POLITICS, LITERATURE, AND FILM IN CONVERSATION

Essays in Honor of Mary P. Nichols

Edited by

Matthew D. Dinan, Paul E. Kirkland, Denise Schaeffer, and Natalie Fuehrer Taylor

Politics, Literature, and Film in Conversation

Politics, Literature, & Film

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It perhaps goes without saying that this book owes its very existence to Mary Nichols. Mary often dwells on Aristotle's suggestion that we cannot repay the debts we owe to the gods or God, our parents, and our teacher of philosophy. While Mary is resolutely human, her care for her students combines that of a mother and a philosopher: the "unrepayable" debt we owe her is therefore doubled. While this volume cannot repay the debt we owe Mary, we hope that it at least takes up her familiar invitation ("y'all are welcome to join me") to engage in ongoing conversation about life's most fundamental matters. We dedicate this book to her, in love and friendship.

Introduction

Matthew D. Dinan and Denise Schaeffer

THE SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT OF MARY P. NICHOLS

Politics, Literature and Film in Conversation is a collection celebrating the scholarly achievement of Mary Pollingue Nichols. The volume features chapters written exclusively by her former doctoral students. A professor emerita of political science at Baylor University, she has supervised more than forty dissertations at Catholic University of America, Fordham University, and Baylor, teaching and mentoring scores of other students at every level. Although she specializes in Ancient Greek political thought, Nichols's pathbreaking scholarly work spans the entire history of political philosophy, and politics, literature, and film. She has published over fifty peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, co-translated an edition of Plato's *Euthydemus*, coedited *Readings in American Government* with David K. Nichols (now in its tenth edition), and published five scholarly monographs (the sixth—a highly anticipated study of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*—is underway as of this writing). She has given lectures throughout North America, performed exemplary university service, and tirelessly contributed to the discipline of political science at every stage of her career.

One area in which her service to North American political science has been especially influential has been her early contribution to, and support of, the subfield of politics, literature, and film. Not only was Nichols instrumental in the formation of the organized section on politics, literature, and film in the American Political Science Association, but she established the first interdisciplinary minor in that field at the doctoral level in the political theory program at Baylor. She has published widely on literature and film as works of political thought, and her students have become some of the most

enthusiastic contributors to the subfield. It is no exaggeration to say that the book series in which this volume appears might not exist without Nichols's seminal scholarly work.

Nichols received her PhD from the University of Chicago in 1975, working under the supervision of Joseph Cropsey, the colleague and literary executor of Leo Strauss. Nichols's *œuvre* shows a persistent concern to work through some of the ostensibly intractable problems in the history of political philosophy; in particular, the conflicts between reason and revelation, philosophy and the city, ancients and moderns, poetry and philosophy. Through Nichols's supple and original interpretations of ancient texts in particular she shows that these organizing categories are more porous than they might seem. She furthermore echoes her teacher Cropsey in subtly demonstrating how these thinkers offer viable alternatives to postmodern thinkers like Nietzsche and Heidegger.[1] In particular, her work contains a sustained critique of the potential excesses of rationalism, cautioning against the tendency to abstract from human limitation and necessity. Yet, in this she is not conventionally conservative, alerting her readers especially to the dangers of this abstraction for citizens, families, and the marginalized. Across her body of scholarly work, Nichols practices a theoretically informed political science, showing how such a political science can even now provide guidance about the good life, sustain just regimes, preserve political freedom, and encourage authentic human flourishing.

Socrates and the Political Community, Nichols's first book on ancient political theory, mounts a challenge to Allan Bloom's influential interpretation of the *Republic* by way of interpretations of Aristophanes's *Clouds*, Plato's *Republic*, and Aristotle's *Politics*.[2] Following Strauss in *The City and Man*, Bloom argues that Socrates considers political life to be little more than the sleepy realm of conventional opinion—the "cave"—and that ambitious individuals like Glaucon need to be turned toward philosophy as a sort of prophylactic against the tyranny modeled by the city in speech, "to cause the unphilosophic man to be concerned about justice for fear of what will happen to him in another world, and to turn philosophic men to the study of the soul."[3] In such a reading, neither the lives of philosophy nor politics appear choice-worthy for their own sakes; for Bloom, "one can say that the [*Republic* teaches] us nothing other than the necessity of philosophy and its priority and superiority to the political life."[4]

Nichols, by contrast, suggests that Socrates's activity in the *Republic* is comparable to that of the legislator in deed as well as in speech. Rather than presenting Socrates as attempting to hoodwink the ambitious Glaucon into pursuing the philosophy for the sake of the city, Nichols sees a Socrates who creates a space for him and the rest of the interlocutors to participate in a "dialogical community." Such a community affirms the ultimate goodness of

the philosophical life, but suggests that, absent the moderating and limiting influence of friends, philosophy itself can embody the tyranny modeled by the philosopher-kings. Nichols links Glaucon's love of abstraction and precision to the account of philosophy Socrates provides in that text: the problem with the philosopher-kings is then doubled, as their tyrannical political plans are inseparable from their mathematical abstraction from the human things. In Nichols's reading, politics is not simply a necessary evil, the cynical precondition for providing the best life for the lucky few philosophical souls, but in fact the proper object of study for the philosopher, who remains a limited human being, and seeks self-knowledge. Where Bloom, and to an extent Strauss, view the relationship between philosophy and the city as necessarily antagonistic, Nichols locates the meaning and purpose of the philosophical life in reflection not on abstract universals, but on the embodied particularities of human life: "The Socratic community is a heterogenous one, which comes closer than the politics described in the *Republic*, whether the city in speech or the degenerative regimes, to satisfying the demands of *both* Glaucon and Adeimantus."[5] Nichols might then counter Nietzsche's suggestion that the Western tradition is preoccupied with abstract, otherworldly contemplation of the things aloft with the suggestion that philosophy best understands itself when it finds its purposes within limited, embodied human life. Her account of philosophy and politics in the *Republic* in this way shows how that dialogue points to the need for an explicitly *political* philosophy—one which attends to the philosophical meaning of politics as such, defending politics on *philosophical* grounds. At the end of *Socrates and the Political Community*, Nichols points to Aristotle's criticisms of Socratic communism in Book 2 of the *Politics* as the place where this project of a true *politikē* can be found.

Nichols' next, and perhaps best-known book, *Citizens and Statesmen*, expands on the promise implied in the pivot to Aristotle in the final chapter of *Socrates and the Political Community*.[6] In a stunning challenge to the received interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics*, Nichols interrupts a scholarly consensus that had long held that Aristotle's conservative political philosophy defends natural slavery, excludes women from political rule, and describes the best regime as the monarchical rule of the most virtuous man. Nichols presents a lively Aristotle whose *politikē* complicates rigid hierarchies purporting to be rooted in nature. In Nichols's hands, we find an Aristotle whose claims are invitations to thought, not dogmatic assertions. By paying attention to Aristotle's carefully chosen examples and his complex literary allusions, Nichols demonstrates that Aristotle's *Politics* is itself a work of statesmanship, designed to gently loosen strong assumptions about the inferiority of women and slaves. As she observes, for instance, Aristotle's citation of Sophocles's *Ajax* to insist that "Silence gives grace to a woman,"

does not in fact support the idea that women lack "deliberative power." As Nichols puts it:

> The words are spoken by Ajax . . . when he is maddened by excessive love of honor. And they are spoken to his wife Tecmessa when she asks her husband for an account of his mad activities. It is difficult to see in this story an illustration of the male's greater deliberative power. It is a madman, Aristotle suggests, who does not listen to the good advice of a woman.[7]

Nichols thereby shows that rather than recommending despotic rule, Aristotle is alive to the ways in which despotism threatens human flourishing—in politics, the family, and philosophy alike—and undercuts its own attempts at establishing self-sufficiency. True self-sufficient freedom is possible only within the horizon of naturally imposed limitations. To wit, the experiences of women as mothers, and as those ruled by often despotic men, are key to understanding political life as such. The recognition of limits makes us better citizens, political actors, and, critically, thinkers, who cannot prima facie assert independence from the divine: "human beings are political animals who learn this truth about themselves when they rule and are ruled in turn, when they act, proving their freedom and encountering the limits inherent in every action. Aristotle's *politikē*, his philosophizing about politics, is therefore more complete, and more philosophic than a life 'divorced from all external things.' *Politikē* is both the means to self-knowledge and the activity that best expresses it."[8] Against a Nietzschean view of politics as struggle and philosophy as an attempt to escape the human things, Nichols affirms the political realm as one of in which meaningful persuasion—and contemplation of the human things—can occur. Aristotle's *Politics* affirms the philosophical goodness of politics and the political goodness of philosophy.

Nichols's *Socrates on Friendship and Community* makes explicit what had been implicit in her earlier books, as she returns to Plato to challenge the popular notion that Socrates is a fundamentally "alienating" and "alienated" figure.[9] Nichols's interpretations of the *Symposium*, *Phaedrus*, and *Lysis* depict a Socrates concerned with the well-being of his friends as he discusses love and friendship. More importantly, she shows how for Plato's Socrates, philosophy finds "meaning and purpose" that saves it from potentially despotic abstraction: "If one pursues the truth because it is one's good," she suggests, one "runs the risk of confounding the object of [one's] search with the good, or the true with the useful." The philosopher's understanding must therefore be "informed by an experience of another that resists being reduced to his own desires and needs." This is the experience of friendship, "an experience of one's own as another who cannot be assimilated or subordinated."[10] Philosophy thereby becomes fully Socratic not when it reaches

beyond the beings or retreats fully into the self, but when, in attending to the other, it experiences a collision of self and other, of familiarity and strangeness. Philosophy inhabits the in-between space of knowing and not-knowing, recognizing that the truth can never be fully assimilated into the self. For this reason, it must also turn to poetry and piety alike as supplements, but supplements which gain something in this friendship: poetry becomes more beautiful through fidelity to the truth; piety becomes more open to admitting its limitations through its encounter with thought.

Thus, in her major works on Aristotle and Plato, Nichols dwells on the peripatetery of self and other, showing in ancient political thought attentiveness to distinctions—to the given—but also to the ways in which ideas require particularity in order to be known by us. In Aristotle, this leads to a defense of political life understood as involving the heterogeneity of the city, the contemplation of which allows for the full experience of the life of philosophy; in Plato, this leads to a defense of philosophy which is most fully experienced in friendship, a humane basis for good politics. These themes receive a surprisingly fulsome development in *Thucydides and the Pursuit of Freedom*, a study treating not political theory but history.[11] Yet, as Nichols shows, Thucydides's *Peloponnesian War* is not a history as is usually understood, but an "artful" history, which shows both Thucydides's freedom, as well as the possibility of freedom in the lives of those in the *poleis* he chronicles. Nichols offers original readings of some of the most prominent citizens and statesmen in the *Peloponnesian War:* Pericles, Brasidas, Nicias, Alcibiades, Themistocles, and Thucydides himself. She orients her analysis of freedom around the paradoxical way in which Athenian freedom makes possible certain virtues, which, in turn, help to preserve that same freedom. At the same time, she notes the limits to the pursuit of freedom, and the ways in which its pursuit—particularly in imperialism—can be undermined by material limitations. Nichols considers the various ways that some of the important individuals in the *Peloponnesian War* embody Athenian freedom, and the limits to such embodiment: Nicias's failure, for instance, to be sufficiently free from Athenian custom makes his homecoming impossible; whereas Alcibiades's polytropism gives him great freedom at the cost of ever making a homecoming. Though she defends both Pericles and Themistocles, it is Thucydides himself, whose "writing up" (*xugrapphein*) of the war ultimately allows for the most important embodiment of freedom expressed in an individual existence. Thucydides's ability to transcend his particular context while remaining resolutely "Athenian" is an example of freedom as the conjunction of the desire for "sailing away" with that of "homecoming." Thucydides in this way might be said to combine Aristotelian *politikē* with Socratic philosophy, acting as a citizen of Athens and thereby as a statesman, but achieving self-reflection in his grand *logos* of the war. Thucydides, the

artful historian, gains the freedom of speculation through fidelity to the given; he gains an independence of Athenian *nomos* which allows him to ultimately defend its peculiar way of life. In this way, his act of friendship to his particular time and place becomes a work for all time.

As evidenced throughout her work on ancient political theory, for Nichols, there is reason to doubt the final truth of the harsh dichotomies sometimes used to describe the history of political philosophy. Although she does not attempt a Hegelian synthesis of these antinomies, she shows how conversation, or friendly relations between seeming opposites, can be achieved. The literary character of her reading of these ancient Greek texts, as well as her substantive focus on artistry and poetry as political and philosophical categories, informs her many contributions to the serious study of politics, literature, and film: from her counterintuitive, but compelling, book-length study of filmmaker Woody Allen, *Reconstructing Woody*, to her many essays of the plays of William Shakespeare; from the writings of William Faulkner, Mark Twain, and Jonathan Swift to filmmakers like Stillman, Palminteri, and Ford. Nichols's championing of politics, literature, and film flows from her engagement with ancient Greek texts.[12] Poetry can converse with politics and philosophy alike, expressing the goodness of the concrete particularities of human life. For Nichols, it is a conversation in which literary artists and filmmakers remain engaged, even today.

What is more, Nichols's scholarly contributions can themselves be understood as dialogical or conversational in the deepest sense. Just as for Nichols philosophy must come to resemble friendship, so might we consider her thought and work as a series of conversations with the greatest minds of the Western tradition. As she likes to observe, the Greek word for "dialogue," *dialegesthai* literally means "to talk things through." To "talk things through" gestures toward conciliation and comedy rather than conflict and tragedy. In that spirit, the chapters in this collection can be understood as a series of conversations—and negotiations—with a variety of thinkers, ancient and modern, and between poetry (in the broadest sense) and philosophy about politics. By facilitating these conversations between ancient and modern political philosophy with politics, literature, and film, this volume reflects one of the central theoretical concerns of Professor Nichols's career. The diversity of works and genres explored in this collection—from poetic readings of Aristotle to philosophical readings of Shakespeare, from the novels of James and Austen to the films of Whit Stillman and Woody Allen—as well as the broadly divergent philosophical evaluations of ethical and political matters contained in these chapters, testifies to the broad scope and influence of Nichols's scholarship, but also to her expansive generosity as a teacher who encourages her students to their own distinctive forms of excellence as scholars and teachers.

PLAN FOR THE VOLUME

This collection features chapters in political philosophy that are especially concerned with literature and film as political thought. The volume is divided into three sections which thematically reflect some of the abiding concerns of Prof. Nichols's career as a scholar and teacher. Part I: Conversations about Love and Friendship offers a set of chapters thinking about varieties and philosophical meanings of human connection and affection. Part II: Conversations between Politics and Poetry considers the political significance of art, but also the ways in which rule is itself a sort of "art" or poetic making in the deepest sense. Part III: Conversations from Tragedy to Comedy looks at the political and philosophical meanings of the categories of tragedy and comedy, and the ways in which these lenses can be used to help us understand the tasks of living together in community.

Part I: Conversations about Love and Friendship opens with an essay offering an interpretation of the place of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* inspired by Professor Nichols. Stephen Block and Patrick Cain analyze Aristotle's discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, linking this discussion to his treatment of knowledge and the pursuit of truth. They argue that Aristotle's account of friendship arises from the paradox of the human good that becomes poetically manifest in his account of virtue—the good both reveals our deep neediness that opens us to another, yet it also has the potential to alienate us from others and indeed requires an alienation from ourselves in our longing to possess this good perfectly. Daniel Mahoney's "Friendship and the Solitude of Greatness: The Case of Charles de Gaulle" explores de Gaulle's attempts to navigate the demands of the political greatness alongside his recognition of human limitation. Mahoney demonstrates how de Gaulle combined the roles of the magnanimous protector with those of the Christian, and the father. Despite de Gaulle's commitment to his family, Mahoney finds that he was required to choose character and statesmanship over true friendship in the Aristotelian vein. Lisa Pace Vetter's contribution, "Love and Friendship in Henry James's *The Bostonians*," uses Aristotle's understanding of friendship as a hermeneutic for reading *The Bostonians*. Vetter argues that although James does not depict Aristotle's "complete" friendship, he demonstrates its felt lack in *Bostonians*, and nevertheless proves himself a friend to Aristotle through his attempts to think through the complexity of living a good life, especially for women, in the American context. This section closes with Ann and Lee Ward's "Whit Woody Barcelona: Love and Friendship in White Stillman's *Barcelona* and Woody Allen's *Vicky, Christina, Barcelona*." Structuring their analysis in terms of the framework of the "male drama" and "female drama" that is developed in Plato's *Republic*, the authors elucidate the ways in which the two films explore

different regime types. Their analysis of this exploration, and the questions it raises, deepens our understanding of what each of the films has to say about European-American relations in the Cold War and post–Cold War contexts in which the dramas are set.

Part II: Conversations between Politics and Poetry opens with Kenneth DeLuca's "Putting Together Courage and Moderation in Plato and Shakespeare." DeLuca considers the tension between the virtues of courage and moderation as developed in both Plato's *Republic* and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*. He examines the role of both virtues in various "republics" as they are theorized, founded, and then degenerate. DeLuca argues that Plato helps us to understand the fundamental difficulty of combining courage and moderation, while Shakespeare illuminates the implications of the failure to do so. Throughout, DeLuca links the discussion of courage and moderation to the human desire to make interpret and make sense of reality by subsuming particulars under universals. Next, Paul Kirkland offers a reading of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which reads the education of Miranda as an improved version of Machiavelli's education for political life in *The Prince*. As the Princ*ess*, Miranda avoids the twin dangers of looking for permanent idealized political solutions on the one hand, and of abstracting from politics altogether on the other. *Play*, Kirkland suggests, is as much "the thing," politically speaking, as *the* play is for Shakespeare, the artist. Next, Germaine Paulo Walsh offers a comparison of J. R. R. Tolkien and Aleksander Solzhenitsyn in "Reading Tolkien through the Lens of Solzhenitsyn's Analysis of Ideology: On Art, Responsibility, and Progress." Walsh puts Solzhenitsyn's analysis of ideology into conversation with the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. A comparison of these writers may initially strike one as an odd pairing, given the many differences between the two men, both in their literary styles and in their life experiences. However, a deeper look reveals some striking similarities between the two writers, and Walsh analyzes how each writer's respective view of the nature of art, and the political role of the artist, is exemplified in his own literary work. Finally, Carl Eric Scott examines the surprising prominence of "social dance" in the films of Whit Stillman. Scott makes a compelling case for the place of dance as a part of the social and political commentary in Stillman's films. Particularly, he shows that by attending to social dance we can not only see Stillman's critique of the sexual revolution, but, in the character of Violet in *Damsels in Distress*, Stillman's self-aware critique of his own excesses as a social critic.

