinages in the conflictual exchange. We articulate the new norms, give them their names. The new words we coin in the process of articulation define and give shape to what we are demanding…In this case the agency is not an individual thinker…it emerges out of a deliberating community, in often conflictual exchange. The creativity here essentially belongs to discourse (Taylor 2016, pp. 281-283).

In this telling, the beginning of the process which led to the Greek notion of equality was the experience of a tension—the tension between the demands of rulers and the desires of those who were ruled. Taylor claims that the Greek idea of the equality of citizens was genuinely new, it was something that, for example, a visitor from nearby Persia would not have understood; they would have known what it meant to be of equal height or equal strength, but the concept of equal citizenship and the norms that it encapsulated for the Greeks would have represented something unprecedented for the Persian (Taylor 2016, p. 281). However, the formalization of a set of customs into a concept like equality is only one step in what Taylor describes as an endless hermeneutic circle—norms develop and grow in response to some felt tension; these norms then become interpreted and formalized into an idea or concept like equality, democracy, human rights; the formalization of these norms creates new tensions which lead to new norms; and the process continues all the way to the present day where the contemporary norms denoted by the term "equality" are very different than those in Ancient Greece.

The most important point to emphasize here is that Taylor describes this process as a "discourse". The equality of citizens in Ancient Greece emerged "out of a deliberating community". It was, in other words, the product of conversation. The beginning of this conversation, and the fuel that continued to power it, was the *tension* between competing images of the world—that of the ruler and that of the ruled. Given all that has been said, it is possible to claim that these competing images of the world are analogous in many ways to Oakeshott's various "modes of understanding" that "take wing and play round one another" in the "conversation of mankind". What both Ricoeur and Taylor help to clarify about this conversation is that its result—the result of an idea "being kindled by the presence of ideas of another order"—is often the creation of *new* norms, *new* ideas, and *new* meanings. It is through this process that cultures and traditions are continually reconstituted.

At this point, it is possible to return to the question with which this section began—Why is it important that liberal education be interdisciplinary?—and give an answer. First, recall the claim of the previous section: liberal education is a necessarily *political* education in that it prepares students to participate in and be members of a plural community. This section built on this claim by examining how the tensions engendered by a plural community full of competing viewpoints and modes of understanding can sometimes be productive ones that play a necessary role in the development a community and its culture. It follows, then, that if liberal education is to prepare students to be participants of a plural community, it should familiarize them with this process. In order to do so, students participate in this process itself within their institution of liberal learning by being asked to put the various modes of understanding to which they are introduced in conversation with each other, to explore the tensions that inevitably arise, and to embrace the possibility that these tensions will lead to discoveries that are illuminative of existing modes of understanding or even open the path towards new understandings.

THE ROLE OF REASON(S) IN LIBERAL LEARNING

The previous section described a process by which the identity, tradition, and culture of a community develops. This process was called *discourse*, and it involves placing seemingly disparate or even opposing ways of viewing the world into conversation with each other, and then transforming the resulting differences into productive tensions that may possibly point towards new understandings and ways of being in the world. This process contains both a descriptive and a moral element. It is descriptive because it outlines an important mechanism through which culture develops without explicitly claiming whether this mecha-

nism is good or bad. There is a moral component, however, because in order for the mechanism of discourse to function, its participants must be committed to certain conversational norms.

There are of course other ways of responding to differences of opinion that have little to do with making the resulting tensions productive. The goal could instead be to marginalize or eliminate one of the opposing viewpoints while establishing the other as dominant. The concept of discourse or conversation as a productive force within culture represents, then, an implicit rejection of more combative, violent, or authoritarian approaches to resolving cultural tensions. However, in order to make tension productive, there must still be some process for working through differences of opinion.

Neither Oakeshott, nor Ricoeur, nor Taylor spend much time looking at the inner workings of conversation and discourse, and it is at this stage that the thought of Jürgen Habermas can provide some guidance. Habermas has spent much of his career examining the procedures and processes that underwrite what has been described here as discourse or conversation, and what Habermas calls *communicative action*. The equivalence between Oakeshott's concept of conversation and Habermas's communicative action is admittedly not a perfect one; Habermas furnishes communicative action with a level of formality and detail that is lacking in Oakeshott's descriptions of conversation, and communicative action generally culminates in a particular decision, while Oakeshott's conversation is a more open-ended affair. But it is the contention of this essay that much of what Habermas says about communicative action is applicable to the concepts of conversation and discourse.

Maeve Cooke, in her book on Habermas's theory of communicative action, writes that communicative action is a "form of social interaction in which the plans of action of various agents are coordinated through an exchange of communicative acts—that is, through a use of language…oriented toward understanding" (Cooke 1997, p. 9). Put differently, communicative action is simply the use of discourse to arrive at some kind of consensus among the conversational participants, and it is differentiated from other modes of interaction such as the use of force. Because its goal is mutual understanding and consensus, communicative action also prohibits the use of certain rhetorical strategies that Habermas labels "instrumental" or "strategic". These are strategies that assume the correctness of a particular point of view prior to entering into communication and are pursued with the intent to manipulate or coerce others into adopting that point of view instead of reaching true mutual understanding through discourse (Cooke 1997, pp. 19-22). In its proscription of force and "strategic action", it is possible to see the emergence of a moral element in this description of communicative action.

However, communicative action must contain some method for dealing with disagreement and the reality of competing and divergent opinions that does not depend on manipulation or coercion. Habermas calls this method *communicative rationality*, and it is the form of reasoning that governs instances of communicative action. Communicative rationality rests upon Habermas's insistence that all forms of communication contain within them some kind of validity claim, and therefore all communication is open to being contested by others. He identifies three types of validity claims with three corresponding methods of contestation. The first type is a claim of *propositional truth* (e.g., the earth is the center of the solar system), and it can be contested on the grounds that the claim is not true (e.g., a rejection of the evidence for a geocentric solar system). The second type of validity claim is one of *normative rightness*. This does not mean a claim about a moral norm (e.g., murder is wrong), as this would be a propositional truth claim. Rather, it is a claim that the speaker has a right to say what they said. Cooke gives the example of a teacher requesting a glass of water from a student. A student could challenge this claim by contesting the teacher's right to make that kind of request. Finally, the third type of validity claim is an *expressive* one (e.g., I am afraid). This claim can be contested by questioning the speaker's truthfulness (e.g., they do not really feel fear) (Cooke 1997, pp. 59-60, 85-86). This is admittedly a somewhat simplified version of a schema that Habermas lays out, but the point that is relative here is that *all* communication is open to possible contestation from others.

Within this context, communicative rationality at its most basic level refers to the asking for and offering of reasons to support various validity claims whenever there is disagreement. It is important to empha-

size that when Habermas refers to *reasons* and *reasoning* when discussing communicative rationality, he means this in the broadest sense of the words. He does not mean only scientific/logical/empirical reasoning, although this kind of reasoning may certainly come into play. In fact, Habermas claims that there is no way to know beforehand what kind of reasons will be compelling and acceptable to the various parties engaged in discourse. Consider again the example of a teacher asking a student to fetch them a glass of water. The student may challenge this claim on the grounds that the teacher does not have the right to make such a request. By contesting this claim, the student is asking the teacher to give them compelling reasons that they do in fact have a right to make such a request, but there is no way of knowing in advance what kind of reasons might be compelling. In fact, what is considered a compelling reason will differ according to details of the culture, tradition, etc. within which the student/teacher are operating. "Because I am your elder", "Because I am in a position of authority", "Because I must stay in the room to keep an eye on the rest of the class"—all of these are possible reasons that, depending on the details of the situation, will be more or less compelling to the student.

Habermas describes this situation—the impossibility of knowing in advance what reasons will be compelling—as one in which "there is no *metadiscourse* to which we can refer in order to justify a choice between different forms of argumentation. There is no forum for deciding…which kinds of argument are relevant" (Cooke 1997, p. 42). It may be possible to know what kinds of reasoning would be compelling in a *particular* situation, but the point Habermas is making is that there is no way of knowing in advance what reasons might be compelling in *all* similar situations (e.g., every time a student challenges the authority of a teacher) given that the factors that make certain reasons compelling are dependent on the particularities of a specific situation.

Oakeshott makes a similar point when he writes that when a community is confronted with a crisis, "if…there were some steady, unchanging, independent guide to which a society might resort, it would no doubt be well advised to do so. But no such guide exists; [a community has] no resources outside…its own tradition of behavior which the crisis has left untouched" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 176). Habermas's metadiscourse and Oakeshott's "steady, unchanging, independent guide" refer to the same concept—a transcendent set of values that is applicable across all cultures and situations. Both claim that no such set of values exists, at least not one that will be compelling to all people. Instead, it is part of the process of discourse and communicative rationality—a process that always takes place within the context of background assumptions and beliefs that are part of a *particular* community—to explore and discover reasons that are convincing to the various parties involved.

After this brief sketch of Habermas's ideas, it is possible to more clearly state the connection between these concepts and liberal education. The claim here is that if liberal education is an education in which students are asked to both study multiple modes of understanding and to put these modes in conversation with each other, it is also an education in the conversational norms that make such an enterprise possible. These conversational norms look something like Habermas's concepts of communicative action and communicative rationality in the sense that the requesting/proffering of reasons for particular beliefs composes the main form of discourse when tensions arise between different and possibly opposing modes of understanding. However, as stated above, the particular reasons that may be compelling in a certain situation and the decisions and conclusions reached through communicative action are impossible to know in advance. In this way, the concept of communicative rationality "is not a substantive conception of reason"—i.e., it does not state what kinds of reasons or reasoning is best in a given situation. It is instead "a formally defined procedure of argumentation" (Cooke 1997, p. 38).

By aligning itself with this particular conversational procedure, liberal education rejects other methods of resolving tensions between competing beliefs such as the use of force, coercion, manipulation, or deceit. It is important to note that this rejection is founded upon a certain idea of personhood, the primary feature of which is the fundamental equality of persons. This equality underwrites the commitment of those engaged in discourse to ask for and proffer reasons in a good faith attempt to reach mutual understanding or consensus by creating a "mutual obligation" between participants in discourse. Cooke explains

this obligation, writing, "With every speech act, by virtue of the validity claim it raises, the speaker enters into an interpersonal relationship of mutual obligation with the hearer: The speaker is obliged to support her claim with reasons, if challenged, and the hearer is obliged to accept a claim unless he has good reasons not to do so" (Cooke 1997, pp. 12-13). In this connection between liberal education and equality, it is possible to see echoes of Aristotle's claim that liberal education is the type of education that is appropriate for free people, by which he had in mind the citizens of the Athenian polis who were equals.

Additionally, discourse and conversation as it has been described in this section also make room for a popularly held goal of liberal education for some thinkers: *self-understanding.* Oakeshott himself subscribed to this view, writing that liberal education is primarily concerned with "adventures in human self-understanding". However, he goes onto state that "Human self-understanding is…inseparable from learning to participate in what is called a 'culture'" (Oakeshott 1989a, pp. 15-16). As this essay has shown, participation in culture is synonymous with participation in the discourse/conversation that is an essential part of culture's constitution.

Beyond setting the parameters for how conversation should be conducted, the rules of discourse described here also support the development of a sense of self and autonomy that is critical for genuine self-understanding. They do this, not by isolating the individual, but by creating the conditions necessary for recognition of the self by others. Cooke writes, "Instead of taking as its starting point the isolated individual consciousness in its relation to an external world, Habermas's critical theory emphasizes the social constitution of the self through the relationships of mutual recognition into which she enters on the basis of her involvement in processes of communicative action" (Cooke 1997, p. 40). Cooke goes on to explain that this process of self-constitution is not necessarily dependent on the acceptance of a person's validity claims in an instance of communicative action because, even if their validity claims are contested and their reasons supporting their validity claims are rejected, the process teaches a person to see "himself as the accountable author of contestable validity claims, as the accountable author of his own actions, and as an individuated affective subject and responsible subject of his life history" (Cooke 1997, p. 92). In this way, then, conversation and discourse are the grounds upon which a person builds a sense of self. This is because self-understanding is constructed socially within a particular culture and tradition. Recognizing this collapses the dichotomy between what have sometimes been seen as opposing goals of education: the advancement of self-understanding and the advancement of political and cultural development.

ON CANON(S), CURRICULUM, AND THE EDIFYING PHILOSOPHER

What has been said so far has mostly addressed the theoretical foundations of liberal education. What follows in this section is an attempt to apply this theory to a question that has colored much of the contemporary discussion around Western liberal education—the place of works and thinkers who have not traditionally been included in the syllabi of classes. Too often, these discussions break down in the crucible of polarized politics, sublimating into inchoate debates about DEI, critical race theory, or other buzzwords that distract from a focus on the purpose and goals of liberal education. The hope is that what has been addressed in this essay will allow for a more productive treatment of this issue.

These debates around the content of liberal learning are often debates about expanding the canon of subjects and thinkers that have traditionally been taught in Western institutions of liberal education. However, when confronting this question, it is helpful to distinguish between three different kinds of "canon expansion".

First, there is the process of taking an existing canonical work and opening it up to new interpretations. Judith Frank provides a good example of this in her essay *In the Waiting Room: Canons, Communities, "Political Correctness"* in which she claims that one can and should read the novel *Robinson Crusoe* as "a novel about the place in which it occurs, a novel about slavery, a novel about British colonialism" (Frank 1993, p. 137). This, she points out, is not how the novel has been traditionally taught, but her reading is based on a close textual analysis of the novel and the historical moment in which it takes place. Frank

goes on to claim, "I'm reading *Robinson Crusoe* as an artifact, an imaginative cultural act, from a culture that was talking to itself very seriously...about what it was doing in Africa and the Caribbean. My reading suggests that rather than exploiting and butchering thousands of slaves while feeling good about itself, British culture worried about it" (Frank 1993, p. 138). This kind of canon expansion is important, but it also tends to be less contentious and is not necessarily what has triggered debates about the place of the Western Canon in the liberal arts.

Much of the debate instead hinges on a second kind of canon expansion. This involves creating a place within an existing canon for new thinkers and new works that, though they have not been traditionally included in that canon, can still make a claim to belonging within it. A major source of the antagonism that characterizes debates about canons stems from the perception that there is a kind of zero-sum game going on. If one side wins, the various works that they think should be taught at universities will be included in syllabi at the expense of the works the other side is fighting for. For example, when a university gets rid of its freshman "Western Civilization" requirement because "Western Civilization was a myth concocted in the 1910s aimed at assimilating immigrant minorities and justifying American imperialism" (Bauerlein 2020) and replaces it with a "Global Citizenship" requirement, the fear is that whatever courses and content were included under the Western Civilization requirement will no longer be taught.

While it's true that there is limited room in syllabi and curricula, and professors must choose what pieces to teach at the expense of others, the situation is not as zero-sum as it is sometimes made out to be. In fact, a possible solution to this debate lies in what has been discussed so far here in this essay: embracing the tension at the debate's core and putting the various works for which each side is advocating in conversation with each other. For example, there used to be a class offered at the University of Chicago called *Black Political Thought: The Problem of Freedom*. In this course, students were asked to examine the question of freedom—its content, and its possibility—through the lens of slave narratives. In addition to these narratives, students also read expositions of freedom such as Hannah Arendt's *What is Freedom?*, Isaiah Berlin's *Two Concepts of Liberty*, and Philip Petit's *Republicanism*. The effect of placing these various visions of freedom in conversation with each other was to show that contemporary conceptions of freedom in America cannot be understood without looking at the history of slavery and the dreams of freedom and critiques of freedom's possibility that it engendered *as well as* the ideas of freedom passed down from Ancient Greece through England to America's founders (sometimes these visions of freedom seemed similar, as in Fredrick Douglas's writings, and sometimes what was presented failed to fit neatly into any common definition of freedom, such as in Olaudah Equiano's narrative of his life). Because of this—because the Western tradition of freedom is itself a product of the tensions generated by the multiplicity of actors and historical particularities that have contributed to it—students cannot be initiated into this tradition without themselves understanding this history and these tensions. By avoiding the zero-sum thinking that too often characterizes debates about expanding the canon, this course more effectively introduced students to Western ideas about freedom than a course that only focused on one strand of this tradition at the expense of others.

If this second kind of canon expansion provokes the most debate, it is the third type that generates the most genuine difficulty. This type of expansion does not involve broadening the boundaries of an existing canon, but rather making room in the classroom for works from completely *new* canons. The saliency of this type of canon expansion in contemporary universities lies in the reality (one that is perhaps reaching a higher pitch due to increasing globalization in much of the world) of interaction between distinct traditions. Habermas, who often uses the term "lifeworld" to describe the cultural tradition within which one operates, describes this situation as one in which there are "a plurality of overlapping *lifeworlds*" (Cooke 1997, p. 16). Because of this *inter*-tradition reality, Oakeshott writes that:

> …to be concerned with one's own tradition of political activity is not enough. A political education worth the name must embrace, also, knowledge of the politics of other contemporary societies. It must do this because some at least of our political activity is related to that of other people, and not to know how they go about attending to their arrangements is not to know the course they

> will pursue and not to know what resources to call upon in our own tradition (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 182).

The difficulty of this third kind of canon expansion lies not, however, in acknowledging its importance, but rather in its implementation. Oakeshott does provide some guidance here. He writes that, "The study of another's politics, like a study of our own, should be an ecological study of a tradition of behavior, not an anatomical study of mechanical devices or the investigation of an ideology" (Ibid.). Oakeshott is claiming that, just as the study of one's own tradition seeks immersion in the cultural conversation that is the lifeblood of that tradition, the study of another tradition should aim for a similar level of depth.

There are examples of attempts to do just this. St. John's College offers a Master of Arts in Eastern Classics in which students immerse themselves in "the thought of India, China, and Japan while studying either Classical Chinese or Sanskrit, as studying these languages opens a window into how thought through the original language came to be" (St. John's College Website 2025). This description, however, reveals the difficulty of such an endeavor. India, China, and Japan each represent distinct cultures, and it is difficult to imagine how a program with such breadth could also provide the depth necessary for the kind of "ecological study" that Oakeshott recommends.

If there is any hope in effectively responding to these challenges, however, it lies in the fact that "we did not begin yesterday to have relations with our neighbors" (Oakeshott 1989b, p. 182). The Western tradition has, for millennia, changed and evolved in response to its encounters with the cultures of others—from its incorporation of Christian ideas in the 4th century CE to the influence of Islamic scientific and philosophical thought in the second millennium. In modern America, there is, of course, the strong presence of Latino and Asian cultures, particularly in the West, or the influence of Dutch culture in the Northeast. Few cultures have evolved within silos, and the interstices between cultures provide entry points into a deeper study and understanding of other traditions.

For example, for a time Colorado College offered a course called *Indigenous Religions of the Southwest*. During this course students spent a week on Pine Ridge, the Lakota reservation in South Dakota, where they were introduced to and participated in various Lakota religious practices and ceremonies. That this experience fostered something deeper than a surface-level understanding of Lakota culture for the students was made possible by two factors: First, the professor of the course had long-standing connections with the Lakota community, and this fact allowed students to visit the reservation as more than mere tourists. Second, the course took place against the historical background of cultural influence between Europeans and the Lakota people. For example, many Lakota religious practices have incorporated Christian beliefs, while Lakota beliefs have been absorbed into the larger American culture in various ways. Stating it this way, of course, belies the violent history that partially underwrites the presence of Christianity in the Lakota community, and students in the course were certainly asked to grapple with this history. The point, however, is that any possibility of mutual understanding between the students and the Lakota people was predicated on and circumscribed by the history of cultural exchange between European/American Western culture and Lakota culture.

This approach to thinking about canon expansion demarcates a limit that is difficult to overcome without long-term immersion in another culture—a person can only approach the study of another tradition through the lens of their own. Fortunately, one's own tradition is often more porous than is sometimes admitted, and the interstices between cultures, be they religious, political, or economic, offer entry points into the study of another tradition that yield more than mere cursory knowledge. Studying other traditions in this way also deepens one's understanding of one's own tradition, both by revealing the historical realities of mutual influence between cultures, but also by asking the student to grapple with the tensions between different traditions—a process that, like rearranging the furniture in a room, makes the old and familiar appear new. This is perhaps what Oakeshott means when he states, "to know only one's own tradition is not to know even that" (Ibid.).

Unfortunately, there is no "metadiscourse" or "steady, unchanging guide" to which department heads and university administrators can turn when doing the difficult work of deciding what should be taught and how. What has been said here, however, does suggest a principle that should serve as lodestar when approaching question of curriculum design. It is the principle of "keeping the conversation going". This phrase is borrowed from Richard Rorty's discussion of "edifying philosophy" at the end of his book *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Rorty writes that the edifying philosopher is one who is primarily concerned with the project of:

> …finding new, better, more interesting, more fruitful ways of speaking. The attempt to edify…may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture or historical period, or between our own discipline and another discipline which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary. But it may instead consist in the 'poetic' activity of thinking up such new aims, new words, or new disciplines, followed by…the attempt to reinterpret our familiar surroundings in the unfamiliar terms of our new inventions (Rorty 1979, p. 360).

This description touches on many of the ideas discussed in this essay, and it suggests that the work of the edifying philosopher is not aimed at identifying any kind of metadiscourse or objective truth. In fact, it actively resists such a project and is instead "a protest against attempts to limit conversation" by the elevation of one mode of understanding, or one conversational voice, above all others (Rorty 1979, p. 377). That Rorty's words here echo those of Oakeshott is not mere happenstance. Rorty acknowledges his debt to Oakeshott by naming the last section of his book *Philosophy in the Conversation of Mankind* as an ode to Oakeshott's essay *The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind.* Rorty writes that he does this because Oakeshott's essay "…catches the tone in which, I think, philosophy should be discussed" (Rorty 1979, p. 389).

Within the context of liberal learning, following the model of the edifying philosopher means that, when confronted with questions of curriculum design, what subjects to teach, or what departments to fund, universities should ask themselves if their decisions are supporting or undermining the possibility of conversation in the sense it has been described here. And a useful approach to answering this question is to ask if the conversation going on *within* the university matches that going on *beyond* the university's campus, in the tradition and culture within which the university is situated. Recall again the course *Black Political Thought: The Problem of Freedom* described above; if there was no place for such a course in an institution of liberal learning, the institution would be failing to make space for what has been an important voice in the Western tradition for the past several hundred years—the experiences and writings of black Americans. Similarly, there must also be a place for the study of thinkers who have contributed to the concept of freedom that has been passed down from Ancient Greece because this too represents a prominent voice in the Western tradition.

Of course, the model of the edifying philosopher does not provide a clear answer in all situations, nor is it possible to make room for every voice or point of view in a university. In a living, breathing, developing tradition, it is natural that certain voices, or modes of understanding, that were once dominant are replaced by others over time. For example, grammar and philology are no longer viewed as essential subjects for students of liberal education, if they are even still taught at all. But a commitment to "keeping the conversation going" should serve as a guide for those making decisions about curriculum design. For to abandon the model of the edifying philosopher would be an admission that, when faced with task of navigating the tensions inherent in the fact of plurality, discourse and conversation are ultimately impotent.

THE PROMISE OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

There is good reason to believe that liberal education and the process of discourse and conversation that it embodies is hopelessly naive. When Charles Taylor claims that the Greek notion of equality was a product of "discourse", and that this discourse continued throughout history to shape what is intimated by the word equality today, he is surely leaving out some important parts of the story. These parts include wars, plagues, slavery, totalitarianism, and all the other instances of force and violence that represent something very different than conversation. So, while it may be true that discourse represents one method of responding to the tensions generated by plurality, it is also a historical fact that this is frequently not the method chosen, and that instead tensions often disintegrate into violence and oppression.

In light of this, liberal learning represents something more than simply an initiation into the cultural process of conversation and discourse that is ongoing. For those participating in it, liberal education signals a commitment to this process *in lieu of* other processes like violence or coercion. Liberal education, then, is the appropriate type of education for modern democracies, where communities and their inhabitants have an explicit commitment to the processes of non-violent deliberation.

The promise of liberal learning is a hopeful one because it is made in the face of a historical record that is marked by violence—where violence is, perhaps, the norm. After all, even the democracy of Aristotle's Athens was haunted by the reality of constant war with its neighbors and the rampant inequality and slavery within its own walls. Discourse and conversation are the rare historical exception, and it is fitting, then, that Rorty calls edifying philosophy "abnormal philosophy". But practitioners of liberal learning are committed to "keeping the conversation going" because they believe that it offers possibilities that the alternatives of violence and coercion do not.

At a personal level, conversation and discourse make possible relationships of mutual obligation and recognition that allow each person to see themselves as responsible agents whose lives have value and meaning. At a communal level, discourse allows for the non-violent creation and renewal of cultural traditions. And sometimes, discourse opens up paths towards new meanings and new understandings by provoking its participants to "fresh exertions". It does this, not by wishing for the kind of single or final solution that those who, because of their unshakable faith in the correctness of their beliefs, long for. Instead, practitioners of liberal learning see "in their ability to sustain a conversation...human beings as generators of new descriptions rather than beings one hopes to be able to describe accurately" (Rorty 1979, p. 378). Violence, on the other hand, by always destroying one tradition while raising up another, prevents the appearance of these new descriptions by foreclosing the discovery of a "surplus of meaning" that is possible only through discursive efforts to make tensions productive, a process through which one's enemy is metamorphosed into one's conversational partner.

This does not mean that individuals who have a commitment to some kind of independent standard are unwelcome in places of liberal learning, nor does it mean that students should be taught only to converse and never choose what might be right or wrong in a given situation—an effect, some decry, of contemporary education's obsession with "critical thinking". On the contrary, Oakeshott notes that each mode of understanding, be it science or history, has its own internal logic that allows those working within it to make claims about their object of study. And even when various voices in a conversation disagree, it is often possible to reach some kind of consensus or decision—this is the work of politics. But what students of liberal education recognize is that every moment of consensus, is just that, a moment. It is nothing more than a brief patch of calm on the "boundless and bottomless sea" upon which all communities sail. The process of navigating the sea is endless, and it requires the constant use, renewal, and reconstitution of cultural traditions and the resources they contain. Liberal education is ultimately concerned with the stewardship of this process and of preventing its foreclosure through violence and coercion. To abandon this stewardship would be an admission that conversation must ultimately make way for war, and that swords will always be the primary tool for sculpting a community.

REFERENCES

Arendt, H. 1998. *The Human Condition*. Second Ed. with an Introduction by Margaret Canovan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aristotle. 2013. *Aristotle's Politics* (C. Lord, Tr.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bauerlein, M. 2020. How a Revision of the Western CIV Curriculum Resulted in No Curriculum At All (Opinion). *Inside Higher Ed*. Feb. 19. https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/02/19/how-revision-western-civ-curriculum-resulted-no-curriculum-all-opinion

Cooke, M. 1997. *Language and Reason: A Study of Habermas's Pragmatics*. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.

Dillard, A. 2007. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Frank, J. 1993. In the Waiting Room: Canons, Communities, "Political Correctness." In: *Wild Orchids and Trotsky*. London: Penguin Books.

Klein, E., and Chiang, T. 2021. *Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Ted Chiang. New York Times*. Mar. 30. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/30/podcasts/ezra-klein-podcast-ted-chiang-transcript.html

Master of Arts in Eastern Classics-Asian Studies at St. John's college. St. John's College. (n.d.). https://www.sjc.edu/academic-programs/graduate/masters-eastern-classics

Oakeshott, M. 1989a. A Place of Learning. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

_____. 1989b. Political Education. In: *The Voice of Liberal Learning*.

_____. 1991. The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind. In: *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*. Indianapolis: Liberty Press.

Oakeshott, M. 2014. *Notebooks, 1922–86*. Exeter: Imprint Academic.

Ricœur, P. 1976. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.

Rorty, R. 1979. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Taylor, C. 2016. *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of The Human Linguistic Capacity*. Cambridge MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

From Liberal Education to Liberation: The Togetherness Wayfinder and Aesthetic Literacies

SHEENA MICHELE MASON
AND
TREVOR ALEO
SUNY Oneonta/
Greenwich Country Day School

Abstract: In this paper, we present two interrelated pedagogical frameworks—the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies. These frameworks help educators navigate "race," identity, and literature in ways that challenge traditional liberal educational models while also helping to bring into fruition the stated goals of liberalism. By examining the limitations of liberalism and neoliberalism in fostering true humanization and equity, we argue for a transformative approach to teaching that centers on critical engagement, imaginative inquiry, and the creation of a better future for all where no one is dehumanized. Together, these frameworks equip students with the intellectual and creative tools needed to rethink identity, critique systemic power structures, and envision and create a more just and liberated future.

Keywords: Togetherness Wayfinder, Aesthetic Literacies, Antiracism, Liberalism, Liberal Education, Identity Formation, Critical Thinking, Humanization, Transformative Learning, Liberation

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary educational landscape, where issues of equity, inclusion, and social justice are increasingly central, the challenge of addressing "race" and racism in K-16 education remains paramount. As educators, our responsibility extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to equipping students with the critical tools necessary to navigate, critique, and ultimately transform the world around them. Traditionally, liberal education has been viewed as the cultivation of the whole human being for the purposes of citizenship and life in a free society. This perspective emphasizes the development of intellectual and ethical virtues, critical thinking, and the ability to deliberate on civic, cultural, and scientific matters. In the West, liberal education is often promoted by those who believe that liberalism fosters personal freedom.

Liberal education is supposed to encourage critical thinking, ethical reasoning, creativity, and an understanding of diverse perspectives. Through exposure to various disciplines—such as the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences—it aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals who can engage thoughtfully with complex social, cultural, and global issues. However, in the contemporary context, liberal education faces challenges from both market-driven priorities, which view education primarily

as a means to economic ends, and from political polarizations that question the value of a broad-based education and desire the maintenance of current systems (Savage 2017). Additionally, the context for which liberalism arose—European colonialism, imperialism, genocide, enslavement of Africans and indigenous peoples, etc.—in short, human rights for some, namely Europeans and those of more recent European descent, and not all depended on the subjugation and exclusion of certain people from the very category of "human." That fact contradicts the intended nature of liberal education in the first place.

That violence, marginalization, and oppression required primarily people who get racialized as "nonwhite" and all characteristics and values associated with so-called nonwhite people inferior and "subhuman," if human at all, to simply accept the premises of liberalism, thereby foregoing any critique much less change. For liberalism to fulfill its latent emancipatory potential, its proponents must both acknowledge and transcend its imperial and dehumanizing origins and embrace a more expansive vision of substantive freedom, economic democracy, and collective wellbeing—values that align with liberal thinkers including Rawls, Mill, and Hobhouse—to create a society where all are truly free moral equals (McManus 2021). As educators and scholars of the humanities, we know that education has a vital role to play in this shift.