Part III: Conversations from Tragedy to Comedy opens with Denise Schaeffer's analysis of Albert Camus's stage play adaptation of William Faulkner's novel *Requiem for a Nun*. Schaeffer explores the major alterations Camus makes to Faulkner's original, arguing that they are not simply driven by practical considerations but are subtly congruent with Camus's own

theoretical treatments of the distinctive character of tragedy and rebellion in modernity. Next, Natalie Taylor reflects on the politico-philosophical significance of the literary form of the novel with the help of Mary Wollstonecraft and Jane Austen in "A Vindication of Novels: Jane Austen's Conversation with Mary Wollstonecraft." Taylor argues that Austen's *Persuasion* depicts the virtues required for a more liberal and egalitarian political order as described by Wollstonecraft. Taylor argues that Austen defends an account of marriage that allows for the coming together of both reason and passion, or love and friendship. In so doing, Austen defends the form of the novel as the literary form that could best effect a comedic resolution of "just opinion" with "romantic sentiment" for a new age of liberty. Sara MacDonald's "From Tragedy to Love: Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*," reads that famously odd play of Shakespeare's as the transition from the account of love and friendship prominent in classical thinkers like Aristotle to the distinctively Christian interpretations of charity and forgiveness found in the modern age. In a way akin to G. W. F. Hegel's philosophy of freedom, MacDonald's Shakespeare makes a case for the ultimate victory of comedy over tragedy and shows the political implications of this view for the possibility of actualizing human freedom in community. Finally, Stephen Sims's chapter, "The Tragic and the Equitable in Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Ethics*," tracks Aristotle's use of the story of Odysseus and Penelope as a comedic alternative to the tragic story of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra in the *Poetics*. The messier ending of the *Odyssey* lacks abstract tragic simplicity of the kind demonstrated by Plato's Socrates in the *Republic*, but the very complexity of human life leaves room for the exercise of prudence and equity, thereby making a case for comedy.

NOTES

1. Gregory Bruce Smith, "On Cropsey's World: Joseph Cropsey and the Tradition of Political Philosophy," *The Review of Politics* 60.2 (Spring 1998): 307–341.
2. Mary P. Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987).
3. Allan Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," in *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd edition, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 307–436; 435.
4. Bloom, "Interpretive Essay," 435.
5. Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community*, 149.
6. Mary P. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Press, 1992).
7. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 31.
8. Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen*, 167.
9. Mary P. Nichols, *Socrates on Friendship and Community* (New York & Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

10. Nichols, *Socrates on Friendship and Community*, 155.

11. Mary P. Nichols, *Thucydides and the Pursuit of Freedom* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015).

12. For a complete list of Prof. Nichols's publications, please see the Appendix to this volume, pp. 227–230.

Part I

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Chapter 1

The Good, Truth, and Friendship in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*

Stephen Block and Patrick N. Cain

It is with good reason that Aristotle is called the philosopher of friendship.[1] His discussion of friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* occupies a full fifth of the book. He devotes more attention to friendship than to justice, to pleasure, to the life of contemplation, to prudence, to wisdom, or to any other virtue. More importantly, he praises friendship. A friend is the "greatest of external goods."[2] Friends are needed by all, in prosperity and poverty, by the young and by the old. Friendship is superior to justice (*NE* 1155a23–27). And most significantly, "no one would choose to live without friends, even possessing all remaining goods" (*NE* 1155a1–2). The incompleteness of a life lacking friends would appear to make a friend the good that completes all other goods.

The place that friends and friendship occupy in Aristotle's account of the good in the *Ethics* is nevertheless perplexing, insofar as it also seems to depreciate friendship. Friendship first appears in the *Ethics* when Aristotle criticizes the idea of the good that was introduced by his "friends," saying that it may be necessary, obligatory, and better to reject one's friends in order to "preserve the truth" (*NE* 1096a13). More subtly, after promising in Book II to treat friendship (*philia*) as a virtue (*NE* 1108a27), Aristotle drops it from his discussion in Book IV, and replaces it with a nameless virtue having to do with providing pleasure, explaining that the virtuous person gives pleasure and pain not out of affection, as does the friend, but because of the sort of person he is (*NE* 1126b20–26). Aristotle only turns to his discussion of friendship in Book VIII, after beginning again in Book VII, which provides both an extended account of continence and incontinence as kinds of counterparts to virtue and vice, and a kind of defense of pleasure.

The recovery of friendship in Books VIII and IX is thus somewhat unexpected. While Aristotle states that friendship is "some sort of virtue or is accompanied by virtue" (*NE* 1154b35), he does not explain why his account

of friendship had to be delayed so long or placed outside of his discussion of virtue and the specific virtues. Indeed, the account of the good would seem to be brought to a conclusion in Aristotle's discussion in Book VI of wisdom (*sophia*)—the knowledge (*epistēmē*) of the things more honorable than human things—which appears to provide the virtuous activity of the soul, thereby fulfilling the inquiry into the human good and happiness set out in Book I.

We argue that understanding Aristotle's account of friendship, and its place in the *Ethics*, depends upon considering his complicated lead up to friendship and especially what transpires in his earlier treatment of the good and of virtue. We begin by looking at Aristotle's general account of the good and his inquiry into what is said to be good by others, which culminates in a split between one's own good and the truth and the aforesaid rejection of friends. Aristotle's turn to his own account of the human good results in an account of virtue that manifests this dichotomy in a split as between desire and thought, pleasure and knowledge, but which Aristotle demonstrates in his account of the specific virtues cannot be maintained except through self-ignorance or self-forgetting—a rejection of both oneself and the truth simultaneously. In all, we suggest that Aristotle's account of friendship arises from the paradox of the *human* good that becomes manifest in his account of virtue. The good both reveals our deep neediness that opens us to another, yet it also has the potential to alienate us from others and indeed requires an alienation from ourselves in our longing to possess this good perfectly.

THE GOOD OF ANOTHER

Aristotle begins the *Ethics* by calling our attention to our desire for the good: our love of the good, our wish to be good. The attempt to possess the good as our own seemingly defines human life. If at least one takes the putative final teaching of the *Ethics* to be that the best life is not one of ethical virtue but the contemplative life, as an inquiry into this good, the *Ethics* seems to be misnamed. "The Good" or "The Life of Contemplation" would seem a more appropriate title for a book of this sort—the life engaged in virtuous deeds is a mere second-best life.[3] At the same time, it is also the case that Aristotle twice at the end says or warns that the contemplative life is directed toward a "more than human" (*NE* 1177b27) happiness. But the *Ethics* is about the *human* good, a good that belongs to the human being as human being, and in Book I's general outline of happiness, Aristotle narrows the scope of the inquiry to human happiness and the human good. Even so, the first substantive thing Aristotle says about the *human* good is that it is a good that belongs to the art of politics, because it procures and preserves the good of the city,

which is a good nobler and more divine than the good of any individual (*NE* 1094b5–10). From the beginning, even the *human* good is held to a more-than-human standard.

Aristotle's first attempt to define the good in the *Ethics* turns to the opinions of others, which too point to the relationship between the human and the divine, to the tension underlying our quest for the good. All agree as to the name of the good being sought as *eudaimonia*, and they also agree that it is living well and acting well. *Eudaimonia* is derived from the noun *daimōn*, a being neither god nor human, but in between. The acknowledgment of eudaimonia as the human good arises from the shared recognition that the activity that constitutes the human good derives from beyond the human.[4]

Even the disagreement between the many and the wise that Aristotle finds in the various views reflects this common disposition to the good. The many say it is something "obvious," like pleasure, wealth, or honor, Aristotle contends, but often what someone says is good changes for the same person: when he is impoverished, for example, he will identify wealth as the good, when sick, he will say health is the good, when aware of his ignorance, he will "be amazed at those who say something that is great and above them," while "others used to think that the good is something other, by itself, apart from these good things and the cause of their being good things" (*NE* 1095a22–27).

Underlying the seeming incoherence in this variety of opinions of the good is a core agreement reflected in these views of the good aside from the name they agree upon. Each of them identifies the good as something else, something other than what they possess: the good is what they lack—health, wealth, knowledge, the good by itself. Thus, this brief survey of what is said to be the good culminates in a description of what seems to be Platonic idea of the good, the good apart from but the cause of good things, to which Aristotle will return a couple of chapters later. While it is offered to account for the goodness of the various goods identified by the many as the good, it is a sophisticated version of the many's good, a good that lies apart from any particular good. Aristotle's account of the opinions of others points to a possible need to understand the good as something we do not have, something that escapes us.

Without addressing any of these opinions about the good, in an apparent digression, Aristotle turns to exhorting the reader not to overlook the arguments that proceed from principles or beginnings are different from those that move toward beginnings or principles. He further notes that "Plato was well (*eu*) perplexed, and examined whether the way was proceeding from *archai* or towards *archai*" (*NE* 1095a32–33). Doing so, however, Aristotle links (adverbially at least) good (*eu*) with lacking (*aporia*).[5] The digression is in this sense of a piece with the view that the good is what is absent. Inasmuch as the good is other and apart from all good things and yet still

the cause of the good things, it is indeed entirely unclear where one would begin an inquiry into the good. Would we need knowledge of *the* good before we can know what things are good? Otherwise, we would not know why they are good. Or would we arrive at an understanding of the good by examining the obvious and manifest goods we experience, for example, by seeing what pleasure, wealth, and honor share in common, that permits us to say what the good is? If the latter, inasmuch as we could know what things are good in the absence of knowledge of *the* good, what is the purpose of knowing *the* good at all, as we would already know what to choose and what to avoid? Or is there something good in having knowledge of the good itself?

HONOR, VIRTUE, AND THE GOOD

In chapter 5, Aristotle returns from his digression, and provides a second survey of opinions about the good, which takes a vastly different approach than the first. Rather than looking at what is said to be good, which resulted in the good being what is beyond us and others, Aristotle now looks to the good that is understood to be present in the lives people themselves choose to live. The many's inconstant view of the good as what is lacking, is replaced by the many's coherent ("not unreasonable") but now subhuman view that pleasure is the good. There is another change as well, for although Aristotle first said that the many identify pleasure, wealth, *and* honor as obvious and manifest goods, he now says honor is the good chosen by the refined who are active in the city, as opposed to the many. Accordingly, honor takes center stage, and it does so in such a way as to suggest that, however good honor is, it is not an obvious and manifest good.

Aristotle devotes the lion's share of this discussion to honor; honor is "nearly" the end of the life of politics, and the political life along with the life of enjoyment and the contemplative life is a prominent one. However, the honor sought by active people proves to be an inadequate good for two reasons. First, it is dependent on those conferring it, which means it can easily be taken away, "whereas we divine that the good is one's own (*oikeion*) which cannot easily be taken away" (*NE* 1095b24–25). Second, individuals desire honor in order to be convinced that they themselves are good, which is why they do not desire to be honored indiscriminately, but rather by those who are prudent and by those who know them, and, moreover, they desire to be honored on account of virtue. Hence, Aristotle concludes that even the honor-seekers think that virtue is the better of the two (*NE* 1095b31). In this light, virtue would appear to be that for the sake of which honor is sought, and that politics is directed more toward virtue than honor.

Active honor-seekers are therefore lacking in self-knowledge for two reasons. First, they pursue honor because they do not *know* themselves to be good. Second, in identifying honor to be the good of politics, rather than the virtue on account of which they seek to be honored, they would appear not to know sufficiently what kind of life they are living. Those who seek honor do seek to be in possession of the good, for the good to be their own. But in seeking honor to confirm that they themselves are good and in possession of virtue, in order to complete their good, they seek another good outside of themselves, a good that does not belong to them.

Aristotle's treatment of honor is a microcosm of the problem of the human good, for in large measure, the problem of happiness for human beings turns on the problem that our securing of the good requires *external* goods, and that those goods do not fully belong to us (*NE* 1098b12–20). Thus, as Aristotle proceeds to show, even virtue turns out to be an incomplete good: one can possess virtue even if one sleeps through life, but no one would seriously consider such a person happy.[6] Indeed, that our happiness might require something or someone other than ourselves is latent in Aristotle's formal arguments for virtue's superiority, which are derived from an analysis of the honor lover. It is by examining honor that we discover not only that virtue is a more appropriate end of politics but also that virtue ought to be honored, and that honor requires virtue. The formal argument against honor is that it is dependent, but at the same time the argument for virtue is dependent on the longing of the honor lover, without which we would not see what the honor lover really longs for—the awareness of his or her goodness. Even the apparent superior independence of virtue—that it is more enduring than honor, because it does not rely on others—is not as strong of a case against honor as first appears, for it turns out that a defining characteristic of the honor lover properly understood, is to desire the honor of the prudent and of those who know; on this basis, it would seem that honor, insofar as it depends on virtue, is as secure as virtue and knowledge itself. Honor appears to be desired in order to see ourselves in possession of virtue, and to this extent it makes the mere possession of virtue insufficient.

` Book I does not make it clear, however, why the virtuous would desire honor or why they would give it, especially since it is not clear how a virtuous person will perceive his need for external goods, given that the need for having his virtue externally verified would seem to undercut the claim that he knows himself to possess virtue. Virtue may be the proper end of the active life, but it is hard to see the basis upon which virtue acts. Whereas the discussion begins with the honor lover pointing us toward virtue, it leaves us wondering how honor and virtue can possibly be reconciled. A fuller explanation would seem to require an account of the basis upon which virtue might turn its attention to other human beings and find a ground for acting.

FRIENDSHIP AND THE GOOD

Fittingly, following hard upon his discussion of honor in Book I, Aristotle makes his first mention of friends in the context of introducing his critique of the idea of the good.[7] In this chapter, Aristotle prefaces his inquiry into the idea of the good by noting that the task is cumbersome because the men who introduced the forms were "friends" (*philois*), but he concludes by seemingly discarding friendship in the interest of philosophy: "Perhaps it might be held to be better, and in fact to be obligatory, at least in defense of the truth, to reject one's own (*oikeia*), especially for a philosopher. Both one's own and truth being friends (or 'dear,' *philoin*), it is pious to honor truth before [one's own]" (*NE* 1096a15–17). In this first mention of friendship in connection with the philosopher, Aristotle presents the radical suggestion that rejecting one's own is a precondition of being a philosopher, that the philosopher as such does away with his own.

Aristotle formulates this exhortation to reject one's own, however, in such a way as to raise the question of whether truth and one's own are as dichotomous as he suggests. For example, he identifies truth and one's own as a pair by using the rare dual verb to express his meaning—"both [truth and one's own] are friends" (*NE* 1096a17). In plural verbs, subjects are brought together by the verb, by acting or being acted upon, but in a separate and individual way—their unity is caused by the action or suffering in which they partake, and thus their unity is accidental. By contrast, singular verbs entail that the subject is a unity prior to acting or being acted upon. By expressing his teaching in the dual, therefore, Aristotle questions whether the truth and one's own are in fact either independent beings, a plurality, or a simple unity. If they were indeed reducible to either a plurality or a unity, the use of the dual would be superfluous.[8] As such, Aristotle raises the question of whether the truth and one's own are either severable objects, accidentally related by being separate objects of our love, or whether they are loved as an inseparable pair.

Honoring the truth first would also entail a consideration of whether it is true that one must dispense with one's own to save the truth. First and foremost, if it is *better* to save the truth, then saving the truth would be inseparable from doing what is best for one's friends, and only more so if they are philosophers.[9] Hence, the oddity of this argument is made evident above all in that it was Socrates (an introducer of the *ideas*), who asserted that he loved to be refuted, because having the lie in the soul is the greatest evil that can befall man.[10] In this respect, it is not so clear how loving one's own can be opposed to truth, especially if one's own is a philosopher, for whom the possession of truth is best and the possession of falsehood is evil. Indeed, it is not clear why this devotion to truth would entail speaking the truth to one's friends about

their ideas rather than simply knowing it for oneself. The identification of the love of truth with *speaking* the truth to one's friends speaks to the connection rather than the split between truth and one's own.

Similarly, *philoin* can operate in the crucial truth or friendship sentence as either an adjective, "loved," or as a substantive, "friends," and so Aristotle could mean either that "both are loved" or that "both are friends." Aristotle thus permits us to consider truth as what is loved, which may or may not be our own, or as a friend, which is inseparable from being our own—a friend is always *someone's* friend. Dispensing with one's own would thereby entail dispensing with the truth as well. As we have seen, Aristotle has only just rejected honor as being the good in part because "we divine that the good is something that is one's own (*oikeion*)" (*NE* 1095b26–27). To disregard one's own would also entail disregarding one's own good, and inasmuch as this is so, there would be a disconnect between the desire for the truth about the good and the desire for the good. Doing away with our own is coeval with doing away with the good that we divine to belong *to us*, and one can wonder why it would matter that it is better to do away with one's own for the sake of the truth.

Aristotle appropriately uses the dual formulation to introduce his critique of the ideas, which is a response to the problem of how we speak about the good—we speak about the good as a dual. Things we experience as good—honor, wealth, and friends, for example—are obviously different, but is calling them all "good" a mere accident of how we speak, or is there some underlying unity? The pairing of the good things as we experience them and *the* good would be a parallel of the apartness and togetherness of one's own and the truth, for if they were not paired in such a way as to admit their separate identities or definitions—if they were simply one—they would explain nothing about our experience of good things, and more specifically about our desire to possess them as our own. If they were so separate as to be plural and related simply by accident, they would similarly allow us no way of judging our experience of good things or their relation to other goods.

Aristotle's substantive critique of the idea of the good is a critique of the ideas in general, but it takes on a special problem with regard to the idea of the good. We put things together—give them the same name—because of their similarity or likeness. The thing itself is supposed to explain why we classify things together. Aristotle's contention is that there is no difference in definition between the good itself and any good thing, or more specifically, the good itself must be predicated of itself—it must be *something* good. With regard to the good, denying that the good itself is predicated of good would entail depriving it of goodness—it would *not* be a good thing, not belong in the class of good things. One could otherwise avoid the problem Aristotle

raises by denying that particular goods participate in the idea of the good—and thus that the idea of the good is the only really good thing. The good causes only itself to be good; the good as a good would not need another idea to account for the similarity between the good and particular goods, for they would be identical. As such, it would be intellectually useless, as it would not elucidate why good things are good, or more problematically, it would negate the goodness of the various goods. Hence, either the idea of the good is not a good thing, or it is the only thing good. The idea of the good leaves us with the choice between understanding the good as the cause of good things being good, but not itself good, or as predicated only of itself, in which case it will be useless and nothing else would be in relation to it or belong to it—it would do nothing to explain our experience of good from which our wonder and perplexity about the good arises. The idea can explain all goods except itself, in which case it would not belong to itself, or it could explain only itself and be apart from all goods, and thus not really be the cause of anything being good. In either case, it lacks the unity to explain how good is spoken about.

In spite of the fact that Aristotle appears to reject the idea, he nevertheless raises the perplexity of why the various good things are good in different ways such that they cannot be explained by a single idea or definition of good. So too he presents what appear to be alternative explanations to the ideas to explain how the good is said. It may be, for example, that all goods are called good by analogy, like sight is good in the eyes, mind is in the soul, and so on, or that they contribute to one thing or are derived from one thing. And yet, Aristotle dismisses this inquiry, because "it would appear to belong more (*oikeioteron*)" to a "different philosophy" "to be exact" about these issues (*NE* 1096b30–31). Philosophy, it appears, has its "own" after all. And likewise, the idea is dismissed, because "even if there is some one good thing predicated [of things] in common, or there is some separate thing, itself by itself, it is clear that it would not be subject to action or capable of being acquired by a human being" (*NE* 1096b33–34). Aristotle thus divides philosophy into two—one in which exactness in truth is its "own" and belongs to it and another devoted to the truth about what can belong to us—the good capable of being "acquired" (*ktēton*) by a human. But that division could only make sense if the philosopher concerning the truth were wholly indifferent to the question of whether such truth is good to have, and practical philosophy were indifferent to the question of whether the good acquired is truly good. Aristotle identifies this good that the *Ethics* is devoted to pursuing as the good "being sought" (*NE* 1097a15)—*to zētoumenon*—which can entail both an inquiry into and a desiring of the good—would suggest that these are neither identical nor wholly separable from each other.

TRUTH AND VIRTUE

In the remainder of Book I, Aristotle provides, in outline at least, his own account of what this good is, which culminates in his famous argument about the human work. All things are judged as good or bad in accordance with their proper work—a good eye is one that sees well, a good carpenter is one who builds well, and so on. Hence, the good human being would be one who does the human work well. But Aristotle's procedure for determining what happiness is entails looking for what work or function is "appropriate" (*oikeion*) to a human being, and he thus excludes having life and perception as these belong to plants and animals as well (*NE* 1097b34–1098a3). What belongs to human beings, Aristotle concludes, is "some practice of one having reason (*logos*)" (*NE* 1098a4). But since human reason is not a seamless whole but rather divides into a part that has reason and thinking, and a part that is persuaded by reason (*NE* 1098a5), the difficulty that arises and will shape the remainder of Aristotle's inquiry into the good is that the function of a thing is determined by what is peculiar to it. Humans are the only beings capable of being persuaded, perhaps—we can choose and act in accordance with rational principle. We are not necessarily the only being with thought; the divine may possess mind. This division of reason raises the problem that what is peculiar to human beings, and thus what it is that belongs to them as their defining work, is not necessarily the best of the activities in which human beings can share.

This problem is revealed more clearly in Aristotle's account of the soul at the end of Book I, from which the account of virtue in the first half of the *Ethics* will be derived. The soul is divided into a rational and nonrational part, the former of which divides into a part that "has" (*echein*) reason "in itself," and an appetitive part that participates (literally, "has together with"—*metechein*) in reason inasmuch as it is persuaded by reason, "as one listens to his father or friends" (*NE* 1102a33–1102b4). Virtue is therefore divided into intellectual and ethical virtue as the excellence of these different parts of *logos* respectively. Aristotle never says what part of this rational soul persuades the part that listens and obeys, and thus how the rational part that is not reason itself but somehow participates in reason is related to reason itself remains unclear.[11] But this omission is not accidental, for it simply manifests the problem of the peculiar function of human beings—they can be "persuaded to be ruled" (*peitharchei*) (*NE* 102b27). The verb *peithomai* means to be persuaded, but it also means to obey, and in this respect, the distinctive human function would appear to entail a good deal of submission to an authority outside of itself, and in its subordination to something else raises a question as to whether it is the highest thing. On the other hand, it is only in the middle voice—in which the subject makes himself the object of his

own action—that *peithomai* means "I obey," literally, "I persuade myself." Obedience thus understood is mixed with a subtle rejection of external authority, or more specifically, it is only on the surface that the desires exist in submission to an external rational principle.

This tension within persuasion is manifest, although problematically, in Aristotle's account of ethical virtue. Initially, the account leaves little place for reason or knowledge. Virtue is a disposition that arises through habit seemingly instilled by a lawgiver rather than through teaching (or from father and friends). The virtuous take pleasure and pain in the right things in the right way at the right time, and the pleasure and pain we take in actions is the surest sign of our character, although we are not told whether these pleasures and pains are found in observing the actions of others or in acting. Virtuous actions are those that "spring" from a firm and unchangeable character, they are chosen, and chosen on account of themselves, and they are done knowingly, but Aristotle concludes that "when it comes to the virtues, knowledge has no, or little, force" (*NE* 1005b3–4).

Accordingly, ethical virtue does not clearly entail any role for reason until Aristotle further specifies the content and ground of choice in a digression separating Aristotle's general account of ethical virtue from his account of the specific virtues. Chosen acts are distinct from other voluntary acts inasmuch as they are the result of prior deliberation, "for choice involves reason and thought" (*NE* 1112a17). But reasoning is reintroduced in choice in a way that proves problematic for virtue. Reason and thought are teleological and directed to ends, and thus deliberate or chosen action entails turning those actions into means, as we cannot deliberate about ends. "We lay down the end," Aristotle says, "and then consider in what manner and by what means it can be realized" (*NE* 1112b14–15). In accordance with this, Aristotle models all deliberation at this point on certain kinds of *technai*, all of which presuppose ends, health in medicine, for example, and deliberate about how to bring them about. Deliberation would be endless and thereby futile, and the decision made on the basis of deliberation arbitrary, if one did not have some standard by which one could decide between alternative courses of action. This means in turn that those ends, for the sake of which we choose things, cannot be the result of choice—no doctor chooses whether he should aim for the health of a patient, and inasmuch as human beings have a work, like the doctor, then they too are governed by a standard they do not make for themselves. In this respect, inasmuch as our actions are our own, they can be so only by subjecting our actions to an external standard, and to this extent entails being governed by something outside of ourselves. The inherent resistance of virtue to reason thus becomes apparent, inasmuch as reason moves us beyond ourselves and makes it necessary that we can only really see ourselves in our actions, and

thus see whether we are good by bowing to the authority of a good that is not entirely our own.

Book IV's discussion of the particular virtues themselves likewise turns our attention to the compatibility of the good with human action and self-knowledge in a way that reflects on friendship. The active life that Aristotle defines in Book I as being devoted to virtue rather than honor culminates in Book IV with the great-souled individual, who is said to in some way contain all the virtues (*NE* 1123b30). Surprisingly, at this seeming peak of virtue it is honor that retakes center stage, with Aristotle arguing that honor is the greatest of external goods, that the great-souled individual is especially concerned with honor (*NE* 1124a6), and that his goodness and nobility make him worthy of great honors (*NE* 1123b22, 34).

At the same time, however, the great-souled individual has contempt for both small honors, and for honors and dishonors that come from people who do not know them. Further, Aristotle suggests that, while the great-souled might accept honor from serious individuals, he would not accept such honor as worthy of his virtue (*NE* 1124a6–11). It does not even appear that the great-souled individual agrees with Aristotle's suggestion that honor is a great thing with which he is especially concerned (*NE* 1124a16–17). As a result of his dismissal of honor, the great-souled individual lacks a reason to exercise his virtue: Aristotle says he acts only when a great honor or deed is at stake (*NE* 1124b22–25), but that no honor seems great to him (as Aristotle thrice notes, nothing is great to the great-souled individual; *NE* 1123b33, 1125a3; 1125a16).[12] He does not act because he does not desire the available honors, but more importantly, because he does not honor anything as worthy of his deeds or honor (*NE* 1124b7); knowing himself to be in possession of all virtue, he lacks anything to possibly act for, since there is nothing external to himself that he honors as good or necessary. His virtue—a virtue without honor—entails an inactivity that makes his soul "a beautiful but profitless object" (*NE* 1125a12–13). The great-souled individual thus seems unable to achieve happiness, which depends upon the practice of virtue and not its mere possession (*NE* 1095b34–1096a2). He is like the man of virtue in Book I who dreams his life away, living a life of virtue that does not choose virtuous deeds. As his name brings to mind, he is all soul with no action.[13] It is perhaps not surprising that Aristotle says that his life does not seem worth living to him (*NE* 1124b9).

According to Aristotle's initial description, the great-souled individual is both great and knows that he is great. Since he wants and deserves honors from those who are worthy of giving it, and only he is worthy, he may wish to honor himself (*NE* 1123b23–24; 1124a5–12). But even if so, how can he come to understand himself as virtuous, except by acting? And to act for the sake of seeing oneself implies that one does not know oneself, which is

outside the definition of the great-souled individual. It seems that if the great-souled individual knows he is virtuous (and is virtuous) he cannot act, but he cannot know himself to be virtuous unless he acts. Thus, even honoring oneself seems to require the desire to be virtuous and to see oneself as virtuous. Action and honor would seem to entail a lack of self-knowledge that is a difficult chasm for complete virtue to bridge.

Late in his account of the great-souled individual, Aristotle suggests that the one person the individual who possesses greatness of soul is capable of living in relation to is a friend (*NE* 1124b30–25a1). Who is that friend? For the friendship to solve the problem of honor would require a second great-souled individual, which would allow the two great-souled individuals to honor one another for each other's nobility by nobly acting for the other's sake, thereby facilitating the sight of their own virtue, and achieving self-knowledge without admitting its absence. But even still, the admission of absence seems impossible to escape, for without it, what need can a great-souled individual have for friendship? Why would a friend be sought, or how could a friend be even recognized? If the friend were a second great-souled individual, then it seems neither would act, and without action it is hard to see how either could identify the other as someone worthy of receiving honor or bestowing it. An exclusive concern with nobility means that neither friendship nor self-knowledge can be activated.

Perhaps it is not surprising that immediately after the discussion of the great-souled individual, and its tendency to abstract from other human beings, Aristotle turns our attention to a new set of virtues—virtues that seem particularly concerned with reconciling oneself to other human beings. If the first five virtues Aristotle discusses emphasize that the mean belonging to virtue is the mean relative to us (*NE* 1107a), the five "social" virtues that follow greatness of soul often seem focused on finding the mean relative to others.

FRIENDSHIP, KNOWLEDGE, AND THE SOCIAL VIRTUES

Although in Book I Aristotle argued that the concern for honor should be reoriented toward virtue, he begins his account of the social virtues with a nameless virtue concerned with honor: not the great honors that are related to greatness of soul, but the small and measured kinds for which greatness of soul has no use (*NE* 1124b21). One is led to wonder whether this virtue aims at solving the problems raised by the discussion of greatness of soul. Does this nameless virtue's concern with noble deeds that are not too great for the individual allow its possessor to acknowledge his own insufficiency in a way

that leaves room for human action? The turn to the social virtues provides us with a new attempt to reconcile honor and virtue.

Interestingly, Aristotle introduces the virtue associated with honor by defining it entirely in terms of praise and blame: he notes that those who love honor (the *philotimoi*) and those who do not love honor (the *aphilotimoi*) are praised and blamed for wanting honor too much or too little, for wanting it from the wrong sources, or for not accepting that noble deeds ought to be honored (*NE* 1125b8–11). Honor is conferred, and goodness confirmed, when his noble deeds are recognized. This introduction seems to frame the virtue simply in terms of honor: since praise and blame are themselves forms of honoring or dishonoring, it would seem that the love of honor is itself honored and dishonored, raising the possibility that the mean in regards to this pursuit of honor could correspond to the amount of praise its pursuit (or lack thereof) produces. The practitioner of this nameless virtue might be the one who achieves the most honor possible by appearing to both love and not love honor in an amount that makes oneself praised to the greatest extent possible—praised as both an honor lover and as someone who does not love honor (*NE* 1125b21–23).[14] But if so, then the virtue in question is in fact hard to differentiate from the love of honor, which Aristotle first says is the vice of the extreme (the only difference between the virtue and vice being the degree to which the goal of honor is achieved).[15] On the other hand, Aristotle argued in Book I that because honor depends so much on the one honoring, the desire for honor is superficial and more rightly understood as the love of noble virtue. If the virtue concerned with honor can be simply defined by praise and blame—by the perception of an outside observer—how can the love of honor be properly identified or properly honored as noble? What can make such a virtue noble?

The noble appears twice in Aristotle's more detailed discussion of honor loving, first in Aristotle's remark that we blame the one who does not love honor because he chooses not to be honored for noble deeds, and second in his observation that "we sometimes praise the honor lover (*philotimon*) as manly and as a lover of what is noble (*philokalon*)" (*NE* 1125b13). Together these remarks suggest that the virtue, insofar as it orients itself by the noble, is found not necessarily in the love of honor but in the proper honoring of noble deeds, including those deeds that are not necessarily of the great variety. The honor lover may appear to be the lover of what is noble because he *acts* nobly for the sake of honor, but the virtue is found in acting honorably for the sake of the noble (which one honors by one's action). That honor can only be given by someone who likewise honors the noble and who honors loving the noble. As the literal translations suggest, one can be a friend to honor if one is a friend of the noble. As we have seen, however, Aristotle's discussion indicates that it may be difficult to properly recognize and honor the

philokalon (or to be a *philophilokalon*)—the same actions that define the *philotimon* belong to the *philokalon*, so it is hard to tell the difference between the two. Whereas Aristotle's account of the noble and complete great-souled individual showed soul without action in a way that made friendship impossible, his presentation of this social virtue seems designed to underscore the difficulty of thinking that action can simply reveal the soul. How can one know if one is properly bestowing honors on another? In Book I, the reconciliation of virtue and honor was dependent on being honored by the one who knows, and the discussion of Book IV highlights the importance of the same, even while showing the difficulty of knowing another, and therewith the difficulty of being certain of one's own virtue. The possibility of overcoming this difficulty is a subject of the subsequent social virtues, which explore the possibility of correction by way of persuasion.

Although Aristotle had told us in Book II that the virtue involving anger is unnamed, he immediately confers a name upon it: gentleness. This second social virtue has to do with finding the mean in regard to the passion of anger (*orgē)*. Both honor and anger are related to *thumos* (*NE* 1147b30), albeit in different ways; anger primarily involves pain, and honor pleasure. Since anger is caused by the misdeeds of others, anger would seem to be as out of one's own control as is honor, insofar as anger (like honor) depends on the words and deeds of others. Yet in the same way that the virtue having to do with honor ultimately aims at making the noble rather than honor the source of its virtue, gentleness also contains an aspect that seems immune from considering others, for Aristotle says the gentle person wishes to be led by reason rather than by passion (*NE* 1125b30).[16] If one never becomes angry, the virtue of gentleness would not be at all dependent on the deeds of others. And if one pays attention to the deeds of another, it is hard to say why becoming angry could be a rational response to a perceived slight or attack.

Nevertheless, Aristotle does say that the gentle person experiences anger, with the caveats that he does not anger easily, does not act quickly on anger, and does not repress anger or keep it from others.[17] Whereas the person of excessive anger seeks revenge, the gentle person forgives or is willing to be persuaded out of anger by another (*NE* 1126a3; a25). The virtuous person neither stays angry nor acts in anger. What distinguishes the gentle person from the vice of deficient anger is that he feels anger while the person of deficient anger does not.

The possibility of being persuaded out of one's anger by another—provokes a somewhat different set of considerations. In such cases, the anger would seem to have arisen because one has wrongly perceived one's own or another's actions—precisely the possibility that arose in the discussion of judging honor lovers. To be persuaded that such anger is mistaken, Aristotle says, comes about by the persuasion of others. To be open to such persuasion

requires being reasonable while recognizing one's own unreasonableness. It requires both independence (to decide whether to simply abandon the anger, or to forgive), and the need for the arguments of another. Being open to painful persuasion or correction would be a sign that one loves the noble more than one loves honor (and the pleasure it brings), even while acknowledging that one does not fully possess it. To take on the task of persuading would seem to require knowledge of the truth, and the willingness to cause pain to another. Yet the vice of excessive anger makes the danger of doing so great. Given the requirements of gentleness, it is fitting that the next social virtue involves sharing in speeches and actions while living together. The mean of this virtue is to be found between those who attempt to cause no one pain by praising everything and opposing nothing, and those who oppose everything and give no thought to pain. Persons at either of the extremes, we might note, would have difficulty persuading someone that their anger was mistaken—they will either encourage excessive honor loving or excessive anger.