Unfortunately, we find ourselves in an era when universities are increasingly commodified and higher education attacked; diversity, equity, and inclusion divisions and efforts are being dismantled; humanities departments are being hollowed out; African and Africana Studies programs are being banned or dismantled; and K-16, not just K-12, education policy and pedagogy feels starved for imagination and effective progressivism (Rousseau 2020). In the background of this decline lies the ruins of the Global Education Reform Movement (GERM)–the acronym used to refer to the global trend toward standardized curriculum, focus on core subjects, and increased accountability measured via testing (Sahlberg 2023). Much like the bipartisan neoliberal era that birthed it, GERM's inability to fulfill its promise of improved educational outcomes has left it with a waning influence but an enduring legacy. While paleoconservative politicians attempt to dismantle public education, strip academic freedom in universities, and implement ahistorical supremacist and nationalist curriculum, the alternatives offered by neoliberal politicians seem to promise little more than increased test scores and potential upticks in future Gross Domestic Product (Schneider and Berkshire 2020). This means most policies, white papers, curricula, etc., from center-left candidates and think tanks have very little to say about the other personal, existential, philosophical, and communal goods that education provides or is thought to provide.

In fact, the impact of the neoliberal era extends beyond systemic and social issues and seems to have fundamentally altered our prevailing attitudes toward knowledge itself. According to Rousseau (2020), market logic has seeped so deeply into the foundations of the academy that even researchers and scholars who value the broad-based liberal arts education struggle to think outside of the limiting frames of neoliberalism. This shift has moved us away from both conservative and progressive-coded views of knowledge; for instance, valuing knowledge intrinsically, as championed by Matthew Arnold, or as a pathway to understanding and engaging with power structures, as theorized by Paul-Michel Foucault. Instead, neoliberalism has fostered a culture of stark instrumentalism in education. This results in "the belief that makes knowledge merely a means to a practical end, or the satisfaction of practical needs" (Hester 2007, p. 170); this instrumentalist frame prioritizes immediate, tangible outcomes over broader intellectual, emotional, and even spiritual growth and is anathema to forms of liberal and liberal arts education in theory and practice. This is particularly unproductive for humanities departments considering "neoliberalism rejects the very idea of not-for-profit and insists that all values must be measured by the market, the humanities appear valueless" (Shumway 2017, p. 10). Humanities departments that emphasize deeper understandings of humanity and global citizenship, for example, would be ill-equipped to inspire clarity and tools for constructing a better and just world with a continued deemphasis on the human or the continued dehumanization of any human individual or group.

This is why education, the humanities and liberal arts in particular, faces a critical juncture in the wake of neoliberalism's influence. While a return to pre-neoliberal paradigms is neither feasible nor desirable, there remains an opportunity to envision a new future for these disciplines and the role of education.

This reimagining calls for a shift toward what could be termed an alternative modernity, one that recenters fundamental inquiries often sidelined by neoliberal frameworks. As Rafudeen argues, this approach would prioritize "questions which a...neoliberal perspective, with its quantitative bias, tends to avoid. These questions such as: What is reality? What is the human being? What is the good life? What is happiness" (Rafudeen 2016, p. 209)? By refocusing on these essential philosophical and existential questions, the humanities can reclaim their vital role in fostering practical wisdom and exploring the human condition, while still acknowledging the realities of our contemporary contexts.

Unfortunately, in both theory and practice, liberalism remains rooted in the very problems it supposedly seeks to address. As something that stemmed from the context of the explicit and effective systemic dehumanization of some humans and the humanization of others, the systemic nature of that dehumanization has remained through the very linguistic and ideological practices carried in and through education systems, which serve to maintain the societal inequities that need not exist or persist. We need fresh methods and frameworks that can help educators foster a meaningful and transformative classroom culture where the limitations of liberalism and its political inclinations do not impede positive and progressive change. How can the valuable aspects of liberalism hold while forging pathways to the rightful humanization of all human beings in practice and theory? How can education stop being about maintaining systemic hierarchies and power imbalances in favor of the embracement, betterment, and wellness of all humans? While there is nothing unique in our diagnosis of these issues, nor in our call to renew the humanities and liberal arts education more broadly, we can present a constellation of ideas, theories, and pedagogies that represent an innovative synthesis of concepts and practices from the frontiers of both our fields.

To that end, this paper introduces two interrelated frameworks—the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies—as essential pedagogical approaches for K-16 teachers in education. These frameworks are designed to reorient how students perceive "race", identity more broadly speaking, and literature, fostering a more informed and imaginative engagement with oneself, English language arts education, and the world. With this in mind, students who have aesthetic experiences with literature and who engage the togetherness wayfinder become equipped with greater discernment and greater imagination, all prerequisites for personal *and* collective freedom. We see education as necessary toward creating pathways to freedom and a better future for all.

Drawing on McManus (2021) and Honneth's (2016) more expansive conception, we define freedom as not only the ability to act without undue constraints but also having access to the material and social conditions necessary for genuine self-development. It involves both individual autonomy and collective participation in shaping the institutions that govern our lives. True freedom requires both substantive resources that enable real choices and social structures that allow for democratic co-determination across different spheres of life. This broader understanding of freedom recognizes that liberation requires transforming how we organize society. The togetherness wayfinder offers one such potentially liberatory mode of seeing and being as part of its toolkit: *Ubuntu*, a Nguni Bantu term and a central component of the togetherness wayfinder. The best one-word translation might be "humanity" or "humanness," but a better translation would be "I am because we (or you) are." While such political and economic solutions are beyond the scope of this article (see Mason 2024), it is our belief that, as educators, we must recognize our role in changing how we talk, teach, and learn about topics such as "race" and racism (i.e., the human) to allow for such freedom to be brought into fruition for everyone.

PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The togetherness wayfinder offers a practical framework that challenges the traditional notions of "race" and racism, advocating for and making possible the abolition of racism in the process. Drawing from *The Raceless Antiracist: Why Ending Race Is the Future of Antiracism* (Mason 2024), the togetherness wayfinder provides educators with tenets, concepts, language, philosophy, information, and tools such as the racelessness translator to help students deconstruct race/ism and understand the broader social, cultural, and eco-

nomic forces at play. By reframing discussions of race/ism through this toolkit, students are encouraged to see beyond binary modes of thought and consider the complex and interconnected systems that perpetuate inequality. They also come to see themselves and each other more clearly. The expressed purpose of engaging the togetherness wayfinder is to help students not just rightly identify the reality of race/ism but also to help stop the root causes of it in the first place.

Complementing this approach, aesthetic literacies, as articulated in this paper and emerging scholarship in education studies (Aleo 2024; Storm 2023), present literacy learning as a richer, more dynamic, and more participatory process than the mere consumption of content or acquisition of skills. To use pedagogies that foster aesthetic literacies is to invite students to take up a range of socially situated practices from different interpretive communities to read, write, and think about the world in more pluralistic and discerning ways. Through fostering students' aesthetic literacies, educators can help learners better navigate our constantly shifting landscape of social, digital, academic, and civic contexts while also providing access to the rich disciplinary traditions offered by a liberal arts education. Similar to the togetherness wayfinder, this framework is one of synthesis and navigation—offering a suite of aesthetic tools and practices that allow for rhetorical and epistemic agility, while maintaining a commitment to the human pursuit of critical, creative, and liberatory forms of knowledge.

We seek to invite educators into these frameworks, offering them epistemological tools that not only inform their understanding of race/ism and literary studies but also empower them to guide their students toward a more just and equitable future. By integrating the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies into their pedagogy, educators can foster a learning environment where students are not only informed about the past and present but are also equipped to imagine and create better futures.

As we explore these frameworks, we will address the broader question of what education is for, challenging the dominant narratives that frame education primarily as a means of market competitiveness. We will advocate for an education that prioritizes personal, existential, and communal growth, providing students with the tools to critique the world from an informed stance and engage in meaningful action that leads to material change.

Incorporating these elements into the K-16 curriculum counters the reduction of education to mere skills acquisition meant to maintain the status quo of inequity and antagonism that arises from such contexts, offering a more robust vision that includes cultivating aesthetic and philosophical sensibilities. These are essential for students as they navigate and ultimately shape a complex world marked by rapid social changes and deep-seated inequalities.

In the sections that follow, we delve into the underpinnings of the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies, provide concrete examples of their application in the classroom, and explore the potential outcomes of this integrative approach in shaping future-making, equity-minded, and liberatory education. Through this work, we offer K-16 educators a comprehensive synthesis of frameworks that not only address the complexities of "race" and racism in education but also empower students to become active agents in the creation of themselves. To emphasize how the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies contain many tools and are not simply a set of conclusions, we share brief overviews of some of their central components before presenting how each toolkit can work in tandem.

The Togetherness Wayfinder

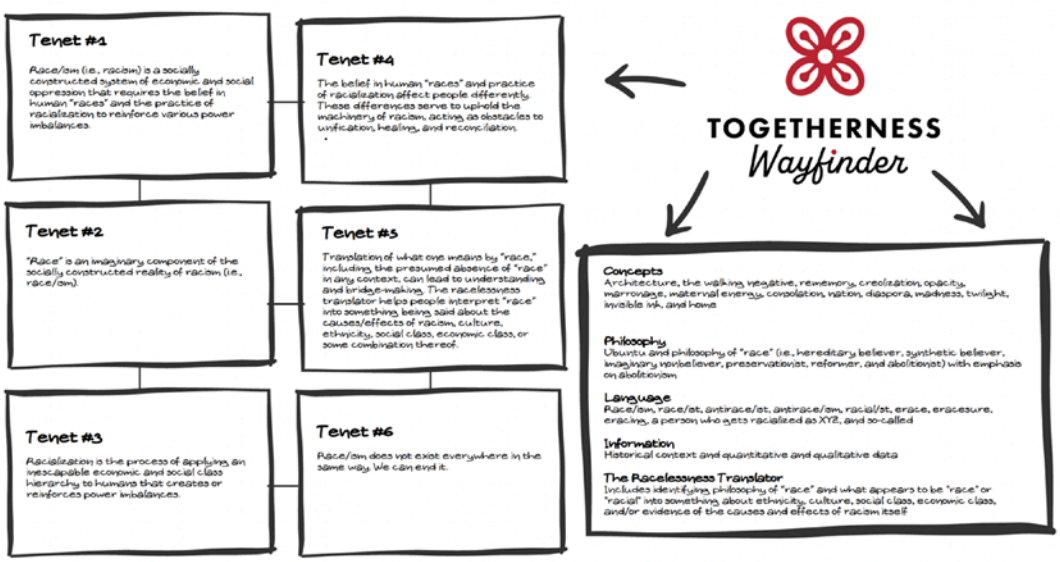

Figure 1: Visual of the Togetherness Wayfinder (Mason 2024, p. xxiv)

Liberal education would have us believe that we form our own identities while using language and ideologies that clearly come from the outside, reflect and maintain hierarchies, and have material impacts. Although centering "race", the togetherness wayfinder is really a journey to and through how any of us thinks about *identity*. As it pertains to "race", we get taught to see "race" and identity as entirely interconnected (i.e., nonblack identities) or entirely disconnected (i.e., white identities). But how any of us thinks about "race" and ourselves is inevitably one side of the same coin. The very design of race/ism depends on our inability and unwillingness to question the role of "race", the impact of "race" or the impact of the presumed absence of "race". We need methods that help us interrogate the category itself more effectively. As a framework, the togetherness wayfinder has overarching tenets, linguistic strategies, philosophies, information, and tools like the racelessness translator. The other tools of the togetherness wayfinder include architecture, the walking negative, rememory, *Ubuntu*, creolization, opacity, marronage, maternal energy, invisible ink, twilight, madness, consolation, nation, diaspora, and home. To properly engage the wayfinder, students learn each aspect of the toolkit from the language and rules to the information and tools through the study of texts, which we define as broadly as possible (i.e., social media, art, music, textiles, fashion, plays, movies, books, poetry, letters, magazines, newspapers, etc.).

Formerly called the *theory of racelessness* and alternatively dubbed *raceless antiracism*, the togetherness wayfinder helps students free themselves from binary modes of thought as it pertains to social identities and overlapping and interlocking systems of oppression. That freedom translates into:

1. a clearer understanding and identification of economic and social systems of oppression;
2. an expanded conception of the human, culture, ethnicity, social class, economic class, and racism;
3. a mode of seeing and being that lessens the internalization of racism-induced traumas;
4. an internalized method of ending the causes and effects of racism that manifest from within individuals and that inspires the desire to contribute toward ending the causes and effects of racism that exist outside of the individual.

To end racism, we must end the belief in what people call "race" and the practice of assigning "races" to the human species (i.e., racialization). "Race" is caught up with how one thinks about the human and who gets dehumanized and why. In places like the United States, "race" often gets conflated with ethnicity, culture, social and economic class, racism itself, or some combination thereof. Thus, the togetherness wayfinder culminates in, reflects, and includes a philosophy of "race" that is also a philosophy of the human that provides a pathway for ending racism. If we let it, the togetherness wayfinder can lead us toward a future where everyone is rightly humanized and humans are seen as commonly biological alongside all other species.

In philosophy, philosophers have identified six theories of "race" across time and place. We each hold two views of "race" even without the language to identify those perspectives. Of the two philosophies of "race" that we each hold, one answers the question "What is 'race'?" and the other answers "What should we do with 'race'?". This methodology requires teachers to render clear all ways that people can answer those questions and work to identify those views in the texts studied in class and out in the world. Again, *texts* include music, art, literature, film, theater, fashion, symbols, etc. The answers to "what is 'race'?" include: hereditary (naturalism), synthetic (constructionism), and imaginary (skepticism). The answers to "what should we do with 'race'?" include: preserve (conservationism), reform (reconstructionism), and abolish (eliminativism). These philosophies become a central part of the togetherness wayfinder. And operating from the latter ways to answer those questions (synthetic abolitionism or imaginary abolitionism) garner more effective discourse and learning outcomes for students.

The core tenets of the togetherness wayfinder are as follows:

1. *Race/ism* (i.e., racism) is a socially constructed system of economic and social oppression that requires the belief in human "races" and the practice of racialization to reinforce various power imbalances.
2. *"Race"* is an imaginary component of the socially constructed reality of racism (i.e., race/ism).
3. *Racialization* is the process of applying an inescapable economic and social class hierarchy to humans that creates or reinforces power imbalances.
4. The belief in human "races" and the practice of racialization affect people differently. These differences serve to uphold the machinery of racism, acting as obstacles to unification, healing, and reconciliation.
5. Translation of what one means by "race", including the presumed absence of "race", can lead to understanding and bridge-making. The racelessness translator helps people interpret "race" into something being said about culture, ethnicity, social class, economic class, the causes/effects of racism, or some combination thereof.
6. Race/ism does not exist everywhere in the same way. We can end it.

AESTHETIC LITERACIES

Grounded in previous theories relating to aesthetics sourced from critical sociocultural theories of literacy (Lewis et al. 2007), aesthetic education (Greene 1995), and literary studies (Eagleton 2013; Tyson 2015; Rosenblatt 1938), *aesthetic literacies* is a concept primarily concerned with the way different communities interpret, inquire, debate, and discuss the relationship between the form, function, and meaning of texts. In contrast to theories that regard learning as an isolated cognitive process and knowledge as an inert collection of facts, the sociocultural theories underpinning aesthetic literacies recognize that knowledge is always embodied, situated, and social. Or as Gee (2003) puts it "an academic discipline, or any domain, for that matter is… primarily a lived and historically set of distinctive social practices [wherein] content

is generated, debated, and transformed via certain distinctive ways of thinking, talking, valuing, acting, and often, reading and writing" (2003, p. 22). This more socially situated and contextual understanding of learning and communication complicates flattened notions of literacy in the singular and requires educators to contend with teaching a variety of *literacies* in the plural. While the literacies used within different discourse communities and the content they generate might vary widely, Figure 2 demonstrates how discourse communities are structured by three key elements: the community, its practices, and a shared domain (Lave and Wenger, 1991).

Key Elements of Discourse Communities

Community	**Domain**	**Practices**
Literary Scholars	Literary and cultural texts	Noticing patterns in language and form, posing interpretive puzzles about texts' meaning and significance, theorizing using various cultural/critical lenses, engaging in scholarly conversations across time, constructing arguments about how texts create meaning
Game Designers	Interactive systems and player experiences	Interpreting how mechanics shape player behavior and meaning-making, analyzing how rules and systems communicate ideas, theorizing about player engagement and motivation, constructing experiences that enable specific types of interpretation and play
Philosophy of Race Scholars	Conceptual frameworks about race/ism	Examining how race/ism is presented and interpreted across contexts, analyzing philosophical arguments about social identity, theorizing about how categories related to social create meaning, engaging in debates about the social and political impacts of race/ism

Figure 2: An overview of the three discourse communities that will be explored over the course of this article

Situated within the broader category of discourse communities are what Fish (1989) refer to as interpretive communities—or groups "made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions" (1989, p. 89). From this perspective, meaning does not reside in the marks in a novel or the brushstrokes in a painting—but is socially constitutive and mediated by members of the community who engage with particular texts in particular ways.

Drawing from Fish's articulation, Storm refers to aesthetic literacies as "the socioculturally shared practices of particular interpretive communities—ways of reading, writing, talking, and thinking—that focus on not only what a text means but also on how that text is written or constructed" (Storm 2023, p. 36). It is an expansive concept that can be used to examine the interpretive and creative practices of communities ranging from Emily Brontë scholars to Taylor Swift fans and Renaissance Art historians to sneakerheads. Despite their many differences, each group leverages practices that require the critical analysis and creation of texts while also considering issues of power. Relatedly, aesthetic literacies are also concerned with questions of social wisdom and global justice. Through the lens of aesthetic literacies students can take up, reject, and/or remix concepts and practices from the humanities and learn how to discern and question the often-subtle ways that texts and other cultural artifacts contribute to the maintenance of social hierarchies, oppressive ideologies, policies, and practices. This critical stance foregrounds the fact that navigating and

participating in various discourse communities should never be seen as a process of assimilation. Instead, it is an invitation to take up new sets of practices and tools and put them towards liberatory, humanizing ends. Through cultivating the aesthetic literacies required for participation, navigation, and transformation of different discourse communities, we can better provide an "education for wide awakeness—for a more active, responsible and ardent model of pursuing human quests" (Greene 2001, p. 111). That aligns well with the stated objectives of liberal education.

Viewing teaching as an opportunity for students to cultivate these tools and practices allows teachers to look beyond traditional notions of education as the transmission of inert knowledge to passive learners. It also transcends instrumentalized views of learning as the accumulation of generic skills in the hopes they'll be useful in a nebulous future job market. Instead, it reframes education as a process of becoming—as an invitation for students to see themselves as proto-literary scholars, art historians, humanists, game designers, and philosophers while also honoring their existing literacies. Drawing on Dewey's assertion that "education is a regulation of the process of coming to share in the social consciousness" (Dewey 1897, p. 15), aesthetic literacies are a reminder that our capacity for critical thought, creative expression, and liberatory action is fundamentally rooted in our shared experiences and collective meaning-making practices; moreover, they allow for students to join a rich tapestry of interpretive communities spanning time, space, culture, and form. In the context of this paper, that quest takes the form of inheriting the rich traditions of liberal arts education and using them on our journey toward what Frantz Fanon called "a new Humanism" (1952, p. 9) and what Paul Gilroy called "planetary humanism" (2000, epigraph) without race/ism.

BOTH IN APPLICATION

More specifically, this project invites students to take up the same epistemic and aesthetic tools used by Sheena Michele Mason—as well as her fellow literary and philosophy of "race" scholars—to explore questions related to race/ism and identity. These *literary literacies* sit within the broader category of aesthetic literacies and are defined as "the holistic practice of generating interpretive and critical knowledge with literary works in community with others" (Rainey and Storm 2022, p. 265). Building on empirical research examining the cognitive processes and social practices of literary scholars, Rainey and Storm claim these practices include *noticing* the use of literary forms, recursively posing interpretive *puzzles* to guide their interpretive work, and leveraging critical, social, and philosophical scholarship to *theorize* in ways that allow for the production of new knowledge. On the surface, these practices might seem far afield from the togetherness wayfinder. They are, however, the very suite of practices Mason used to engage with literary texts in ways that allowed her to reimagine and reconceptualize what race/ism is and how we might dismantle it. Instead of didactically transmitting the togetherness wayfinder to students so they can regurgitate its tenants or burying it under fuzzy labels like "critical, analytical, or creative thinking", aesthetic literacies approaches invite teachers to equip students with the disciplinary tools and knowledge used to *create it* in the hopes they can meaningfully participate in both academic discourse about race/ism, literary studies, and philosophy and navigate their own personal questions of identity.

The togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies, applied to an 11th-grade English Language Arts (ELA) unit on the Harlem Renaissance, offer students a dynamic architecture for exploring "race", identity, and future-making using an array of practices from literary studies and philosophy and principles from game-based learning. Considering these practices come from a variety of interpretive communities, they require educators to understand their classrooms as *hybrid interpretive communities* (Jones et al. 2024) where students are encouraged to draw on knowledge and practices from a range of different discourses. At the core of the togetherness wayfinder, for instance, is the philosophy of "race," which includes six key perspectives from the field. Three views respond to the question what is "race": hereditary, synthetic, and imaginary (i.e., naturalism, constructionism, and skepticism). And three respond to what we should do with "race": preserve, reform, and abolish (i.e., conservationism, reconstructionism, and eliminativism). Rather than co-opt learners into the most dominant views of "race" without explicitly teaching philosophy

of "race", the wayfinder presents all views of "race" and invites exploration of the perspectives that remain untaught, seldom understood, and rarely held and practiced in systems designed to require us to only hold views that maintain the broader structure of race/ism.

When we teach students all of these philosophies, we equip them with the tools to critically examine how race/ism is constructed, maintained, challenged, and understood across different contexts. In stark contrast to decontextualized skills acquisition or endless symbol hunting, inviting students to use concepts and frameworks sourced from the philosophy of "race" exemplifies the rich forms of theorizing that occur in classrooms cultivating literary and aesthetic literacies. This philosophical grounding complements the literary and creative works students study, helping them to see racism—or race/ism—as a social construction and a lived reality that humans designed and, indeed, design. It is a construction that constricts art, imagination, and beliefs and practices around identity and humanity. It is a construction that gatekeeps humanness from being equally applied to all humans, which has material impacts. Students will also learn how Americans of more recent African descent—as all humans originated in what we now call Africa—have contributed to the advancement of human rights.

In this unit, students take up the practices of literary scholars and philosophers to engage with texts such as George Schuyler's *Black No More* and "The Negro Art Hokum," Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* or the film adaptation of *Passing*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Langston Hughes's "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," Richard Wright's "Blueprint for Negro Writing," and Alain Locke's "The New Negro." These works highlight early debates around identity, culture, class, ethnicity, nationality, and "race" and the role of art in shaping or resisting racist narratives and structures. Schuyler, for example, argues in "The Negro Art Hokum" that "the Aframerican is merely a lampblacked Anglo-Saxon," rejecting the idea of distinct "Negro art" (Schuyler 1926). Translation: Schuyler argues that there is a distinction between "race" and culture, and that racializing culture or collapsing the differences between the two serves to maintain the status quo of antiblack racism. His perspective aligns with racial skepticism or imaginary nonbelievers, as dubbed in *The Raceless Antiracist*, challenging students to think critically about the nature of "race" and racism and its impact on art and inviting them to better translate "race" into culture or ethnicity when appropriate. Jubilee's "6 Black Men vs. 1 Secret White Guy | Odd One Out" video on YouTube (Jubilee 2023) would help students make connections between texts that were published almost one hundred years ago and today's conversations about "race". How might Schuyler's skepticism connect with the skepticism displayed by the participants in Jubilee's Middle Ground game? How do his points about needing to distinguish between "race" and culture and ethnicity echo in the game? From which philosophies of "race" do each of the players speak? How do you know? Students would then engage with responses to Schuyler's essay.

Hughes pushes back in "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," urging artists who get racialized as black and the broader American public to embrace their so-called racial identities and "express their individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame" (Hughes 1926). His stance aligns with hereditary and synthetic believers, emphasizing the importance of "racial" pride in artistic expression. Students are better equipped to translate Hughes' position on "race" as reflective of a cultural position, *not a "racial" one*. That is easy to miss when "race" language is used to describe culture, ethnicity, and the reality of racism, too. The racelessness translator of the togetherness wayfinder empowers students to bridge their views of "race" and racism toward a more objective reality of the two. Whereas Schuyler's depiction of race/ism in *Black No More* and "The Negro Art Hokum" aligns with an abolitionist view toward race/ism, Hughes' perspective resonates most with a preservationist and reformationist view. Yet, both of their perspectives contribute to an overwhelming amount of evidence that abolition is necessary and inevitable, too.[1] Students would be invited to weigh the evidence and draw their own conclusions, noting how their conclusions might change over the course of the unit.

To help students engage with Hughes's and Schuyler's ideas, they would recursively pose literary *puzzles* about their perspectives, *notice* how they used literary form to convey their message, and *theorize* about both authors' perspectives on what race is and what should be done with it. Which words provide evi-

dence for such interpretations? How? Why? Are there any internal contradictions? What external contradictions (context) are both writers working within and against? In keeping with the practices used by literary scholars to construct such arguments, students would need to formulate claims about each author, support their interpretation with text evidence, and provide sound reasoning to defend their position. In addition to providing a rich context for exploration and scaffolding key disciplinary practices, this type of writing helps students learn some of the key thinkers, theories, debates, and tensions that scholars of the Harlem Renaissance frequently engage. In short, it is reflective of the type of authentic, intellectual work currently happening in African American Literary Studies, Africana or Black Studies more broadly, and Philosophy. This is, of course, a task separate from having students use the knowledge and practices of the field to identify and articulate their own philosophies of "race," which is another vital aspect of this unit. Such aspirations are the natural outgrowth of pedagogies that equip students with the knowledge and practices required to generate interpretive and critical knowledge in community with others.

Additionally, when examining Langston Hughes's "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," students will not only analyze the content of Hughes's argument but also use a New Historical lens to investigate the social and cultural context that shaped his perspective on racial identity and artistic expression. They will be encouraged to consider how Hughes's call for artists that get racialized as black to embrace their so-called racial identity was itself a product of and response to the specific interpretive communities he participated in and from the vibrant cultural milieu of 1920s Harlem to the broader African American literary tradition and to the tradition of liberation movements in the United States. By situating Hughes's essay within these overlapping social contexts, students gain insight into how aesthetic forms and interpretive practices are deeply intertwined with the norms, values, and discourses of communities rooted in distinct historical moments. Similarly, when engaging with Schuyler's "The Negro Art Hokum," students will explore how Schuyler's rejection of the concept of "Negro art" reflects and challenges certain socially shared assumptions about "race," identity, and artistic production. This analysis extends beyond mere content to examine how Schuyler's rhetorical strategies and stylistic choices are informed by and respond to the interpretive practices of his contemporaries and intended audience. Both Schuyler and Hughes, too, strive toward a future without antiblack race/ism. For them, the stakes were incredibly high. And so they remain.

Through this lens of the togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies, students will come to understand these Harlem Renaissance texts not as static artifacts, but as dynamic sites of meaning-making shaped by complex sociocultural and political forces, the affordances of particular aesthetic forms, and the genre conventions of the period. This approach fosters a more nuanced appreciation of how aesthetic forms both reflect and contribute to the ongoing negotiation of identity and cultural expression within specific historical and social contexts. Furthermore, it serves as an invitation for students to engage in authentic disciplinary inquiry, wrestle with deeply human questions and practices (i.e., philosophy), and begin to develop their own stances.

During this first phase of the unit, students would also be engaged in a process of cognitive apprenticeship where they observe how their teacher models disciplinary practices, engages with a range of literary and philosophical forms, and frames contemporary issues in the field before taking them up themselves. Instead of centering canonical texts and their related cultural capital, or instrumentalized skills in their 21st century flavor, this continued emphasis on the literary literacies foregrounds authentic participation in ongoing scholarly conversations about race/ism in the field of literary studies and philosophy of "race". Over the course of the unit, students' experiences observing, using, and discussing these interpretive practices of noticing, puzzling, and philosophizing will not only set them up for success in the class, but will prepare them for authentic intellectual, spiritual, and emotional work, as a student of Mason's once described, in future humanities courses. It will also give them a suite of interpretive and aesthetic tools that will help them pursue deeply human questions related to identity, selfhood, and aesthetics.

GAME LITERACIES AND THE *GUESS WHO?* ASSIGNMENT

The togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies would integrate a scaffolded and ongoing *Guess Who?* project, which encourages students to identify their own lenses in response to what is "race," and what we should do with it. On a fundamental level, the real overarching questions are what are identity and personhood. They would then have opportunities to apply, identify, and engage with these philosophies—these lenses—in a hands-on manner. Students would first play the standard 1979 version of the game. In that version, students must guess the identity of the other player's chosen character by asking questions about phenotype and clothing. After everyone gets a chance to both play and observe their classmates playing, students would share their initial observations about the types of questions asked and how those questions connect with identity and personhood. The class would then play the more updated version that has a wider range of visual representation. In a fishbowl style classroom setup, students would make observations about the types of questions asked and their connections with identity and personhood.

When viewed through an aesthetic literacies lens, following a rich philosophical exploration of the American literary tradition with an examination of *Guess Who?* is not as incongruous as one might think. While game designers and literary scholars may seem to have little in common on the surface, both are aesthetic communities whose work requires an understanding of what texts—be it a board game or bildungsroman—mean as well as how and why they are constructed (much like how one thinks about identity). Both operate within a community with shared language, concepts, and practices who use those resources to interpret and create texts (Gee 2003). As it so happens, students' understanding that texts' portrayal of identity is often reflective of the normative values and discourses of the period from which it emerged is just as useful when trying to understand literary periods as it is the increased diversity in and the shift in the types of questions one asks in *Guess Who?* The goal of pointing this out, of course, is not to flatten the many differences between these communities. Instead, it is to demonstrate how aesthetic literacies provide a superordinate category through which a constellation of seemingly disparate discourses can be placed in productive dialogue with one another. For instance, there is already an emerging body of scholarship exploring how educators can juxtapose literary and literacies studies with various forms of game-based learning (Corbitt et al. 2024; Storm and Jones 2021; Jones et al. 2021).