Although the virtue of sharing in speeches and actions while living together is unnamed, Aristotle says its deeds fall into the same category as those of a friend, with the difference being that the virtue lacks the affection that belongs to friendship. The focus of the virtue is on actions related to external goods rather than on the character of another's soul. This difference means that the person with this unnamed virtue "will act similarly in the case of both those he does not know and those he does know," doing what is suitable in each case (*NE* 1126b26–27). We might wonder if this does not give the unnamed virtue a certain advantage over friendship, since the approval or disapproval that persons with this virtue seek is not compromised by their relationships. On the other hand, Aristotle notes that what is suitable is partly determined by how much and what kind of a relationship already exists between the virtuous and the other person, and what sort of person the other is (whether they are rich, for instance). In other words, how (and how much) pleasure and pain the virtuous person is able to produce varies, as does the potential cause of pleasure and pain, which varies in accordance with the sort of relationship that is shared. A "friendly" person can provide the pleasure of the honor lover and can help him avoid the pain of disgrace that might come from anger (*NE* 1126b34),[18] if he properly judges the person and the person's standing. But if he properly judges the person, and not just the external goods, how can he "act similarly in the case of both those he does not know and those he does know"? What does it mean to have knowledge of another person, without having affection for them? If the other person is noble, does this not mean that friendly people do not love the noble? Or is it that they simply judge others as external goods?

Although this unnamed virtue seems to be one of pleasing and of avoiding the giving of pain, Aristotle says that this virtue also acts with a view to what

is noble and advantageous (*NE* 1126b30). This description of what guides this pleaser of persons is not entirely clear. Does he speak and act toward others for the sake of their nobility and/or advantage (and what if the two conflict?), or does he speak and act for the sake of his own nobility and/or advantage? When one considers the difference between this person and the friend who is willing to cause pain, one must suspect the latter. But given this contrast, to what extent could this virtue be truthful?

Aristotle turns to the question of falsehood and truth in his discussion of the virtue having to do with the sphere of speech, action, and pretense (*prospoiēma*) (*NE* 1127a20). Aristotle ascribes this virtue to the truthful man, whom he distinguishes from the boastful man (who enjoys falsehoods) and the self-deprecating ironist (who understates his own qualities in order to avoid bombast). One oddity of this virtue is that the person who thinks he always tells the truth could also be considered a kind of boaster, insofar as he too is "apt to pretend to qualities held in high repute," as Aristotle says of the boaster. He in this way resembles the great-souled-individual, who "is disposed to feeling contempt for others, and he is given to truthfulness, except inasmuch as he is ironic toward the many" (*NE* 1124b27). Aristotle says that such a person affirms that the qualities he possesses are his own without exaggerating or minimizing them (*NE* 1127a25), and that the virtue especially involves telling the truth about oneself (or about what one pretends to; *NE* 1127a20) in situations that do not involve justice or injustice (*NE* 1127a35). Understood thusly, the virtue seems to be defined as truthfully telling the truth about oneself—that one is truthful. It therefore involves a tautological kind of existence that holds true only insofar as the speech involved in the realm of truthfulness involves saying this and this only. Truthfulness would appear to be truthfulness about nothing, and especially unable to honor or to persuade. On what basis can such a person be said to know the truth, and how can they be certain of their knowledge?

In contrast to this version of truthfulness, Aristotle discusses self-deprecation and irony, arguing that one is ironic in order to avoid notice and therewith a reputation for bombast. Aristotle, however, refers to Socrates (*NE* 1127a24–27) as an example of irony, the philosopher who is famous for his irony and suffered a reputation for bombast for the very reason that he was held to be ironic (*Republic* 337a). By the end of his discussion of truthfulness, Aristotle admits this complication, if not explicitly about Socrates, at least about irony in general. The danger accompanying the practice of irony, he writes, is that the virtue and vices will collapse into one: irony can easily become boastfulness about the truth:

> Both excess and exaggerated deficiency are boastful. But people who make moderate use of irony and understate such of their own qualities as are not too

> noticeable and obnoxious strike one as cultivated. It is the boastful man who appears to be the opposite of the truthful man, because he is inferior to the ironic one. (*NE* 1127b29–33)

Aristotle here criticizes irony not because it is untruthful but because it is so unrestrained that it is understood as boasting. Near the end of the discussion, Aristotle newly suggests that the truthful person is inclined "to understate the truth" (*NE* 1127b8–9), which introduces the possibility of depreciating his own truthfulness.[19] If truthfulness can allow for self-deprecation, then irony may be compatible with truthfulness, but only irony of a certain kind: one must find a way to "make moderate use of irony." Just as irony points to the importance of knowing how and when one must tell the truth, so Aristotle's discussion points to the importance of knowing how and when one must be ironic. His writing, unlike Socrates's irony, does not lead to a reputation for bombast; his description of truthfulness and its extremes endorses those qualities that are highly valued (in word, if not in deed) by others. It seems that Aristotle has mastered the use of irony in a way that eluded both the great-souled individual and Socrates. By connecting truthfulness with irony, he recasts the way in which truthfulness is a virtue, and highlights the need to reconcile virtue with our relationship to others.

Aristotle further explores this possibility in his discussion of the virtue of wit. Literally, the name of the witty man (*eutrapelos*) means "turning well," or "good turns." In contrast to the slow moving and slow talking great-souled individual (*NE* 1125a13–16), the witty human being is defined by a quickness of wit (*NE* 1128a10). The witty human is a comic (*NE* 1128a24) who is concerned with playful speech that accompanies relaxation (*NE* 1127b33). While this description may appear to make wit a social grace that simply adorns the other virtues,[20] Aristotle highlights its importance by calling playful relaxation an essential and necessary part of life (*NE* 1127b33, 1128b4).

Like the other social virtues, wit appears to contain a divide within it. On the one hand, the witty man is defined by his freedom. His virtue is for himself, and he is "a law unto himself" (*NE* 1128a30–34),[21] dismissive of the city's law and its potential to curb the practice of his virtue (*NE* 1128a30–34). On the other hand, the witty man's assertion of independence or self-sufficiency is in tension with the other features of his virtue that make him dependent on the tastes of his audience. Much as truthfulness might be combined with irony, the witty man combines his comedy with tactfulness: he is defined as a man who "says nothing that is inappropriate for a free human being, or as one who will not give pain, or even one who will give joy to his listener" (*NE* 1128a24–27). Aristotle thus brings to mind the difficulty he had in defining the previous social virtues' means, for he admits that this characterization makes the witty person's virtue "indefinable," on the grounds that "different

things are hateful and pleasant to different people" (*NE* 1128a28–29). In contrast to truthfulness, and "friendliness," wit provides a way by which aspects of the earlier unnamed virtues might be practiced—a way to give pleasures (such as honor) and minimize pains (such as anger) through speech and action—without necessarily abandoning the standard of truth.[22] Wit's doing so, however, seems to depend on its indefinable character. Within the bounds of his own law the witty man is free to speak the truth, and perhaps even free to speak it precisely.[23] But he is not free to persuade or to be persuaded. For to persuade is to use truth in a way that causes pain, for it is to reveal another's lack of knowledge, just as to be persuaded is to reconcile the rule of oneself with being ruled by something outside of one's own law.

Book IV's discussion of the social virtues does not follow the order promised in Book II, which was supposed to culminate in a discussion of the virtue of friendship. The actual discussion, however, seemed to replace friendship with a virtue said to be like friendship but to not be friendship because of its lack of affection. It replaced friendship in another way, by changing the order of the virtues, with "friendliness" taking the place of truthfulness, truthfulness taking the place of wit, and wit taking the place of friendship. These three virtues as originally promised were to concern themselves with the truth and the pleasant in speech and action, but their actual description showed the difficulty of combining the true and the pleasant in either speech or action. Because the socially virtuous person's primary goal is to produce pleasure and minimize pain, he is unable to point out mistakes or to persuade, since his doing so will often cause pain. He is in this way the inverse of the great-souled individual who is unwilling to have his mistakes or deficiencies or neediness pointed out to him by another (*NE* 1124b14). The socially virtuous person's knowledge of the truth must remain hidden from others, with the truth spoken either ironically or as a joke. He, therefore, does not leave himself open to the correction of any mistakes in his own knowledge—any correction of his judgment of others.

CONCLUSION

The problematic relationship between the truth and our own raised in Book I is thus present throughout Aristotle's account of moral and social virtues. The soul of the virtuous seems to be perfectly in harmony, so that the desire for truth and the desire for the good appear to be wholly in unison. This discussion peaked with the achievement of complete moral virtue within the soul of the great-souled individual, who, having fully achieved moral virtue, has little motive for human action, since such an individual already possesses the good at which all things aim.

Friendship proves to be impossible within Aristotle's discussion of the moral and social virtues. They cannot provide the necessary ground for affection, and they do not allow for the sharing in truth that is the essential ground of friendship. To be willing to cause pain to friends, by correcting them and persuading them that they are wrong (wrong to be angry, for instance), would be to allow truth to govern friendship. It is only when one's willingness to speak the truth is known that a reliable honor can be found, and one's willingness to tell the truth can only be discovered by one's willingness to cause pain, rather than be a servile deliverer of pleasure. To reveal oneself as willing to cause pain for the good of another is to reveal oneself as lover of the noble. It is a willingness that connects and distinguishes the love of honor and the love of the noble by providing the way that the lover of the noble might discover another person like himself, but not so like himself as to not see the other's incompleteness or to have his own incompleteness seen by another. The inherent, but hidden, selfishness of virtue proves insufficient for human knowledge or for friendship.

This split between truth and good will be made explicit in Aristotle's account of the intellectual virtues, which consists in attaining the truth in contrast to the good we are directed toward by our longing. Prudence deliberates about the correct means to the correct end established by our longing for the good. However, the highest of intellectual virtues is not prudence but wisdom (*sophia*), which does not consider the human things, and as such does not consider either what is good or what is generated or comes about in time. Whereas the good seems unknowable apart from understanding what it causes (for we long to have it), wisdom will remain useless for action, for it will liberate itself from any subordination to the soul's longing. Thus, Aristotle will both claim that wisdom produces happiness, even while making clear that the wise do not think about what will make them happy. Their good will appear to be achieved only by forgetting about their good in the name of truth.

Wisdom thus will prove to be the mirror-image of the great-souled individual, who wants to contemplate the good alone in abstraction from any kind of external verification. The wholly inward contemplation of the great-souled man proves impossible to achieve, because the good cannot be severed from understanding it as belonging to himself—as contemplating himself being good. The harmony of the soul that is experienced in the peaks of virtue manifesting this split can be maintained only by falsehoods they must tell themselves—a subtle rejection of both their own and the truth. It is from this illusory split that friendship is originally rejected in Book I, and it is only from the disharmonizing account of continence and the tragic account of pleasure in Book VII, that friendship will be rediscovered and recovered.

NOTES

1. In the spring of 2006, we together enrolled in a course on Aristotle's *Ethics* taught by Mary Nichols at Baylor University. Each week, Professor Nichols demonstrated a manner of reading and teaching Aristotle that we consider one of the greatest goods to have been bestowed upon us. It was by inquiring into Aristotle with a care and boldness that is born of love for the truth, as well as a love for Aristotle himself, that the greatest and the most joyful insights into Aristotle's understanding of the good and the human good could be gleaned. As we have experienced it at least, at the core of Mary Nichols's life and teaching, as well as Aristotle's, is the relationship between truth and love, philosophy and friendship. The arguments of this chapter, first conceived in that course, were developed and formed through our shared reflections on that experience. We are most grateful to have had her as our teacher.

2. All references to the *Nicomachean Ethics* are in parentheses. The translations are our own from the Greek as it appears in Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), but we have consulted the translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins, *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011) and Martin Ostwald, *Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1962).

3. For the view that the *Nicomachean Ethics* is a defense of the contemplative live as the best life, see Aristide Tessitore, *Reading Aristotle's Ethics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996) and Robert C. Bartlett, "Aristotle's Introduction to the Problem of Happiness," *American Journal of Political Science* 52 (2008): 677–687.

4. Thus, Aristotle will in Book VI identify the virtue of *sophia* as scientific knowledge of, among other things, "daimonic things" but also as useless "because [the wise] do not investigate the human goods" (*NE* 1141b8–9).

5. Mary Nichols has pointed out to us that if you elide *eu* with *aporos* you get *euporos*, having resources, or being well provided; the good becomes present.

6. Sleep is the paradigmatic condition in which we cannot see ourselves, and so cannot recognize ourselves as good or bad, although Aristotle qualifies this assessment in one way at the close of Book I—the dreams of the good are better. Dreams are a way of contemplating ourselves perhaps, but they are nevertheless ways of doing so without actually making any choices at all.

7. Aristotle identifies honor as the greatest of external goods in Book IV (*NE* 1123b21), but later *seemingly* recants and accords this honor to friends (*NE* 1169b9–10).

8. The Greek dual also differs from plural and singular verbs in that there is no first-person dual—it must always refer to someone other than the speaker.

9. This is the only time the word *philosophos*—"philosopher" (*NE* 1096a16)—is used in the *Ethics*.

10. Along a similar line of reasoning, Nichols points out that the idea of the good, which deprives particular beings of goodness, and makes only the good itself lovable, is necessary to critique in order to preserve the ground of friendship. Aristotle's defense of truth is in this respect also a defense of friendship. See Mary P. Nichols,

"Both Friends and Truth Are Dear: Aristotle's Political Thought as a Response to Plato," in *Natural Right and Political Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Catherine Zuckert and Michael Zuckert*, eds. Ann Ward and Lee Ward (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 71–74.

11. This is pointed out by Michael Davis, *The Soul of the Greeks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 57–58.

12. This is also Glaucon's view of the man of complete virtue in Plato's *Republic* (486a-e).

13. This would help explain Aristotle's comment that there is no difference between the great-souled individual and the virtue of greatness of soul (*NE* 1123b1–2).

14. This possibility might explain why the virtue must remain unnamed—if it is named as honor loving, it would be subject to blame. But if this is the case, it is hard to see how everyone could praise the virtue, for if it is understand it as honor loving rather than the loving of the noble, we will be unable to praise it.

15. Defined this way, the virtue would seem subject to the great-souled individual's critique that it is slavish rather than noble to live with a view to others (*NE* 1124b30).

16. In Aristotle's discussion of courage, anger (*thumos*) is said to be supportive of courage.

17. Neither is the gentle person harsh, even though "sometimes we praise those who are harsh as manly, on the grounds that they are capable of ruling" (*NE* 1126b1). In the discussion of honor, Aristotle notes that the ambitious person is praised as manly and a lover of what is noble (*NE* 1125b10).

18. Aristotle notes that the release of anger can be pleasurable.

19. Aristotle's introductory claim that the virtue of truthfulness belonged to the sphere of pretense (along with speech and action) foreshadows this conclusion.

20. Harry Jaffa argues that "the social graces . . . [are] an adornment of the description of the magnanimous man." *Thomism and Aristotelianism: A Study of the Commentary by Thomas Aquinas on the Nicomachean Ethics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 51.

21. Susan Collins argues that a peak of moral virtue is wit, partially on the grounds that, by the end of the *Ethics*, wit "occupies the middle ground between a dogmatic commitment to the law and skeptical alienation from it." *Aristotle and the Rediscovery of Citizenship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 163.

22. In Aristotle's first accounting of the social virtues' order, these three virtues are said to be similar to one another insofar as each is concerned with speech and action, but distinguished from one another on the ground that one is concerned with the truth in speech and action while the others are concerned with what is pleasant in them (*NE* 1108a10–15). At that point, what seemed clear—or obvious—was that truthfulness is the virtue concerned with truth, and so that the other two must be the ones concerned with the pleasant. However, Aristotle's discussion of truth and irony gives us reason to rethink this early assumption.

23. On these grounds, wit is limited to private conversation, since the diversity of a large audience by its very nature restricts the witty person, who will no longer be able to give joy without pain to every member of the audience. In the same way, it

is hard to see how one would be witty in writing, since that art addresses large audiences, giving pain to some and pleasure to others, which would cause some to suffer. It is, therefore, not surprising that even as he reconciles himself to the city, the witty person is not ruled by the city's law, but is rather "a law unto himself," for the law of the city addresses large and diverse audiences.

Chapter 2

Friendship and the Solitude of Greatness

The Case of Charles de Gaulle

Daniel J. Mahoney

The French statesman Charles de Gaulle was, and remains, something of an enigma.[1] A genuinely great man, at first glance, he seems to tower above mere humanity. In studying de Gaulle's biographies and writings, the statesman and military man eclipses the human being without leaving his human bearing wholly behind. De Gaulle himself emphasized the solitude and sadness that accompanied the burden of human greatness. Yet, de Gaulle, the self-described "man of character," "the born protector," was also a loving husband, a not terribly demanding or severe father, a faithful Christian, and a French patriot. There were profound limits to his solitude and self-sufficiency. His austere magnanimity coincided with moderation, even benevolence. He loved his country, strove for greatness, and sacrificed something of his private happiness for the public good. He was a complex man and soul, and perhaps a conflicted one.

A devoted family man, de Gaulle nonetheless was a man of few friendships (I will discuss the exceptions below). He was in no way an empty suit, a vacant soul. Still, he cultivated authority and prestige in no small part by remaining a mystery to those around him. What passions, thoughts, and feelings animated this enigmatic soul? This mystery cannot be completely dispelled, but it can be clarified with the help of de Gaulle's own self-presentation in *Le fil de l'epée* (*The Edge of the Sword*) and by attentiveness to key moments and episodes in his long and eventful life.[2]

This tension between the public and the private, between greatness and the requirements of civility and affability, defines the figure we know as "de Gaulle" (de Gaulle had a curious habit of referring to himself in the third person as de Gaulle—as if the private man, the real man, was separate, even

distant, from the public persona). Perhaps only Washington rivals him for the austerity, the seeming inaccessibility, of the man behind the public persona. Here we confront two great statesmen and military leaders, two authentically great men, moved by the love of country, love of liberty, and the requirements of personal greatness. They share a stoicism, a rectitude, that is all too rare in a democratic age.

Democratic man above all values authenticity, self-expression, accessibility. He appreciates people who are "nice." He is not supposed to wear a mask, to keep part of his inner self hidden from those around him. And yet, paradoxically, there is something vacuous about these constant "democratic" displays of the "true self," which must be shared with the whole of humanity. The "true self" is often empty of substance, of spiritual depth, frequently contenting itself with the trivial or the commonplace. Such democratic displays are the opposite of Gaullist grandeur, which is inseparable from a certain *hauteur*.

De Gaulle did not have a democratic soul, but his humane version of magnanimity is needed by democracies, particularly in times of crisis. De Gaulle and Churchill were not wholly shaped by a democratic age. But their "quasi-aristocratic" virtues helped save European liberty in its confrontation with totalitarianism in the twentieth century. In Churchill's unforgettable "Finest Hour" speech of June 18, 1940, and in de Gaulle's great "Appeal" to resistance of the same day, we confront powerful and eloquent appeals to personal and political honor at the service of helping to save a Western civilization that too often puts personal well-being above the old civic and military virtues. Churchill's and de Gaulle's contemporaries needed to be reminded of old truths (including the Roman virtue of courage) and the full range of the virtues.[3]

One profoundly misunderstands de Gaulle if one sees in him an aspiring Bonaparte, a Caesarian figure threatening public liberties. He was quite critical (in *France et son armée* and elsewhere) of Bonaparte for severing greatness from moderation, for squelching public liberty, and for engaging in imperial overreach. De Gaulle was an egalitarian in two elemental senses: as a Christian he affirmed the dignity of man made in the "image and likeness of God" (and for this reason opposed every form of totalitarianism) and as a French republican, he accepted civic equality as the basis of free, republican life. But he did not accept what might be called a democratic political psychology that affirmed human equality in almost every respect. Even democracies need statesmen, however much democrats delight in attacking inequalities and hierarchies as inherently unjust. De Gaulle believed that nature, human nature above all, is stronger than democratic ideology. Like Aristotle and Machiavelli (for all their considerable differences), he knew that there were a variety of human types. As to the question of command, the

world was forever divided between the "great" and the "small" (on this point, see Book 3 of the *Politics* and chapter 9 of the *Prince*). The great man must ally with the few or the many (or perhaps mediate their claims) and should not pretend that the human world is a homogenous or undifferentiated mass.

If men are "political animals," as de Gaulle asserts in *The Edge of the Sword*, they "feel the need for organization, that is to say for an established order and for leaders."[4] This is not merely a matter of self-assertion on the part of the great, as Machiavelli and Nietzsche might suggest. It is a matter of *justice* (as Aristotle suggests in his *Ethics*). A common or shared good is possible between the few and the many in a way that respects common decency, public liberty, and shared humanity. De Gaulle's great achievement as a statesman and political thinker was to meld together magnanimity and moderation, or rather to show that the truly great man was a "born protector" and not a tyrant and a destroyer of bodies and souls.

The key to de Gaulle's self-understanding, to his unforced melding of magnanimity and moderation, can be found in the two central sections of *The Edge of the Sword*, on "Character" and "Prestige," respectively. Let us turn to those two revealing discussions.

THE MAN OF CHARACTER

De Gaulle's account of "the man of character" in part 2 of *The Edge of the Sword* (1932) is more than an account of "the virtue of hard times," as he calls it. It is nothing less than what André Malraux called an "anticipatory self-portrait." This anticipatory self-portrait allows us to see "de Gaulle" *avant la lettre* and thus to get a glimpse of the mysterious depths (as well as the self-understanding) that shaped his soul. De Gaulle's account of the "man of character" is at the same time an exacting self-portrait and an exercise in the political philosophy and political psychology (in the original, capacious sense of the term) that account for human greatness. Rarely has a statesman been so self-conscious about his own nature and motives and about the nature of the political whole (and the human world) in which he operates.

It is tempting—but mistaken—to give a Nietzschean interpretation of "the man of character." He is indeed an individualist who "has recourse to himself." One might think of him as a political artist who likes to act alone. "His instinctive response" to the challenge of events "is to leave his mark on action, to take responsibility for it, to make it his own business." His "passion for self-reliance" is "accompanied by some roughness in method." His subordinates initially groan under his command and are struck by his aloofness. The man of character knows that "there can be no authority without prestige, nor prestige" without personal distance—hence the austerity, the almost

inhuman roughness, distance, and reserve that initially characterizes the man of character. It is hard to see how one can reconcile such a view of human greatness with an Aristotelian or Christian conception of a common or shared human and political good. But this is not the end of the story.

De Gaulle writes that "when events become grave, the peril pressing" things begin to change and ordinary men turn to the man of character "as iron towards the magnet." The confidence of the "lesser man" ("petits") exalts the man of character, and gives him a sense of obligation." He is no longer so solitary, so autarchic. He is moved by benevolence "for he is a born protector."[5] The desire to protect, to give of himself, is deeply ingrained in his nature. In other words, his soul is moved by generosity and not by the impulse to destroy or tear down in search of a field for his political ambition. He is a benevolent political animal in a community that he acknowledges as his own. He does not claim all success as his own, even as he alone takes responsibility for failures. As I have argued in my book *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, Grandeur, and Modern Democracy*, de Gaulle's is an account of magnanimity marked by a Christian sense of benevolence and a classical appreciation of greatness of soul. Aristotle's magnanimous man does not display the same sense of obligation or generosity as de Gaulle's man of character even if his pride prevents him from committing injustice. He is virtuous, but he does not remember the good deeds of others. He is haughty, even contemptuous of lesser souls. He is not prone to admiration "since nothing is great to him."[6]

By contrast, de Gaulle's sense of personal and political greatness is profoundly marked by Christianity, by a deepening and a broadening of the soul's obligations to others. De Gaulle even calls the man of character the "good prince," a sure sign that the great French statesman had more than military greatness in mind when he published *The Edge of the Sword* in 1932. Just as a knight is moved by chivalry, by a mixture of aristocratic virtue and Christian obligation, de Gaulle's man of character eschews revenge and absorbs himself in salutary action for the common good. He is part of a moral and political whole. De Gaulle explicitly states that "justice appears" when the man of character is given his due.

De Gaulle's man of character does not inhabit a Nietzschean world "beyond good and evil." Nonetheless, in the chapter on "Prestige," de Gaulle freely acknowledges the tension between Christianity and the political virtues. "The perfection preached in the Gospels does not lead to empire. Every man of action has a strong dose of egotism, pride, hardness, and cunning." De Gaulle's "hardness" was most on display in his decision in 1962 to abandon the Harkis, the Algerian Muslims who had fought courageously for France in the Algerian War, to their terrible fate (in many cases, imprisonment, torture, and death). De Gaulle undoubtedly wanted to bring the Algerian War to a quick end and to restore comity to France. But this abandonment of France's

allies leaves a stain on the record of a man otherwise admirably devoted to national and personal honor. Still, de Gaulle's conception of the statesman as "born protector" surely owes as much to Christianity as to pagan antiquity. At the same time, the discussions of leadership in *The Edge of the Sword* undoubtedly express unresolved tensions in de Gaulle's complex soul.

Aloofness and the Melancholy of Superior Men

In the chapter on "Prestige," de Gaulle acknowledges a crisis of authority in the modern world. A statesman can no longer depend on the force of tradition or inherited institutions. In some profound sense, the old gods are dead, or are at least tottering. De Gaulle was fully cognizant of what Walter Lippmann in 1929 called "the acids of modernity," three years before de Gaulle published his little book. Authority needs the support of artifice and that means the cultivation of mystery, reserve, and aloofness on the part of a great military or political leader. De Gaulle recognizes that this is a very special burden, too much for many to bear. It demands "unceasing self-discipline, the constant taking of risks, and a perpetual inner struggle." Some great men buckle under these weights and withdraw from the austere demands of public life. The man of "reserve, character, and greatness . . . must accept the solitude which, according to Faguet, is 'the wretchedness of superior men.'" Tranquility, and even friendship, certainly of the usual kind, are denied the man of character. An inchoate sense of melancholy surrounds him. De Gaulle reports a tale of somebody saying to Napoleon that an old and noble monument was sad. Napoleon's reply was revealing: "Yes as sad as greatness."

Is this de Gaulle's final word? Must the "born protector" choose a solitary life without family and friends? Is there an unbridgeable gap between the requirements of greatness and the requirements of human happiness? Or does de Gaulle exaggerate to make a point about the sacrifice of ordinary tranquility that sometimes accompanies personal and political greatness? In what ways did this particular man of character remain a human being, capable of tenderness, friendship, even Christian charity?

A FAMILY MAN

Before turning to the place of friendship in de Gaulle's public and personal life, it is necessary to say a word or two about the place of family in his affective life. Here his humanity is most clearly on display. His biographers, such as Jean Lacouture and Jonathan Fenby, reveal a loving husband and father, a Catholic bourgeois who valued family ties and affections. He was in no way autarchic, self-sufficient, or anything resembling a god among men. He was

a great man but very much a human being. His letters to his wife, Yvonne, are often affectionate and reveal nothing of a stern or uncaring *paterfamilias*. Theirs was a tie marked by love, affection as well as duty and responsibility. Even during the Free French years in London, de Gaulle had time for his family amidst his grave political and military responsibilities. He was proud of his son Philippe's service in the Free French navy (he went on later in life to become an admiral) and wrote Philippe an affectionate letter to that effect. In his letters, he was always "papa" or "affectionate papa," and if he was not conspicuous with affection in person, nor was he cold and stern with his children. (Lacouture records a tender grandfather at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises during the final years of his retirement, who enjoyed taking walks with his grandchildren Anne Boissieu and Yves de Gaulle, Philippe's second son.) He even laughed on occasions. The country writer, as Lacouture calls him (he was completing his *Memoirs of Hope*), and tender grandfather, is eminently human and humane and is in no way of another essence.

He had a special relationship, one marked by deep and abiding love, for his daughter Anne, who was born on New Year's Day in 1928 with Down's syndrome. She was to live twenty years and is buried at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises with Charles and Yvonne de Gaulle. She brought out the best in de Gaulle as father, husband, and Christian. Fenby and Lacouture describe de Gaulle's enormous devotion to Anne: the only word the girl managed to say properly was "papa." He played with her after returning from work, kissing her, singing songs, and allowing her to play with his military cap. He would take her for walks in the botanical gardens in Metz before World War II and would rock her gently for an hour or two at a time before she fell asleep. The little girl loved him in her own way.[7]

The Catholic writer Henri-Daniel Rops, a friend of de Gaulle's before the war, reports a moving discussion he had with de Gaulle in which he confided the "heavy cross" that he and his wife had to bear because of Anne's unfortunate condition. But they never thought for a moment to put Anne in an institution. As Fenby points out, de Gaulle's character may have been decidedly stoic, but with Anne he found a "blessing" and his "joy." This same man who went to mass at a French church in London everyday during the war responded like a Christian who paradoxically found joy in his suffering and in the love it brought forth for Anne. As Lacouture reports, his friend, the Catholic writer André Frossard, observed that there was more love in the world because of Anne. De Gaulle welcomed the trial of Anne's diminished condition and suffering also as a gift that encouraged him "always to aim higher" (as he once was overheard saying by one of her doctors). He famously remarked upon her death that "now she is like all the others." It is hard not to see grace at work in this loving encounter between a wounded child and her loving father. In de Gaulle, we see no Nietzschean contempt

for the weak, the disabled, the suffering. The "man of character" is indeed a "born protector," and in this case even an exemplary Christian.

A PAUCITY OF FRIENDSHIPS

If de Gaulle was surrounded by a loving family, if great joy arose even from the "trial" that was Anne's life, it cannot be said that his was a life rich in friendship. Fenby reports that in Trier in Germany, where he was stationed in the late 1920s, he stayed after work to fraternize with his young junior officers. He discussed history with them. Nothing personal, nothing intimate. He stood apart, both because of his height and because of his self-command (which Fenby falsely reduces to "ego"). One witness to these encounters observed de Gaulle's "extraordinary loneliness." This observer asked, "Beyond his excursions into history, what could the [then] major say? Who could he talk to? What about?" "The man of character," it appears, does not converse about commonplaces. Like Aristotle's "magnanimous man," he preoccupies himself with high and noble things and perhaps even his own deeds. He is difficult to bear and somewhat "rough in his methods." His greatness undoubtedly sets him apart. Solitude is part of his condition, even if, as we have shown, it is not the only or final word.[8]

But what about friendship with other statesmen, with those rare few imbued with a sense of human and political greatness? For all their disagreements in the course of the war, for all his sense that Churchill and England had taken advantage of "wounded France," de Gaulle clearly admired Churchill. In the famous description in volume 1 of the *Mémoires de guerre*, Churchill appeared to de Gaulle "from one end of the drama to the other, as the great champion of a great enterprise and the great artist of a great history." There could not be higher praise from de Gaulle. He brilliantly describes Churchill's unparalleled ability to "play upon" the "angelic and diabolical gift" of politics and political rhetoric "to rouse the heavy dough of the English as well as to impress the minds of foreigners." Churchill was "a man of destiny" (in his own words), or in Gaullist terms, "a man of character." Churchill and de Gaulle never became friends, at least in the fulsome sense of the term, but they admired each other and never allowed frictions in the relationship between their two nations (or between Free France and Britain) to ultimately undermine that mutual respect and admiration.

Could a relationship between two magnanimous men, two great "men of character" ever be free of friction and misunderstanding? That seems unlikely. The historian François Kersaudy has told the story well. One of the first things de Gaulle did upon returning to power in 1958 was to invite a very old Churchill to Paris to be honored by the French government and nation.

And from Churchill's own death in 1965 until de Gaulle's in November 1970, de Gaulle wrote Clementine Churchill every January on the anniversary of Churchill's death. Unlike Aristotle's magnanimous man, de Gaulle had a gift for seeing greatness in others. He was capable of genuine admiration. As a Conservative in the best sense of the term, he appreciated what Churchill had done to protect Europe and the West against the scourge of totalitarianism. Both men never severed greatness from moderation or lost an appreciation for the dignity of what de Gaulle freely called "les petits," those with no aptitude for leadership or command. Churchill and de Gaulle are best understood as "shepherds," born protectors, who were never tempted to become totalitarian "wolves."[9]

MALRAUX, THE "INSPIRED FRIEND"

There was one public man whom de Gaulle called his "inspired friend." In a luminous passage in his *Memoirs of Hope*, he speaks of André Malraux, always sitting to his right, an "inspired friend" and "devotee of lofty destinies." Malraux, the great novelist, adventurer, theorist of art, and longtime Gaullist Minister of Culture, gave de Gaulle "a sense of being insured against the commonplace." Malraux's own sense of greatness fortified de Gaulle and his "flashing judgments would help to dispel the shadows." De Gaulle had often expressed friendship and esteem for Malraux. But Malraux feared that he primarily saw him as a symbol who lent intellectual credence to Gaullism. Malraux thus doubted if the general truly thought of him as his friend, as his equal. Nonetheless, Lacouture reports that Malraux was elated to read this passage in de Gaulle's final set of memoirs and "dashed off at once" to read the passage aloud to his friend, the great anti-totalitarian writer Manès Sperber. It must also be recognized that de Gaulle bestowed his final intellectual testament to Malraux, as recorded in the great dialogue between the poet and the statesman that is *Les chênes qu'on abat*, *Felled Oaks*. Here, de Gaulle expresses his deep concerns about "the crisis of civilization," if not his final despair about France and his legacy. He feared that he amused his fellow countrymen by waving flags, as he puts it in a particularly pointed formulation. It is a recreated encounter or conversation, but one "based on profound truth," as Lacouture rightly observes.

De Gaulle and Malraux were not intimates. But a lofty vision of France and civilization united them, as well as a refusal to rest content with the commonplace. Theirs was a friendship marked by a common dedication to a "politics of grandeur" and a shared sense of de Gaulle's own indispensability to France and the West. De Gaulle does not use the word "friend" lightly. We must then respect his judgment about Malraux as revealing an essential truth.[10]

ADENAUER AND DE GAULLE: A GREAT POLITICAL FRIENDSHIP

There is one statesman whom de Gaulle called his "illustrious friend,"[11] Konrad Adenauer, the chancellor of West Germany between 1949 and 1963. The two men met in France and Germany fifteen times between de Gaulle's return to power in 1958 and Adenauer's departure from office in 1963. They also corresponded on more than forty occasions. They came to admire each other and developed a personal friendship that accompanied and helped deepen the political and spiritual reconciliation of France and Germany in the period between 1958 and 1963. As François Kersaudy has noted, de Gaulle admired Adenauer for his intransigent opposition to Hitler and National Socialism before and during World War II and for the independence he displayed in dealing with the British occupation forces in Germany after 1945. In Adenauer, de Gaulle saw a man of immense personal integrity, a German patriot (but not a deranged nationalist), and a statesman of the first order. Adenauer was at first suspicious of de Gaulle, fearing that he was a virulent nationalist who opposed European integration and who was insensitive to the Soviet threat. His first encounter with de Gaulle at Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises cured him of any misgivings. De Gaulle's nationalism was much more moderate and humane than Adenauer had anticipated. The two great men saw eye to eye on the key issues of the day and both were firmly committed to an enduring rapprochement between France and Germany.

Adenauer was profoundly touched by the fact that he was welcomed at de Gaulle's home in the fall of 1958 as a member of his family and was struck by the simplicity—and naturalness—of de Gaulle's manners and personal bearing. The two men developed an authentic friendship that was sometimes clouded by differences on geopolitical matters (de Gaulle was suspicious of what he saw as West Germany's excessive deference to American leadership, and Adenauer was worried, wrongly in retrospect, that France was indifferent to the Soviet threat to Berlin). But these bumps in the road never led to anything like a break or an undermining of the mutual respect in which each statesman held the other. Kersaudy went so far as to say that a "great friendship" developed between these two remarkable statesmen in the years between 1958 and 1963. Adenauer came to France on a state visit in July 1962 where de Gaulle welcomed him as a great German, a great European, and a true friend of France. Two months later, de Gaulle traveled to Germany, where he was met by rapturous crowds and where he delivered fourteen sterling speeches in exquisite German. He displayed what Kersaudy aptly calls the "Gaullist magic." Of course, the capstone of Franco-German reconciliation was the signing of a treaty of friendship between the two nations in the summer of 1962, a reconciliation that was symbolized by these two Catholic

statesmen coming together for prayer in the cathedral of Rheims, a city much contested in previous Franco-German wars and conflicts. Kersaudy notes that Adenauer was a cold man, and de Gaulle an eminently proud one. Yet, both believed that the "deeds of friendship," both personal and national, could in this case replace the "miseries of war," as de Gaulle strikingly put in his *Memoirs of Hope*.