In the next phase of the project, students engage with a set of short articles and media discussing some of the basic tenets of game design theory. This process helps them move beyond the interesting—albeit superficial—connections to the field of literary studies and helps them understand the unique "gaming literacies" employed by people who create and play games (Zimmerman 2008). Following that experience, in groups of four, students would work together to make their own lists of gameplay questions for the latest version of *Guess Who?* This version of the game would avoid physical descriptions, focusing instead on personal traits, hobbies, and cultural beliefs. Students must ask questions like, "Is this person passionate about environmental causes?" or "Does this person enjoy reading science fiction?" to narrow down their guesses. However, the teacher is cautioned not to give those types of examples. Instead, we want to advise students to avoid crafting questions around how people look or what they are wearing without leading them into what that means. This exercise parallels the literary and philosophical themes of identity and "race", pushing students to think beyond what people often interpret as surface-level characteristics and consider deeper elements of who someone is.

The absence of centering identity on one's physical traits in *Guess Who?* echoes some of the philosophical debates in the unit. For example, by questioning physical markers that many interpret as "obviously racial", the game mirrors the abolitionist view that race/ism should not determine identity. It also helps students keep asking if it is not skin color or hair texture, for example, then "what is race?". Students also reflect on how "racial" and cultural identities, like those discussed by Hughes, Locke, and the Jubilee participants, play a significant role in shaping individual and collective experiences. Considering the hybrid nature of their learning ecology, *Guess Who?* becomes a tool for students to explore these tensions in personal ways, challenging their assumptions about identity and how it is perceived while inviting them to

consider what they've learned about the philosophy of "race". Inevitably, students will ask questions like those above or "Does this person look like a teacher?" "Does this person look mean?" "Does this person look like a librarian?". Again, without leading students, encourage students to work diligently on their lists, making 34 questions for the 34 characters. Once the groups have a list that they agree on, have groups exchange lists.

Now, have groups play *Guess Who?* by using another group's list of questions. If a group is playing their questions, students should observe as if in a fishbowl and note which questions the players correlated with which characters. It is highly likely that the gameplay will not pan out how they thought it would. Players will be unlikely to guess accurately based on the updated list. That is because the questions, despite the students' best efforts, will still lean on ideologies that get attached to how people look and their interpretation of those features and characteristics. Those ideologies get rendered more clearly for students in the next part of the project.

Once every group has played another group's list and every group has witnessed their questions being played by their classmates, come together as a class to debrief about their observations and questions. Use an interactive method like small whiteboards or slides on Mentimeter (see Figures 2-4) to have students indicate whether specific questions reflect the following: racism, sexism, classism, ageism, some combination, or neutrality.

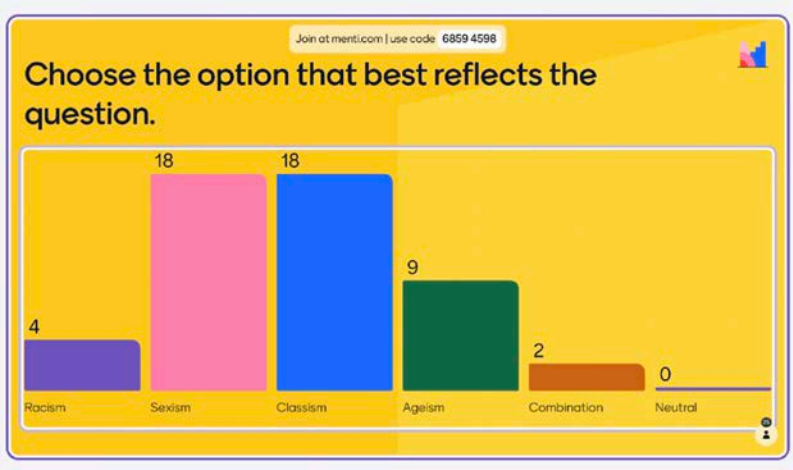

Figure 3: Responses from undergraduate students to whether a question they crafted reflects any of these social issues, some combination, or neutrality

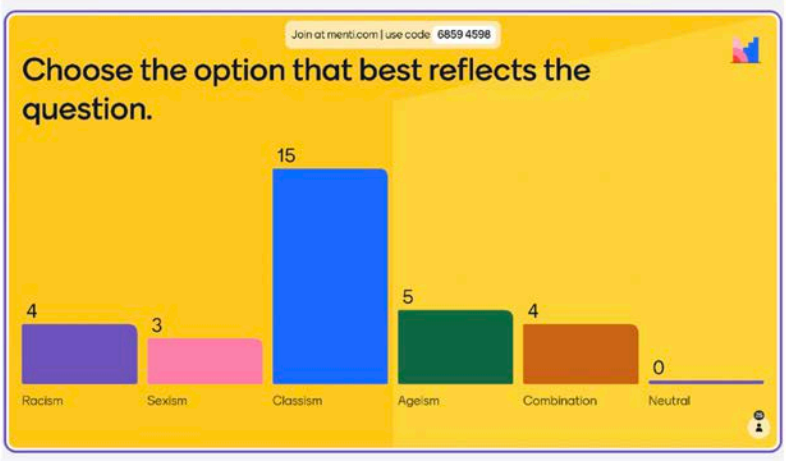

Figure 4: Responses from undergraduate students to whether a question they crafted reflects any of these social issues, some combination, or neutrality

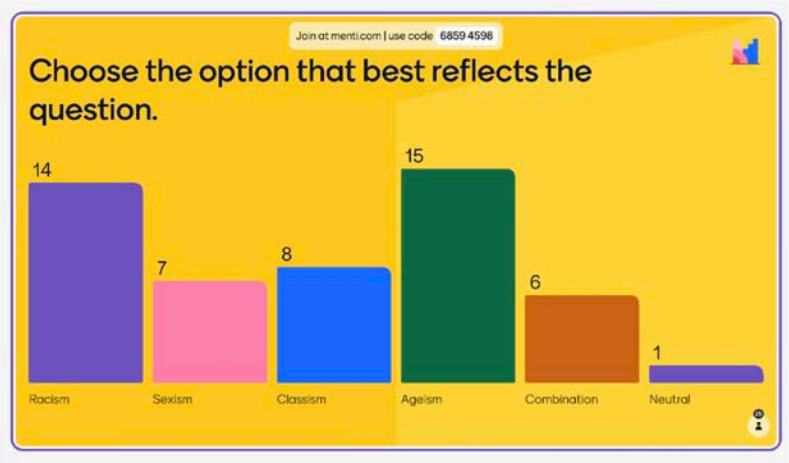

Figure 5: Responses from undergraduate students to whether a question they crafted reflects any of these social issues, some combination, or neutrality

Invite students to share why they identified a question in relation to their responses. How could the fill-in-the-blank question reflect neutrality or ageism, racism, etc.? The teacher should add context and information in support of certain identifications only after students have an opportunity to share freely. There is ample evidence from the time period to do this effectively. Make explicit the connections between how we think about and practice identity and race/ism now and how people thought about and practiced it almost one hundred years ago by connecting their questions and answers with the texts studied in the unit. Educators can conclude this part of the unit by having students write a three to four-page reflection paper. How are students thinking about identity now? What do the categories we tend to associate with identity actually say about a person? How can you know if a person is like fill-in-the-blank? To add an additional layer of authenticity, educators could provide students with the necessary scaffolds to format and structure their paper as though it is a submission to a literary or philosophy of "race" journal. Time permitting, teachers could even facilitate a symposium where students deliver a brief talk on their paper. In both cases, students are further apprenticed into the discipline through exposure to the genres and formats used by scholars and practitioners in the field. Regardless of whether students have any interest in pursuing careers in the humanities, the use of these real-world forms help them see their learning as more meaningful and authentic (Aleo 2025; Aleo and Hicks 2024).

Alongside the *Guess Who?* scaffolded project, students would analyze Wright's "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (Wright 1937) thus adding another dimension to the ongoing conversation. Wright critiques the apolitical nature of much literature written by Americans of more recent African descent, advocating for writing that directly engages with the struggles against white supremacy and antiblack racism. In the context of the *Guess Who?* activity, students can reflect on how their own identities intersect with broader societal issues. For instance, questions about personal beliefs or worldviews may resonate with Wright's call for socially conscious art that reflects real-world struggles. This ties identity not just to personal traits but also to how individuals engage with political and social forces. In fact, this ties identity to power imbalances that are made to be and seem permanently intractable because of the interconnectedness between how any of us sees ourselves and others and our essences, our personhood. Through taking up theories and concepts from literary studies, philosophy of "race", and principles and practices from game design, students continue to learn more about each other and how they think about identity and "race" more specifically. Alongside each step, students proceed, too, with their analysis of assigned texts. As students participate in *Guess Who?*, they are invited to think about their own identities—how they are shaped by both personal choices and larger historical and cultural forces. This helps them draw connections between their lives, oth-

er people's lives, and the experiences of the artists and activists they study. It also helps them be infinitely more cleareyed about the realities of race/ism and how to stop the causes at the roots.

The use of multiple mediums—literature, YouTube shows, visual art, games, and music—further enriches the unit. These aesthetic forms provide students with concrete examples of how race/ism, identity, and creativity intersect, allowing them to see how cultural movements like the Harlem Renaissance used art to challenge and reshape dominant narratives. Similarly, it provides them with access to the knowledge and practices scholars use to notice, puzzle, and philosophize about literary studies in ways that allow for new forms of knowledge that can provide insight into our current moment and imagine new social futures. Perhaps most importantly, when these tools and bodies of knowledge are taught in unison, they can help students envision and create pathways toward a future without the same challenges and material realities caused by pervasive human-made problems such as race/ism.

The togetherness wayfinder, combined with aesthetic literacies, and the ongoing *Guess Who?* activity, creates a rich and immersive learning experience that challenges students to think deeply about the topics at hand. By learning and applying the six philosophies of "race" and other aspects of the togetherness wayfinder, students gain a more nuanced understanding of how identity is both produced or imagined and contested. The opportunity to develop this knowledge using the aesthetic and epistemic tools of literary studies and philosophy also provides an invitation to reflect on how they see themselves and others, both in literature and art and in real life.

The profound impact that this form of study can have on a student's perception of "race" and identity can be seen in the following reflection of an undergraduate student on the course:

Throughout the course of this semester, my perspective on race, racism, and the makeup of a person's identity has changed drastically leading me to a deeper understanding of society and personhood. Initially, I believed race to be a social construct and a category [that] contributed significantly [positively] to identity. This course opened my eyes to the truth about race and all the misconceptions I held and had been conditioned by society to think. Our *Guess Who?* activities throughout the semester proved to me that identity goes far deeper than surface-level physical traits and requires a connection to truly discover what makes a person who they are. Furthermore, our studies of films [book adaptations], texts, and short videos provided the evidence I needed to understand that race does not exist biologically and is simply a made-up concept used by society to create systems of power and oppression. Humans attempt to use race to gain an understanding of a person's identity when in reality our studies this semester proved the race assigned to someone by society does not correlate to particular characteristics. Gaining insight [into] a person's identity requires effort and cannot be attributed to societal norms, physical traits, or expectations.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The togetherness wayfinder and aesthetic literacies can be used in other contexts and disciplines toward the objective of exploring identity and the human story and of fostering critical thinking, compassion, empathy, an appreciation for the liberal arts and education more broadly, unification, healing, and reconciliation, too. Rather than return to nostalgic classical liberalism that did not enable us to practice what liberalism preaches and instead of "burning it all down," educators can use the tools and ideals of liberalism to problematize how we think about sociocultural and political contexts and the future. By fostering students' aesthetic literacies, we equip them with the tools necessary to identify and deconstruct how cultural texts reify and reinscribe cultural notions and practices of race/ism in ways that foreclose liberation and truly democratic forms of liberalism. The synthesis of these frameworks can inspire students and educators alike to imagine and construct a better future for all. To the future…

NOTES

1 Consider the history of "racial" terms like "red" and "yellow."

REFERENCES

Aleo, T. 2025. Aesthetic Literacies in Action: Designing Literary Knowledge in Hybrid Interpretive Communities. Proquest.

Aleo, T., and Hicks, T. 2024. Fostering Digital Literary Literacies: Moving Students Toward Participatory forms of Reading, Writing, and Thinking About Literature. In: *Teaching for Equity, Justice, and Antiracism with Digital Literacy Practices*, pp. 194-216. London: Routledge.

Arnold, M. 2006. *Culture and Anarchy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Corbitt, A., Jones, K., Storm, S., and Carter-Stone, L. 2024. Expanding Reader-Response: Tracing Emergence, Nested Ontology, and Affect Across Playful Activities. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 1-17.

Dewey, J. 1897. My Pedagogic Creed. *The School Journal*, *LIV*(3):77-80.

Hall, R. (Director). 2021. *Passing* [Film]. The Villages: Significant Productions.

Hester, D. Micah and Talisse, Robert B. (eds.). 2007. John Dewey's Essays in Experimental Logic. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Eagleton, T. 2013. *How to Read Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press

Fanon, F. 1952. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Fish, S. E. 1989. *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 1977. Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation Between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. In: *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice*. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (tr.), Donald F. Bouchard (ed.). Ithaca: Cornell.

Gee, J. P. 2003. What Video Games Have to Teach us about Learning and Literacy Computers in Entertainment (CIE), 1:20-20.

Gilroy, Paul. 2000. *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. Cambridge MA: Belknap Press.

Greene, M. 1995. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays On Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. Hoboken: Jossey-Bass.

_____. 2001. *Variations on a Blue Guitar: The Lincoln Center Institute Lectures on Aesthetic Education.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Honneth, A. 2016. *Freedom's Right: The Social Foundations of Democratic Life* (J. Ganahl, Tr.). New York: Columbia University Press.

Hughes, L. 1926. The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain. *The Nation,* 122(3181):692-694.

Jones, K., Storm, S., and Beck, S. W. 2024. Navigating and Hybridizing Interpretive Claim-Making Across Discursive Communities. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 1-19.

Jones, K., Storm, S., Castillo, J., and Karbachinskiy, S. 2021. Chasing New Worlds: Stories of Roleplaying in Classroom Spaces. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 17(1):n1.

Jubilee. 2023. 6 Black Men vs 1 White Guy | Odd One Out. *YouTube*. https://youtu.be/ICISHNou9Zs?si=JaJg1CEZVVb6sA91.

Lave, J., and Wenger, E. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Larsen, Nella. 2011. *Quicksand*. London: Penguin Classics.

Lewis, C., Enciso, P., and Moje, E. B. 2007. *Reframing sociocultural research on literacy: Identity, agency, and power.* Mahwah: Erlbaum.

Locke, Alain. 2021. *The Works of Alain Locke*. Ed. Charles Molesworth. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mason, Sheena Michele. 2024. *The Raceless Antiracist: Why Ending Race Is the Future of Antiracism*. Durham: Pitchstone.

McManus, M. 2021. What Does It Mean to Say All Are Created Equal?: Liberalism and Socialism on Basic Rights. In: *Liberalism and Socialism,* M. McManus (Ed.), pp. 3-30. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rafudeen, A. 2016. Human Nature, the Humanities and Neoliberalism. *Religion & Theology*, 23(1-2):188–211.

Rainey, E. C., and Storm, S. 2022. Teaching Literary Literacy. In: K. A. Hinchman and H. K. Sheridan-Thomas (Eds.), *Best Practices in Adolescent Literacy Instruction* (3rd ed.). New York: Guilford.

Rosenblatt, L. M. 1938. *Literature as Exploration*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company.

Rousseau, N. 2020. The Sociological Imagination, Neoliberalism, and Higher Education. *Social Currents*, 7(5):395-401.

Sahlberg, P. 2023. Trends in Global Education Reform Since the 1990s: Looking for the Right Way. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 98(C).

Savage, G. 2017. Neoliberalism, Education and Curriculum. *Powers of Curriculum: Sociological Perspectives on Education*, pp. 143-165. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Schneider, J., and Berkshire, J. C. 2020. *A Wolf at the Schoolhouse Door: The Dismantling of Public Education and the Future of School.* New York: The New Press.

Schuyler, G. S. 1926. The Negro-Art Hokum. *The Nation,* 122(3181):662-663.
Shumway, D. 2017. *The University, Neoliberalism, and the Humanities: A History. Humanities*, 6(4):83.
Storm, S. 2023. Aesthetic Literacies: A Multi-Method Study of Youth Textual Interpretation and Social Justice in a Digital Learning Ecology. *ProQuest LLC*.
Storm, S., and Jones, K. 2021. Queering Critical Literacies: Disidentifications and Queer Futurity in an Afterschool Storytelling and Roleplaying Game. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 20(4):534-548.
Tyson, L. 2015. *Critical theory Today* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
Wright, R. 1937. Blueprint for Negro Writing. *New Challenge,* 2(2). Rep. in: *Thirties Culture.*
Zimmerman, Eric. 2008. Gaming Literacy: Game Design as a Model for Literacy in the Twenty-first Century. In: *The Video Game Theory Reader* 2nd ed., pp. 23-31. Bernard Perron and Mark J. P. Wolf eds. London: Routledge.

"The Fastest Known Way to Get Rid of Enemies": Children's Literature, Forgiveness, and the Liberal Arts

NEIL DHINGRA
AND
PAMELA CALLAHAN
University of Maryland

Abstract: The C3 framework of social studies standards and thinkers like Martha Nussbaum recommend teaching about anger and forgiveness through reflective thought and sympathetic understanding to encourage cooperation and social harmony. We suggest Hannah Arendt's argument that forgiveness proceeds from an unconditioned, almost-miraculous starting anew as a supplement. Through qualitative analysis of the narrative structures of 24 children's books, we show that Arendt's concept of forgiveness is *already* in the K-6 curriculum in children's literature. We argue that the liberal arts should see children's literature as an exemplar, as it conveys wonder to evoke an unexpectedly peaceful world that may come.

Keywords: Children's Literature, Forgiveness, Liberal Arts, Liberal Education, Hannah Arendt, Martha Nussbaum

> Children's books say: the world is huge. They say hope counts for something. They say: bravery will matter, wit will matter, empathy will matter, love will matter. These things may or may not be true. I do not know. I hope they are. I think it is urgently necessary to hear them and to speak them.
> — Katherine Rundell (2019, p. 48).

> Enemy pie is the fastest known way to get rid of enemies.
> — Derek Munson, *Enemy Pie* (2000).

A. INTRODUCTION

How can a close analysis of children's literature improve teaching about forgiveness? How can it clarify contemporary debates about the liberal arts at all levels of education?

First, we must specify how forgiveness is already taught. The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)' C3 framework (Herczog 2013) presents an inquiry arc that encompasses asking questions, applying disciplinary tools, gathering evidence, and, finally, taking action (p. 332). The framework's fourth dimension, taking action, suggests that students participate in community-based research, produce student journalism (Levinson and Levine 2013), and protest "unjust laws," (Swan et al. 2013, p. 104) all of which presumably require both constructive anger and the practice of virtues like "cooperation" (p. 33).

Likewise, the philosopher Patricia White (2012) argues that students should "feel" political anger—here, defined restrictively as anger at harm caused by political agency, "find an appropriate means of expression for that anger," and, finally, understand other expressions of political anger (p. 10). Schools will not have to "encourage students to be angry" (ibid.)—that can be taken for granted; instead, schools must teach students to direct their emotional responses towards a constructive "civilizing role" (p. 8). Further, this anger should not preempt what White (2002) has called a "relaxed view of forgiveness," in which students say, "No problem!" in the face of resentment and human disappointment to decide for a foreseeably harmonious and cooperative future (p. 64).

These frameworks imagine setting aside excessive hostility as reflective thought, if accompanied by emotion, clarifies the possibility of cooperation and the desirability of restored social harmony. Similarly, and more generally, Martha Nussbaum (2016) has argued that anger itself must be set aside in a transition away from focus on regaining lost position (a "status error" [p. 29]) or payback ("magical thinking involving a strange metaphysics of cosmic balance" [p. 183]) to a future orientation that looks with "non-anger" for constructive projects that might eventually "win over the adversaries, enlisting their cooperation in nation-building" (p. 236). Nussbaum even discourages forgiveness itself, which to her entails abasement instead of the mutual respect that allows for cooperation. Here, Nussbaum enlists the liberal arts not only as reflective thought but also as sympathetic understanding. Sympathetic understanding, as empathy combines with compassion, both dispels the narcissism that only sees one's own status as significant and unmasks the desire for payback that leaves others nothing more than "retributively clobbered" (p. 54). Further, understanding one's enemies, whether through narrative or the role-playing in theatrical or dance performances (Nussbaum 2010, p. 104), means "you are more likely to devise constructive projects that include them" (Nussbaum 2016, p. 54).

Why, then, might reflective thought and sympathetic understanding require supplementation?

Nussbaum recognizes that the setting aside of anger will strike critics as difficult, even "inhuman" (p. 223) in its rigor, and these critics have suggested that she regularizes as ordinary justice what must remain supererogatory, even graced (Jackson 2018). But the vehicle of the liberal arts—here, with Nussbaum (2010), defined expansively as those subjects meant to foster critical thinking, universal citizenship, and the narrative imagination—may also remain unreliable. The sadist can use empathy to learn to torture, an elite may only selectively extend compassion, "defective" literature and art might inhibit "imaginative access to the stigmatized position" (p. 109), and the liberal arts themselves remain counterintuitive: "We do not automatically see another human being as spacious and deep…." (p. 102). (Tellingly, the liberal arts on campus often encounter "indifference" [Nussbaum 1999, p. 43].) This raises the question of whether the liberal arts can *reliably* facilitate forgiveness—or Nussbaum's preferred transition to non-anger—for students. A supplement may be warranted.

Thus, we argue that all the frameworks neglect an essential aspect of forgiveness that has been explored by Hannah Arendt, namely that forgiveness must *interrupt* the ordinary pattern of human action—forgiveness proceeds from an unconditioned, almost-miraculous starting anew. We consider that schools already teach this quality of forgiveness at the K-6 level through practices that create secular ritual spaces for anger to be experienced and transcended and for vengefulness to be left behind. We propose that the most important space is the field of children's literature, which has significance as it "continues to be a vehicle for expressing visions of a more just world" (Mickenberg and Nel 2008, p. 5), and not just as the vehicle for demonstrating practical possibilities, preferences, or concepts that are expressible in terms of a knowing *that* which remains only propositional (Warne 2018).

Drawing on a qualitative study of the narrative structures in 24 books for elementary- and middle-school students, we hypothesize that accounts of anger and forgiveness that focus on preexisting possibilities, preferences, and concepts, as well as rules and societal values, are far too limited as they ignore existing possibilities of ritual habituation that allow students to experience anger without self-destructive irascibility and forgiveness without sentimentalism. They do so through *wonder* (Jo 2019; Gary 2006). These forms of habituation should be part of the liberal arts, as they deal with the intoxication of anger—that dangerous

promise of vengeance that, in Aristotle's words (1991), is "far sweeter than dripping honey down the throat" (1991, 1378a), and likely sweeter than that for children and adolescents—by creating new possibilities and forestalling the inevitability of violence through evoking an unexpectedly, near-miraculous peaceful world to come. As such, we argue for an expanded role for the liberal arts that draws on children's literature as an exemplar.

B. LITERATURE

1. Arendt on Forgiveness

For Hannah Arendt (1958), forgiveness is necessary for the public sphere lest we remain like "the sorcerer's apprentice who lacked the magic formula to break the spell" (p. 237) here placed on us by an injury that then provokes a cycle of "natural, automatic" vengeance. Like the effect of a "magic formula," forgiveness comes as "unexpected" (p. 241). While Arendt suggests that Jesus was its "discoverer" (p. 238), forgiveness remains a secular concept that proceeds from a limited "friendship" with a fellow citizen with whom we share a common world, not from emotional love nor from perfect understanding. This forgiveness is a release from the *consequences* of an action.

Writing to W. H. Auden, Arendt (1960) clarified that she did *not* mean Christian charity, which being completely indiscriminate—"*uberhaupt*"—preempts the need for judgment and mutual relationship with an offender who may remain unforgivable. Sometimes no common world can ever be had; Arendt (2006), at the end of her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, imagines the judges telling the former Nazi *Obersturmbannführer,* "[W]e find that no one, that is, no member of the human race, can be expected to want to share the earth with you," and pronouncing a death sentence (p. 279). Nevertheless, even with these limits, the *unconditioned* quality of forgiveness likely demands much more than a shared capacity for future cooperation. As Shina Chiba (1995) claims, even Arendt's concept of political forgiveness demands qualities—self-denial, for instance—that exceed enlightened self-interest and the C3 list of virtues—"honesty, mutual respect, cooperation, and attentiveness to multiple perspectives" (Swan et al. 2013, p. 233)—and at least stretch political respect in the direction of *agape* in their orientation towards an open future.

Thus, Arendt's political forgiveness presents an alternative to both White's "No problem!" suggestion that we overlook human error and Nussbaum's difficult transition of anger to non-anger for what we may safely predict will be a harmonious future. Educational thinkers such as Maxine Greene and Natasha Levinson have already written that Arendt's fascination with newness ("natality") allows students to escape from the "confinements of privatism and self-regard" (Greene 1995, p. 31) or "fixed, determined, and unchangeable" (Levinson 2001, p. 19) identities in the world as is. Likewise, Jean Bethke Elshtain (1992) has written about the "drama" of the classroom as a place for engagement so that the unpredictable—"that which we are coming to know and that which we are learning to be" (p. 61)—may emerge. Here, we argue that Arendt's description of political forgiveness allows students to escape the otherwise repetitive dramatic plot of anger's confines and its apparent finality.

But where does this forgiveness come from?

2. Secular Benedictions

As Greene, Levinson, and Elshtain suggest, an awareness of what Arendt called "natality" is already present in schools in practices that can inform the liberal arts. Writing of Arendt and Shakespeare's oft-assigned *A Winter's Tale*, Julia Reinhard Lupton (2014) identifies a "secular benediction," in which Hermione, the wronged but miraculously alive wife who has only incompletely forgiven her husband—how could it be otherwise?—calls upon the "gods" to bless her lost daughter, "preparing the ground for a forgiveness to come" (p. 651) through invoking a power outside of herself. In historical events, we see invocations for forgiveness that, if necessarily incomplete, still prevent the cyclical exercise of repetitive violence in what

Elshtain (2003) called a "knowing forgetting"—a recollection of the past that nevertheless does not involve clearing the debts of executors and victims (p. 51). In children's literature, we hypothesize this "secular benediction" often takes the form of imaginative magic or ritual, music or nature or dreams. (We certainly do not believe in the widespread and indiscriminate incorporation of magic or dreams into politics. For Arendt, children are pre-political, and magic and dreams are forms of *preparation* for the rituals in politics, not politics rightly understood [Dhingra 2019].)

While we focus on children's literature as *children's* literature, we do not believe that "secular benedictions" are all left behind with age like old toys. These "secular benedictions" can also occur for older students, even *in extremis*, as interruptions from otherwise inevitable violence and retribution. Importantly, they are not necessarily superseded by reflective thought and empathy. An example may prove useful. For high school students, anger is present in not only the "'casual' violence that can break out in homes, in the playground or classroom, and on the streets" (Haydon 1999, p. 59) but also as the threat of school shootings. School shooters are often initially the victims of bullying, and, powerless yet influenced by popular culture or "violence coaches" who advocate violence as the means of regaining dignity and respect, they engage in narcissistic rituals of violence, taking care to publicize their newfound agency (Fast 2008). Afterwards, as Bryan R. Warnick et al. (2010) write, predictable rituals of vengeance follow as the shooters themselves become "the focus of community vengeance" (p. 375). Warnick and his co-authors suggest that the lack of a normative school expressive culture leaves a vacuum that is filled by ersatz student rituals, some of which involve a cycle of bullying and rage. They propose school rituals as constitutionally permitted "forms of inquiry" (p. 380) or rituals outside of school to deter the attempts of school shooters to appear as "badasses" by preemptively offering forgiveness to those who were bullied. Their account, however, implies that shooters are either perpetrators to be condemned or victims to be indiscriminately forgiven. A ritual "form of inquiry" without predetermined result may be open to simple yet meaningful ambiguity regarding forgiveness.

What might these look like?

Jonathan Fast's book (2008) on school shootings, which they drawn on, outlines post-shooting rituals—posters in hallways, poetry recitations, church services, prayer rituals for purification against spirits, extemporaneous memorials. Some display vengeance; some express seemingly premature idealism if not sentimentality. Two, however, are relevant here. The first, following the violence in Columbine in 1999, involved the planting of commemorative sycamore trees for the killers as well as the victims. Grieving relatives then chopped down the killers' trees, which a church youth group later propped up. While Warnick et al. (2010), imagine this controversy as a return to vengeance, the awkward presence of propped up trees ironically shows a forgiveness not possible but not completely foreclosed. Fast notes that the community never made arrests for the vandalism, granting legal and ritual space for this ambiguity to be played out over time.

In a disturbing example outside school—"one of the few examples of forgiveness to be found in the pages of this book" (Fast 2008, p. 109)—both a relative who had to work through intense anger and a post-conversion school shooter reconcile enough to sell "murderabilia," the proceeds of which go to the victims' families. This shows a strange camaraderie past vengeance that still does not resolve the past injury but ironically draws further attention to it and the still-unhealed wounds. We argue that these instances may show what Warnick, et al, call the potential for ritual "forms of inquiry," here without presuming a forgiveness that may not yet exist but also without foreclosing newness in a world otherwise condemned to cyclical violence. At the very least, there *is* space for something new to happen.

But is this speculative and atypical or do we see further examples in children's literature?

C. METHODS

1. Data

We set out to identify a suitable book list to serve as a dataset to discern the sources of forgiveness and peace in children's literature. We identified consistency in curriculum standards regarding curriculum goals addressing cohabitation in a democratic society, specifically how or if students can develop skills that will lead to peace, collaboration, and compromise. We initially identified the Jane Addams Children's Book Award (JACB) as a possible dataset. However, recent review of the JACB award winners found that the award criterion focused on "people peaceably settling disputes" was one of the "three most neglected criteria" (Colabbuci and Napoli 2017, p. 31), despite being the focus of the award. As a result, we sought a set of children's books more aligned to the phenomenon of peace.

We next identified a recommended reading list from Julia Mickenberg and Philip Nel. In 2008, Mickenberg and Nel compiled and edited a collection of children's literature from the past 75 years. Their guiding philosophy was to include children's literature from a variety of ideological perspectives to showcase the diversity of thought in the United States. The selected books were then organized according to themes such as activism, imagination, and peace. We hypothesized that their thematic list of 24 titles for peace would offer this study a diverse sample of children's literature to review for newness and secular rituals—one not biased to a particular viewpoint, publisher, or historical time period.