Adenauer died on April 19, 1967, not without a touch of sadness as he confronted the isolations of extreme old age and the loss of political responsibilities. But, as Kersaudy notes, he told de Gaulle four years earlier that "the personal friendship" between the two men was "one of the very rare presents" that he took away from political work. For his part, de Gaulle told aides that Adenauer was the "only one that I am able to consider as my equal." Churchill's powers and influence were by now long eclipsed (he died at the age of ninety in January 1965). He was alive but no longer on the world stage. And political—and national—differences (particularly regarding the centrality of the partnership with the United States) prevented their mutual admiration from being transformed into a sustained personal friendship. However, with Adenauer and de Gaulle, we see how two world-class statesmen—committed in their own ways to humane national loyalty, opposed to every form of totalitarian domination, and deeply devoted to the Christian sources of the European spirit—could bury the past in order to build a future on new and more solid foundations. Along the way, a personal friendship developed between two proud if eminently decent and humane men.

CONCLUSION

We have explored the complexity of Charles de Gaulle's soul and self-understanding. His "anticipatory self-portrait" in *The Edge of the Sword* allows us to see how benevolence and solitude coexisted in this great man's soul. This "born protector" was not a Nietzschean "Overman." He loved his family, cared deeply for his country, and felt a sense of obligation toward those who looked to his protective leadership. A Christian and a man of honor, he believed in justice and the common good and did not act as if "God is dead." He was a loving husband and father, and his deliberately cultivated austere public persona did not crowd out human feelings and even tenderness. In dealing with his beloved daughter Anne, he suffered like a true Christian, and even found joy and consolation amidst a great trial. He was a man of few friendships, and does not seem to have experienced the kind of virtue-friendship, the joint perception of the good (*sunaisthesis*), that Aristotle describes in the ninth book of his *Ethics*. De Gaulle knew that in an age where character depended on the cultivation of "prestige," some sacrifice of human intimacy

must be made by the "man of character." He also knew that this sacrifice was for the common good. He undoubtedly felt sadness and loneliness, but also love, affection, tenderness, and pride for self and country. His friendships with Malraux and Adenauer are particularly telling. De Gaulle was an authentically great human being, not just a "charismatic leader" to use the desiccated language of our official social science, which can no longer talk about the highest human types, or about any souls for that matter.

NOTES

1. This chapter was originally published in *Perspectives on Political Science* and is reprinted here with permission. See Daniel J. Mahoney, "Friendship and the Solitude of Greatness: The Case of Charles de Gaulle," *Perspectives on Political Science* 46.2: 87–92.

2. I have drawn freely on sections two and three ("Character" and "Prestige") of Charles de Gaulle's *The Edge of the Sword*, translated by Gerald Hopkins (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), pp. 35–78, especially pp. 41–44 and pp. 55–66. This elegant but inexact translation should be checked against the French original, *Le fil de l'epée et autres ecrits* (Paris: Omnibus/Plon, 1994). For example, on p. 44 of the English translation, the crucial phrase "bon prince" ("good prince") disappears.

3. For a fuller discussion of de Gaulle's portrait of "the man of character," see Daniel J. Mahoney, *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, Grandeur, and Modern Democracy* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2000), pp. 41–66.

4. Charles de Gaulle, *The Edge of the Sword*, translated by Gerald Hopkins (New York: Criterion Books, 1960).

5. Ibid, 43.

6. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1125a, 2–3.

7. On de Gaulle's family life and the relationship with Anne de Gaulle, see Jonathan Fenby, *The General: Charles de Gaulle and the France He Saved* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2012), pp. 89–91 and pp. 159–165 and Jean Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Rebel: 1890–1944*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (New York: W.W. Norton, 1990), p. 107 and *De Gaulle: The Ruler: 1945–1970*, translated by Patrick O'Brian (W.W. Norton, 1992), p. 578.

8. For the fascinating account of de Gaulle's relationship with the other officers at Trier see Fenby, p. 89.

9. For de Gaulle's magisterial description of Churchill, see *The Complete War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp. 57–58.

10. For the beautiful passage on Malraux, see Charles de Gaulle, *Memoirs of Hope: Renewal and Endeavor*, translated by Terence Kilmartin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), p. 272. For Malraux's reaction to this passage, see Lacouture, *De Gaulle: The Ruler: 1945–1970*, p. 584. For the great final conversation between de Gaulle and Malraux, see Malraux, *Felled Oaks: Conversation with de Gaulle* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972) and the discussion in Lacouture, p. 584.

11. See pp. 173–181 of the *Memoirs of Hope* for de Gaulle's own account of his emerging friendship with Konrad Adenauer. The phrase "illustrious friend" is used on p. 181. In my discussion that follows here, I am indebted to François Kersaudy's excellent article "De Gaulle et Adenauer, aux origines de la réconciliation Franco-Allemande," which can be found on the website of the *Institut Charles de Gaulle*.

Chapter 3

Love and Friendship in Henry James's *The Bostonians*

Lisa Pace Vetter

As he prepared to write *The Bostonians*, James proclaimed his ambitious goal: "I wished to write a very American tale, a tale very characteristic of our social condition, and I asked myself what was the most salient and peculiar point in our social life. The answer was: the situation of woman, the decline of the sentiment of sex, the agitation on their behalf" (xi).[1] Many explanations have been given for James's ultimate purpose in writing the novel. Some see James reinforcing the status quo by criticizing the excesses of the early women's rights movement and specifically the desire to expand the role of women in the public realm.[2] For many, the novel "has been taken to represent James at his most arch, crypto-conservative, and cheerfully, even hysterically, misogynist."[3] Critical theorists have dwelled on the homoerotic dynamics in the relationship between Olive Chancellor and Verena Tarrant, and the sexual undertones of Basil Ransom's pursuit of Verena.

Commentators placed *The Bostonians* among the "romance of reunion" works of Reconstruction-era America because it ended with a marriage of sorts between North and South. The periodical in which the work was initially serialized, *The Century*, included many stories that concerned "the state of the nation in the aftermath of the Civil War, the failure of Reconstruction, and the need for national reconciliation."[4] In this case, a dashing young Southerner, Basil, sweeps an innocent, unsuspecting Northerner, Verena, off her feet. The excesses of New England prudery and hypocrisy are effectively tamed by a new form of Southerner, who leaves behind his homeland and risks a new future with an exotic Northerner. Others have noted the strains of abolitionist rhetoric that permeate the novel. The debate between Olive and Basil over Verena's "true nature" mirrors arguments concerning the human nature of enslaved peoples: are talent and intelligence innate, or can they be developed through education and nurture?[5] Basil's condescension to women

and his desire to "master" Verena can also be seen as manifestations of his pro-slavery sentiments, and Olive's fervent commitment to educating Verena on the systematic oppression of women reflects abolitionists' dedication to instruct and rehabilitate freed Blacks.[6]

Martha Nussbaum has explored connections between James's understanding of discernment, discrimination, and criticism, on the one hand, and Aristotle's ethics, on the other. Expanding on Aristotle's claim that "discernment rests with perception," and that correct action "lies in a mean," Nussbaum argues that "because Aristotle's conception" of ethics "leaves so much to particularized contextual judgment, one cannot well assess the conception without studying complex examples of such particularized judgment; and of course Aristotle's text does not supply such material." James shows himself to be a "powerful ally" of Aristotle because his works supply the complex examples Aristotle's ethical theory requires but his treatises lack.[7] And by studying the complex examples James portrays, Nussbaum argues, readers themselves develop the kind of contextual judgment required for ethical behavior understood in the Aristotelian sense.[8]

Nussbaum's interpretation of Aristotle here consists of a generalized synthesis of disparate concepts, but it nevertheless offers a helpful frame of reference in interpreting James's works. I want to expand on the Aristotelian aspects of James's novels by exploring the theme of friendship, a vital component of Aristotle's ethical theory. For Aristotle, friendships are based on three things: utility, pleasure, and virtue/the good. A friendship based on utility or pleasure ends when it is no longer needed. By contrast, Aristotle's ideal or "complete" form of friendship exists between "those who are good and alike in point of virtue . . . [and] wish in similar fashion for the good things for each other insofar as they are good." The highest form of friendship is reserved for "those who wish for the good things for their friends, for their friends' sake" because "they are disposed in this way in themselves and not incidentally" (NE 1156b6–17).[9] Equally important, such friendships "are likely to be rare, since people of this sort are few," and they require "the passage of time and the habits formed by living together" (NE 1156b25). Happiness is "the work" of the human being that is "an activity of soul in accord with virtue" or the good, which in turn is "something complete and self-sufficient, it being an end of our actions" (1097b20–21). Because virtue is a mean along a continuum, and virtuous action is contingent on particular circumstances, virtue can only be spoken of "in outline" and not by "art or any set of precepts" (1103b34–1104a10). Thus, a morally virtuous person learns through habituation rather than formal learning, and develops virtue through prudent deliberation about particular circumstances. The highest form of friendship, then, offers an important opportunity to cultivate the habits of virtue. This unique partnership would exist between virtuous friends who encourage each other

to develop their own unique talents, skills, and abilities—their individual excellences. They want each other to thrive as independent-thinking and reflectively active human beings. Best friends are those who desire happiness for one another not because they expect to be rewarded but because happiness is the best form of activity for the human soul.

In *The Bostonians*, James explores the sources of divisions within American society and the harm they can cause through numerous examples of friendships.[10] The most central friendship, between Olive and Verena, ends tragically, as does the union between Verena and Basil. For when Basil demands that she leave with him, Verena "threw herself upon him with a protest which was all, and more than all, a surrender" (444).[11] There is certainly no love lost between cousins Olive and Basil, whose kinship ties offer no protection as they compete fiercely for Verena's loyalty. Most striking, perhaps, is the lack of friendship—or sisterhood—among the women's rights advocates. Although Verena and suffragist Mrs. Farrinder share a mutual interest in oratory, Farrinder greeted the young woman's desire for mentorship "with the frown of Juno" (56). Miss Birdseye is an icon in the movement, and yet her ethereal nature—her "bird's eye view of the world"—prevents any close personal connections with other women. The "tough and technical" Dr. Prance does not share the ardent commitment to women's rights of her patient, Miss Birdseye, or her companions (42). The courtship between Verena and Henry Burrage, the charming and wealthy young man whose mother expresses support for Verena's public speaking on women's rights, fails to lead to a lasting relationship.

By applying Aristotle's categories to these failed relationships, we see that they can be framed largely in terms of utility or pleasure. The friendship between Olive and Verena is a utilitarian one in that Olive needs Verena as a "voice box" for her ideas, and Verena, an "empty vessel," needs material for her speeches about women. The relationship between Basil and Verena is another kind of friendship that is based on utility as well as pleasure. It is clear that Basil will benefit: he would dominate Verena completely, for "if he should become her husband he should know a way to strike her dumb" and ban her from public speaking (320). It is less clear how Verena profits from the marriage. Perhaps the prospect of having children and devoting herself exclusively to domestic duties provides some measure of comfort. Yet, whatever Verena might gain comes at a steep price, as the narrator's chilling warning makes clear: "With the union, so far from brilliant, into which she was about to enter, these [tears] were not the last she was destined to shed" (449). If the marriage symbolizes a "romance of reunion," any union between North and South is doomed to fail if it is based merely on utility (or pleasure).

The women's rights advocates share a largely utilitarian bond as well. Olive requires the presence of Miss Birdseye to help legitimize her own role

as an activist. Miss Birdseye depends on the medical attention of Dr. Prance, who in turn needs patients to treat. At the extreme end of the spectrum, Mrs. Farrinder fails to find a relationship with Verena to be useful at all. Even the courtship between Verena and Henry can be framed in terms of aesthetic pleasure. His musical gifts, learning, and charm attract Verena, but only temporarily. Aristotle's prediction that friendships based on pleasure or utility will ultimately end proves accurate. And whereas Aristotle concedes that the virtuous relationships are rare but real, James does not seem to provide a single example of a friendship based on virtue in *The Bostonians*. Hence the tragedy.

Not all is what it seems, however. The friendship between Olive and Verena cannot simply be reduced to utility because their characters—and their motivations—are more complex than typically thought. Neither character is a two-dimensional stereotype incapable of forming substantive relationships. In spite of the fact that Olive and Verena's friendship does not last, it can be seen in terms of virtue and goodness as well. Olive develops her latent rhetorical capabilities to a certain degree as a result of the friendship, and Verena occasionally exhibits independent thinking and critical discernment.[12] The union between Basil and Verena is doomed, but it showed some promise at the start of the relationship. Basil, perhaps the most rigid character in the novel, seems to enjoy no genuine friendships of any kind, but he does establish brief connections with two unlikely characters, Miss Birdseye and Dr. Prance. Of course, the interpretation I offer here runs the risk of "explaining the joke" by assuming that James is not simply satirizing American society and everyone in it. Nevertheless, it is possible that James occasionally relinquishes his role as relentless critic to offer readers a few glimpses of a better world, if only to further heighten their sense of tragedy.

BEYOND UTILITY OR PLEASURE: COMPLICATED CHARACTERS WITH COMPLEX MOTIVATIONS IN *THE BOSTONIANS*

The most extensively examined friendship in *The Bostonians* is between Olive and Verena. Explorations of the homoerotic dynamics of their "Boston Marriage" abound, and Olive is most frequently cast in a negative light.[13] Her "morbid" nature and austere physical appearance, combined with her domineering and manipulative behavior toward Verena, offer a caricature of the "New Woman," a menacing specter of androgyny and free thinking. Verena is characterized as a young, innocent ingénue who is powerless to resist the appeal of Olive's crusade for women's rights. In their first meeting Verena had been "taken up" by Olive "in the literal sense of the phrase," and

she "liked it, for the most part" and "gave herself up, only shutting her eyes a little" (79). And Verena later confesses to Basil that "all I am good for" is speeches and that Olive "tells me what to say—the real things, the strong things. It's Miss Chancellor as much as me!" (225).

Verena Tarrant

Upon closer inspection, Verena is a study of contrasts that are not easily categorized. Although Verena's speaking "gave almost the impression of a lesson rehearsed in advance," the narrator claims that the young woman was nevertheless authentic and genuine at some visceral level: "There was a strange spontaneity in her manner, and an air of artless enthusiasm, of personal purity. If she was theatrical, she was naturally theatrical." Even Mrs. Farrinder could not decide if Verena "were a remarkable young woman or only a forward minx" (53). Basil "had never seen such an odd mixture of elements; with it, an air of being on exhibition, of belonging to a troupe, of living in the gaslight." Although Basil tried to define her as "an Oriental," the label is inaccurate because Verena's complexion was not "dark"; he compared her to Esmerelda, but she had no goat (58). Her first speech in the novel about the plight of women is described by Basil as "strange, sweet, crude, absurd, [and] enchanting" (60).

Much of the evidence that Verena's character is two-dimensional is provided by less than reliable sources. Basil and Olive see Verena from their own perspectives. Basil's declaration that Verena's sole purpose is "to please every one who came near her, and to be happy that she pleased" is undermined by the narrator, who observes that "I know not whether Ransom was aware of the bearings of this interpretation, which attributed to Miss Tarrant a singular hollowness of character." Basil's credibility is further undercut by Verena herself, who foresees his duplicity even before she meets him. For men (like Basil) "pretend to admire us very much," she says, "but I should like them to admire us a little less and trust us a little more" (61).

Like Basil, Olive projects her own expectations on the young woman, admitting that "you seem to me very wonderful. I don't know what to make of you," and "losing herself" in admiration (79). Because "she always felt more at her ease in the presence of anything strange," Olive is powerfully drawn to Verena. Although "it was just as she was that she liked her," Verena is "strange" only because Olive lacks any frame of reference. Verena appears to "belong to the 'people' " through the prism of Olive's faux populism. The young woman represented "the social dusk of that mysterious democracy which Miss Chancellor held that the fortunate classes know so little about, and with which (in a future possibly very near) they will have to count" (79).[14] Like her colleague Miss Birdseye, Olive fancies herself a lover of the

people, but not of individuals.[15] Olive "hated men," not as individuals, but "as a class, anyway" (22). Based on Olive's impressions, we ultimately know very little about Verena's true nature.

As Basil claims that Verena's primary motivation is to please others, so too does the narrator assert that in befriending Olive the young woman only wants "to please her only because she had such a dread of displeasing her" (138). It is not entirely surprising that Verena would be inclined to ingratiate herself to everyone she meets. She was raised as the only child of a father who pressures Verena to speak and return a profit, and a mother who wants her daughter to enjoy the high society from which she herself was banished because of her objectionable marriage. More important, Verena's apparent pandering is flatly contradicted by her repeated efforts to confront opposition directly. Olive views Verena's associations with men as a "weak spot," a "sole infirmity and subtle flaw" (287). Yet, Olive's steely resolve to eliminate patriarchy is based on avoidance and fear: She shuns the company of men because, she admits, "I am afraid to face what I don't like" (291). By contrast, Verena places herself firmly in enemy territory, so to speak, as if to demonstrate her own personal form of commitment, albeit a naïve one. She allows herself to be courted by Henry and Matthias Pardon, a newspaperman. Whereas Olive rejects marriage and family altogether, Verena remains open to the prospect and professes a love for children.

When they first meet, Verena is determined to face Basil. She declares, "I like opposition" and, amused by Basil's sarcasm, displays her own wit by proposing: "Why, sir, you ought to take the platform too; we might go round together as poison and antidote!" (91). Rather than seeing Basil as a threat, Verena initially imagines him to be an equal. Indeed, Verena wants Basil to thrive and develop his own talents, if only in support of the cause of women's rights. Verena echoes the optimism of Miss Birdseye, who believes that Basil is destined to become one of the "leaders" of the movement because, Verena explains to him, "you are very gifted for treating great questions and acting on masses of people," and "when you go up to the top as one of our champions it will all have been through me" (272). Verena is even able to withstand the onslaught of Basil's cynicism, at least initially, during their fateful meeting in New York City. She "had never encountered such a power of disparagement or heard so much sarcasm leveled at the institution of her country and the tendencies of the age." Although Verena "knew he was an intense conservative," she did not realize "that being a conservative could make a person so aggressive and unmerciful." Verena initially "replied to him, contradicted, showed a high spirit of retort, turning his irreverence against himself." Indeed, "she was too quick and ingenious not to be able to think of something to oppose—talking in a fanciful strain—to almost everything he said." For Verena had been raised "to admire new

ideas, to criticize the social arrangements that one met almost everywhere, and to disapprove of a great many things" (326). She even laments the fact that Basil has been unable to share his worldview with a broader audience because his articles have been rejected. Again, Verena seeks a debate, if only on a limited scale. In spite of the fact that she finds Basil's views utterly repugnant, she respects his autonomy: "I want you to remain as you are!," she proclaims (340).

Even when Basil aggressively pursues Verena to Marmion, a small town on Cape Cod, where she again retreats with Olive to prepare another important speech, the young woman refuses to forsake him. Although she continually reminds Olive that she loathes Basil's views, Verena does not go so far as to despise Basil himself, admitting instead that "I like him—I can't help it—I do like him. I don't want to marry him . . . but I like him better than any gentleman I have seen" (375). In effect, Verena loves the sinner but hates the sin. For Verena, avoiding Basil altogether would lack "dignity," for she "insisted on its being her duty to face the accidents and alarms of life" (376).

Olive Chancellor

Olive's character reflects many paradoxes as well. She is "subject to fits of tragic shyness" but "in certain conditions she was liable suddenly to become bold," especially when faced with anything "peculiar" or "exotic" (10, 12). Although Olive is prevented by her social awkwardness from speaking in public, claiming, "I have no facility; I am awkward and embarrassed and dry," she is not completely devoid of rhetorical talent. And thus, her dependence on Verena as a "mouthpiece" is not absolute. Indeed, one of the most powerful speeches Olive gives includes a warning to the young woman that proves prescient: "If you become dangerous some day to their selfishness, to their vested interests, to their immorality—as I pray heaven every day, my dear friend, that you may!—it will be a grand thing for one of them if he can persuade you that he loves you. Then you will see what he will do with you, and how far his love will take him! It will be a sad day for you and me and for all of us, if you were to believe something of that kind." Verena declares, "Why, Olive, you are quite a speaker yourself! You would far surpass me if you let yourself go" (136). Yet Olive's rhetorical powers—and the "high reasonableness" she exhibited, along with "a tone of softness and sympathy, a gentle dignity, a serenity and wisdom,"—were "not often revealed to the public at large; they belong to Miss Chancellor's very private life" (137). Olive's potential as a public speaker reemerges at the conclusion of the novel, as she is forced to confront a waiting audience in Boston after Verena is carried away by Basil. As Olive rose to the stage, "every sound instantly dropped, the hush was respectful, the great public waited" for her to speak (449).[16]

Olive clearly wants Verena never to marry, but she does not simply command the young woman to obey, as a stereotypical tyrant would. Olive explains to Verena that "your safety must not come from your having tied your hands" but rather "from the growth of your perception; from your seeing things, of yourself, sincerely and with conviction, in the light in which I see them; from your feeling that for your work your freedom is essential." Olive's overbearing desire "to extract a certainty" was matched by her amiable wish to "deprecate a pledge" in a way that was "altogether feminine." Olive's behavior smacks of passive aggression, but it is also understandable, given her strong desire to teach Verena and her awareness of her own excesses (137).[17] Olive realizes that Verena "was of many pieces, which had, where they fitted together, little capricious chinks, through which mocking inner lights seemed to gleam," and, to her credit, recognizes that "it was not of importance that Verena should be just like herself" (146).

Olive is clearly drawn toward an extreme form of asceticism as represented by Miss Birdseye, in spite of her wealth and privilege. We would expect Olive to shun friendships based on pleasure. Although Aristotle praises moderation, he does not advocate utter deprivation. Nor does Olive, in spite of the fact that she pursues "a career in which she was constantly exposing herself to offence and laceration." For Olive loves beauty: "Her most poignant suffering came from the injury of her taste. She had tried to kill that nerve, to persuade herself that taste was only frivolity in the disguise of knowledge." Beautiful things are not lovable for Olive because they are useful or pleasant, but rather because they are good in themselves: "Her susceptibility [to beauty] was constantly blooming afresh and making her wonder whether an absence of nice arrangements were a necessary part of the enthusiasm of humanity" (29). Olive's aesthetic sensibilities reemerge when she meets Henry Burrage. "Olive was extremely susceptible to music," and as Burrage played the piano for her and Verena, "it was impossible to her not to be soothed and beguiled by the young man's charming art." Indeed, Olive felt "as if the situation were a kind of truce," and that "the relations of men and women, in that picturesque grouping, had not the air of being internecine" (153). Olive's severity is open to challenge after all, albeit temporarily. Under the influence of Henry and her mother, even Verena shows "a flash of reflective intelligence and dares to question the dogma of her teacher" when she "goes 'so far as to ask Olive whether taste and art were not something' " (149).[18]

Basil Ransom

Whereas there is more than meets the eye in James's characterizations of Olive and Verena, Basil is seemingly one of the most closed-minded and one-dimensional characters in James's novels. Given James's well-deserved

reputation for portraying complex, multidimensional characters, Basil, "the most important personage in my narrative" who "played a very active part in the events I have undertaken in some degree to set forth," is a jarring stereotype of the Southern gentleman (4). Expressing his misogynistic views in sarcastic, ironical language, dripping with Southern charm, Basil categorically refuses to entertain the expansion of women's rights to any degree. By virtually every definition the young man has been a failure. Unable to run his family plantation after the Civil War or launch a successful new career as an attorney in New York, Basil "began to wonder whether he might not make a living by his opinions." For he "always had a desire for public life; to cause one's ideas to be embodied in national conduct appeared to him the highest form of human enjoyment." Yet, when he attempted to publish several articles based on his "research," they were turned down because of his objectionable views on the "rights of minorities" and other controversial issues that, for one editor, "were about three hundred years behind the age." Although Basil read a great deal, he focused on works that validated rather than challenged his worldview—Carlyle was of course one of his favorite authors (188–189). Even the narrator is taken aback by Basil's atavism, for "he seemed at moments to be inhabited by some transmitted spirit of a robust but narrow ancestor . . . with a more primitive conception of manhood than our modern temperament appears to require" (190). Clearly, Basil would be incapable of forming friendships with anyone who did not share his "painfully crude" views on women and other "minorities" (193).

And yet, the narrator's vivid description of Basil for the reader who "likes a complete image, who desires to read with the senses as well as with reason," indicates that the Southern gentleman is more complex than we might think. "This lean, pale, sallow, shabby" young man with "sedentary shoulders" is nevertheless "striking" because of "his superior head." The narrator describes Basil's expressions in paradoxical terms, of "bright grimness and hard enthusiasm." He is "provincial" yet "distinguished" in appearance. Basil is a symbol, "a representative of his sex," and yet he is also a unique individual (4). His boldness and aggression belie weakness and vulnerability. Although Basil is "a young man of first-rate intelligence," he is also "conscious of the narrow range, as yet, of his experience" (10). Although Basil liked women "not to think too much, not to feel any responsibility for the government of the world," but rather "be private and passive, and have no feeling but for that, and leave publicity to the sex of tougher hide," he nevertheless latches onto Verena as his savior (11). For when Basil vows to court the young woman, "his lodgings, his ambition, his resolution, had rekindled; he had remembered that he formerly supposed he was a man of ability," and, overlooking his otherwise conspicuous failures, "that nothing particular had occurred to make him doubt it (the evidence was only negative, not positive),

and that at any rate he was young enough to have another try" (208). Basil's very identity depends on the affections of a young, innocent woman.

In spite of Basil's multidimensionality, he is incapable of establishing a deeper relationship with Verena that is based on anything beyond utility or pleasure. The weakness of their bond is indicated by the fact that Basil relates to Verena only by placing a wedge between the young woman and her closest friend, and by completely ignoring the substance of her words, especially her radical views on women. As the novel progresses, Basil becomes less chivalrous and increasingly predatory as he single-mindedly pursues his prey. "In playing with the subject this way, in enjoying her visible hesitation," the narrator observes, Basil "was slightly conscious of a man's brutality—of being pushed by an impulse to test her good-nature, which seemed to have no limit" (244).

TWO ARISTOTELIAN FRIENDSHIPS: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS

James sets up two parallel friendships that can be helpfully analyzed from the perspective of Aristotelian friendship. The friendship between Olive and Verena does not last, but it is more clearly connected to virtue. Basil effectively replaces Olive as he seeks to isolate Verena in the confines of their future home. Although the impending marriage between Basil and Verena promises to last all too long, the relationship between them is ultimately based solely on utility and pleasure.

Olive and Verena's Friendship

When Olive and Verena withdraw to Olive's home and immerse themselves in the teachings of the early women's rights movement, the narrator vividly describes the "infatuated pair" of women in terms reminiscent of Aristotle's ideal or "complete" form of virtue. Both "wish in similar fashion for the good things for each other" and especially "for their friends' sake." Both show signs of developing independent thinking and discernment. The women were "completely, inspiringly in agreement, full of the purpose to live indeed, and with high success; to become great, in order not to be obscure, and powerful, in order not to be useless." The "partnership of their two minds—each of them, by itself, lacking an important group of facets—made an organic whole which, for the work in hand, could not fail to be brilliantly effective" (156). Specifically, Verena's "irresponsive" nature and her weak "statistical and logical side" is complemented by Olive's ability to conjure the "divine idea" and inspire her to speak. And Olive's "crusade" would lack "sweetness"

or "unction" without Verena's rhetorical gifts (156–157). Both develop their respective virtues and use their talents to help one another. Olive and Verena "threw themselves into study" of "innumerable big books from the Athenaeum, and consumed the midnight oil," but they did not deprive themselves of beauty or good company. "They admired the sunsets" together, entertained guests, and attended "the superior programmes" at the Music Hall (171, 177). Their devotion to learning did not isolate the two women from the outside world.

The women indulge in a guilty pleasure that threatens to jeopardize the virtuous nature of their friendship, namely, "the wonderful insight they had obtained into the history of feminine anguish" (181). This was Olive's specialty, and she "poured forth these views to her listening and responsive friend . . . again and again," like a mantra. Eventually, Verena "quite agreed with her companion that . . . men must take *their* turn, men must pay!" (182) Wallowing in the systematic oppression of women smacks of indoctrination and stereotyping. Although "they read a great deal of history together," a highly selective reading for the sole purpose of "finding confirmation in it for this idea that their sex had suffered inexpressibly," Verena, in spite of her education and experience, was nevertheless "full of suggestions which stimulated discussion" about the women who "had been intrusted with power and had not always used it amiably" (175). Olive believes in the "native refinement" of Verena and other American women, or "their latent 'adaptability.'" She rejoices at "the way her companion rose with the level of civilisation that surrounded her, the way she assimilated all delicacies and absorbed all traditions" (174). Verena exhibits the kind of independent thinking and discernment Nussbaum's Aristotle would appreciate, much to Olive's delight.

There are other indications that Verena exercises a greater independence of thought through her friendship with Olive. Verena maintains a certain level of independence because "she had latent curiosities and distractions—left to herself, she was not always thinking of the unhappiness of women" (137–138). She is able to laugh at Olive's implicit concession that some men might actually be acceptable for marriage (139). Although she found herself ensnared by Olive's "fine web of authority . . . as dense as a suit of golden mail," Verena was no longer "passive, purely appreciative" but rather "disinterestedly attached to the precious things they were to do together; she cared about them for themselves, believed in them ardently, had them constantly in mind" (168).

The women were visited frequently by Miss Birdseye, who regaled them with tales from her past work. Initially, Miss Birdseye appears to be a kind of icon, "a representative of suffering humanity," "the last link in a tradition" of "New England life" characterized by "plain living and high thinking, of pure ideals and earnest effort, of moral passion and noble experiment." As such,

Birdseye is a useful symbol and vital source of information for the women. Olive and Verena's fixation on Birdseye seems exploitative, reeking "a kind of aroma of martyrdom." Yet, what really drew them to the old woman was the particular experiences and the authenticity of her commitment to abolitionism and women's rights: "It was the perennial freshness of Miss Birdseye's faith that had had such a contagion for these modern maidens." For Verena, Birdseye's stories filled a lacuna in her own background. She had met other abolitionists as a child, "but she had seen none with so many reminiscences as Miss Birdseye, or who had been so nearly scorched by penal fires" (178–179). The young woman was so moved by Birdseye's lived experiences that she spontaneously crafted an ode to the old woman at a meeting that "brought tears into the eyes of most of the others" (180). Birdseye reflects Aristotle's claim that virtue requires lived experience in particular contexts, not abstract learning and reflection. The passion of the two women serves to restore Miss Birdseye's humanity—and their own.

The friendship between Olive and Verena is fundamentally transformed when Basil insinuates himself into Verena's life. After confessing to Olive that she and Basil had met secretly in Cambridge and exchanged letters, Verena is "sick to realise how much her friend was wrapped up in her—how terribly she would suffer from the least deviation" (290). And when Verena reveals that she will spend an afternoon with Basil while in New York City, the narrator explains that among the "peculiarities" that Verena found so "noble" in Olive, her "earnestness," had begun "to appear as inharmonious with the scheme of the universe as if it had been a broken saw" (296). The egalitarian relationship between the two women is permanently upset because Olive has become dependent on the young woman. Olive refuses to tyrannize over Verena, but rather than lament the personal loss of a friend, she "only dwelt upon the unspeakable tragedy of a defection" that would "put back the emancipation of women a hundred years" (379). Their friendship does not disappear altogether, but it does change to a more utilitarian one. Each requires the help of the other, but the intense dialogues between the two women no longer occur. Instead, Verena's days are spent constantly rehearsing her new speech. The "inspiration" that had animated their friendship "seemed rather to have faded away." Olive "wasn't going to trust to inspiration this time; she didn't want to meet a big Boston audience without knowing where she was" (392). Creativity is replaced with calculation as Olive adopts the role of manager and publicist.

Basil and Verena's "Friendship"

The void left by Olive in Verena's life is quickly filled by Basil, who makes clear that "she should be poor and withdrawn from view, a partner of his

struggle, of his severe, hard, unique stoicism." Verena believes that to submit is the only way to bring "happiness," but "the obstacles were terrible, cruel" (386). Basil's frankness could be interpreted as providing Verena an important opportunity to make an informed decision about her future, as did Olive. Moreover, Basil denies that he is destroying Verena's talent or "silencing" her. "I want to give it another direction," he explains, "but I don't want to stop your activity." Transforming Verena's public speaking to private conversation will somehow make her "the most charming woman in America," although few Americans will actually enjoy her gifts (389–390). If Basil is correct, and their marriage simply shifts Verena's forum from the public to the private, their friendship should simply become another version of the highest form, similar to the bond between Verena and Olive. Verena is still able to develop her talents in the domestic realm. Indeed, even Aristotle praises the power of friendship between mother and child and husband and wife (NE 1161b11–1162a34).

There are important differences between the relationships, however. Whereas Olive recognizes Verena's excellence and encourages its development, Basil falls in love with Verena by transforming her gift into a possession. Basil is incapable of hearing the message of Verena's speeches because he is blinded by passion and selfishness. The young woman is transformed into a domestic goddess of sorts who is deprived of the freedom to develop her talents and make informed choices.

In her pivotal speech on women's rights in New York City, Verena had confronted Basil almost directly by singling out men who continued to resist women's pleas for equality because their "prejudice was stronger and more cultivated" and "pretended to rest upon study and argument" (265). Yet Basil clearly does not realize that he was the intended target. Verena's speech contains aspects of virtually every major argument made concerning early women's rights, and yet Basil's perspective is not informed by logic or reason but rather passion. Notably, Verena's speech is presented not from the narrator's own perspective but from that of Basil, "through whose ears we are listening to it," and it is clear that he hears without listening. Verena's "intellectual effort" is reduced to "a pretty essay, committed to memory and delivered by a bright girl at an 'academy.' " Basil concludes that "from any serious point of view it was neither worth answering or worth considering" (268). Because Basil "was falling in love with her," he is capable of transforming her potential gifts as a public speaker into those of a housewife: "The idea that she was brilliant" meant not that Verena was destined for a career as a women's rights advocate, but rather "for something divinely different—for privacy, for him, for love" (366). Basil's conclusion that Verena is destined to be his private possession is a clear indication that their relationship is based on utility and pleasure. Only by interpreting Verena's character and virtues from his selfish

perspective is Basil able to bring himself to "love" her. Moreover, by jealously sequestering Verena, Basil also ensures that she will never enjoy the public notoriety that he himself failed to attain.[19]

As Basil is able to "love" Verena by deluding himself, so too does Verena seem capable of finding Basil appealing only when she separates his odious views from his "curious" but "pleasant" nature. When Basil seems to soften his tone, Verena focuses "on his deep, sweet, distinct voice" instead of the "monstrous opinions" it was expressing. As if to highlight the repulsiveness of Basil's views, the narrator admits that it has been a "difficult duty to describe" the "monstrous proceeding" between Basil and Verena, and he expresses relief at a brief silence between them (327–330). Although both Basil and Olive caused Verena pain and discomfort, Verena never considered Olive's views to be "monstrous." Whereas Basil's relentless cynicism silences Verena, Olive's tireless commitment to the cause of women's rights engages the young woman's intellect and provides substance to her speeches, albeit temporarily.