Before settling on Mickenberg's and Nel's recommendations of peace-centered books for young children, we engaged in a web-based curriculum document review to verify that selections from Mickenberg's and Nel's recommendations were in fact used in public school classrooms. Frequently, we found peace and forgiveness development were guiding principles of character education supplements (e.g., school districts in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC; Davis, UT; and Fort Worth, TX). Titles such as *Enemy Pie* and *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* were included in both curriculum documents and Mickenberg's and Nel's peace recommended reading list. As a result, we felt confident in using Mickenberg and Nel's list of children's literature regarding peace as the basis of our data set, since it was plausible that these books could be used in the classroom to develop forgiveness and sustain peace (Table 2).

D. RESEARCH QUESTION

Does a set of 24 books for elementary-and middle-school students exhibit narrative structures that show forgiveness and peace emerging from 1) rational calculation and/or empathy or 2) magical and ritual possibilities for new action?

E. QUALITATIVE CODING PROCESS

After reviewing the literature, we could not identify a preexisting codebook that applied to the concepts in the research question. We then drew on the "top-down" and "macrotextual" (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, pp. 464-5) approach to narrative analysis (Singer 2011, p. 311). To begin, we created a questionnaire to increase the validity and reliability of the analysis process (Merriam 1998). The questionnaire asks researchers to identify concepts, words, and themes related to political anger, political forgiveness, natality, magic, and ritual in each text (Table 1). To avoid bias, we assigned a number to each title in the data set and then randomly assigned books to each researcher. The coding process occurred in two phases. In the first phase, both researchers independently coded the first five books on the random assignment list. At the completion of the first round of coding, we reviewed the results and identified differences in responses. To better align the reliability of the coding, we improved the specificity to the questionnaire. In the second phase, each researcher independently coded the books randomly assigned to them. At the conclusion of the second phase, each researcher reviewed all the responses, identified codes, and organized codes into themes (Bogdan and

Bilken 1997). We met virtually to share, discuss, and refine codes and themes in accordance with the research question.

F. FINDINGS

The theme of peace was unsurprisingly evident in 23 out of the 24 coded books (see Table 3 for all categorizations). Coding for the presence of peace allowed us to divide the sample into two categories: 1) books that invite readers to experience conflict or its aftermath vicariously through a main character, and 2) books that illustrate the logic (or illogic) of conflict through an intentionally simplified story form (e.g., James Thurber's *The Last Flower: A Parable in Pictures*), often if not always featuring animals. The outlier is Ruth Krauss' *The Big World and the Little House*, in which a lonely house, devoid of visible signs of nature, is turned into a home and connected with nature and the world by a family: there is no conflict in this book, only isolation to be overcome.

The first category of books that invite readers to experience conflict through a main character can itself be divided into three subcategories: 1) direct involvement in conflict, 2) involvement in the aftermath of conflict, and 3) involvement in a simplified or focused version of conflict. The first subcategory has three books in which a child is placed directly into conflict, whether the aftermath of the atomic bombs that ended World War II (*Hiroshima No Pika*), the American Civil War (*Pink and Say*), or the Lebanese Civil War (*Sami and the Time of Troubles)*, where even if the character is a soldier (Pink), the conflict is not fully understood, and the character is ultimately a victim who must survive. The second subcategory has three books involving the *aftermath* of conflict, in which, for instance, the character must maintain hope amidst terminal disease from post-Hiroshima radiation (*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*) or interpret the loss of his grandfather in the Vietnam War (*The Wall*)—"I'd rather have him here," the main character finally realizes (Bunting and Himler 1992, p. 30; see Cantero 2019). A third and final subcategory includes three books depicting a simplified or narrowed version of conflict, so that the plot focuses on fictionalized antagonism between two boys (*Enemy Pie*), an adult librarian's sense of obligation to save books amidst the very real Iraq War (*The Librarian of Basra*), or a magical boy's restoration of a world in which a machine politician has banned baseball through striking that politician out (*How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball*).

The fifteen books that, instead of illustrating human experience, show the logic (or illogic) of conflict through simplified story forms do so by depicting animals (sheep in *Baaa*, the title characters in *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig,* or the wide variety of animals that secure world peace in *The Animals' Conference*), letters (*The Alphabet Tree*), Dr. Seuss' exaggerated and irrational and monstrous characters (Sciullo 2014), or adult humans seemingly trapped, machine-like, in patterns by their wartime roles (*Rebel*, *The Hat*). These books portray conflict not through realistic effects on characters but as theories of action to which the characters seem unalterably subject. In *John Black's Body*, for example, the speechless title character, in a line a page, is valued solely by monetary worth, sent to war, killed, and summarily buried under a "98 cent" cross (Martin 1939). Here, there is as little emotional development as any possible agency against the logic of money, which traps army officers, as well as ministers, politicians, and professors. In these books, the plot concerns whether this logic of conflict is inevitable, even as nuclear weapons ominously hang in the air (*The Hat*) or animals plead desperately for peace for the sake of all children (*The Animals' Conference*)—as in this parable only children and animals "have the common sense and intelligence to defuse international tension" (Lathey 1999, p. 49; see parallels with Arendtian thoughtlessness, Dhingra 2019).

Only five of the books in the entire dataset feature empathy (Table 4)—in *The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village*, for instance, an American family welcomes a refugee child from Vietnam with smiles. In none of these books, however, is empathy (or perspective-taking) the *decisive* factor in the plot. In *Enemy Pie*, for instance, the narrator gradually discerns commonalty with Jeremy, his supposed enemy, but, tellingly, he remains motivated by his desire to execute the magical recipe for enemy pie.

More generally, in all the books in the dataset, the characters are unable to change their situations because of either their youthful incomprehension and lack of agency or their powerlessness before the logic of conflict. There is no exit to conflict as the result of propositional knowledge. *The Hat* expresses a desire for a world authority, but it remains aspirational. Some of the books even suggest that conflict may simply remain inevitable—such is *John Black's Body*, the cyclical stories of rebirth and destruction in *Baaa* and *The Last Flower*, and the standoff that ends Dr. Seuss' *Butter Battle War*—except, possibly, for the impact of the books themselves on their readers.

Importantly, the majority, here including the otherwise outlying *The Big World and the Little House*, show peace in the possibility of newness that accompanies rituals, games, festivals, nature, dreams, music, or humor (Table 4). This necessarily transcends the decision-making abilities of the characters or any depicted logic of conflict. For instance, as mentioned, the seemingly esoteric ritual of making an "enemy pie" creates a space for the narrator to get to know his enemy and magically get rid of him—as an enemy, that is. In *Hiroshima No Pika*, the book ends with a hopeful ritual, "Every year on August 6 the people of Hiroshima inscribe the names of loved ones who died because of the bomb on lanterns" (Maruki 1980). In *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, Sadako maintains hope through the act of folding cranes, and the readers are themselves invited to fold cranes to hope that atomic weapons will never again be used. In *The Wall*, the child narrator participates in the rituals associated with the Vietnam Veterans Memorial; these let him interpret his feeling of loss and ambivalence and finally grasp the importance of peace, "But I'd rather have my grandpa here" (Bunting and Himler 1992, p. 30).

In *Georgie Radbourn Saves Baseball*, a game is crucial for peace. Boss Swaggart plunges the land into perpetual winter and dreary authoritarianism when he bans baseball. He is overthrown when defeated at the seemingly irresistible sport by a child, which suggests that baseball itself is magically regenerative (Shannon 1990). In the *Pushcart War*, a festival seems necessary to end a seemingly endless if comical conflict. The belligerent truckers, desperate to control the city streets, sue for peace only after women, "celebrating", throw fruit at their trucks; Jean Merrill's fictional historian (1992) who recounts the story from the future tells us that at this very point a "Peace Conference" finally begins, and, afterwards, an annual "Feast of the Cantaloupes" is instituted (1992, pp. 209, 213). Games reconcile *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, and, once again, *Enemy Pie* creates space for the narrator and his enemy to become friends through play that would have been impossible without the fascination with a magical pie recipe.

Twelve of the books associate nature with peace. Nature seems to bear the possibility for peace even when human beings themselves lack the capacity to deliberate towards it. In the *Animals' Conference*, amidst the seeming incapacity of the human nations to secure peace in conferences, animals ranging from an elephant to birds to Babar and Mickey Mouse meet in their own international conference, act to destroy records and military uniforms, and biblically seize all human children in a collective effort for world peace. "Thus the irony is that the animals turn man's own game against him. Ironically, things go so well in the hands of the animals" (Duan 1994, p. 145). In the *Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*, humorously, pacific wolves build a house of flowers, and the big bad pig's heart becomes "tender" through the floral scent (Trivizas and Oxenbury 1993). Likewise, *Ferdinand*, the decidedly non-violent bull in a blood-soaked world of bullfighting, is entranced with flowers. In *Hiroshima No Pika*, amidst horrific destruction, a rainbow appears, gleaming "brightly over the dead and wounded" (Maruki 1980). In *The Last Flower*, the dim possibility for societal reform is represented by a single flower.

When some of the child characters are trapped in violence, they dream of nature. Pink, the wounded adolescent American Civil War soldier, dreams of "hummin' birds and green pastures full of sunlight and wildflowers" (Polacco 1994), and, far away from her home, Hien, the heroine of the *Little Weaver,* draws strength from her dreams of the me-Linh bird that helps her endure the effects of the Vietnam War: exile, injury, loss.

As Hien's example suggests, dreams themselves also create the possibility of peace. In *The Librarian of Basra*, the determined librarian, books finally kept safe in piles around her, "Dreams of peace, dreams of a new library" (Winter 2005). Likewise, an underground mole in *Mole Music* dreams "beautiful, peace-

ful dreams" about what his music might do, not realizing that, far from being delusion, on the surface, its sonorousness has already ended violent conflict (McPhail 1999; see Cardany 2016). In the *Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village*, dreams are likewise connected to peace, natural abundance, and music, as a song about full rice bowls reaches to the "blue sky above" to be "carried to the horizon on the waves of the young, fragrant rice plants" (Tranh 1987; see Miyoko 1991).

Finally, humor plays a role in many of the books. In *Here Comes the Cat*, for instance, the apparent fear of an oncoming predator—the cat—is amusingly replaced by the image of a large feline bringing a giant wheel of cheese for the mice. Most importantly, in two books in our second general category, in which, in simplified narratives, violence seems inevitable, humor serves as the means to expose otherwise unopposable dictators, whether the realistic general in *Rebel*, driven out by a cleverly disguised dissenter's thrown thong sandal, or Dr. Seuss' Hitler-inspired *Yertle the Turtle*, whose Babel-like stack is toppled by… a burp (Seuss 1986; see West 2016). To be sure, this laughter may not last, yet, as Peter Berger (1997) wrote, it represents the insertion of "an island into the ocean of ordinary experience," an "effervescent" otherness in what would otherwise remain "heavy, dense, compelling" (p. 190).

Thus, the books foreground either experience or the logic of conflict and generally illustrate the possibility of peace as occurring through rituals, games, festivals, nature, dreams, music, and humor. The books do not suggest that these possibilities occur through negotiation or empathy. Further, tellingly, the books that show no possibility of peace have narratives featuring uninterruptible logic and momentum—for instance, that mad escalation rooted in the "negative and essentialized version of a different society" (Hursh 2013, p. 642), Yooks against Zooks, turning into that final standoff in Dr. Seuss' *Butter Battle Book*—that provide no break at all for ritual or even the effervescence of a joke. Here, these are the narrative preconditions for forgiveness.

G. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Following Augustine, Arendt (1996) notes that the human being can only escape turning endlessly in cycles because she can realize that "it was for the sake of *novitas*" that she was created, and by remembering "[her] 'beginning' or [her] origin, [she] is able to act as a beginner" (p. 55). This may be the perception of either an "original interconnectedness" or a "negative" political theology that simply grasps the possibility of a happy life even in the face of domination (Vatter 2006, p. 140, 158). For Arendt, forgiveness exhibits newness, but, importantly, this is never a Godlike power to create *ex nihilo,* only relative spontaneity (Kiess 2016). Seemingly unconditioned human acts, as political and thus *dramatic* (Lupton 2014, p. 654), require both spectators who are already there and preexisting dramaturgy (Clark and Quill 2009, p. 263), here present for students as rituals, games, festivals, nature, dreams, music, and humor that have been passed down to them, perhaps from time immemorial. From our dataset, we present two examples in more detail.

For elementary school-age students, Derek Munson's *Enemy Pie* presents a "creative way" (Pollock 2006, p. 34) to deal with conflict through the intercession of the main character's father (Entenman et al. 2005), who cleverly (and humorously) invokes a fascinatingly magical ritual: he bakes a pie that will "get rid" of the main character's "enemy," if the main character first spends time with his rival, Jonathan, whom he then unwittingly befriends. The ritual of "enemy pie" allows the main character to entertain anger and release forbidden impulses (Lurie 1990) as he imagines the lurid possibilities of Jonathan's pie consumption, working through his dark desires with only the subtle presence of an adult authority, finally realizing that, no, he does not want his rival to die. The pie really works as it turns an "enemy" into a friend, because the main character's fascination with an esoteric recipe and its wonderfully ironic formula let him get to know Jonathan in ways that transcend any straightforward application of contact theory. The conflict dissolves only as the main character finds quasi-magical space for something unanticipated to happen—spending time with his not-so-bad rival, *not* because he first develops a cognitive grasp of properly directed anger or the likely possibilities of a harmonious future. Amusingly, the book ends with him still wondering

what "enemy pie" does to enemies, not grasping that it fosters a new future in which he initiates a common world with Jonathan—here in the form of a trampoline on which they may both jump.

For middle-school students, Eleanor Coerr's *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, if still somewhat historically problematic and romanticized, introduces the aftereffects of World War II through the ritual of the main character, an eleven-year-old girl in Hiroshima who dies of post-atomic bomb leukemia, repetitively folding origami cranes in an enduring form of hope (Apol et al. 2002). The book does not present the "old story" (Coerr 1977, p. 35) that folding a thousand cranes causes the gods to heal Sadako as *literally* true; the friend who suggests the practice herself "didn't really believe in such things" (p. 36). The book even begins as Sadako's coming diagnosis suggests the failure of optimism and that good luck symbols—the clear sky, a spider—may be empty omens. The ritual of making the cranes simply allows Sadako, frequently angry at herself because of her lack of agency, to "keep the magic working" (1977, p. 52) as a concrete reminder that "there was always hope" (p. 76). The evidence of the cranes' power is in their elicitation of hopefulness, despite the increasing grimness of Sadako's condition, until finally if inevitably, "Life was slipping away from her, but the crane made Sadako feel stronger inside" (p. 63). This ritual of folding provides stability amid an otherwise sad existence; the numbered folding of endless papers shows that hope may be as relentless as oncoming death (for a similar example, see Hatfield 2011). The book ends with the construction of a statue for the deceased Sadako and a "prayer" for peace in a place otherwise associated with anger. The act of folding cranes creates space for an unexpected emergence of peace in Hiroshima itself and anticipatory hope in students' lives.

These books implicitly argue for at least the possibility of forgiveness but not one dependent on the formation of conceptual knowledge or empathy. We instead have the religious perception of mysterious interconnectedness or the secular affirmation of life amidst the darkest times. Through rituals, dreams, or music, these books disclose a world that calls us to *wonder*—that the world is not only beyond our concepts and understanding, but also worth attending to (see Schinkel 2017, especially the contrast of Arendt to Dewey, pp. 483ff; Kristjánsson 2019, p. 108, and DiPaoantonio 2019), not least because it is presently unfinished. As Josef Pieper (1999) wrote, in festivals, we affirm the world beyond any immediate efficiency, and during those festivals, existing social differences are abolished as the community sets aside the everyday to participate in a preexisting concord (see Jo 2019, for a secular appropriation). Even without the festivals of "The Feast of the Cantaloupe" in *The Pushcart War* or that irresistibly enthralling baseball game connected with the restoration of nature itself in *How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball*, Pieper sees the arts, like music or painting or film, as bearing within themselves a primordial affirmation of this mysterious world, even perhaps in the music of a mole deep underground.

The world may exceed all egocentrism (Warne 2018; Schinkel 2019) to potentially include offenders and victims—those medieval armies brought together by the mole's underground music, the Boss, who even after being struck out by Georgie Radbourn, is not exiled but finds his place selling peanuts at the reinstated baseball games in the book's final illustration. This perception is not conceptual—knowing *that*—but based on an experiential sense of possibility dimly disclosed in dreams, music, nature. No *Little House* need remain in isolation in the *Big World*, and not only because of telephones and television and global trade (Krauss 1942; see Nel 2012), but also because of the sense, in Ruth Krauss' book, that nature will return, and children find something significant in the stars between their toes. We are *not* apologetically arguing for (or against) a specific ontological grounding—again, these are children's books—but only the human capacity to act anew, rather than merely to forgive out of existing resources to opportunistically preserve the *status quo*, whether out of paternalism (Gubar 2020), or the recognition of kinship (Sardella-Ayres 2019), or from problem-solving.

As such, we still claim that the liberal arts should teach forgiveness in recognizable ways, including those drawing on reflective thought and sympathetic understanding. However, we suggest these emphases be supplemented by a knowledge of those diverse cultural traditions, religious and secular, in children's literature that carry that perception that the world remains generative, even if we are angry, and that this plenitude can create the possibility for a different future. These cultural traditions include "secular benedic-

tions" that allow victims to dream or discern an unexpected and unconditioned future that may even include offenders.

Additionally and relatedly, we think liberal arts education should make use of two ideas.

First, as Kristján Kristjánsson (2019) writes, flourishing may require some form of awe in the sense of "transpersonal emotions with their heightened, ecstatic sensitivities" (p. 99). He acknowledges that "children's experiences of the world are typically filled with awe", but this receptivity seems to "dissipate in adolescence and to become suppressed in adults", leading to a disenchanted "flatness" (Ibid.), presumably as awe and wonder are seen as childish and completely left behind. He suggests, "Legends, fairy tales and folk stories will provide an important initial resource in this regard" (p. 111). Our qualitative work confirms his recognition of the initial importance of such genres, if not necessarily his neo-Aristotelianism, as well as the role of sublimity in history (Scribner 2019) and analogous disciplines. Further research should seek to confirm—as our reading of Jonathan Fast may suggest—their enduring relevance for adolescents and older students in fostering space for forgiveness that may be possible if not yet realizable in our world.

Second, the liberal arts should draw not only on propositional knowledge but also what Pieper (1998) calls receptive knowledge in which the "truth presents itself as a landscape presents itself to the eye" (p. 32). This can be likened to what Eleonore Stump (2012) has distinguished as "Franciscan knowledge": knowledge that is "direct, intuitive, non-propositional, and subserved by distinct brain systems designed precisely for mind-reading between conspecifics" (p. 99), that is, a relational knowledge of persons (and, we would add, the natural world, which, as we have seen, can be intensely personal). For Stump (2010), Franciscan knowledge is transmitted by narratives that do not convey propositions but rather "something of what we would have had if we ourselves had been participants" (p. 373). Here, this knowledge grounds neither a calculated forgiveness nor forgiveness based on a sympathetic knowledge of malefactors, but, as Arendt sees the political world in dramatic categories, a knowledge of how to act before spectators on the world stage so that our play does not become repetitively destructive.

Our work in empirical philosophy confirms Stump's recognition of knowledge that may only come from baking pies, folding cranes, playing baseball, or reading about those characters who do. Children's literature has intense relevance for the liberal arts. Martha Nussbaum's defense (2010) of the liberal arts recognizes wonder, as she mentions that a children's nursery rhyme is a "paradigm of wonder, since it involves looking at a shape and endowing that shape with an inner world," but this wonder ages into an intensified curiosity, as it is "what children ultimately must be able to do with other people" (p. 99). We do not disagree with this account, but we do not want to restrict wonder to a fascination with human capacities alone.[1]

TABLE 1—CODING QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Research
2. Title
3. Plot Synopsis
4. List of characters and each of their roles in the development of the plot
5. Underlying themes in the text
6. Examples of magical or ritual elements in the text leading to newness
7. How is peace defined in this text? How could peace be achieved?
8. Are there elements of political anger? If so explained in the context of this text.
9. Are there elements of political forgiveness? If so explain in the context of this text.
10. Are forgiveness and empathy distinct emotions in this text? Explain. When looking at this question the goal is to identify if and how forgiveness and empathy are aligned with each other.
11. List examples of characters moving through emotions in the text. Think of this as emotional development.
12. List the change in characters across points in the text: beginning, middle, and end. Think of this as a change in social position.
13. List the institutions mention or alluded to in the text. Think broadly and attempt to capture institutions at both the macro and micro levels of society.
14. Who is the narrator of the story? What perspective do they offer the text?
15. Additional Thoughts? Add information about illustrations if possible.

TABLE 2—LIST OF BOOKS

Title	Author	Year of Publication
Munro Leaf	*The Story of Ferdinand*	1936
Ben Martin	*John Black's Body*	1939
James Thurber	*The Last Flower*	1939
Erich Kastner	*The Animals' Conference*	1949
Ruth Krauss	*The Big World and the Little House*	1949
Dr. Seuss	*Yertle the Turtle*	1958
Jean Merrill	*The Pushcart War*	1964
Leo Lionni	*The Alphabet Tree*	1968
John and Faith Hubley	*The Hat*	1974
Eleanor Coerr	*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*	1977
Trân-Khánh-Tuyêt	*The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village*	1977 (rev. 1986)
Toshi Maruki	*Hiroshima No Pika*	1982
Dr. Seuss	*The Butter Battle Book*	1984
David Macaulay	*Baaa*	1985
Frank Asch and Vladimir Vagin	*Here Comes the Cat*	1989
Eve Bunting	*The Wall*	1992
Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland	*Sami and the Time of Troubles*	1992
Eugene Trivizas	*The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*	1993
Alan Baillie	*Rebel*	1994
Patricia Polacco	*Pink and Say*	1994
David Shannon	*How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball*	1994
David McPhail	*Mole Music*	1999
Derek Munson	*Enemy Pie*	2000
Jeanette Winter	*The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*	2005

TABLE 3—CATEGORIZATION OF BOOKS

Author	Title	Year of Publication
Books inviting readers to experience conflict through the experience of a main character		
A character is placed directly in conflict		
Toshi Maruki	*Hiroshima No Pika*	1982
Florence Parry Heide and Judith Heide Gilliland	*Sami and the Time of Troubles*	1992
Patricia Polacco	*Pink and Say*	1994
A character is placed in the aftermath of conflict		
Eleanor Coerr	*Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*	1977
Trân-Khánh-Tuyêt	*The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village*	1977 (rev. 1986)
Eve Bunting	*The Wall*	1992
A character is placed in a simplified or focused experience of conflict		
David Shannon	*How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball*	1994
Derek Munson	*Enemy Pie*	2000
Jeanette Winter	*The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*	2005
Books that show the logic (or illogic) of conflict through simplified story forms		
Animals (in simplified story)		
Munro Leaf	*The Story of Ferdinand*	1936
David Macaulay	*Baaa*	1985
Frank Asch and Vladimir Vagin	*Here Comes the Cat*	1989
Eugene Trivizas	*The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*	1993
David McPhail	*Mole Music*	1999
Symbolic or exaggerated characters		
Dr. Seuss	*Yertle the Turtle*	1958
Leo Lionni	*The Alphabet Tree*	1968

con't.

Characters seemingly trapped, machine-like, in patterns by their wartime roles		
Ben Martin	*John Black's Body*	1939
James Thurber	*The Last Flower*	1939
John and Faith Hubley	*The Hat*	1974
Alan Baillie	*Rebel*	1994
Characters parallel or invert patterns of human aggression		
Erich Kastner	*The Animals' Conference*	1949
Jean Merrill	*The Pushcart War*	1964
Outlier (no conflict)		
Ruth Krauss	*The Big World and the Little House*	1949

TABLE 4—THE SOURCES OF FORGIVENESS AND PEACE FROM THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURES OF THE BOOKS

Books with Empathy
Pink and Say
Enemy Pie
The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village
The Hat
The Alphabet Tree

Books with Nature as a Source of Newness
The Story of Ferdinand
Hiroshima No Pika
Sami and the Time of Troubles
The Big World and the Little House
The Hat
The Last Flower
The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig
The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village
Mole Music
Pink and Say
How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball
The Animals' Conference

Books with Rituals or Games or Festivals as Sources of Newness
Enemy Pie
Hiroshima No Pika
Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes
Pink and Say
How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball
The Wall
The Pushcart War

Books with Dreams as Sources of Newness
Pink and Say
Sami and the Time of Troubles
Mole Music
The Librarian of Basra
The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village
The Hat

Books with Music as a Source of Newness
Mole Music
The Little House and the Big World
The Little Weaver of Thai-Yen Village

Books with Humor as a Source of Newness
Rebel
Yertle the Turtle
Here Comes the Cat
The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig
The Animals' Conference

NOTES

1 The authors would like to thank Joel Miller, Erin Hogan, Campbell Scribner, and Isaac Radner, whose comments improved this paper.

REFERENCES

Apol, L., Sakuma, A., Reynolds, T. M., and Rop, S. K. 2002. When Can We Make Paper Cranes?: Examining Pre-Service Teachers' Resistance to Critical Readings of Historical Fiction. *Journal of Literacy Research,* 34(4):429-464.

Arendt, H. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

_____. 1960. *General Correspondence, 1938-1976*. Hannah Arendt to W. H. Auden Feb. 14. Hannah Arendt Papers, Manuscript Division. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

_____. 1996. *Love and Saint Augustine*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

_____. 2006. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. London: Penguin.

_____. 2018. Public rights and private interests: A response to Charles Frankel. In: H. Arendt, Kohn, J. (ed.), *Thinking Without a Banister: Essays in Understanding, 1953-1975*, pp. 506-512. New York: Schocken Press.

Aristotle. 1991. *On Rhetoric*. Tr. G. A. Kennedy. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, P. 1997. *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. K. 1997. *Qualitative Research for Education*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Bunting, E. and Himler, R. 1992. *The Wall*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt/Sandpiper.

Cantero, H. 2019. The ANZAC Tribulations at Gallipoli in Recent Australian Children's Literature. *ANGLICA-An International Journal of English Studies*, 28(3):85-96.

Cardany, A. B. 2016. Reading about the power of music: *Mole Music* and *Children of the Stone*. *General Music Today,* 29(2):29-34.

Chiba, S. 1995. Hannah Arendt on Love and the Political: Love, Friendship, and Citizenship. *The Review of Politics*, 57(3):505-536.

Clarke, B., and Quill, L. 2009. Augustine, Arendt, and Anthropy. *Sophia,* 48(3):253-265.

Coerr, E. 1977. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. London: Penguin Books.

Colabucci, L, and Napoli, M. 2017. Beyond Compassion? An Analysis of the Jane Addams Children's Book Award. *Journal of Children's Literature,* 43(1):28-36.

Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. 2011. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dhingra, N. 2019. Student Free Speech and Schools as Public Spaces. *Educational Theory,* 69(6):657-673.

DiPaoantonio, M. 2019. Wonder, Guarding Against Thoughtlessness in Education. *Studies in Philosophy and Education,* 38(3):213-22.

Duan, S. 1994. *A Tale of Animals: The Changing Images of Animals in Animal Fantasy for Children from Aesop's Fables Through 1986.* [Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University].

Elshtain, J. B. 1992. Teaching as Drama. In: S. Hauerwas and J. H. Westerhoff (eds.) *Schooling Christians: "Holy Experiments" in American Education*, (pp. 54-65). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press.

_____. 2003. Politics and Forgiveness. In: N. Biggar (ed.), *Burying the Past: Making Peace and Doing Justice After Civil Conflict*, (pp. 45-64). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.

Entenman, J., Murnen T. J., and Hendricks, C. 2005. Victims, Bullies, and Bystanders in K–3 Literature. *The Reading Teacher,* 59(4):352-364.

Fast, J. 2008. *Ceremonial Violence: Understanding Columbine and Other School Rampage Shootings.* New York: Overlook Press.

Gary, K. 2006. Leisure, Freedom, and Liberal Education. *Educational Theory,* 56(2):121-136.

Greene, M. 1995. *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Gubar, M. 2020. Toothless Pedagogy? Problematizing Paternalism in Children's Literature and Childhood Studies. *Children's Literature,* 48(1):153-197.

Hatfield, C. 2011. Redrawing the Comic-Strip Child: Charles M. Schulz's *Peanuts* as Cross-Writing. In: L. Vallone and J. Micklenberg (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Children's Literature*, pp. 167-187. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haydon, G. 1999. Is there Virtue in Anger? *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 33(1):59-66.

Herczog, M. M. 2013. The Links Between the C3 Framework and the NCSS National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. *Social Education*, 77(6):331-333.

Hursh, J. 2013. International Law, Armed Conflict, and the Construction of Otherness: A Critical Reading of Dr. Seuss's *The Butter Battle Book* and a Renewed Call for Global Citizenship. *New York Law School Law Review,* 58:617-652.

Jackson, T. P. 2018. Not Far from the Kingdom: Martha Nussbaum on Anger and Forgiveness. *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 46(4):749-770.
Jo, K. 2019. Learning to Rest: A Pieperian Approach to Leisure in Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 53(2):374-393.
Kiess, J. 2016. *Hannah Arendt and Theology*. London: T&T Clark.
Krauss, R. 1942. *The Big World and the Little House.* Henry Schuman.
Kristjánsson, K. 2019. *Flourishing as the Aim of Education: A Neo-Aristotelian View*. London: Routledge.
Lathey, G. 1999. Other Sides of the Story: War in Translated Children's Fiction. *Signal,* 88:48-58.
Levinson, M., and Levine, P. 2013. Taking Informed Action to Engage Students in Civic Life. *Social Education*, 77(6):339-341.
Levinson, N. 2001. The Paradox of Natality: Teaching in the Midst of Belatedness. In: M. Gordon (ed.), *Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing our Common World*, pp. 11-36. Boulder: Westview Press.
Lupton, J. R. 2014. Judging Forgiveness: Hannah Arendt, WH Auden, and The Winter's Tale. *New Literary History, 45*(4):641-663.
Lurie, A. 1990. *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: Subversive Children's Literature*. London: Little, Brown.
Martin, B. 1939. *John Black's Body*. New York: Vanguard Press.
Maruki, T. 1980. *Hiroshima No Pika*. Boston: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Books.
McPhail, D. 1999. *Mole Music*. New York: Henry Holt & Company.
Merriam, S. 1998. *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education.* Rev. and Exp. from *Case Study Research in Education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
Merrill, J. 1992. *The Pushcart War. New York Review of Books*.
Mickenberg, J. and Nel, P. 2008. *Tales for Little Rebels: A Collection of Radical Children's Literature*. New York: New York University Press.
Miyoko, A. 1991. The Suffering Child's Plea for Peace in Japanese Picture Books. *Children's Literature Association Quarterly,* 1:154-160.
Munson, D. 2000. *Enemy Pie*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.
Nel, P. 2012. *Crockett Johnson and Ruth Krauss: How An Unlikely Couple Found Love, Dodged the FBI, and Transformed Children's Literature*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
Nussbaum, M. 1999. *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
_____. 2010. *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
_____. 2016. *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Pieper, J. 1998. *Leisure: The basis of Culture*. South Bend: St. Augustine's Press.
_____. 1999. *In Tune with the World: A theory of Festivity.* South Bend: St. Augustine's Press.
Polacco, P. 1994. *Pink and Say*. New York: Philomel Books.
Pollock, S. L. 2006. Counselor Roles in Dealing with Bullies and Their LGBT Victims. *Middle School Journal*, 38(2):29-36.
Rundell, K. 2019. *Why You Should Read Children's Books, Even Though You are so Old And Wise*. London: Bloomsbury.
Sardella-Ayres, D. 2019. Rewriting and Re-Whiting the Little Colonel: Racial Anxieties, Tomboyism, and Lloyd Sherman. *Children's Literature,* 47(1):79-103.
Schinkel, A. 2017. The Educational Importance of Deep Wonder. *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 51(2):538-553.
Schinkel, A. 2019. Wonder, Mystery, and Meaning. *Philosophical Papers,* 48(2):293-319.
_____. 2020. Education as Mediation Between Child and World: The Role of Wonder. *Studies in Philosophy and Education,* 39(5):479-492.
Sciullo, N. 2014. Unexpected Insights into Terrorism and National Security Law Through Children's Literature: Reading *The Butter Battle Book* as Monstrosity. *British Journal of American Legal Studies*, 3(2):507-527.
Scribner, C. 2019. Sublime Understanding: Cultivating the Emotional Past. In: M. Gross and L. Terra (eds.), *Teaching and Learning the Difficult Past: Comparative Perspectives*, pp. 42-55. London: Routledge.
Seuss, Dr. 1984. *The Butter Battle Book*. New York: Random House.
_____. 1986. *Yertle the Turtle and Other Stories*. New York: Random House.
Shannon, D. 1994. *How Georgie Radbourn Saved Baseball*. New York: Blue Sky Press.
Singer, A. 2011. A Novel Approach: The Sociology of Literature, Children's Books, and Social Inequality. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 10(4):307-320.
Stump, E. 2010. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
_____. 2012. Wandering in Darkness: Further Reflections. *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion,* 4(3):197-21.
Swan, K., et al. 2013. *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework For Social Studies State Standards: Guidance For Enhancing the Rigor Of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History*. National Council on the Social Sciences.
Tranh, K. T. 1987. *The Little Weaver of Thái-Yên Village*. Children's Book Press.
Trivizas, E. and Oxenbury, H. 1993. *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry Books.
Vatter, M. 2006. Natality and Biopolitics in Hannah Arendt. *Revista de Ciencia Política,* 26(2):137-159.
Warnick, B., Johnson, B. A., and Rocha, S. 2010. Tragedy and the Meaning of School Shootings. *Educational Theory,* 60(3):371-390.

Warne, N. 2018. Learning to See the World Again: Josef Pieper on Philosophy, Prudence, and the University. *Journal of Moral Education,* 47(3):289-303.
West, M. 2016. Dr. Seuss's Responses to Nazism: Historical Allegories or Political Parables? *The Looking Glass: New Perspectives on Children's Literature,* 19(1).
White, P. 2002. What Should we Teach Children About Forgiveness? *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 36(1):57-67.
_____. 2012. Making Political Anger Possible: A Task for Civic Education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *46(*1):1-13.
Winter, J. 2005. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*. New York: Harcourt.

Teaching For Freedom

MARSHA FAMILARO ENRIGHT
President of The Reliance College Fund

Abstract: Free societies require individuals who know how to thrive in their tumult and how to guard their freedom. Liberal education is key to developing the autonomy needed, but that education must be about more than the history and ideas of freedom. It must include experiences that serve as an "apprenticeship of freedom" if individuals are to be capable of putting the ideas into practice. Traditional education does not offer such an apprenticeship, but the educational philosophy of the Montessori Method does. Herein are the principles and the practice by which educators can craft learning environments that provide the apprenticeship needed.

Keywords: Liberal Education, Maria Montessori, Freedom, Liberty, Montessori Method, Children, School, Socrates

LIBERAL LEARNING AND LIBERTY

A republic, if you can keep it — Ben Franklin

In ancient times when liberal education was invented, not only Greek, but Roman aristocrats and anyone aspiring to positions of influence in civic life sought such an education.

But why, we may ask, in our high tech, fast moving, science-rich culture, should everyone *today* have some part of a liberal education? Most college students are not wealthy aristocrats—or able to devote their time to civic life.

With history as the measure, it's clear that free society advocates don't need to be a majority to significantly change the culture. But they need to be a significant, knowledgeable, and active minority. Such a minority made the progress towards increased freedom and individual rights possible in Britain and in its North American colonies, and they were steeped in the Enlightenment and classical learning.

We need people at many levels of society and in many areas—business, the trades, the arts, medicine, journalists, as well as intellectuals and professors—with the ideas, values, and habits friendly to liberty as part of this minority. This is where a sound, liberal education is essential.

Consequently, free persons need the most powerful knowledge and excellent reasoning and persuasive skills, no matter their profession.

Moreover, they need to learn from what Matthew Arnold called "the best that has been thought and said", e.g. the classics or Great Books. These works are crucial for several reasons:

- Authors, such as Plato, Livy, Shakespeare, and Madison are not only superb writers but original thinkers; those who study them well incorporate a panoply of approaches into their own minds, gaining power and beauty of thought.
- These thinkers have shaped our world and very way of thinking.

When I say this latter, people often ask me "What do you mean? What ideas are influencing me?" I'll ask them, "Do you ever speak about something being actually one thing but potentially another?—you got that from Aristotle; Do you believe scientists should test their theories with experiments? You got that from Francis Bacon. Do you think that civilization is corrupting? You got that from Jean-Jacques Rousseau." And on and on.

THE APPRENTICESHIP OF FREEDOM

For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them. — Aristotle

However, being knowledgeable about the ideas of a free society is not enough.

It's one thing to be lectured to about liberty and the virtues needed for it; it's another to know how to act in freedom; can you *apply* these ideas in your life? Where do you learn how? Have you experienced what a free society would be like—and are you motivated to achieve it?

The Pilgrims and other settlers of the New World largely faced a wilderness and were so far away from the mother country and of such little economic importance for 200 years that they effectively self-governed; an *apprenticeship of freedom*.

Today, we live in a society of extraordinary wealth and comfort. It's only too easy to be ignorant of how we got here and of how hard it was to create—or keep. Unlike the American Colonists, none of us has been raised in a highly self-reliant society of the Enlightenment Era—did we have the chance to develop the habits needed to embody its values? To act in our families, among our friends, in our towns and cities, the way a free person should act? To have the skills and force of personality to implement the changes needed to make our lives better and freer, whatever our professions, associations and interests?

As Alexis de Tocqueville said, "There is nothing more prolific in marvels than the art of being free; but there is nothing harder than the apprenticeship of freedom" (Tocqueville 2000).

Where do the young today experience "an apprenticeship of freedom" so as to embrace the tumultuous society it creates? Educator Maria Montessori observed, "The schoolchild, being continually discouraged and scolded, ends by acquiring that mixture of distrust of his own powers and of fear which is called shyness, and which later, in the grown man, takes the form of discouragement and submissiveness, of incapacity to put up the slightest moral resistance" (Montessori 2019).

Unfortunately, today we have not only a plague of submissiveness, but of what seems to be the opposite of submission—a plague of children raised to do whatever they want and be praised regardless of their performance. Neither an authoritarian nor a permissive upbringing prepare a young person for life in a free society which requires alertness to opportunity, assertiveness, and self-confidence. Neither approach develops self-discipline, self-responsibility, hard work or the other virtues needed to navigate life successfully. Nor do they result in happiness because the child neither learns how to concentrate in order to achieve goals nor proper behavior and values that will make a successful, flourishing life possible.

NEEDED DIMENSIONS OF A MODERN LIBERAL EDUCATION

> *To consider the school as the place where instruction is given is one point of view. But to consider the school as a preparation for life is another. In the latter case, the school must satisfy all the needs of life.* — Maria Montessori

Educators familiar with the facts, history, and ideas of free societies and spontaneous order understand the value of dispersed and localized knowledge and the prosperity and flourishing that results from individuals peacefully collaborating as trading partners.

Advocates of reason and freedom understand that the mind cannot be forced to accept truth. Nor does the social pressure of authority or peers result in a real understanding of truth, and certainly not the first-hand comprehension and autonomy of the innovator. Neither does a top-down environment cultivate an independent person's ability to fight for his or her individual freedom.

What they might not have considered is the way in which the classroom is a micro-society in which students learn how to behave in the larger world, and whether their classrooms reflect the social relationships, the virtues, and the psychological conditions that sustain and advance the behavior of free people.

The modern classroom, from grade school to graduate school, relies heavily on a structure of a single arbiter of knowledge, often in the position of lecturer, discussion leader, knowledge authority, and director of learning. Directed group lessons in traditional grade school and lectures in higher education are favored methodologies of the traditional method of education.

In the traditional teaching model, students are considered passive empty vessels, to be filled with knowledge by the academic authority, rather than active agents in their own learning. The teaching paradigm encourages an authority to convey the "right" answers to the waiting student-receptacles.

Traditionally, "learning" is measured by the amount of information the instructor has offered which the student is able to reiterate on tests and in papers.

Consider the psychological effects of the traditional methods of teaching in which:

- The teacher is the repository of truth.
- The student is taught a limited line of reasoning given in the lecture or presentation.
- The student is the receiver, not initiator of learning.
- The student is discouraged from asking questions, often quashed as interfering with the business of information acquisition (or, even an affront to the teacher's authority).

In this paradigm:

How does the student learn how to arrive at truth himself?

How does the student learn that there are multiple ways of approaching a problem?

How does the student learn to find subjects of interest to himself, individually, and know how to go about the process of learning new material, arrive at his own conclusions and navigate all the choices and opportunities in a free society?

Furthermore, how does the instructor know if real understanding has been achieved or whether the student can use this information in his or her life?

The conditions of freedom cannot be *consistently and sufficiently* conveyed in a traditional, lecture-based environment.

The micro-society of a classroom structure that endeavors to encourage the exchange of ideas between individuals, while still incorporating the guidance and expertise of the educator, mirrors the creative process of the market. This is something free society educators can endeavor to construct.

What are the dimensions for such an outcome?

Mirroring the environment of a free society means eschewing centralized, top-down procedures and crafting every aspect of the learning environment to support the *discovery* of truth and the connection of ideas to their practical effects, including:

- Instruction and guidance in first-hand thinking—e.g., in how to look at any aspect of reality for oneself, which is a fundamental skill of an independent human being.
- Explicit tutelage in logic and thinking skills.
- Development of the art of rhetoric, especially questioning [dialectic].
- Encouragement in thinking of many different possibilities and combinations of ideas and facts;
- Connecting subjects across domains of knowledge, e.g. the relationship of math to history, geology to politics, or the relationship of philosophy to all the subjects.
- Understanding of the relation of ideas and theories to the facts, and to practical consequences—What's the connection between the Napoleonic Wars and my contemporary life? Yet, there is a crucial connection.

As one of my students said, "I knew about dates and facts, but I wasn't able to view processes along history, the connection between the facts and philosophy….in many cases, learning is not meaningful for the student."

Carefully crafted assignments and classes can purposefully integrate knowledge, connect domains, reveal practical consequences, and develop creativity. Teachers need training to ensure these aims—something which the rare university professor gets.

One of the beauties of studying Great Books is that they often cross categories. Lucretius's poem "On the Nature of Things" is at once literature, metaphysics, psychology, and physics. Plato's *Meno* is literature and psychology as well as an examination of virtue. Fiction writers teach the reader about inner life and often present models of self-reflection. Think of Macbeth's agonizing soliloquys; or revolutionary Gauvain's long night of weighing the right and wrong of what to do with his uncle and counter-revolutionary prisoner, the Marquis de Lantenac, in Hugo's *Ninety-Three*; or Rebecca's defiant speech against the tyranny and anti-semitism of the nobles in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. These are just some of the outstanding educational qualities of the classics.

At this point, let's turn to an education model specifically, scientifically, and thoroughly designed to help the young optimally grow, thrive, and become independent human beings.

MONTESSORI EDUCATION AND LIBERTY

> *Discipline must come through liberty … We do not consider an individual disciplined only when he has been rendered as artificially silent as a mute and as immovable as a paralytic. He is an individual annihilated, not disciplined.* — Maria Montessori

The Montessori model, 100+ years old, covers all the subjects of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* of liberal learning—and more. And its power is attested to by the following story:

> At a tumultuous time in history, with too many parallels to our own, an astonishing drama unfolded. Amidst a raging civil war in 1939 Catalonia, Spain, Maria Montessori anxiously waited with her grandchildren on the second floor of their house in Barcelona as Communist anarchists ripped through the town, slaughtering priests, nuns, and Catholic lay people. She was Catholic.
>
> Then, something strange occurred: a group of these rough men, with their bandoliers of bullets, stopped in front of her house and began painting on her doorway. After they left, she and the chil-

dren raced downstairs to see, in black paint, "Respect this house. It harbors a friend of the children" (Montessori 1998).

What had Montessori done to elicit such a tribute and protection?

She had helped parents understand the behavior and needs of their children through a series of talks given on the radio! "A taxi driver who brought her back home one day did not want to accept the fare. 'You are Dr. Montessori, aren't you? You know, my wife listens to you, every talk you give. We have had six children—they are all small-but only now we know them, after what you have told us" (Montessori 1988).

Maria Montessori was the first woman doctor in Italy and a scientific genius. Starting out with slum children in 1907, she discovered and implemented a brilliant and complex method of education. It treated children as unique individuals and nurtured their development and powers to thrive. Children became hard-working, curious, creative, self-possessed, and high achieving individuals who knew how to live peaceably and respectfully with others, as traders of value.

Just the kind of people needed to live well in a free society, countering the worst trends in today's educational landscape. How does her method accomplish this?

First, the Montessori classroom is complex and well-thought-out, physically, intellectually, and socially. Its fundamental principle is freedom in a structured environment. This parallels the structure of a free society, encouraging peaceful interactions while allowing members as much freedom as possible. Children are able to develop self-mastery, which is needed to live in freedom.

Second, children are treated with gentle respect for their individuality, with coercion reserved for dire circumstances. They are encouraged to learn through exciting and interesting materials perfectly suited to the child's developmental needs. The teacher conveys an attitude of curiosity and questioning that captures the child's mind: "Let's see how big an apatosaurus is compared to tyrannosaurus rex—let's measure out each in the parking lot and compare!"

Third, the child's reasoning powers and independent judgment are strongly cultivated through the learning materials.

Thus, the three essential values needed for a free society are developed: reason, individualism, and freedom.

And the consequence is: children love going to a well-run Montessori school. Over my 27 years running Council Oak Montessori, I received many letters in which parents told me their children loved school so much they lied when they were sick and said they were fine so as not to miss school!

THE PROBLEM OF ATTENTION

When you have solved the problem of controlling the attention of the child, you have solved the entire problem of education. — Maria Montessori

Without attention there is no learning, yet attentional resources are limited. They must be used well to efficiently learn the most possible.

Further, the developed ability to concentrate on work and goals and to self-maintain interest and focus allow a person to succeed in long-term projects and purposes. In *Montessori, Dewey, and Capitalism*, Jerry Kirkpatrick calls this "Concentrated Attention".

In his studies on intensely productive and creative people, University of Chicago research psychologist Mihály Csíkszentmihályi found that certain conditions elevate the ability to pay attention deeply for long periods of time, an experience he called "Flow" (Csíkszentmihályi 1990). His research group found that Montessori practices provide these conditions throughout the school day and result in exceptional outcomes.

The use of the Three-Period Lesson is a case in point. Research shows that humans learn best if:

- They are highly motivated to learn the material for some personal end.
- They are physically engaged.
- They understand the application of the material to their lives.

Figure 1: Layers of the Earth Lesson

The classic Montessori Three-Period Lesson ingeniously engages human attention. Montessori materials affect the student's whole intellectual, sensory, motor, and conceptual capacities, thereby powerfully imprinting memory.

They are specially designed to focus attention on an important concept, such as whole numbers versus fractions. Objects and materials incorporating shapes, colors, sounds, and textures concretely make the idea vivid.

The lesson's three parts are Naming, Recognition and Association, and Recall. The teacher gathers one to four students ready for the particular lesson, seats them in front of the materials, names the objects and show their use with as few words as possible. For example, with fraction circles that demonstrate the addition of fractions.

Figure 2: Fraction Circles

These are sets of metal, pie-shaped circles cut into different quantities of wedges with little knobs on each wedge. One circle consists of 4 wedges, another of 12, to demonstrate fourths and twelfths, while all the circles in the material are the same size, to embody whole number. All the operations of arithmetic are possible with them. The child can *literally see* the relationship of different fractional proportions by taking the

wedges out of the circles and putting them back in different combinations. Each lesson demonstrates one possible use of the materials.

During the lesson, the teacher speaks little, allowing the students to focus and observe the demonstrated examples carefully so they recognize the elements and form associations. The teacher encourages questions from the students; she also models curiosity and triggers discussion with questions of her own when students are not forthcoming.

After the fraction demonstration, the teacher asks the student to explain what to do with the materials to solve the next problem and moves the materials accordingly. Finally, the teacher asks the student to demonstrate the material, turning student into teacher and thereby recalling the elements of the lesson, requiring a more complete level of understanding for the student's performance.

After the lesson, the student is free to pursue more problems with the materials right then, or to use them later when the student feels interested in working on that material (on the principle that one learns best when one is individually motivated). The teacher regularly takes notes while observing the children in class and, if she finds a child avoiding some material, she makes it her job to think of a way to interest the child in the work.

A key to the Method's success is ensuring that the amount of material conveyed at one lesson is not overwhelming but sufficiently interesting—i.e., just the conditions necessary for Flow. More frequent, shorter lessons with follow-up exercises are preferable to one long demonstration.

The Three-Period Lesson can be fruitfully adapted to many college-level subjects. In fact, some college classes, such as chemistry, often use a version of the Three-Period Lesson, with the experiment as the final student demonstration. However, the devil is in the details.

Game-like, the materials teach mathematics, history, language, science, and the arts—all the classic subjects—as well as many practical skills. They are arrayed on low shelves around the room in subject order and difficulty level, enabling children to obtain them and work on them by themselves, and to know how far along they are in the curriculum. The materials and their order are designed to develop independence.

Six-year-olds learn American history using a timeline organized by the terms of the presidents. They add figures, notes, maps and other items alongside each term to flesh out what events occurred. By manipulating concrete objects representing the people, dates, events, and relationships, the knowledge is burned into their minds because, as Maria said, "The hand is the instrument of the mind" (Montessori 1972).

As much as possible, classroom physical order enables the children to do things for themselves. Children can choose the order of their work depending on their interests, with math first, then geography, snack and clean-up, and finally reading a book, on one day. Then, a different order another day. After a lesson, children can continue with that material or do it later, just as adults usually have choice about the order in which to work.

By allowing the child to follow his interests and inner guide, he learns faster and retains the knowledge better, just as you do when you work on something of your choice.

The teacher regularly devotes time to carefully observing each child, learning their exact developmental level, interests, and individual personality characteristics. She becomes highly equipped to gently guide children to what each needs to learn, encouraging their productive individuality.

Students can choose to make up their own problems with materials: Two boys at our school would spend hours creating more and more math problems for themselves so they wouldn't have to go back to the teacher. This kind of freedom cultivates independence, self-reliance, and creativity. They're both highly self-motivated engineers today.

Other key features of the classroom are:

- Mixed aged groupings with, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, and 12-15 year-olds together, similar to typical mixed-age adult work environments. A wide variety of work is provided for such groups, which inspires younger children to do the next hardest work and older children to solidify their understanding by helping the younger children.
- Students can work at a desk, a table, their own rug on the floor, or in a corner they like.
- They can work with others *if they choose*; they are not forced to associate. Consequently, they freely associate just as adults do in a free society.
- They can work on the material as long as they need to, but then they must put the materials carefully back on the shelves for the next person the way each of us must take care of and replace commonly used objects at the park, or in a family, or on a team.
- Each child is responsible for the classroom environment; if she spills water on the floor, she must clean it up.
- Every week, each child is given a different job for maintaining the classroom, such as feeding the fish, sweeping the floor, or wiping the tables clean.
- As children get older, their responsibilities grow so that in the 9-12 classroom, a child answers the phone or acts as host and guide to visitors; in the 12-15 classroom, students create field trips out of their learning interest, determine a budget and timing, and make all the reservations and transportation arrangements.
- Children ages 9-12 and 12-15 create businesses to raise money for special trips, such as selling parents and visitors coffee and muffins they bake or learning calligraphy to inscribe wedding invitations.
- The materials and the classroom are set up to be self-correcting, that is, designed so the child can figure out himself if he has gotten the right answer, or is behaving correctly. For example, the furniture and shelves are carefully arranged so that if a child tries to run through, he could knock into shelves and cause objects to fall; he thereby learns not to run through class; if she puts the wrong knobbed cylinders into the holes, not all of them will fit.
- If they need to use the toilet, they check for and take the tag indicating the toilet is free, and, if so, take it and go there themselves.
- Even the smallest come in to school and hang up their own coats and dress themselves when it's time to leave.

The results? Young human beings that are remarkably self-disciplined, purposeful, and self-confident. Moreover, they have an independent, hardworking entrepreneurial mind-set and are socially adept, able to productively collaborate with others, which is so important for the business of a free society. They are superbly self-regulated, something desperately needed today among our young.

And they love their work the way human beings should if they are to become self-supporting individuals in a free society.

MIT business research professor Andrew McAfee argues in his book, *The Geek Way*, that Montessori education nurtures curiosity, openness, and initiative – many characteristics typical in great new companies run by "geeks", such as Amazon, Google, and Netflix. Their founders are part of what the *Wall Street Journal* called "The Montessori Mafia" of highly creative and world-impacting Montessori students such as Jeff Bezos, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, John McWhorter, Julia Child, and Anne Frank (Sims 1994). McAfee comments:

> After surveying more than five hundred creative professionals, management researchers Hal Gregerson and Jeff Dyer were surprised at how many started off in Montessori schools. This research revealed the importance of curiosity and asking lots of questions. As Gregerson put it, 'If you look at 4-year-olds, they are constantly asking questions and wondering how things work.

> But by the time they are 6 ½ years old, they stop asking questions because they quickly learn that teachers value the right answers more than provocative questions…We believe that the most innovative entrepreneurs were very lucky to have been raised in an atmosphere where inquisitiveness was encouraged…A number of [them] went to Montessori schools, where they learned to follow their curiosity' (McAfee 2023).

LIBERAL LEARNING, MONTESSORI, AND INNOVATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

> *Adaptability, this is the most essential quality, for the progress of the world is continually opening new careers, and at the same time closing or revolutionizing the traditional types of employment.* — Maria Montessori

In the main, traditional university education's methodology has been unchanged for centuries. Of course, many colleges and universities are using all the bells and whistles of the latest physical technology, which makes the world's knowledge available to their students through Internet-connected classrooms, electronic writing technology, online discussion groups, or handheld quiz machines.

But, given what we now know about human development, learning, and motivation, education is ripe for a revolution in its *psychological* tools. This is where the Montessori principles can be fruitfully applied to higher education. When freedom and autonomy are directly experienced, students become more engaged, interested, and enthusiastic learners and more often adopt the ideas and values of liberty.

Montessori wrote that for elementary-aged children, "an inner change has taken place" (1947, p. 4), and the child:

> … wants to understand for himself, not content with accepting mere facts. As moral activity develops, he wants to use his own judgment, which often will be quite different from that of his teachers. There is nothing more difficult than to teach moral values to a child of this age; he gives an immediate retort to everything we say, having become a rebel (Conesa, December 2024).

This is equally true of the young adult. In her genius as a scientific observer, Montessori recognized that the last period of development was ages 16-24. In recent years, neurological research has discovered that the brain does not fully mature until the age of 24 (Arain et al. 2013).

Montessori wrote only one essay about higher education, the deeply insightful "The Functions of the University" (1994). In it, she notes that young adults are seeking their place in the world; they need to *understand* the world in order to take their place in the great developments of civilization.

What college graduates do with the information they learn will now, more than ever, determine their competitive edge. Broad knowledge and capability to learn combined with the ability to deftly integrate new material into one's repertoire is essential to become an adaptable "Versatilist" capable of switching careers as the economy demands. Liberal learning excels in developing these qualities. The application of liberal learning and Montessori principles at this period of life can result in almost-magical outcomes.

Developmental and cognitive research, plus over 100 years of experience using the Montessori Method, argues that optimal learning occurs when the following conditions are present (Lillard 2005, *passim*):

- The instructor is informed about and alert to the developmental needs of the young adult student,
- Questions are actively encouraged by classroom methodology,
- An instructor's activities are modified based on the interests of the students, within the limits of the studied material,

- Activities are crafted with optimal learning conditions in mind, ones that engage the needs, attentions, and interests of young adults.

What methods best suit these needs?

The lecture is the traditional college learning format. If organized well, lectures can distill a vast amount of information down to a few principles and key examples. A lecture can be an economical introduction to a subject.

However, as a method, lectures are designed to be easy for the teacher, not the student. They allow the teacher to recount his or her knowledge without feedback or interrupting questions and side issues from the listener.

A lecture requires the learner to mostly listen and look a little. Unlike learning methods that make learning easy, the lecture usually does not engage the whole mind, including vivid perceptions and imagination, or the body of the student. Listening and looking during a lecture involves little sensory-motor work, which normally helps cement learning in memory. Students must exert an enormous amount of effort to stay focused on what the speaker says during lectures.

Visual aids (such as a power-point presentation) offer sensory stimulation, providing at least some perceptual imagery to associate with the ideas being conveyed. But students cannot study the illustrations as long as they want.

Human interaction usually helps to increase interest as well as physically engage the student, but there is very little interaction between student and teacher during a lecture. Often the lecture is aimed at a general audience and cannot address individual student goals, interests and comprehension difficulties.

Usually, a student cannot stop the lecture to ask a question or request a further, clarifying explanation or replay what the lecturer said. Once confused, the student may find the rest of the lecture very difficult, if not impossible to follow. Consequently, students often miss the important points and substantial content of the lecture.

In a lecture format, the *best teachers* attempt to address human learning needs by weaving their information into a story. Stories incorporate drama, character, values, passion, meaning, purpose, a climax and resolution. (Winston Churchill was a master at this.) They utilize human tendencies to search for meaning and purpose, to connect knowledge acquired to personal circumstances, and to remember people, places and things more easily than abstract ideas.

Imaginative work and bodily feelings help the student feel much more engaged in the material. Exceptional lecturer MIT physics professor Walter Lewin spends 30 hours and three practice trials developing each of the lectures for his remarkable classes. One of the great values of today's online resources is the fact that the best lectures on any subject can be sought, visually illustrated, and watched as much as the student needs.

The *best* learners are active. They come to a lecture motivated to learn for their own reasons. They expend extra effort in imagining their own examples to concretize the lecture's ideas. They maintain an internal dialogue of questions with the lecturer, noting what they don't understand and with what they take issue, and tend to seek answers after the lecture.

Many teachers recognize that this kind of student is rare and usually has high intelligence, strong intellectual ambition, and great self-motivation.

A long school career of lectures, drills, memorization, and teaching methods out of tune with learning needs usually turns most students away from enthusiastic learning at school. They are only too often motivated primarily by the external rewards of grades, adult approval, superior social position, and the acquisition of credentials, and they lack internal motivation and inherent interest in acquiring knowledge—qualities essential in the new global economy.

Unfortunately, lectures are so difficult to pay attention to, and psychologically painful for most students that they often goof around or look at their phones; consequently, they learn that they are "bad" and "undisciplined". They are expected to know how to force their attention on boring material.

Students attempting to pass their courses seek low-energy ways to fulfill requirements while maximizing grades, such as the use of recordings, buying lecture notes, or passing multiple choice tests without attending lectures.

These students aren't inherently bad, they are responding to the high psychological costs of traditional education in a psychologically economical way. They more profitably spend their limited attentional resources elsewhere.

Sadly, many feel guilt, frustration, and anger for failing to live up to the traditional classroom's expectations, with a nagging disappointment for what they've missed—or should have gotten—from education. Often, they blame themselves for the rest of their lives. In fact, many students desperately need help to become "active learners", interested in the material and in charge of their own education.

We cannot change what nature gives our students in terms of basic intelligence. However, we can offer a program that nurtures those abilities and habits of mind needed for the creativity and productivity needed in a free market by cultivating:

- Objective reasoning skills, not just in science and math, but all domains of knowledge, including such areas as art, history, and literature,
- Knowledge of a *broad* array of information, ancient and modern,
- Habits of connecting information and ideas from one domain of knowledge to another (the way highly creative people do).

Educators can develop these qualities by:

- Teaching through works that are cross-domain, like Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, a work of moral philosophy that founded the study of economics, or Plato's *Meno*, which examines history, epistemology, and social interaction,
- Guiding students to draw cross-disciplinary connections with examples such as how a city's buildings and layout are related to its history or pointing out the way in which original thinkers made crucial connections, such as Newton's connection of the apple's fall with the idea of gravity,
- Encouraging curiosity by modeling questioning and fostering it in students,
- Modeling enthusiasm and inquiry about what is being studied,
- Demonstrating careful observation of the world and the relation of any idea to the facts on which it rests,
- Questioning the observational/factual basis of their ideas.

Moreover, to help students find their place in life, teachers can cultivate awareness about students' meaning and purpose by presenting a curriculum that connects knowledge to living by:

- Always asking what any given fact or idea means to human life,
- Asking of any knowledge—to whom is this information valuable and how will it be used?

The Great Books' authors and their ideas serve as examples of the highest in creative thinking skills. Schooled to think deeply about these works, a student economically recognizes patterns, trends, and influences everywhere in culture, from art to business, from job trends to medical discoveries.

Moreover, Great Books show that so much we take for granted in our great civilization was invented by creative individuals all through the ages; this fosters students' appreciation of what we have. The way these books are used is critical to liberal learning.

TEACHERS AS ESSENTIAL TO LIBERAL EDUCATION

First we must inspire, not just inform — Pat Schaeffer

Maria Montessori noted that the student is a "spiritual embryo" with his or her own innate pattern of growth ready to unfold, delicately and amazingly, given the right psychological and physical environment. The teacher's role in this unfolding cannot be underestimated.

Maria Montessori said teachers, "have to conquer minds stirring up the great emotions of life" to achieve real learning in students. In other words, teachers must tap into students' deepest desires and values, such as love, joy, and pride, to fuel student curiosity.

Great teachers are often transformative to students, helping them learn to love knowledge and serious work, to acquire heightened reasoning skills, to look at many sides of a problem, to gather information from far-reaching domains in order to find solutions and to be self-reflective and reasonable—all important ingredients to future success. And great teachers have been key in the whole history of liberal learning, from Socrates to Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Abelard, Aquinas, and many more.

Famed investor Warren Buffet, who did not want to go to college, said of his time achieving a master's degree at Columbia University, "I didn't go there for a degree, I went for two teachers who were already my heroes."

Liberal learning necessitates teachers of the highest order: those with the utmost respect for their students, who can teach by example, and guide student through difficult material. To encourage the development of particular values and virtues in students, faculty become essential as role models.

While it is possible to be competent in communicating information and conveying some of these traits long distance, in-person interaction is the most compellingly effective method. It's important to have a program that actively uses technology of all kinds to creatively facilitate learning and collaboration and make scholars and public intellectuals from around the world accessible to students. But in-person classes with skilled, specially trained role-model teachers are indispensable for a great education.

A small group of people, like concert violinist Rachel Barton Pine, seem to find riveting interests when they are mere toddlers. This kind of person often barrels full speed ahead in what they want to do; but most people are not as definite or enthusiastic about any particular interest.

Often, a passionate teacher triggers an individual's interest in a new subject. A previously unknown, boring, or distasteful field becomes the person's area of professional interest through their teacher. I've seen many a student with no previous interest in, or maybe even a repulsion to, cicadas or worms, become enthralled with them after an enthusiastic teacher shows them the fascinating parts of the worm, the weird way the cicada flies, or how to eat it. The teacher fuels what research psychologist Csíkszentmihályi calls "activation energy"—i.e., the energy invested in learning to do something new.

Many complex and deeply engaging areas of knowledge and skill require an enormous amount of unrewarding work before they become enjoyable. Ballet dancing, mastering physics, or successfully managing employees are a few examples. Initially, the learner must expend intense mental energy in order to focus on the learning and become interested in the subject or skill—this is the "activation energy". Learning a musical instrument is a good example: the student spends hours practicing physical movements and enduring awful sonic productions before acquiring enough skill to make enjoyable music!

In the early 20th century, Montessori noted the same phenomena and realized its connection to teaching, stating that at the start, the teaching material had to be associated with the voice of the teacher which roused the students to use the material and educate themselves.

A great teacher, like the character of Edward James Olmos in the movie "Stand and Deliver" or Robin Williams in "Dead Poets Society", helps students through difficult material with contagious excitement and the ability to make it dramatically interesting and well-related to students' deepest needs and values. This goes back to the principle that human interest drives learning.

Understanding how to pose the right questions can lead to a great awakening with unforeseen, amazing consequences. Forestry Consultant Charles Tomlinson often regaled friends and family with stories of his experience at The University of the South (called "Sewanee") with "Abbo". Charles claimed himself a rather complacent product of a middleclass Southern family when he encountered "Abbo", English Professor Abbott Cotton Martin. Abbo spent considerable hours poking holes in everything Charles took for granted, from football to religion, with some English literature thrown in for good measure. This was Abbo's stock-in-trade.

Abbo taught Charles to thoroughly question and examine what he thought he knew. But Abbo didn't just throw students in the water of quandaries, he made himself available to talk all during the week, not just during Sunday office hours. Charles learned to "check his premises" through Abbo's prodding. The other wonderful teachers at Sewanee helped too. They inspired him to demand more of himself, leading to a long, creatively productive, exciting life.

This included deeply influencing many, many people, including Jaroslave Romanchuk, a major figure in the opposition to Belarus' authoritarian government.

ACTIVE LISTENING AND INDEPENDENT JUDGMENT

> *Be careful not to ask [your] questions of the [students]. Only when [students] seek to answer questions which they themselves ask, do they commit themselves to the hard work of finding answers that are meaningful to them…give only as much guidance and encouragement as is necessary to elicit the [students'] interest.* — Maria Montessori

Inspiration is the fundamental mission of the teacher, because of motivation's deep importance to learning. "Active Listening" is a powerful teaching tool which promotes an inspiring relationship between teacher and student. For one thing, Active Listening conveys deep respect for the individual's independence in thought and value.

Active Listening is a key skill enabling teachers to nurture independent judgment. The Active Listener authentically tries to understand what the other person means, empathizing with the other's point of view by working hard to grasp his or her full context. This means trying to understand the other person's level of knowledge about a subject, what emotional issues may be affecting their thinking, and the set of ideas he or she is using to grasp the subject.

Active listening promotes the spread of truth. Only by Active Listening do we end up with a full idea of what the other person means and thereby gain the opportunity to respond with appropriate facts and reasoning.

Used in teaching, this means the Active Listener asks clarifying questions about the student's terms, respectfully allowing the student time to finish what he or she is saying before responding, and, importantly, conveying an attitude of alert interest in what the student says.

The Active Listener must try to leave aside any personal feelings about the subject and suppress the desire to assert and forcefully drive home the rightness of his or her own opinion. These actions only serve to distract a student from deep thinking and learning by bringing in issues of social hierarchy, personal power, and self-worth (i.e., do I know enough? What does the teacher think of me? He's got more status than I. I should listen to him.). These issues elicit powerful, distracting emotions.

Further, the Active Listener tries to sense any motives in the student's statements beyond the informational. For example, if a student in a class on Freud asks, "What if a son is extremely fond and affectionate toward his mother—does that mean he has an Oedipus complex?", the teacher needs to be aware that the student's study of Freud may have caused him to feel anxiety about his love for his mother. The teacher needs to respond with gentleness, general reassurance, and kindness.

Independent judgment is the wellspring of real choice, and good discussions nurture true individuality and judgment. Unfortunately, these days teachers sometimes find it difficult to conduct good discussions

because students have been led to believe all opinions are equal in value and everyone should open their mouths to babble whatever they wish, no matter how inaccurate or trivial. Resulting from the reign of the Postmodernist attack on objectivity, this belief cripples students' minds by encouraging them to think that any opinion is acceptable, regardless of foundation, as long as it is theirs. While stroking their egos by making them feel whatever they think is important, this practice stops them from learning that true, valuable opinion must be grounded in facts and good reasoning.

Postmodernist ideology further deforms a student's concept of self by equating diversity with group membership. In the Post Modernist schema, one's diversity depends on race or ethnic background, gender, or sexual preference rather than considered, ideological judgment. It promotes a collectivist concept of tribal or social diversity rather than true ideological difference.

In contrast, Active Listening in the classroom conveys a deep respect for the independence of the other person's mind: the Active Listener takes the student's ideological point of view seriously and tries to respond to it carefully. The aim of Active Listening is a full understanding of what the other is saying in the service of arriving at truth. Just imagine the kind of productive political discussions we all might have if we used these principles!

Some people have a rare, natural ability or tendency to listen like this, but since it can be learned, there's hope for the rest of us. For university students, we can bring together all the elements I've discussed through a way of crafting curriculum by a special methodology which the teachers can use.

SOCRATIC PRACTICE: A METHODOLOGY THAT SERVES YOUNG ADULT NEEDS

> *Do not tell them how to do it. Show them how to do it…if you tell them, they will watch your lips move. If you show them, they will want to do it themselves.* — Maria Montessori

Socratic Practice is a formidable discussion methodology that *holds the attention of the student* when used properly. It incorporates Active Listening at its best and powerfully nurtures reasoning skills and independence. Classrooms using Socratic Practice are active learning environments, intellectually, socially, and physically engaging. By encouraging the learners to ask their own questions of what they are studying, the motivating power of individual interest is harnessed. Furthermore, because they are so engaging, Socratic Practice discussions don't tax attentional resources, making learning much easier and enjoyable; students often get into a Flow state, forgetting how much time is passing because they are engaged.

I am referring to a very specific, carefully crafted methodology of teaching, which I will describe shortly. You may have been to classes called Socratic Seminars which are quite different from what I mean. In these, a teacher might ask a question like "What is justice?" and then proceed to tell students they're wrong when they give an answer the teacher doesn't want. Well, that's wrong; Socratic questioning is meant to develop the student's ability to think about a subject, not to test them and catch them when they are wrong or call them on the carpet for the right answer.

Teachers looking for the right answer encourage students to focus on pleasing the teacher, not on thinking for himself or herself. But the truly excellent teacher aims at helping students learn how to find the right answer themselves.

Students often view school as the place to feed back the answer the teacher wants to hear, not learn new knowledge in order to figure out the truth with their own powers. Teachers skillfully using Socratic Practice often must spend time rehabilitating students after a lifetime of being told what to learn, what is the "right" answer—or that any answer is right, with no standard of truth.

Consequently, in the beginning of a program using Socratic Practice, the teacher (often called "tutor") must work especially hard to shape the learning environment. Just as in any Montessori school, the prepared environment is a key to success in developing the thriving, independent-minded learner.

For the college level, these are the conditions that foster good discussion and develop excellent reasoning and social skills, as well as a strong sense of autonomy: Physically, the environment must be quiet. All

participants are required to respect the appointed time of discussion, with no phone calls, text messages, etc. They sit in a circle facing each other. Attention must be on the discussion, and all participants are expected to have read the assigned text. Psychologically, the tutor shapes the environment by many principles. He or she requires a formal politeness among discussants to encourage rational, civil discourse. Sometimes participants must address each other by title and last name (e.g., Ms. Smith and Mr. Murphy) to foster this.

The tutor picks a text or work that has rich meaning and is well-made. It is most often a text but can be other things such as a painting, sculpture, building, or experiment. The right piece elicits many interesting thoughts and questions in the participants' minds. This becomes the meat to chew in the discussion. The goal of the discussion is to reason together about the material in order for each person to arrive at his or her own independent judgment about the piece and the ideas and values discussed. *Participants think together to think independently.*

Unless a student starts the discussion, the tutor leads off with a thoughtful question about the reading—or often a factual question if the material is mathematical or scientific. The tutor always finds a question to which he or she genuinely wants to know the answer. This initiates a real inquiry. Students are good at recognizing leading questions requiring prescribed answers—which cuts off the student's own thinking.

Learning to reason objectively about complex material requires the willingness to entertain possibly incorrect ideas in order to examine them fully, to measure them against the facts, and to analyze their rational foundation. The tutor encourages questions and comments evincing an earnest search for truth, while discouraging or disallowing talk in which the student is trying to impress with his knowledge or disingenuous agreement with the tutor.

For example, during a seminar on Aristotle's *Politics*, the tutor might deflect a student who says, "Richard McKeon says that Aristotle's politics…" from lecturing about these details by a question such as "What does Aristotle say that makes you think that is true?". The tutor aims to bring the discussion back to the facts of the text studied, plus the student's own experience and reasoning. For the discussion to be excellent, all participants should be able to judge the facts discussed for themselves. If a participant brings up many facts and claims he alone knows, how can anyone else examine those claims firsthand? Instead, the tutor encourages observations from facts, generalizations closely derived from facts, and conclusions reasoned from the facts of the work the entire class is studying together. Any outside material must be explained in general terms, understandable to general reasoning.

The tutor must walk a fine line, encouraging good reasoning while being careful not to discourage students from talking because they might have errors in their arguments. If a student is too fearful of looking foolish or feeling humiliated when caught in an error, he or she won't explore complex ideas thoroughly enough to find out if they are true.

To help students be more consciously aware of how to reason well, both inductively (e.g., how to make an accurate generalization) and deductively (e.g., how to derive a conclusion from already-given facts and ideas), the tutor gives students extra, explicit instruction in reasoning skills and logic. Sessions on logical fallacies are especially valuable in sharpening students' awareness of reasoning's pitfalls.

When Socratic Practice is implemented well, the group engages in excellent objective reasoning, learning from the way each student understands and interprets the text and its implications. The tutor doesn't aim at a "right interpretation", yet it is common to see well-functioning groups reasoning together arrive at solid conclusions, conclusions an expert would reach, about the meaning of very difficult texts, whether Plato's *Meno*, Einstein's *Relativity*, or Mises' *Human Action*.

An excellent seminar leader asks intriguing, deep questions respectfully, keeps discussion on important topics but allows students to diverge from the set topic if it means exploring something important and meaningful to them. Clearly, much art and judgment are involved, which is why extensive training is necessary.

To be a good listener, a teacher must be a careful observer. As a scientist, Maria Montessori incorporated the scientific method into her teacher-training program. She urged her teachers to spend time every day sitting back and watching the students work, interacting with each other, and dealing with problems.

In this way, teachers learn a great deal about each student, their interests, abilities and difficulties, thus enabling the teacher to guide him or her well. Observe, empathize, respect—these are the basics of good teaching needed at the young adult level as well.

What I've seen over and over during the 15 years I have run Socratic seminars is the consistent growth in students' reasoning skills and confidence. Students become excited and energized to learn how to be able to valuably contribute to a discussion; they become eager to read the texts because now they know how to understand them and get value from them. Students experience the power of self-direction and self-responsibility. The micro-society of the classroom gives them an apprenticeship in freedom.

The evidence that the methods of Socratic Practice, consistently applied, increases cognitive skills is strong. Michael Strong extensively discusses these methods *in The Habit of Thought: From Socratic Seminars to Socratic Practice.* Strong established remarkable programs in four high schools around the country. He measured program outcomes with the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal, a cognitive skills test correlated with performance on intelligence tests and college entrance exams such as the SAT and ACT. By administering this instrument before, during, and after a year at school, he found cognitive skill gains ranging, for example, from 30% to 84%. The mean score of one school's 9th grade group moved from below the national 9th grade mean to above the 12th grade mean *in one year*, while one inner city student who scored at the 1st percentile on the initial test, scored at the 85th percentile by the end of *four months*. While more work is needed to fully validate his results, they were consistent from school to school. Any teacher would be proud to so deeply help students learn to think well.

Professor John Tomasi implemented this method in his hugely successful special program, The Political Theory Project, at Brown University. He states, "Kids are sick and tired of being told what to think. They want to make up their own minds. They want to be challenged." The kind of work done through Socratic Practice discussions of the Great Books does exactly that.

Scott Buchanan, architect of the Great Books program at St. John's College, gives voice to the ultimate goal:

> Have you allowed adverse evidence to pile up and force you to conclude that you are not mathematical, not linguistic, not poetic, not scientific, not philosophical? If you have allowed this to happen, you have arbitrarily imposed limits on your intellectual freedom, and you have smothered the fires from which all other freedoms arise.

FROM PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

> *The hallmark of a well-functioning mind is the ability to identify facts, analyze ideas, integrate knowledge, and successfully translate principles into action.* — Marsha Familaro Enright

To complete an apprenticeship in freedom, a liberal education requires that the student learn how to put knowledge and principles into action. In Montessori lower education, children at the age of four are taught to sweep the floor and politely use a tissue for sniffles, while 12-year-olds plan and execute their own field trips—all part of the Practical Life curriculum. And it is as important as the math curriculum for living life. The same is true for higher education.

Therefore, programs for young adults should include guided experiences in creating products, services, and solutions to real-world problems. This can be the creation of a machine, clothing, planting technique, ocean waste disposal method, software—addressing needs in whatever aspect of the world captures the interest of the student. Educators can introduce students to professional areas of which they might be unaware, for example forensic corporate auditor or dramaturg, and guide students in professional networking and finding mentors. They can also provide instruction in finance, economics, and especially different kinds of writing, since writing is crucial in so many aspects of life.

Through this process, students learn to translate their classroom knowledge into action and their seminar-built ability to communicate effectively becomes valuable for team building. Long before they have to make a living, they'll know what it is like to work in the field of their choice—or how to change to another one.

They are ready to face the world and find their place in it.

INSPIRATION AND A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

> *Our care of the [student] should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.* — Maria Montessori

Throughout life, humans need inspiration to help us through the difficult and dreary parts. If you've watched infants and young children, you know they're constantly challenging themselves to learn the next hardest thing—how to walk on uneven surfaces, how to run down a hill without falling, how to say "cracker". To keep up that motivation as their awareness grows and their psychological challenge deepens, they especially need to know that life can be an adventure, full of challenge, and of exciting, unfolding possibilities.

All the schooling in the world won't achieve a good life if a child doesn't feel inspired to act. Children need a vision of work as an important endeavor that will help them achieve their independence and find purpose. Stories of heroes and heroines embody the highest reaches of human nature, motivating them to learn and find their way. Without purpose and a hopeful view of the future, the young are lost, adrift, only too susceptible to depression or even suicide.

Where do they get inspiration today? Our culture is bipolar: On the one hand, there are people in every profession who are eager to create and excited about the possibilities. Intel's TV commercial "We believe there's an innovator in everybody" captures this sentiment. Business constantly seeks to make new and better products—"offer more value" is the common business phrase—while aiming for an energizing and financially rewarding time doing it.

On the other hand, for decades there has also been a culture of cynicism, resentment of achievement, intolerance towards differing ideas and values, and a bleak picture of the future based on the premise that human technology has run rampant, expressed in:

- the drumbeat of climate change disaster,
- artificial intelligence boogeymen,
- the soul-destructing nature of capitalism.

When the news, TV, their friends, teachers at school, and, of course, videos, tweets, and posts tell the young that the world is going to hell in a handbasket, that humans are to blame, and that there's no hope, how do you nurture resilience and grit?

A study of the classics and great modern works, human achievement against considerable odds, the connection of ideas to real world events, and especially great literature in a liberal arts program are crucial to build a young person's inspiring view of the world and help him or her succeed in life as an independent, self-reliant individual who knows how to live in freedom.

REFERENCES

Arain M., Haque M., Johal L., Mathur P., Nel W., Rais A., and Sandhu R. 2013. Maturation of the adolescent brain. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment* 9:449-461

Aristotle. 2005. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Tr. W. D. Ross. http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/nicomachaen.2.ii.html

Cicero. 2002. *De Inventione*. Tr. C. D. Yonge. Blackmask. http://public library.uk/ebooks/21/27.pdf

Conesa, Cynthia Brunhold. 2024. Practical Life Through the Ages, Part Two – Elementary: From Physical Autonomy to Intellectual Independence. The Montessori Blog. https://amshq.org/Blog/2024-12-09-Practical-Life-Through-the-Ages-Part-Two-Elementary.

Csíkszentmihályi, Mihály. 1990. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience.* New York: Harper Collins.

_____. 1996. *Creativity*. New York: Harper Collins.

Hogan, Patrick Colm. 2011. *What Literature Teaches Us About Emotion.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Horace. 1884. *The Works of Horace,* Tr. C. Smart. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14020/14020-h/14020-h.htm#THE_SECOND_BOOK_OF_THE_EPISTLES_OF_HORACE

Kaufmann, Walter. 1980. *Discovering the Mind.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Lillard, Angeline. 2005. *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lincoln, Abraham. 1863. The Gettysburg Address. https://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm

McAfee, Andrew. 2023. *The Geek Way.* New York: Little Brown and Company.

Montessori, Maria. 1912. *The Montessori Method*. Tr. Anne Everett George. New York: Frederick A. Stokes.

_____. 1947/1989. *To Educate the Human Potential*. Oxford: Clio.

_____. 1948/1994. *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Oxford: Clio Press.

_____. 1972. *The Secret of Childhood*. New York: Ballantine Books.

_____. 1998. Respect This House. *The NAMTA Journal*. 23(2).

_____. 2019. *Citizen of the World: Key Montessori Readings*. London: Montessori-Pierson.

Robinson, Ken. 2007. Do Schools Kill Creativity? https://youtu.be/iG9CE55wbtY

Sims, Peter. 2011. The Montessori Mafia. *The Wall Street Journal*. http://blogs.wsj.com/ideas-market/2011/04/05/the-montessori-mafia/

Stanley, Thomas J. 2001. *The Millionaire Mind*. Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing.

Strong, Michael. 1997. *The Habit of Thought: From Socratic Seminars to Socratic Practice*. New View Publications.

Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2000. *On the Idea of Rights in the United States. Democracy in America*. Vol 1. Tr. Mansfield, Harvey and Debra Winthrop. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Future is Past: The Enduring Weight of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*

DAVID A. EISENBERG
Eureka College

Nineteen Eighty-Four is a heavy book, as the glut of spirits crushed beneath its weight attests. When at last he had a chance to look over the draft that Orwell had been racing to finish before death finished him, Orwell's publisher remarked that it was "among the most terrifying books" he had ever read and prayed that, in spite of its manifest greatness, he "may be spared from reading another like it for years to come." In part, what makes the work so terrifying is the immanence of the horror contained therein—a horror born not from supernatural beings, but from human, all too human ones. As such, it is the type of horror that demands more of the intellect than of the imagination; a logical horror, one might say, that preys upon the reader's rational fears rather than horror's more commonly targeted irrational ones. What only serves to compound the visceral dread that a preliminary read begets is the sinking feeling that, as E. M. Forster so marvelously put it, "there is not a monster in that hateful apocalypse which does not exist in embryo today."

Forster's remark rings as true today as it did when he proffered it three quarters of a century ago. If the monsters themselves remain by and large embryonic, conditions are much more propitious now than they were then. It is not just that opportunities for growth have multiplied, but that the elements that might have impeded that growth have deteriorated considerably, so that, like some invasive species, these monsters would find the stage well set for their proliferation, were they ever to hatch.

But that invasion has not exactly taken place, which is apt to foster a false sense of repose. Embryonic monsters are not all that frightening, at least when compared with ones that have spawned, to say nothing of those that have evolved. It demands a certain degree of perspicacity to perceive monsters of the embryonic variety—monsters that exist *in potentia* and not *in esse*—and it is not uncharitable to say that in any day, that sort of perspicacity is parceled out parsimoniously. What is more, the horrors of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are so over-the-top that in many readers' minds they remain remote and chimeric, thereby dulling their impact, if only a little. Torture chambers, perpetual war, public hangings, routine vaporizations, the Two Minutes Hate, to say nothing of its week-long cousin—like some paranormal horror or sinister nightmare, its frightfulness is felt, but it is not real, and hence, like the paralytically stupid Parsons, is readily disappeared.

That such horrors are not part of the West's reality, does not entail that they are part of no reality. Indeed, what

struck many readers who had the cosmic misfortune to be born on the Iron Curtain's wrong side was precisely its realism. As Czesław Miłosz recollected:

> A few have become acquainted with Orwell's *1984*; because it is both difficult to obtain and dangerous to possess, it is known only to certain members of the Inner Party. Orwell fascinates them through his insight into details they know well, and through his use of Swiftian satire. Such a form of writing is forbidden by the New Faith because allegory, by nature manifold in meaning, would trespass beyond the prescriptions of socialist realism and the demands of the censor. Even those who know Orwell only by hearsay are amazed that a writer who never lived in Russia should have so keen a perception into its life.

But the majority of those who have read and continue to read Orwell's masterpiece do so in a world insulated from war; a world of individual rights and procedural guarantees; a world of comfort, plenty, and security; in brief, a world that is, on the face of it, as unlike Oceania as one possibly could hope for. But that dissimilitude is deceptive; the relief it affords is readily shattered by a careful reading of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the awareness that many of its features strike too close to home and thereby, too close for comfort. Those who, upon putting the novel down, put it out of a mind (like a bad dream that one has been wrested from and is best not think of again), slumber on, blissfully unaware that the nightmare lies before them, not behind.

ORWELL'S END FROM THE START

The terror that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* inspires is not Orwell's end, but a means to it. In a letter written to the president of the United Auto Workers union, who thought highly of the book but was mistrustful of its message, Orwell clarified his objective:

> My novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is *not* intended as an attack on socialism, or on the British Labor party, but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable, and which have already been partly realized in Communism and fascism. I do not believe that the kind of society I describe necessarily *will* arrive, but I believe (allowing of course for the fact that the book is a satire) that something resembling it *could* arrive. I believe also that totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere, and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences. The scene of the book is laid in Britain in order to emphasise that the English-speaking races are not innately better than anyone else and that totalitarianism, if not fought against, could triumph anywhere.

In view of his aim, one might contend that the savagery contained in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is at once productive and counterproductive. It is productive insofar as it is bound to provoke. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not the sort of book that one reads without being rattled. It is a book that plumbs the depths of human depravity and does so unflinchingly, with a heavy-handedness that cannot but bear down on the reader, like a boot stomping on a face over and over and over again. If a soul must be agitated before it can be vigilant, Orwell would appear to have done his job well.

But precisely because the savagery is so egregious—because it is, like that boot, so in your face—the very people he sought to put on guard are liable to remain at ease, at least with respect to Orwell's stated aim. Sure, the horrors of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are plausible and a society resembling the one he depicts is realizable. The proof is, as Orwell observes, that it already has been realized. But it has been realized *elsewhere*. One need not endorse the notion that the so-called English-speaking races are innately better than anyone else to concede that totalitarianism has not found a footing in the English-speaking world the way

it has in many parts of the non-English-speaking world. What the record suggests is that totalitarianism can triumph elsewhere, not anywhere.

Be that as it may, the danger to which Orwell points is not Russian or German or Chinese, but *human*. It imperils man qua man. And it does so particularly, if not uniquely, in this modern or post-modern age. If totalitarianism has not afflicted the English-speaking peoples as it has so many others, it is not because they are immune from the affliction, but because they have been more effective defending against it. Their long-standing health in this regard stems not only from the values they embody, but the heedfulness with which they have upheld them. But as was apparent to Orwell and as any diagnostician worth his salt cannot fail to note, those values and the sedulity needed to sustain them are in decline.

Thus, although the grim totalitarianism so prominently on display in Orwell's day has been all but vanquished or at least, very narrowly circumscribed, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is arguably more pressing than ever before, precisely because of the beguiling peace of mind that the putatively progressive march of history promotes. That march goes hand in hand with the inexorable advance of technology, which portends to be instrumental in exploiting the very security it provides. Human freedom is always insecure, but it is especially so in the present day. If there is any prospect of preserving it, ultimately it will depend on the heightened vigilance that *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was penned to inspire. The unabashedly atheistic Orwell was not on a mission to reform man; to turn sinners into saints, but to warn the people of his day and the days that followed that freedom's place in this brave new world is precarious, not least in those places where totalitarianism has never secured a foothold and, as a result, freedom is most likely to be taken for granted. Orwell envisaged a future in which freedom had been stamped out so systematically that it admitted no possibility of resuscitation. The passage of time has done nothing to confound Orwell's fears and much to confirm them.

BIG TECH IS WATCHING YOU

If much like the horror that riddles *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, that all sounds rather hyperbolic, a convenient place to begin would be with the rise of surveillance. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, to be is to be surveilled. From the book's opening page to its last, Big Brother—"the colossus that bestrode the world"—is watching you. His enormous mustachioed face peers from "those posters that were plastered everywhere" and were contrived in such a manner that the eyes follow one about wherever one goes. Of course, it is not just the sensation of being watched that encumbers the occupants of this world. No less ubiquitous are the telescreens, those instruments that simultaneously transmit and receive, recording every movement and every sound above the feintest whisper. Like the posters, they pervade the novel, from its opening pages to its last—their ubiquity hammered home by the revelation that even where undetected and unsuspected (for example, throughout much of the book's second part), they prove ineludible.

If at present, surveillance does not boast comparable ubiquity, the potential for it ought to have a chilling effect all the same, all the more so since it is a potential that existed in no earlier day. Presumably, surveillance in some form or another is as old as society itself. The spy who breaches enemy lines, the relative who conceals himself in a chamber's recess, the woman who seduces an unsuspecting lord—all with an eye to surreptitiously acquiring and imparting information—enjoys its own sort of ubiquity throughout time. What distinguishes surveillance in the current age is the sheer scale of it. Even the divinities of earlier days who disguised themselves as mortals, to say nothing of the mortals who disguised themselves simply, so as to learn the machinations of some unsuspecting character, were decidedly limited in their reach. That limitation is denoted in the word eavesdrop. In its now obsolete noun form, eavesdrop refers to that spot where rainwater drips from the roof (i.e., eaves) of a house. The eavesdropper is one who stands at such a spot to hear what is going on within earshot.

The limited reach of surveillance was an elemental feature of it throughout history, until very recently. (Such limitations of space and time were transcended by the Biblical God, who knows everything at once, as His knowledge of the number of hairs on one's head implies. But God has no place in *Nineteen Eighty-*

Four; the void He has left behind is filled by Big Brother, who assumes an earthly omniscience and omnipresence. If God has not been banished from the present age, His providential gaze disconcerts far less than it did in an earlier one.) Technology is the gamechanger, though it should be borne in mind that well into the twentieth century, surveillance essentially remained targeted. As with eavesdropping, wiretapping definitionally bespoke its limits. In order to listen in on someone's conversation, a device (or bug) had to be physically connected to the person's phone line. Like the prying neighbor 'neath the eaves, the wiretapper's surveillance was predominantly restricted to the person being pursued. Extraneous chatter may have been detected, but the fact remains that it was an individual (his home, his business, his favorite haunt) that was being deliberately singled out. What could be said of mass eavesdropping by and large could be said of mass wiretapping in its original incarnation: it would defy reality.

In the digital age, surveillance is unbound by these limitations. Though surveillance still is routinely targeted, an inordinate amount of it is conducted indiscriminately. To substantiate this point, the mere mention of the NAS ought to suffice. For those for whom it does not, consider that in a 2011 government memorandum, it was disclosed that under Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act, the government had *retained* more than 250 million internet communications each year, a number that does not include those communications that were scanned and deemed undeserving of retention. In the digital age, mass surveillance does not defy reality. It is reality.

For all intents and purposes, Big Brother *is* watching you. That the screen in effect has become the medium through which much of this takes place only serves to lend further weight to Orwell's flair for prophecy. To be sure, today's denizens can avoid screens in ways that *Nineteen Eighty-Four*'s never could. Screens can be turned off (a luxury reserved for Inner-Party members) and barred from spaces (even the ostensibly concealed alcove in Winston's flat where he furtively writes in his diary fails to go undetected). But whatever consolation that may afford ought to be rather trifling. It demands very little imagination to envision a day when the screen—conceived literally or figuratively—will be inescapable. Already, half a century removed from the admittedly arbitrary date of Orwell's dystopia, screens have metastasized through the body politic like a virus spreading through an unsuspecting host. The metastasization is Orwellian in a manner Orwell himself did not anticipate, for while the screens of Oceania are fixed to the walls of homes, public buildings, and other physical structures, screens today are habitually affixed to the people themselves. It is estimated that 90% of American adults own a smartphone (that percentage was 35 a decade and a half prior). What is more, over 80% keep their phones nearby while they are awake and 70% whilst they sleep. What makes all this even more Orwellian is that even when turned off (and lest there be any illusion on this score, most Americans rarely turn their phones off), smart phones continue tracking. All this suggests that the comfort alluded to above is not so much a small one, but a false one. As it turns out, the screen is more ubiquitous in the real world than in Orwell's fictional one, where the proles, who comprise 85% of the population, are largely unmonitored by Big Brother and left to their own devices. If there is an equivalent to the proles in America, and Orwell intimates that in every society there is, they are not commensurately free on that score.

What aggravates the insidiousness of all this is that in the real world, Big Brother has little brothers that are engaged in the family business. Although they operate independently, they generally are quick to do their bigger brother's bidding when asked. Nominally, their motives are different—they are in the business of business rather than of governing—but ultimately, their concern is one and the same: control. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* the Party controls everything; nothing circumvents its regard. In the real world, the state has not assumed such colossal proportions; it sees much, but not all. But much of what might otherwise go unseen comes into view when one factors in the operations of its little siblings: Facebook, Google, Microsoft, and related enterprises. In many ways, their operations are even more nefarious than the state's. For while, in principle at least, the state surveils its people so as to check their behavior, the corporation surveils its people so as to manipulate theirs. To this end, it mines and stores and analyzes the data of its users, (mis)appropriating a profile of them so comprehensive and denuded that users likely would balk at sharing it with their closest confidantes and even, frankly, owning up to it to themselves. In the end, it mat-

ters little which is the more nefarious, for the increasing collusion between Big Government and Big Tech suggests that whatever line may separate state from corporate surveillance grows thinner by the day.

It is true that little brothers can stand up to Big Brother and refuse to cooperate, but the family history shows that on the whole, they are all too willing to comply. That some of this compliance is the result of compulsion, if not coercion, should not distort the fact that much of it results from an unscrupulous and symbiotic quid pro quo relationship. Whatever the nature of that relationship may be, the bottom line remains that the people are surveilled—by which brother ought not to matter much—more and more extensively. When one factors in the assemblage of smart devices that percolate through the homes of smart people—smart speakers, doorbells, thermostats, and the like—it becomes apparent there is scarcely a nook and cranny that remains private.

What only serves to make all of this even more dismaying than it already is is that this ever-expanding surveillance apparatus has been bolstered by the objects of it: the people themselves. The duplicitous escapades of companies like Google and Facebook have been grudgingly disclosed time and time and time again. The public outrage generated by such revelations tends to be complacently shrugged off by a people more preoccupied with the conveniences these corporations provide than the incursions they have conducted. The eagerness with which the people facilitate the surveillance activities of these companies is arguably more outrageous than the activities themselves. In China, cameras and listening devices are installed in the homes of Uighurs against their will and often without their knowledge. But in America, the people exuberantly line up to install them themselves. Twentieth-century Americans were for the most part staunchly opposed to being surveilled; twenty-first century Americans appear insouciantly resigned to it. What Oliver Wendel Holmes, Jr. dubbed the "dirty business" has become business as usual.

PRIVACY GOES PUBLIC

In this vein, it is interesting to reflect on the place of privacy in America. Privacy, of course, has no place in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. In America, privacy exists, but as the foregoing remarks indicate, its position is becoming more and more exposed. What is curious about this is that an abiding commitment to privacy is said to be integral to the American ethos, a conceit affirmed by the nation's highest tribunal when it conjured from the penumbras of the nation's highest law a constitutional right to privacy. The specific rights that emanate from that more general right to privacy have become battlegrounds where legions of Americans take up arms to defend those rights whenever they appear imperiled. Yet for all the uproar surrounding privacy's ostensible sacrosanctity, the American people exhibit a perverse fondness for flaunting themselves. Some of that is hinted at in the preceding paragraphs. Privacy hardly seems much of a concern for the person who communes with Alexa; sleeps with her iPhone at, if not in, hand; and regularly updates her Facebook page to keep people abreast of what and how she has been doing—and doing this with an awareness, however vague, that everything she broadcasts is being monitored by third parties to be collected and sold off to fourth and fifth and sixth ones.

It is reasonable to rail at Big Tech for undermining privacy, but doing so largely misses the point. There is no doubt that innovations in technology have made privacy's place in the digital age much more vulnerable, but it should be borne in mind that to some degree, the technology is not being imposed on the people so much as embraced by them—ebulliently. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the reader learns that

> [w]ith the development of television, and the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen, or at least every citizen important enough to be worth watching, could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda, with all other channels of communication closed. The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time.

In principle, that power exists in the modern day and to a greater degree than even Orwell's penetrating mind could have conceived. Privacy still exists in ways that Big Brother never would brook, but what makes the real-world scenario so troubling is that in addition to being destroyed from without it is being disavowed from within. The very person who regards the right to privacy as uninfringeable is all too willing to divulge what in any other day would have been one's most intimate secrets (regarding one's mental health, past traumas, sexual proclivities, and so on). The reason for this, as Carl Trueman has unriddled, is that reality or identity has essentially become inward. One's identity is no longer shaped by his or her extrinsic relations or intrinsic traits, but by how one feels. In order for that reality to get acknowledged and that identity to get the respect it demands, one must let it be known; one must scream it from the mountaintops or desktops or laptops. And so, without any solicitation, to say nothing of interrogation, one readily learns all one could wish to know, and much that one would prefer not to know, about the private lives of not so private peoples.

THE PROTEAN PAST

In one of the book's more memorable and demoralizing lines, O'Brien remarks to Winston, "If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—for ever." It is the crushing weight of Orwell's world that, as noted above, can make it so difficult to relate to, especially in the West. A world where pleasure has been methodically eradicated seems far removed from a world where pleasure is hedonically pursued and effortlessly procured, however insubstantial and transient those pleasures may be. But as Orwell himself expounded, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is more of a cautionary tale than a prognosticatorary one. He did not contend that the kind of society he describes will arrive, but that something approximating it could. In a world where people feel more threatened by microaggressions than macro-ones, that contention, even when qualified, is likely to sound overblown. But the essence of Orwell's world is not its brutalism so much as its totalitarianism. It is not the loss of safety but the dispossession of freedom that defines it.

In this regard, the state of terror is more means than end. It is a means that allows the Party to control the people. Or to put it more nakedly, it is a means to power. But what if the means to that end became by and large dispensable? What if power did not need to be brutally imposed on people because it already had been relinquished by them? Or rather, suppose people had become so thoroughly manipulatable that they remained incognizant of the fact that they were being manipulated? The totalitarian order that might result would perhaps be more akin to a soft Tocquevillean despotism than a hard Orwellian one; a Huxleyan future where people, instead of being ruthlessly tyrannized, will have learned to love their subjugation. In either case, freedom, and humanity with it, would be surrendered irrevocably. What more convenient way to establish despotism than to find a people ready-made for it?

Of course, it is not just the egregious and unrelenting brutality that gives *Nineteen Eighty-Four* its sadistically quixotic air; a vision horrific enough to haunt the imagination, but too implausible to menace reality. The Party's control over history is apt to strike the reader as being too contrived; a clever literary device, wonderfully conveyed in the Party's slogan, *who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past*, but one that could never be put into practice. It would presuppose a degree of control so total on the part of those in power, as well as a degree of ignorance no less total on the part of the people, that the proposition is more likely to amuse than alarm.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, "all history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary." As it turns out, for a party bent on maintaining power and an air of infallibility, necessity demands an almost constant alteration of the past. "Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date." "Every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance," including "newspapers… books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, soundtracks, cartoons, [and] photographs," was adjusted to accord with the Party's predictions and decrees, the offending originals destroyed for good. In this way, the past was whatever the Party willed it to be.

As O'Brien patiently explains to Winston, what has been no longer is. History vanishes once it has been made. The past cannot be revisited. To the extent that the past exists at all, it is in the records and relics that bear witness to it. Who controls those records and relics controls the past. This complete command of history cannot but seem fanciful at a time when so many testaments to the past lie beyond the reach of the powers that be. But the premise is hardly far-fetched, particularly at a time when more and more of the past is being digitized. A past that has been virtualized is never more than a short remove from being vaporized.

History, by its nature, is evanescent. One might say of it what Heraclitus said of nature: it loves to hide. Historical records in some ways constitute acts of defiance; a resistance to the impermanence of being and time. It should be noted as a relevant aside that this undertaking is not exactly natural or automatic. Cows do not have history. To the extent that one might speak of a history of cows, it is only insofar as humans have composed it. And as with cows, so too with peoples. An ahistorical culture is not a contradiction, any more than a pre- or illiterate culture is; indeed, it was the norm throughout much of, well, history. So as not to sow confusion, history ought not to be equated with myth or memory. Clearly, non-human beings have memory, just as ahistorical humans have myth. The import of history may be divined from its etymology. History derives from the Greek *historia*, which connotes an account of one's inquiries. More foundationally, *histor* signifies someone with knowledge or more to the point, a witness. To the extent that history might be equated with memory, its reach would be very limited and woefully unreliable. As for the creation myths of ahistorical cultures, there are no witnesses. Herodotus is the father of history because he is the first to inquire into the past and chronicle his inquiries. History is a testimony to what has been. In chronicling the past, the historian enables future generations to peer into a time that is no more and thereby witness events whose actual witnesses have long since perished.

To return to history as virtual reality, the recent imbroglio surrounding Google's Gemini-generated depictions of historical figures attests both to the absurdity and feasibility of manipulating the past in the manner that Orwell entertains: absurd because at this time, the rendering of George Washington as an African American woman is risible; feasible because the rudiments that would allow such a rendition to become accepted are already in place.

The other key component to history, which serves as a stumbling block for those who would seek to rewrite it, is, as Winston responds to O'Brien's inquisitorial probing, "in the mind. In human memories." On its own, memory's capacity is rather paltry. It is notoriously unreliable and becomes less reliable the more protracted it becomes. The documenting of history is intended to correct or preempt the fallibility to which memory is inherently susceptible. History, then, permits memory to reach back further and more dependably than it otherwise would be able to. Presumably those who laughed at the image of a black female George Washington did not need to consult the history books to confirm that their derision was warranted. Memory served them well enough.

But memories must be made in order to serve, and they must be made well in order to serve well. If memory fails today, it is not because of some collective amnesia (though the prospect of *that* should not be discounted, as, for example, the memory, or lack thereof, of the Tiananmen massacre in China today demonstrates), but because when it comes to history, it is, these days, seldom well made. The historical illiteracy of college graduates is glaring. According to a recent survey, only a third of respondents knew when the Constitution was written; a mere quarter knew that the Thirteenth Amendment abolished slavery. (With 75% of respondents able to name the the wife of Jay-Z and 89% able to identify the owner of Amazon, what knowledge the college educated do boast merely compounds the despair their lack of knowledge invites.) If memory can serve to corroborate the accuracy of history, what happens when the historical knowledge that undergirds memory is erroneous or non-existent?

A people growing increasingly illiterate of a past that is becoming increasingly digitized: it hardly requires Orwell's genius to imagine Orwell's future.

I DOUBLETHINK THEREFORE I AM NOT

A key to the Party's ability to control reality that has not been touched on, one that is likely to reassure the reader that his world will never approach Orwell's because like the barbarity of it, it is too preposterous to entertain seriously, is the art of doublethink: "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them." The principle is embodied in the Party's immortalized slogans:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

A mind not trained thus is naturally inclined to dismiss such a notion as not merely being implausible but impossible. The principle of non-contradiction binds human thought so firmly that it cannot engage in doublethink. *X* cannot be not-*x*. War cannot be not-war, i.e., peace. A means to peace, sure, but peace itself, never.

On that last note, it is worth emphasizing that doublethink is not simply hypocrisy or a logical fallacy. That variety of specious reasoning would appear to be endemic to human thought. When someone says it is necessary to steal an election to save democracy, that is not doublethink, strictly speaking. For that stolen election is not itself democracy—an instance of it—but a means to safeguarding it, however misguided or unjustified the means may be. Stolen elections are democracy would be a doublethought; an absurdity, really, one that the mind—even the mind of one who is willing to steal an election to save democracy—is unwilling to countenance, and not just unwilling, but unable. *X* cannot be not-*x*.

But doublethink is not beyond or beneath the powers of human cogitation. If the mind has not been trained to ratiocinate in this fashion, it certainly is capable of doing so and not just capable, but accustomed to doing so. By way of illustration, consider the conception of a virgin birth. In humans at least, birth presupposes a loss of virginity; virginity precludes the possibility of birth. To believe in a virgin birth is to hold two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accept both of them.

In response, people will be quick to call attention to the religious nature of this teaching—both those who consider it gospel and those who think it piffle. That detail probably does more to vindicate the teaching than confound it, at least with respect to the principle of non-contradiction. For a sine qua non of the gospel in question is an omnipotent being unconstrained by the strictures of human logic. What is a miracle but a stretching, if not transgression, of the natural order? To contend that God cannot do it because human logic will not allow it would entail a diminution of God's sovereignty and an aggrandizement of man's. It would flout the divine supremacy clause upon which the cosmological balance of power rests. Man would be rendered the measure of all things, God Himself included.

Be that as it may, none of this should detract from the verity that a virgin birth is doublethink. That it is cloaked in an air of religious (il)legitimacy does not change that. It may validate it in the eyes of those who believe, but it does not alter the (il)logicality of it.

But it is the disbelievers, or at least those that would denigrate the notion of a virginal birth as being a delusion indicative of the superstitious folly to which religious simpletons are prone, who seem to be on shakier ground. Anyone who declaims the delusive power of religious faith while ignoring the no less delusive power of political faith is himself deluded. The peerless atrocities of the twentieth century were by and large the fruits of political faiths, not religious ones. Indeed, one could argue that it was a dearth of religious faith that exacerbated those atrocities (on that, more below). It might also be noted that religious faith enjoys a saving grace or an escape clause, alluded to above, which political faith has no recourse to: Religious faith rests on or points to a transcendent being that is unbound by the constraints that come with being human. Political faith, however ambitious its promises may be, cannot overstep those limits.

By way of a secular example of doublethink, one serendipitously related to the aforementioned religious example, be so charitable as to consider the following: men can give birth. Logically speaking, men are as capable of giving birth as are virgins. To adopt this notion is to hold two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accept them both. And to do so, moreover, without the support of a supernatural being that has the power to supersede the laws of nature.

To insist that men can give birth is to deny the reality that men cannot give birth and to do so, moreover, while denying that one has denied reality. That is the very essence of doublethink.

> The process has to be conscious, or it would not be carried out with sufficient precision, but it also has to be unconscious, or it would bring with it a feeling of falsity and hence of guilt…. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and then, when it becomes necessary again, to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies—all this is indispensably necessary.

Political faith may not move mountains but it can transform men into women and women into men and both into neither—why not! Miracle or not, that is no mean feat. That this is a matter of political faith can be inferred from the shared political leanings or ideologies of those who doublethink thus. What is remarkable about the growing acceptance of this proposition is the facileness with which it is conceded and the fervidness with which it is defended. Winston had to be tortured mercilessly to learn that 2+2=5. Today's minor (political) party members learn that men can give birth without ever being brought to Room 101. Gender Studies 101 turns out to be enough.

HOLLOWED GROUND

If the transformative power of political faith inspires wonder, its redemptive power leaves much to be desired. For it is unclear what sort of salvation is vouchsafed to those who cling to it. In the past, religious faith accorded the prospect of an ethereal and eternal happiness, one that offered solace in this life to those who abided by it—a life much briefer and more burdensome than what typically transpires today. If the promise of political faith is an earthly bliss, it by and large has failed to deliver. Numerous signs announce this failure, including escalating rates of depression, anxiety, loneliness, drug addiction, and suicide. That may not be enough to inspire faith in the powers of God, but it ought to be enough to shake one's faith in the powers of Man.

The growing power of political faith can be gleaned from the growing polarization that plagues the republic. The vitriol that rankles the public arena, to say nothing of the violence that spills out into it with ill-omened consistency, evinces a mindset that prioritizes people's political allegiances at the expense of a broader shared identity (as Americans, for example, or more broadly still, as humans). That prioritization also erodes religious unity, as the fracturing of Protestant denominations along *political* lines suggests. But internal religious schisms aside—besides, they are nothing new—political faith in America appears to be in the process of supplanting religious faith. The decline in religious affiliation in America has been well underway and well documented for some time now, a time that coincides with the increasing hyperpolarization of the American populace, intimating that the two faiths—religious and political—may be inversely aligned. As recently as 2000, nearly 90% of Americans identified as Christian, with an additional 5% affirming some other religious affiliation. A mere two decades later, the percentage of Americans who identify as Christian dropped below 70%, while the percentage of those who professed no religious affiliation swelled to nearly 30%. It is anticipated that a couple decades hence, those percentages will achieve parity. It would seem that man requires faith and that faith abhors a vacuum. The abandonment of religious faith is not the abandonment of faith *tout court*; it is merely the exchange of one type of faith for another.

In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, religion has no place. In fact, the word itself has ceased to exist. The proles alone are afforded religious freedom, but as with the intellectual freedom they are given, they make no use of it. "They can be granted intellectual liberty because they have no intellect." Likewise, they enjoy religious freedom because they have no religiosity. The proles largely evade the scrutiny of Big Brother, not because they are above suspicion, but because they are beneath it. "As the Party slogan put it: 'Proles and animals are free.'"

In that world, the Party has displaced God. Having assumed His omniscience and omnipotence, it demands the sort of reverence and obedience that once was owed Him. As it turns out, the Party demands even greater obedience, for while God allowed himself to be defied, the Party permits no defiance. It is true that those who sinned against God were consigned to hell, but this too amounts to a comparative shortcoming when measured against the power of the Party, as Patrick Reilly astutely observed in his study of Orwell's dystopia. Every child of God who winds up in hell is a child who could not be saved. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, everyone is saved, even the wayward Winston who in the end learns to love Big Brother. That Oceania in effect has become a hell from which there is no escape only further underscores the absolute power of the Party and the utter powerlessness of the people it rules over.

It is no coincidence that in this world from which religion has been banished, so too has humanity. As a rueful Winston remarks, the proles alone have stayed human. In spite of their debasement, in spite of their animalization, "they had not become hardened inside." Though the proles were regarded by the Party as sub-human, they treated themselves humanely. "They were governed by private loyalties which they did not question. What mattered were individual relationships, [so that] a completely helpless gesture, an embrace, a tear, a word spoken to a dying man, could have value in itself." For the non-proles, there is no value in itself. Whatever does not serve the interests of the Party has no value.

Displays of humanity are very few and far between in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and invariably they meet a dispiriting if not ghastly end. The refugee woman, "blue with fright," futilely shielding the screaming boy in her arms from the bullets raining down on them, only to be blown to bits by a "20 kilo bomb" that had been dropped from above. Bumstead's offer of a "grimy piece of bread" to his fellow prisoner, wasting away before his eyes; an act of charity that earns Bumstead "a frightful blow" from the prison guard that catapults him across the cell and does nothing to save "the skull-faced man" from the dreadful fate that awaits him in Room 101. Winston's own mother clasping his starving baby sister in her arms knowing that the gesture could do nothing to yield the "precious little morsel of chocolate" that she cried for nor keep her safe from the tragic denouement—whatever it may be (starvation, labor camp, vaporization)—that inexorably drew near.

Before it is irreparably stamped out of him, Winston, too, provides one of the novel's rare displays of humanity. At the start of part two, when Julia stumbles in front of him, landing on her face and emitting "a sharp cry of pain," Winston reflexively comes to her aid, notwithstanding that at this juncture, he is convinced she is a spy bent on ratting him out.

> A curious emotion stirred in Winston's heart. In front of him was an enemy who was trying to kill him: in front of him, also, was a human creature, in pain and perhaps with a broken bone. Already he had instinctively started forward to help her. In the moment when he had seen her fall on the bandaged arm, it had been as though he felt the pain in his own body.

Winston's fate was sealed long before he came to Julia's aid. But it is that moment that sets in motion the drama of the book's second part, a stirringly human drama suffused with hope and love and, well, humanity. That sliver of humanity will go the way of all humanity in the Orwellian future. By book's end, nothing of it will remain.

To sustain a semblance of humanity in so inhumane a world, one would have to be, to paraphrase Aristotle, a prole or a god. Winston, of course, is neither. Long before he is tortured and the last remnants of humanity have been snuffed out of him, he reveals that his capacity for inhumanity is no less than

that of the cold-blooded tyrants he conspires to topple. In an effort to gauge Winston's dedication to the Brotherhood, O'Brien asks him what he is prepared to do. In a litany that haunts the reader and will come back to haunt him, Winston declares that he is "prepared to commit murder [,] acts of sabotage which may cause the death of hundreds of innocent people[,] distribute habit-forming drugs, [] encourage prostitution, [] disseminate venereal diseases…and [] throw sulphuric acid in a child's face."

How is it that the very same man who selflessly came to the aid of a woman in distress, a woman whom he presumed to be an enemy no less, is prepared to throw sulphuric acid in the face of an innocent child? Though Winston retains a shred of humanity in a world by and large bereft of it, he is prepared, even eager, to forfeit that humanity for what he views to be a higher good. That the path to that higher good is paved with flagitious wrongs is of no moment in a world from which God has been exiled. The loss of religion precipitates a loss of humanity. The disavowal of religious faith will not spell the disavowal of faith simply, but will entail the advent of a new faith, an irreligious faith in whose name one will be sanctioned in perpetrating unspeakable enormities.

Orwell, himself a devout atheist, was hardly so naïve as to think that man ceased to be a knave the moment he embraced religion. No matter how much religion may lift him, man always will remain base. But religion serves as a positive check all the same. It supplies a sense of measure, a moral compass without which man is bound to go astray in the tenebrous abyss into which he has been tossed. Just how far astray man is capable of going was made plain in Orwell's century when abominations the likes of which the world had never before seen were carried out, not in the name of God, but for the sake of some godless cause, be it communism, Nazism, or imperialism.

The proles, it will be observed, appear to retain their humanity in the absence of religion. They did so by holding "on to the primitive emotions which [Winston] himself had to re-learn by conscious effort." In some Rousseauian sense, those primitive emotions bespeak a latent affinity for one's fellow human being and an aversion to seeing that fellow being mistreated. Such primitive goodness enjoys a precarious place in civilization, which often seeks to efface or mend man's primitive ways. Because they remain uncivilized, the proles have managed to preserve those ways. But civilized man requires some substitute and here religion serves him well. For what it teaches is that humans, made in God's image, are born with dignity and should be treated accordingly. In the absence of God, the ground of human dignity becomes a lot less stable, its source much less evident. The modern penchant to root human dignity in reason or autonomy is often little more than a superficial and supercilious effort to conserve biblical morality while scrapping biblical faith, as Nietzsche had so trenchantly argued. Orwell too exposes the dubiety of that undertaking in one of the book's more devastating scenes. When O'Brien paints for Winston a picture of the future, a future in which the Party forever holds on to power, implacably crushing the heretics who resist it (for heresies too will live forever), so that whatever remains of humanity is subsumed beneath the Party itself, Winston weakly replies "You can't!" Though he can adduce no evidence that would controvert O'Brien's claim, he believes, nay knows, as a matter of faith that the Party "will fail. There is something in the universe—I don't know, some spirit, some principle—that you will never overcome." When Winston confesses that that spirit is human and not divine, his delusion is laid bare. Having been tortured and starved for an unknown period of time—long enough to lose more than 50 pounds—a decaying Winston is forced to undress and behold before the mirror "the bag of filth" he has become. That is what the human spirit has been reduced to; that is what it is eminently reducible to. Men are pitiful creatures, perhaps all the more so in view of their puffed-up and misplaced pride.

Reason does not keep men from being reduced to bags of filth. One might rejoin that neither does God, but so long as man is more than the sum of his material parts, it does. What is more, one will not hesitate to do to a bag of filth what one would demur to do to a child of God. Brotherly love no doubt is an elusive ideal, but children of God are naturally more disposed for it than are children who pride themselves on having no need of God because reason is enough to light their way. As Orwell illustrates and as the century to which he belonged attests, without an effective moral restraint, reason never will lack for reasons, even when it is called to legitimate the most heinous iniquities. The ease with which reason can be corrupted—

or perhaps, can corrupt those who rely too exclusively on it—was exemplified by those Marxists who never wavered in their conviction that, to paraphrase Eric Hobsbawm (among the more luminous of them), the sacrifice of millions upon millions of lives was justified to reach the radiant tomorrow.

And of course, one need not repair to the previous century nor look to the radiant tomorrow to substantiate this verity. For in the present day, this logic is borne out with deplorable regularity. One sees it in the widespread lament that the assassination attempt on Trump was but an attempt; in the ill-concealed glee with which the vaccinated in the time of COVID rejoiced in the deaths of the unanointed; and on college campuses across this country following the events of October 7th, when people came together not to mourn the victims and condemn the appalling horrors that were committed, but to commemorate those horrors and clamor for new ones (and new victims with them). No one who believed that human dignity is inborn and inviolable would behave thus. That conviction will not transmute men into angels, but it will help keep them from becoming devils.

THE OBJECT OF POWER

A related component to all this, one to which Orwell presciently points, is power and the unshakeable thirst for it. Humans seem inveterately inclined to forsake the better angels of their nature in the pursuit of it and, even more so, when in possession of it. The wisdom of Lord Acton's dictum is demonstrated by its universality. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, it is demonstrated by the absolute corruptness of the Party.

What enables the Party to maintain its absolute rule is not simply its lack of scruples, but its lack of illusions. Whereas the norm has been for rulers—benevolent and malevolent alike—to regard power as a means, the Party transparently treats it as an end. "The object of persecution is persecution. The object of torture is torture. The object of power is power." Even the great twentieth-century totalitarians were misguided on this score. "The German Nazis and the Russian Communists came very close to us in their methods, but they never had the courage to recognize their own motives." Power in their eyes was but a means to that radiant tomorrow, whether its hallmark was racial purity or human equality. Inevitably, then, those in power would one day cease to be, either because their goal had been achieved or, more likely, because their goal remained ever out of reach. A ruling group that pursues an unattainable goal cannot long sustain the requisite faith in itself that is a precondition for its reign. The Party has sidestepped this pitfall by being honest with itself. One does not wield power for some greater good, for in a cosmic abyss, there is no greater good. Nor does one ever surrender power, for when power is the greatest good, there is nothing to surrender it to or for. The sage who regards virtue as the highest good does not abandon virtue once he becomes virtuous, but continues to practice virtue, redoubling his efforts whenever he falters. Of course, that pursuit, unlike that of power, demands restraint of its practitioners. In the absence of a higher good than power, there is no restraint. Everything is permitted.

Power may not be reckoned the highest good in the present day, at least not openly, but it has become an obsession all the same. It has become the paradigm through which human relations are viewed, an essentially—and essentialist—Marxist paradigm that neatly and simplistically divides the world into two groups: oppressors and oppressed. An oppressor is, definitionally, one who wields power over others, harshly and unjustly. What today's self-proclaimed victims want is not so much an end to oppression, but an end to *their* oppression. This is made evident in the enthusiasm with which, whenever the opportunity arises, they become oppressors themselves—by shaming or excluding, if not outright harming, those they accuse of oppressing them. That today's purported oppressors are so susceptible shame—to being shamed—suggests that they have lost faith in their ability or right to oppress and soon will cease to be oppressors, if they have not already or, for that matter, if ever they were. If what has been can provide a glimpse into what will be, then pace Marx, what lies just beyond the horizon is not the radiant tomorrow, but the same interminable struggles that have littered history heretofore, albeit with different oppressive and oppressed players strutting and fretting their hours upon the stage.

The centrality of power in the minds of today's self-designated victims can be gleaned from the frequency with which the word "empower" is bandied about, as well as the subtle shift in the word's connotation. (Google's Ngram Viewer shows that the usage of the word has surged over the past few decades, without showing any sign of abating.) In its earlier usage, to *empower* typically meant to *authorize*, as in empowering an admiralty or municipality to exercise certain functions. In its current usage, to *empower* typically means to promote the self-actualization of an individual or group of people, as in empowering women to advance their careers or transgenders to affirm their identity. That need or desire for empowerment not only betrays a lack of power (the powerful do not fuss about being empowered any more than the rich fuss about being enriched), but a fixation with it. It is not just the word's increased usage that signals as much. Consider also how malapropos it would be to use some other word—a word that might have been apropos in some other day—in its stead. How ridiculous would it sound in this age of oppression to advocate that instead of empowering some marginalized group of people, the goal should be to ennoble or enlighten them? But nobility and enlightenment were the watchwords of a bygone age for which there is no safe space in the present one.

THE TRIUMPH OF EVIL

In a day when brute power becomes the nexus of human relations, barbarism will find a welcome home. A window into such a world, as well as the souls of those who occupy it, was furnished by Orwell so that those safely removed from it may safely peer into it. Those who would shrug off such premonitions as being but the outgrowth of a tortured and overactive imagination or the kind of horror from which liberal peoples are immune (owing to their longstanding commitments to civil liberties, limited government, due process, and so forth) would do well to recall Solzhenitsyn's admonition that evil cuts through the heart of every human being. It would also behoove them to comprehend that the sorts of depravities Orwell entertains are prominently on display today, not just in the illiberal corners of the world, but in the very liberal parts as well, and one might add, in the breasts of the putatively liberal denizens who reside there. In this regard, the events of October 7th are revealing not only because they allow, if not compel, one to peer into the depths of human depravity, but because they expose the profound degradation of man in a world where life is reduced to little more than a power struggle.

The response in many parts of America, not least in those places that once were concerned more with enlightening and ennobling human beings than empowering them, was, as mentioned above, not only to condone those horrors, but to celebrate them. And what is more, to wish them on others. That response stems neatly if not inevitably from the Manichean mindset that has made oppression the lynchpin of human existence and power the means to human redemption. An illustration of that mindset that is as illuminating as it is alarming was afforded by Jodi Dean, professor of politics at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, who defended Hamas in her Orwellianlly entitled piece, "Palestine Speaks for Everyone." Lest anyone be reluctant to judge a piece by its title, Dean does her readers a service by summarily dispelling any room for ambiguity with her opening sentence: "The images from October 7 of paragliders evading Israeli air defenses were for many of us exhilarating." And well they should be for those who view the world through the lens of oppression and who are (pre)disposed to see everywhere "two sides and no alternative." From this Manichean standpoint, there can be "no negotiation of the relation between oppressor and oppressed."

As was made promptly and painfully apparent, Dean's is not some isolated voice in the wilderness. The throngs of students, effectively empowered without being effectively ennobled and enlightened, that poured out across college campuses to share and convey the sort of joy and exhilaration that Dean exuded, left no room for doubt just how deep-seated and widespread the moral rot has become among Orwell's "English-speaking races." Those students may be poor ethicists, but they make for passable logicians. For if the quality of their ethical reasoning leaves much to be desired, who can dispute that they reason and, given the classrooms in which their minds have been molded, do so soundly? In viewing the world as they have been

taught to view it—through the lens of oppression—life is reduced to a Hobbesian struggle in which, as Dean professes, "oppressed people fight back against their oppressors by every means necessary." As in Hobbes's state of nature and Karamazov's godless universe, so too in Dean's Manichean weltanschauung: everything is permitted. Only in such a world where humans have been parceled out between good and evil—invidiously and unconditionally—could the wanton rape of women and butchering of children be so seamlessly and shamelessly equated with justice. Only in a day in which, to turn once more to Solzhenitsyn, men have lost God, could the reduction of humans to bags of filth elicit cries of joy and exhilaration.

ORWELL'S WINTRY MIND

Orwell's fiction is the stuff of non-fiction—yet one more element to compound the weight of a work that has no further need of it. Bleak as the book may be—arguably, it is as bleak as they come—it affords hope, however dim, all the same. That may appear an incongruous conclusion to draw in view of the foregoing remarks, rendered all the more injudicious by the fact that every glimmer of hope that materializes in that hateful apocalypse is pitilessly dashed asunder in the end. With a lingering sense of gloom and doom hanging over the reader's soul, the more valid verdict would seem to be the one reached by V. S. Pritchett in his review of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: in Mr. Orwell's wintry mind, hope has died.

But it did not die. And the novel that evokes overwhelming despair is the proof. Why would Orwell write a book, particularly with death knocking impatiently at his door, if hope had expired before he did? Why bequeath that book to posterity if the boot forever stamping on the face of humanity was a fait accompli?

Like Hell, Oceania is a world whose residents are enjoined to abandon hope. So long as *Nineteen Eighty-Four* continues to find an audience, readers should be enjoined not to abandon hope. Orwell wrote a book bereft of hope to give hope, not exhaust it. He defied death to complete that book precisely because in the winter of his life, hope had not died.

One does not conquer one's demons by condoning them, but by confronting them. That is the hope that this utterly hopeless book affords: Orwell shows his readers the monsters that lie before them, that lie within them, and exhorts those readers to face those monsters and defeat them, lest they be defeated.

A party bent on promoting this book might affix to it the slogan: despair is hope. A more palatable alternative for a readership too logical to indulge such paradoxical excess would be: in despair there is hope. The absence of despair does not signal the triumph of hope but of resignation. These are despairing times. They are not hopeless ones.

As such, they are times for which Orwell remains indispensable. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* will always have a place in a world where the promise of a radiant tomorrow continues to seduce even the brightest of minds; a world where the radiant tomorrow has yet to be reached and the nightmare it is bound to be has yet to be realized. May Orwell never lack for readers who are willing to peer unflinchingly into the future and into themselves. A darkness, blinding and oppressive, awaits them there. But it is a darkness that, as Orwell illumines, is not wholly devoid of light.

Caveat Lector: let the reader despair. And hope.

Author Index

SIEO refers to the assimilated *Studies in Emergent Order*

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Abel, Corey 1:3/6:6+7
Adair-Toteff, Christopher 7:3+4/7:3+4/8:2+3/8:10+11/8:12/9:7+8/9:11+12/10:1+2/11:3+4/11:9+10/12:7+8/ 13:1+2/13:1+2/13:1+2
Agrawal, Ritwik 11:9+10
Aldrich, Daniel P. SIEO 4
Aleo, Trevor 13:3+4
Alexander, James 8:2+3/8:10+11/10:7+8/10:7+8/11:1+2
Allen, Darcy 8:8+9
Amato, Elizabeth 8:12
Andersson, David Emanuel 1:1/SIEO 1/SIEO 3/SIEO 5/SIEO 7/3:1/8:8+9/12:5+6
Antiseri, Dario 3:2+3

Barnett, Barry J. SIEO 7
Beaulier, Scott A. SIEO 5
Becchio, Giandommenica 10:5+6
Beckstein, Martin 6:3+4
Bedi, Joshua K. 9:1+2
Beltrán Ferrer, Jordi 8:4+5+6+7
Benson, Bruce L. SIEO 3/SIEO 4
Benzecry, Gabriel F. 11:7+8
Berg, Alistair 8:8+9
Berg, Chris 8:8+9/8:8+9
Bernstein, Ilya SIEO 1
Birner, Jack 3:2+3
Bix, Brian 8:4+5+6+7
Block, Walter 4:1/6:6+7/10:3+4/11:5+6/11:7+8/12:7+8/12:9+10/ 12:9+10/13:1+2
Bodeau, Abigail 9:1+2
Bodon, Herminio 10:3+4
Boehnert, J. SIEO 6
Boettke, Peter SIEO 4/3:2+3/7:1+2/7:5+6/9:3+4
Bose, Feler 9:1+2
Boucher, David 10:7+8
Bourke, Richard 9:9+10
Brennan, Jason SIEO 7
Briggeman, Jason 9:1+2
Bronner, Gérald 3:2+3
Brown, Russell 8:4+5+6+7
Brożek, Bartosz 8:4+5+6+7
Bruni, Luigino SIEO 7
Buitelaar, Edwin 4:2+3
Burczak, Ted 7:5+6/9:11+12
Burns, Sarah 10:9+10+11+12
Burns, Scott 6:1+2
Bustamante, Pedro 10:3+4
Butos, William N. SIEO 2/4:1/7:1+2/9:3+4
Caldwell, Bruce SIEO 4
Callahan, Gene SIEO 7/1:3/3:1/8:10+11/13:1+2
Callahan Pamela 13:3+4
Campagnolo, Gilles 3:2+3/10:5+6
Camplin, Troy Earl SIEO 3/SIEO 7/4:1/5:1/6:6+7/8:2+3
Candela, Rosolino SIEO 7/9:5+6/10:5+6
Capaldi, Nicholas 6:3+4/12:7+8
Carden, Art SIEO 4/SIEO 7
Carrasco, Maria Alejandra 2:3
Chamberlin, Anton 6:6+7
Chamlee-Wright, Emily SIEO 4
Chan, Wing-Cheuk 12:7+8
Chartier, Gary SIEO 7
Chaumet, Mario 8:4+5+6+7
Cheeseman, Thomas J. 1:3
Cheung, Chor-yung 1:2/1:3
Cho, John 8:8+9
Christensen, Brandon 10:9+10+11+12
Ciampini, Gabriele 5:3+4
Coats, W. J. 10:1+2/13:3+4
Cockram, Nathan Robert 6:3+4
Collier, Benjamin L. SIEO 7
Collins, Gregory 9:9+10
Corey, David D. 1:3/6:3+4
Corey, Elizabeth 13:3+4
Cowen, Nick 7:5+6
Cox, Wendell 4:2+3
Coyne, Christopher J. SIEO 4/SIEO 7/10:9+10+11+12
Cozzolino, Stefano 4:2+3/5:3+4
Crepelle, Adam 10:9+10+11+12
Crespo Ricardo F. 10:5+6
Crowe, Jonathan SIEO 7
Crowley, Tim 8:4+5+6+7
Crutchfield, Parker 9:5+6
Cubbe de Ghantuz, Giovanni 11:7+8
Cubeddu, Raimondo 10:5+6
Currie-Knight, Kevin 5:1

D'Agostino, Fred 5:2
D'Andrea, Fernando 9:7+8
Dart, Ron 6:3+4
Davies, Stephen 9:9+10
Davis, Ellen SIEO 7
Davis, William L. 9:1+2
De Brito, Adriano Naves 8:4+5+6+7
De Waal, Cornelis 8:4+5+6+7
Deakin, Simon 11:1+2
Dekker, Erwin 4:1/9:3+4/10:5+6
Den Uyl, Douglas 8:1
Dershowitz, Alan 12:9+10
Desrochers, Pierre 4:2+3
Devereaux, Abigail 7:1+2/9:1+2/9:5+6
Dhingra, Neil 13:3+4
Di Iorio, Francesco 3:2+3
Di Nuoscio, Enzo 3:2+3
Digeser, P. E. 8:10+11
diZerega, Gus SIEO 1/SIEO 3/ 1:1/2:1/3:1/5:3+4/6:6+7/7:3+4/8:2+3/8:10+11/9:7+8/9:11+12/9:11+12/2022/12/11:1+2/11:7+8/12:5+6/12:9+10
Dobuzinskis, Laurent SIEO 1/SIEO 5/6:5/8:8+9
Dockstader, Jason 10:7+8
Drosos, Dionysios 2:3
Dumouchel, Paul 3:2+3
Duncan, Thomas K. SIEO 7
Dyke, Jeremiah 12:7+8

Edmundson, William A. 11:9+10
Eisenberg, David 6:1+2/13:3+4
Eldridge, Richard 11:3+4
Ellerman, David 5:3+4
Elliott, Euel SIEO 7
Enright, Marsha Familaro 13:3+4
Erion, Gerald J. 4:4

Fear, Christopher 10:7+8
Ferlito, Carmelo 10:3+4/11:7+8
Ferrian, Stefano 5:1
Finn, Victoria 9:5+6
Fjelland, Ragnar 12:5+6
Foldvary, Fred 8:8+9
Franco, Paul 11:7+8
Frantz, Roger 7:5+6
Frederick, Danny 6:6+7/6:6+7/6:6+7/8:2+3/9:7+8
Friedman, Mark D. 8:2+3/9:7+8
Fuller, Timothy 8:12/9:11+12/10:1+2/13:3+4/13:3+4
Furedi, Frank 11:1+2
Futerman, Alan, 12:9+10/12:9+10

Garzarelli, Giampaolo 7:1+2
Gaus, Gerald 7:5+6
Geloso, Vincent 6:5/9:5+6
Gomez, Pedro Bustamante Marcela 10:3+4
Gonzales-Lagier, Daniel 8:4+5+6+7
Goodman, Nathan P. 9:5+6/11:11+12
Gordon, David 11:1+2
Gordon, Peter SIEO 7/4:2+3/8:8+9
Graham, Gordon 5:3+4/8:1
Granado, Michael 5:1
Grant, Robert 10:7+8
Grassl, Wolfgang 4:4
Green, Paul R. SIEO 4
Gregg, Samuel 9:9+10
Gregório, Inês Gregório 6:1+2
Grube, Laura E. 9:5+6
Guarino, Nicola 4:4
Gulker, Max 9:5+6

Haack, Susan 8:4+5+6+7
Haar van de, Edwin 10:9+10+11+12/12:5+6
Haeffele, Stefanie 9:5+6
Hall-Blanco, Abigail SIEO 7/10:9+10+11+12
Hall, Lauren K. 1:2/9:9+10/11:11+12
Hamilton, Emily 4:2+3
Hampsher-Monk, Iain 9:9+10
Hanley, Ryan Patrick 8:1/11:9+10
Hardwick, David F. SIEO 1/SIEO 5/5:1/8:10+11
Hartley, Christie 11:9+10
Hastings, Janna 12:5+6
Hedblom, Maria M. 12:5+6
Herdy, Rachel 8:4+5+6+7
Herzberg, Roberta Q. 9:1+2
Herzog, Lisa 2:3
Heydt, Colin 8:1
Hoffmann, Andreas SIEO 7
Hooten Wilson, Jessica 8:12
Hörcher, Ferenc 11:5+6
Horwitz, Steven SIEO 1/SIEO 4/3:1/6:5
Hrelja, Marko SIEO 4
Hudík, Marek 3:1/6:1+2/8:8+9
Hughes, Mark D. 11:7+8

Ikeda, Sanford 1:3/SIEO 7/4:2+3/5:3+4/8:8+9
Imber, Jonathan 11:3+4
Infantino, Lorenzo 7:1+2

Jace, Clara 6:1+2/9:1+2
Jacobs, Michael N. 13:1+2
Jacobsen, Peter J. 9:5+6
Jajodia, Ishaan 11:5+6
Jakobson, Mari-Liis 9:5+6
Jankovic, Ivan 6:1+2
Jones, Emily 9:9+10
Jones, Garett SIEO 7
Jonsson, Hjorleifur 10:9+10+11+12
Jowett, Kiersten 8:8+9

Karsh, Efraim 12:9+10
Kearns, John T. 4:4
Keeling, Shannon SIEO 4
Kiesling, Lynne SIEO 3
Klein, Daniel B. SIEO 7/9:1+2/9:9+10
Kolev, Stefan 7:5+6
Koppl, Roger SIEO 7:1+2/9:3+4/9:5+6
Kosec, Jernej 10:9+10+11+12
Krinkin, Kirill 12:5+6
Krisnamurthy, Prashant 10:3+4
Kuchař, Pavel 4:1/10:5+6
Kuznicki, Jason 11:11+12

Lai, Lawrence W. C. 11:1+2/12:7+8
Lambert, Karras J. 10:5+6
Landau, Iddo 8:4+5+6+7
Landes, Richard 12:9+10
Landgrebe, Jobst 12:5+6
Lane, Robert 8:4+5+6+7
Langlois, Richard N. 7:1+2
Lee, Michael 10:9+10+11+12
Leeson Peter T. SIEO 7
Lehto, Otto 9:5+6/11:9+10
Lemke, Jayme S. SIEO 4/SIEO 7/11:11+12
Letwin, Oliver 10:7+8
Lewin, Peter SIEO 7/2:2
Lewis, Paul SIEO 4/2:2/7:5+6/10:3+4
Lewis, Ted G. 6:6+7/7:3+4/9:7+8
Lifshitz, Joseph Isaac 1:2
Little, Daniel 11:3+4
Lofthouse, Jordan K. 9:5+6
Lohmann, Roger A. SIEO 2
Lombardo, Gary A. 13:1+2/13:1+2/13:1+2
Lopes Azize, Rafael 11:3+4
Lovasz, Adam 12:7+8
Lozano-Paredes, Luis Hernando 8:8+9
Lüthe, Rudolf 4:4

Madison, Michael 10:3+4
Magness, Phil 9:5+6
Malamet, Akiva 11:11+12
Malczewski, Eric 12:7+8
Mallett, Jacky SIEO 2/2:2
Mannai, Waleed I. Al 9:7+8
Markey-Towler, Brendan 6:5
Marriott, Shal 10:7+8
Marsh, Leslie SIEO 5/1:3/4:2+3/5:1/6:3+4/8:4+5+6+7/8:8+9/8:12/9:11+12/11:9+10/13:1+2
Martin, Adam SIEO 3/SIEO 4/7:5+6
Martin, Nona, P. SIEO 1
Martinelli, Emanuele 12:5+6
Masini, Fabio 10:9+10+11+12
Mason, Sheena Michele 13:3+4
Mayorga, Rosa Maria 8:4+5+6+7
McCabe, Joshua T. SIEO 4
McCloskey, Deirdre N. SIEO 7
McHugh, John 8:1
McIlwain David 10:1+2
McIntyre, Kenneth B. 10:1+2
McQuade, Thomas J. SIEO 2/4:1/6:6+7/9:7+8/10:3+4/11:1+2
Meirson, Itay 12:9+10
Mendenhall, Allen SIEO 5/8:12
Menon, Marco 10:5+6
Meroi, Andrea 8:4+5+6+7
Migotti, Mark 8:4+5+6+7
Miller, William 5:3+4
Mingardi, Alberto 2:1/13:1+2
Minola, Luca 8:8+9
Miotti, Ana Luisa Ponce 8:4+5+6+7
Moreno-Casas, Vicente 11:5+6
Moroni, Stefano 1:2/4:2+3
Morrone, Francis 4:2+3
Motchoulski, Alex 11:9+10
Muldoon, Ryan 5:2
Mulligan, Kevin 6:3+4
Mulligan, Robert F. SIEO 2/SIEO 3/6:1+2/10:3+4/11:5+6
Murphy, Jon 9:5+6
Murtazashvili, Ilia 9:5+6/10:3+4/10:9+10+11+12
Murtazashvili, Jennifer 10:3+4
Mussler, Alexandra 8:2+3
Mylovanov, Tymofiy 10:3+4

Nadeau, Robert 3:2+3
Naves de Brito, Adriano 8:4+5+6+7
Nelson, Scott B. 10:1+2
Neufeld, Blain 5:2
Nichols, David 10:9+10+11+12
Nicol, Heather 10:9+10+11+12
Nientiedt, Daniel 10:9+10+11+12
Nikodym, Tomáš 11:5+6
Njoya, Wanjiru 11:1+2/11:1+2
Norman, Jesse 8:1
Novak, Mikayla 5:3+4/6:1+2/6:5/7:5+6/8:8+9/9:5+6/9:7+8/11:11+12
Nubiola, Jaime 8:4+5+6+7

O'Hara, Kieron 6:3+4
O'Sullivan, Luke 9:3+4/10:1+2
O'Gorman, Farrell 8:12
O'Sullivan, Noël 1:3/6:3+4/9:7+8
Oliverio, Albertina 3:2+3
Ott, Jordan 8:10+11
Otteson, James 8:1
Oyerinde, Oyebade 10:9+10+11+12

Packard, Mark D. 11:1+2
Padvorac, Meggan 8:4+5+6+7

Paganelli, Maria Pia 2:3/8:1
Page, Scott E. 5:2
Pakaluk, Catherine R. 9:1+2/11:11+12
Palmberg, Johanna 1:1
Paniagua, Pablo 5:3+4/8:2+3/9:3+4/9:5+6
Pardy, Bruce 11:1+2
Pegg, Scott 10:9+10+11+12
Pender, Casey 10:5+6
Peppers, Shawn 2:1
Peralta-Greenough, Quinton V. 10:3+4/12:5+6/12:9+10
Perednik, Gustavo D. 12:9+10
Peterson, Lindsey SIEO 7
Petitot, Jean 3:2+3
Phillips, Luke Nathan 11:5+6
Plassart, Anna 9:9+10
Podemska-Mikluch, Marta 6:5
Podoksik, Efraim 6:3+4
Porqueddu, Elena 5:3+4
Postigo Zúñiga y, Gloria 4:4
Pošvanc Matúš 12:7+8
Potts, Jason 1:1/2:1/8:8+9
Powell, Benjamin SIEO 7
Prather, A. 13:3+4
Prehn, W.L. 13:3+4
Prychitko, David L. 7:5+6

Raatzsch, Richard 11:3+4
Radcliffe, Elizabeth S. 12:1+2
Radner, Isaac 13:3+4 13:3+4
Rajagopalan, Shruti 4:2+3
Ramos, Vitor Lia de Paula 8:4+5+6+7
Rapaport, William J. 12:5+6
Rayamajhee, Veeshan 9:5+6
Read, Rupert 11:3+4
Riano, Nayeli L. 7:3+4/11:5+6/11:5+6
Risser, James J. 8:10+11
Ritter, Dylan 11:5+6
Robitaille, Christian 10:5+6
Rodríguez Burgos, Ojel L. 12:7+8
Rohac, Dalibor 10:9+10+11+12
Rosenthal-Pubúl, Alexander 7:3+4
Roth, Paul A. 11:3+4
Rowse, Eric 11:9+10
Rueda, Beckett 10:7+8

Salter, Alexander William 2:2
Sampieri-Cabál, Rubén 8:4+5+6+7
Schaefer, David Lewis 10:1+2
Scheall, Scott 7:1+2/9:3+4/9:5+6/12:7+8
Scheffel, Eric M. 1:1
Schliesser, Eric 9:3+4
Schneider, Luc 4:4
Scruton, Roger 6:3+4
Sedlakova, Jana 12:5+6
Shalev, Avraham (Russell) 12:9+10
Shearmur, Jeremy 7:5+6
Shera, Marcus 9:1+2
Shoup, Brian SIEO 7
Shrestha, Shikhar 9:5+6
Simon, Jonathan A. 12:5+6
Simons, Peter M. 4:4
Skarbek, Emily C. SIEO 4
Skjönsberg, Max 10:7+8
Skoble, Aeon SIEO **7**
Skwire, Sarah 11:11+12
Smith, Barry 4:4/12:5+6
Smith, Blake 10:9+10+11+12
Smith, Brian A. 8:12
Smith, Craig 8:1
Smith, Daniel J. SIEO 5/SIEO 7/11:7+8
Smith, Sandra 4:4
Snow, Nicholas A. 11:11+12
Söderbaum, Jakob 13:1+2
Sordini, Alexander 11:7+8
Sorel, Niels 4:2+3
Staden van, Martin 10:9+10+11+12
Stein, Sofia Inês Albornoz 8:4+5+6+7
Stein, Solomon SIEO 7 /2:2
Storr, Virgil Henry SIEO 1/9:5+6
Studebaker, Benjamin 10:9+10+11+12
Sutter, Daniel SIEO 2/SIEO 3/SIEO 4/SIEO 5
Szurmak, Joanna 4:2+3

Tegos, Spyridon 2:3
Thomas, Diana W. 9:1+2
Thomas, Michael D. 9:1+2
Trimcev, Eno 6:3+4/8:10+11
Troy, Gil 12:9+10
Turner, Frederick 1:2
Turner, Stephen SIEO 5/1:3/6:1+2/7:1+2/10:1+2/12:5+6

Valério, Luan 11:7+8
Vallier, Kevin 5:2/11:9+10
Valliere, Dave SIEO 4
Vargas-Vélez, Orión 8:4+5+6+7
Vázquez, Carmen 8:4+5+6**+7**
Veetil, Vipin P. 3:2+3
Vilaça, Guilherme Vasconcelos SIEO 3
Vinten, Robert 11:3+4

Wagner, Michael 7:3+4
Wagner, Richard E. SIEO 4/SIEO 7/6:5/7:1+2
Walsh, Aidan SIEO 2/SIEO 3
Watson, Lori 5:2/11:9+10
Weinstein, Jack Russell 2:3
Weiss, Martin 10:3+4
Wenzel, Nikolai G. SIEO 5/8:2+3
West, Robert 12:5+6
Whatmore, Richard 9:9+10
Wible, James R. 7:1+2
Wiemer, Walter B. 8:10+11/9:11+12/11:3+4/12:7+8/13:1+2
Wiens, David 5:2
Williams, Kevin 1:3/ 13:3+4
Williamson, Claudia R. SIEO 7
Wilson, Aaron 8:4+5+6+7
Woleński, Jan 4:4
Wolloch, Nathaniel 2:3
Woode-Smith, Nicholas 10:9+10

Xerohemona, Kiriake 8:4+5+6+7

Zanetti, Roberto 5:1
Zeitlin, S. G. 12:9+10
Żełaniec, Wojciech 4:4
Zellen, Barry S. 10:9+10+11+12

Back Issues

THEMATIC

13:3+4	Liberal Education
12:11+12	Society for the Development of Austrian Economics
12:1+2	Hume's Political Epistemology
11:11+12	Gender and Spontaneous Order
11:5+6	Revisiting Cultural History
10:9+10/11+12	Sovereignties, World Orders, and the Federalist Option: Reviving Libertarian Foreign Policy
10:7+8	*Rationalism in Politics*: sixty years on
10:5+6	Carl Menger and Classical Liberalism
9:5+6	The Political Economy of Pandemics: Towards Uncharted Territory
9:1+2	Economics of Religion
8:8+9	Spontaneous Urban Planning at the Intersection of Markets, Democracy and Science
8:4+5/6+7	Philosophy, The World, Life, and The Law: In Honour of Susan Haack
6:6+7	Karl Popper
5:1	Jazz as a Spontaneous Order
4:4	Barry Smith: On the Occasion of his 65th Birthday
4:2+3	Jane Jacobs
3:2+3	Methodological Individualism, Structural Constraints, and Social Complexity
1:3	Michael Oakeshott

BOOK SYMPOSIA

12:11+12	*The Virtues of Limits*
12:9+10	*The Classical Liberal Case for Israel*
12:5+6	*Why Machines Will Never Rule the World: Artificial Intelligence without Fear*
12:3+4	*Anatomy of Liberty in Don Quijote de la Mancha: Religion, Feminism, Slavery, Politics, and Economics in the First Modern Novel*
11:9+10	*Trust in a Polarized Age*
11:3+4	*Wittgenstein and the Social Sciences: Action, Ideology, and Justice*
11:1+2	*Economic Freedom and Social Justice: The Classical Ideal of Equality in Contexts of Racial Diversity*
10:1+2	*Michael Oakeshott and Leo Strauss: The Politics of Renaissance and Enlightenment*
9:9+10	*Commerce and Manners in Edmund Burke's Political Economy*
9:3+4	*F. A. Hayek and the Epistemology of Politics*
8:12	*Walker Percy and the Politics of the Wayfarer*
8:1	*Adam Smith: What He Thought, and Why it Matters*
7:5+6	*F. A. Hayek: Economics, Political Economy and Social* Philosophy
7:1+2	*Expert Failure*
6:5	*Inequality: An Entangled Political Economy Perspective*
6:3+4	*Conservatism—An Invitation to the Great Tradition*
5:2	*The Tyranny of the Ideal*
2:3	*Adam Smith's Pluralism: Rationality, Education And The Moral Sentiments*

GENERAL

13:3+4/13:1+2/12:7+8/11:7+8/10:3+4/9:11+12/9:7+8/8:10+11/8:2+3/7:3+4/6:6+7/6:1+2/5:3+4/4:1/3:1/2:2/2:1/1:2/1:1

Editorial Information

AIMS AND SCOPE

COSMOS + TAXIS takes its name and inspiration from the Greek terms that F. A. Hayek invoked to connote the distinction between *spontaneous orders* and *consciously planned* orders.

COSMOS + TAXIS is a joint initiative run under the auspices of the Department of Economics, Philosophy and Political Science at The University of British Columbia Okanagan and the Political Science Department at Simon Fraser University.

COSMOS + TAXIS offers a forum to those concerned that the central presuppositions of the liberal tradition have been severely corroded, neglected, or misappropriated by overly rationalistic and constructivist approaches. The hardest-won achievements of the liberal tradition has been the wrestling of epistemic independence from overwhelming concentrations of power, monopolies and capricious zealotries. The very precondition of knowledge is the exploitation of the *epistemic* virtues accorded by society's *situated* and *distributed* manifold of spontaneous orders, the DNA of the modern civil condition.

COSMOS + TAXIS is not committed to any particular school of thought but has as its central interest any discussion that falls within the *classical* liberal tradition as outlined above.

COSMOS+TAXIS publishes papers on *complexity* broadly conceived in a manner that is accessible to a general multidisciplinary audience with particular emphasis on political economy and philosophy.

COSMOS+TAXIS offers a forum distinctively engaging the confluence of interest in situated and distributed liberalism emanating from the Scottish tradition, Austrian and behavioral economics, non-Cartesian philosophy and moral psychology, philosophy of social science, social epistemology, and political philosophy.

COSMOS+TAXIS publishes a wide range of content: refereed articles, topical issues and book symposia, though to moderated discussion articles, literature surveys and reviews. If you'd like to make a thematic proposal as a guest editor or suggest a book review, please contact the managing editor. All books listed on COSMOS + TAXIS' Facebook page are available for review. COSMOS + TAXIS does not have article processing—nor any submission—charges.

COSMOS + TAXIS does not assume responsibility for the views expressed by its contributors.

COSMOS+TAXIS is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Authors retain full copyright to their work and Cosmos+Taxis retains copyright as a curated entity.

Books for review should be sent to:

Laurent Dobuzinskis
Department of Political Science
Simon Fraser University
AQ6069—8888 University Drive
Burnaby, B.C.
Canada V5A 1S6

SUBMISSIONS

Submitting an article to COSMOS + TAXIS implies that it is not under consideration (and has not been accepted) for publication elsewhere. COSMOS + TAXIS will endeavor to complete the refereeing process in a timely manner (i.e. a publication decision will be made available within three months). All submissions should be in digital format, and emailed to: leslie.marsh@ubc.ca

Papers should be double-spaced, in 12 point font, Times New Roman. Accepted papers are usually about 6,000-8,000 words long. However, we are willing to consider manuscripts as long as 12,000 words (and even more under very special circumstances). All self-identifying marks should be removed from the article itself to facilitate blind review. In addition to the article itself, an abstract should be submitted as a separate file (also devoid of author-identifying information). Submissions should be made in Word doc format.

COSMOS + TAXIS welcomes proposals for guest edited themed issues and suggestions for book reviews. Please contact the Editor-in-Chief to make a proposal: leslie.marsh@ubc.ca

All business issues and typsetting are done under the auspices of the University of British Columbia. Inquiries should be addressed to the Editor-in-Chief: leslie.marsh@ubc.ca

ELEMENTS OF STYLE

1. Submissions should be in English: American, Canadian and UK spellings and punctuation are acceptable so long as they consistently adhere to the one convention.

2. Citations should be made in author-date format. A reference list of all works cited in the body of the text should be placed at the end of the article.

   The most common permutations are as follows:

   Author, A. B. 2013. Title. *Journal,* 1(1):1-10.
   Author, C. D., Author, B., and Author, C. 2013. Article Title.
   In: Book *Title*, pp. 1-10. City: Publisher.
   Author, J. E. and Author, B. (Eds.) *Title*, pp. 1-10. City: Publisher.
   Author, E. F. 2008. *Title.* City: Publisher.

   To use as a fully detailed style sheet, please consult the most recent issue of COSMOS+TAXIS.

3. All notes should be as end notes.

4. Please keep mathematical formulae to a bare minimum.

5. Unless an article or a book is only available online, doi and other links should not be used.

6. No embedded citations to be used in Word.

COSMOS + TAXIS acknowledges the generous support of the Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation.

Design and typesetting: Claire Roan, UBC Studios,
Information Technology, The University of British Columbia.

COSMOS+TAXIS