Basil's interest in Verena is utilitarian because he consistently refuses to treat her as a discrete, autonomous individual with her own thoughts and ideas. Indeed, Basil denies that his attack is "personal" and insists that he does not wish to "touch" or "destroy" her or her friends (333). Instead, Verena represents for him something far more abstract, namely, the "most damnable feminization" of society itself. Basil laments that "the masculine tone" is being replaced with "a feminine, a nervous, hysterical, cantering" filled with "hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes and coddled sensibilities." Basil proposes to wage war against this "reign of mediocrity" by defending "the masculine character, the ability . . . to look the world in the face and take it for what it is." At the end of his rant, Basil admits: "I don't in the least care what becomes of you ladies while I make the attempt!" (334). The irony, of course, is that Basil's tirade is itself "feminized": it is he who employs "hollow phrases and false delicacy and exaggerated solicitudes" in the form of Southern chivalry. Basil's delusions of grandeur—that he might "put to shape the slumbering instincts of an important minority" and even become the president of the United States—seem the product of "an angry helplessness" (334). Although Basil is emboldened when one of his articles is finally accepted for publication, it is unclear how long his success will last.

When Verena objects to "the cruel effect her apostasy would have" on Olive, Basil angrily dismisses Verena's reference to "the sacred name of friendship" as "fantastical sophistry" (390). The young woman clearly mourns the loss of a cherished bond that Basil is incapable of understanding. Indeed, the narrator claims that the friendship between the two women, though "a very peculiar thing," nevertheless "had elements which made it probably as complete as any (between women) that had ever existed" (386).

Basil is focused on disempowering Verena by persuading her to give up her gift of speech: Although "he was indeed quite appalled at the facility with which she threw it over, gave up the idea that it was useful and precious," Basil was pleased by his apparent success (388). Whereas Basil does not hesitate to reveal his tyrannical tendencies, Olive had largely resisted the temptation to dominate her vulnerable friend.

The seemingly inevitable descent into tragedy is briefly interrupted by the death of Miss Birdseye, who again reminds her companions that virtue lies in lived experience. Verena confesses to Basil that she would have preferred a life of activism, "to wander, alone with her life in her hand, on an errand of mercy, through a country in which society was arrayed against her," just as Miss Birdseye had done, instead of "simply talking about the right from the gas-lighted vantage of the New England platform." Without Birdseye and others like her, Olive's abstract account of women's oppression loses an individual, particularized reinforcement that humanizes the movement. Even Basil finds Birdseye's personal history compelling: "He wished he might have met the old lady in Carolina and Georgia before the war—shown her around among the negroes and talked over New England ideas with her." Basil makes the shocking admission that "there were a good many" New England ideas "he didn't care much about now, but at that time they would have been tremendously refreshing" (395–396).

The extent to which Verena's choice to follow Basil is truly "free" is undermined by his ruthlessness. The language used to describe his actions is increasingly forceful and brutal. Basil's aggression precludes any notion that the friendship between him and Verena can be virtuous because it is not choice-worthy in itself. As Basil closes in, "Verena has no opportunity to make a thoughtful decision, and she never freely makes any type of promise to Ransom." Like John Wilkes Booth, one commentator observes, Basil swoops down to rob the people of a voice for freedom.[20] "Named and created as he is, Ransom cannot do more than brutally have his way with his desire."[21] Following the analogy, readers might wonder if Verena is kidnapped or (spiritually?) assassinated by her aggressor.

ON PATHS NOT TAKEN: FRIENDSHIPS AS POSSIBILITIES

James is a "powerful ally" of Aristotle not only because he provides a rich tapestry with which to examine ancient theories of virtue but also of friendship. Like the characters James portrays, readers develop a sense of discernment by following in their footsteps, so to speak, gaining insight into their innermost thoughts, seeing where they made good choices and bad ones, and speculating

about why they did what they did. Readers learn not only from what James includes in his novels but from what he chooses to exclude. In so doing, James invites his audience to contemplate alternatives and possibilities that might help guide them toward goodness and virtue in an otherwise disorienting world.

Verena seems destined to suffer a miserable fate. The young woman seems to have no choice but to acquiesce to Basil's relentless advances. An alternate life for Verena in which she would remain a passionate advocate for women's rights while married (and presumably with children) is not a viable option. Olive too refuses to acknowledge the possibility of a truly egalitarian marriage. This is somewhat surprising, considering how many early women's rights advocates, such as Lucretia Mott, Ernestine Rose, and especially Lucy Stone, enjoyed relatively equal status with their husbands.[22]

What if the friendships in *The Bostonians* were not destined to fail? What would they look like? Perhaps if Olive had indulged her aesthetic sensibilities, she could have added to her words the "sweetness" and "unction" that she so desperately sought in Verena and refined her message about women's fundamental humanity. If Verena had been able to arrive at a more authentic and informed commitment to women's rights, she would have been a much better friend for Olive. Although it is almost impossible to imagine, perhaps a misogynist ideologue like Basil would have been more open to a kind of feminism that supplemented its rhetoric with concrete action—as it was for Miss Birdseye. Perhaps the friendship between Henry, Olive, and Verena could have united style and substance.[23]

In James's *Bostonians*, "the situation of woman" in America is dire yet not without hope. The "decline of the sentiment of sex" provides a crucial opening for the renegotiation of these "sentiments" and the emergence of new ones. And the "agitation" on behalf of women requires both the old and the new, the practical and the theoretical. Perhaps the sheer complexity of the American condition is what makes James's *Bostonians* uniquely American.

NOTES

1. Quoted in Henry James, *The Bostonians*, The Library of America (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), xi.

2. See Caroline Field Levander, "Bawdy Talk; The Politics of Women's Public Speech in *The Lecturess* and *the Bostonians*," *American Literature* 67, no. 3 (1995).

3. Peter Coviello, *Tomorrow's Parties: Sex and the Untimely in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 170. For a more charitable view, see Aaron Shaheen, "'The Social Dusk of That Mysterious Democracy': Race, Sexology, and the New Woman in Henry James's *The Bostonians*," *The American Transcendental Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (2005).

4. Barbara Hochman, "Reading Historically/Reading Selectively: *The Bostonians* in the Century, 1885–1886," *The Henry James Review* 34, no. 3 (2013): 272.

5. Emily Coit, "Henry James's Dramas of Cultivation: Liberalism and Democracy in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*," 36, no. 2 (2015): 182–183.

6. Shaheen, "'The Social Dusk of That Mysterious Democracy': Race, Sexology, and the New Woman in Henry James's *The Bostonians*," 288.

7. Martha Craven Nussbaum, "Exactly and Responsibly: A Defense of Ethical Criticism," *Philosophy and Literature*, no. 2 (1998): 347–348.

8. For a qualified endorsement of Nussbaum's analysis, see Jane Singleton, "Henry James—Aristotle's Ally, an Exclusive Pact?," 30, no. 1 (April 2006).

9. *Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011). Line numbers in parentheses.

10. For an alternative explanation of the failure of the various relationships, see Catherine H. Zuckert, "American Women and Democratic Morals: 'The Bostonians'," *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 3/4 (1976).

11. Henry James, *The Bostonians; a Novel* (London, New York: Macmillan and Co., 1886). All subsequent parenthetical citations refer to this edition.

12. For a similarly charitable view of Olive and Verena's friendship, see Anthony Scott, "Basil, Olive, and Verena: The Bostonians and the Problem of Politics," *Arizona Quarterly: A Journal of American Literature, Culture, and Theory* 49, no. 1 (1993).

13. For a particularly harsh recent treatment of Olive, see Coit, "Henry James's Dramas of Cultivation: Liberalism and Democracy in *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima*."

14. For an exploration of the racialized aspects of Verena's exoticism, see Shaheen, " 'The Social Dusk of That Mysterious Democracy': Race, Sexology, and the New Woman in Henry James's *The Bostonians*," 285–286.

15. Olive's comfortable home contrasts sharply with Miss Birdseye's "long, loose, empty parlor (it was shaped exactly like Miss Chancellor's)," which indicated that Birdseye "had never had any needs but moral needs" (29).

16. See Kathleen McColley, "Claiming Center Stage: Speaking out for Homoerotic Empowerment in *The Bostonians*," *The Henry James Review* 21, no. 2 (2000): 166.

17. This awareness becomes apparent when Olive first meets Verena and continually checks her eagerness to befriend the young woman by insisting that they must "wait."

18. Coit, "Henry James's Dramas of Cultivation: Liberalism and Democracy in *the Bostonians* and *the Princess Casamassima*," 188.

19. Basil laments Verena's uncanny ability to remind him of his own failure to express his views publicly, in contrast to her relative success as a public speaker (329, 321).

20. Sara Blair, "Realism, Culture, and the Place of the Literary: Henry James and 'The Bostonians'," in *The Cambridge Companion to Henry James*, ed. Jonathan Freedman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). Cited in McColley, "Claiming Center Stage: Speaking out for Homoerotic Empowerment in *The Bostonians*," 166.

21. "Claiming Center Stage: Speaking out for Homoerotic Empowerment in *the Bostonians*," 165–166.

22. On the notable lack of references to the movement itself, see Leslie Petty, "The Political Is Personal: The Feminist Lesson of Henry James's 'The Bostonians'," *Women's Studies* 34 (2005).

23. A parody of *The Bostonians* in which Olive becomes an effective advocate for women's rights and Verena liberates herself from Basil's tyranny was written in 1887 by Celia Whitehead under the pseudonym Henrietta James. Although the piece was satirical, Whitehead explained that she wanted to finish what the novel had left incomplete. Ibid., 398–402.

Chapter 4

Whit Woody Barcelona

Love and Friendship in Whit Stillman's Barcelona *and Woody Allen's* Vicky, Cristina, Barcelona

Ann Ward and Lee Ward

This chapter compares and contrasts the themes of love and friendship in Whit Stillman's *Barcelona* (1994) and Woody Allen's *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008). While these films both deal with the lives of young Americans in Catalonia, they differ in significant ways. Stillman's film is what we identify as the "male drama." Set during the 1980s, the experience of love and friendship for two American cousins, Ted and Fred Boynton, as they interact with a circle of young Spanish women and with each other is deeply impacted by both the Cold War conflict between the liberal capitalist "right" and the socialist or communist "left," and the tensions between Europe and America. Stillman represents 1980s Barcelona as a period of transition in which the conflict between traditional certainties about political ideology and gender relations, on the one hand, and new ideas of political and sexual freedom, on the other, are at least partly resolved in Stillman's view by the putative triumph of bourgeois American commercial values.

Allen's film is the "female drama." Set in a post–Cold War world in which American global capitalism seems triumphant and on which European high culture now seems to depend, big politics appears to have ended. Yet, for the American and Catalan women and men who inhabit this world, the "personal is political," as it were, or questions of justice and freedom have moved into the private sphere. Although completely free to live as she chooses, Vicky's pursuit of sexual fulfillment seems more inhibited by the "social contract" she has made with her American fiancé than if she were to adopt a Catalan identity that views the subject as the pawn of larger forces that one does not control, whether the passions or the opaque source of artistic inspiration.

Cristina, choosing to fall into the arms of a Catalan painter, whose arms seem large enough to embrace three women at the same time, nonetheless returns to America apparently suffering from the hypos first identified by Herman Melville's Ishmael.[1] Yet, Marie Elena, the Spanish femme fatale, who possesses not just talent, but genius, and from whom all seem to draw life, would not be the recognized artist that she is without the commitment to sexual equality originally imported to Europe from America. Nevertheless, we conclude that Allen is in fact more critical than Stillman of what America has to offer.

THE MALE DRAMA: WHIT STILLMAN'S *BARCELONA*

The film's plot revolves around the experiences of two twentysomething American cousins Ted and Fred Boynton living in Barcelona in what Stillman describes as the "last decade of the Cold War," that is, the early 1980s. Ted works as a sales rep for an American firm, the Illinois High Speed Motor Company (IHSMOCO). Fred is a junior naval officer sent to Barcelona to do some PR work in advance of a fleet visit to the city, notorious for its hostility to the American military and to Spain's proposed entry in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). From the opening scene with panoramic sweeps of the cityscape, the eponymous urban setting dominates the film. In this sense, *Barcelona* shares a kinship with the venerable genre of American literature peopled by writers such as Ernest Hemingway and Henry James searching for creative inspiration in Europe.[2] There is also, of course, the Englishman George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia*, which reminds us that many literary figures in the first half of the twentieth century identified Barcelona with progressive, even revolutionary, politics.[3] The significance of Barcelona for Stillman is not only as a rich cultural meeting ground for American and European points of view but also as the particular expression of a minority national culture within Spanish political history. The Barcelona that inspired Orwell with its resistance to Franco's military dictatorship was the anti-monarchical, anticlerical, and anti-fascist bastion in Spain's brutal civil war of the 1930s. In other words, Barcelona is a classic "Red Town."

It is into a city with this distinct political heritage that Stillman inserts these two American men. Hardly innocents abroad, Ted and Fred represent the twin pillars of American Cold War preeminence, that is, the economic and military strength of the Western superpower.[4] Both aspects of American power embodied in the Boynton cousins reflect sharp contrasts with fundamental elements of Catalan identity. In response to Fred's military service, Stillman shows us the Catalan tradition of anti-militarism. Contra Ted's can-do American capitalist spirit, Barcelona evokes memories of the communitarian

and socialist ideals of its past. The importance of the political context for understanding this film is demonstrated from one of the earliest scenes in which some Catalan youths accuse the uniformed Fred and business-attired Ted of being *facha*, Catalan slang for fascist.

Fred's query: "What is facha?" signifies the first indication of the mutual miscomprehension between the Americans and the Catalans. Ted's response fails to calm his agitated cousin: "Don't worry, they call everybody that. I mean, you comb your hair, or wear a coat and tie, and you're '*facha.*' A military uniform—definitely *facha*." Fred's overdrawn confusion elicits: "So 'facha' is something good then. . . . Because if they were referring to the political movement Benito Mussolini led, I'd be really offended." This early exchange exposes the competing and distorted historical memory regarding both Spain's history and the 1980s Cold War geopolitical reality. Fred sees fascism in terms of World War II and is outraged at the insult to the "men in this uniform who died ridding Europe of fascism." For Fred, from the American perspective, World War II was the conflict that determined the structure of the Cold War. But for the Catalans, fascism has to do with Spain's own civil war, which arguably did not end, or perhaps even begin to end, until the death of the dictator Franco peacefully in his bed in November 1975 just a few years before the time period for the film. Ted's allusion to the "facha" overtones regarding haircuts or a business suit suggests that the scarring effect of fascist dictatorship extended even into fashion choices in the 1980s in which wearing a leather jacket hearkened back to Barcelona's anarcho-syndicalist past, while uniforms and suits are a perpetual reminder of the petit bourgeois and professional military who triumphed in Spain's civil war.

It is in this context that the *facha* comment evokes the anti-Americanism in 1980s Barcelona. "Yankee pigs" spray painted on a wall has its roots in the perception of American support for anti-communist military dictators in Chile, Nicaragua, and Argentina. Fred's determination to clean up the graffiti stems from his belief that both Spaniards and Americans are guilty of "forgetting too much," that is, forgetting the anti-fascist alliance of World War II. Ted's caution that "It's not our country" presents this anti-American sentiment as a product of the internal debate about Catalan identity sparked by Spain's proposed entry into NATO, rather than anything to do with World War II. Fred is shocked at Catalan opposition to NATO: "What are they for? Soviet troops racing across Europe eating all the croissants?"

Anti-Americanism is personified in the film by the academic-turned-fashion-journalist Ramon, who seems to always be hovering around the same social circle as the Boyntons.[5] He is a Svengali figure among the Catalan "Trade Fair girls," and very much Ted and Fred's rival in love and politics. Stillman presents an unflattering portrait of a lecherous intellectual *poseur*

who peddles garbled half-truths and conspiracy theories in order to pass himself off as an authority on American foreign policy. Impressionable young Catalans look to Ramon as a kind of political wizard who, according to Ted (and Fred's) love interest Montserrat, "had read the works of Philip Agee and so was an expert on the American CIA and its involvement in the internal affairs of every country." One crucial scene involves Ted, Fred, Montserrat, and another Trade Fair girl Marta encountering Ramon holding court with a rapt audience at a San Juan Night party. Ramon draws the parallel between the recent terrorist bombing of the USO office in Barcelona (in which an American sailor was killed) and the sabotaging of the USS *Maine* in Havana Harbour in 1898, which provided the casus belli for the Spanish-American War that resulted in the US conquest of Cuba and the Philippines. In response to this tale of American ruthlessness and cynicism, it is the normally unflappable Ted, as opposed to the overtly patriotic Fred, who blurts out: "Those are lies!" Ted later concedes defeat when Montserrat blithely informs him that "all the history books" in Spain teach Ramon's version of events about the USS *Maine*.

Clearly, Stillman employs Ramon as a vehicle to display the fatuousness of much of what passes for discourse about American foreign policy among many in the European Left. Ramon is prejudiced and uninformed, yet Montserrat and Marta insist that he is correct about the nefarious antiprogressive activities of the "AFL-CIA," an absurd malapropism for the most important US labor organization. Stillman also reveals Ramon's comical lack of fluency in English as he intones vatic statements about forthcoming US attacks on Iran and Libya meant to reverse "the reclining popularity of the president." Ramon's influence depends upon considerable ignorance about real American life on the part of his Spanish audience. The only perspective many of them have on the United States is filtered through the prism of hostile or misinformed interpreters. Ted captures this aspect of anti-Americanism by analogy to the "disgusting" mock-hamburgers served in Europe, which leads Europeans to believe that Americans, who are known to love hamburgers, are "idiots." Europeans do not, perhaps cannot, know that hamburgers in the United States are delicious, and this it is "that ideal burger of memory that we crave."

CHALLENGING COLD WAR ASSUMPTIONS

Ted and Fred reflect ideological certainties of the Cold War that are subject to serious challenge in the closing phase of the conflict. Montserrat, namesake of the beautiful mountain range surrounding the city, reminds us, echoing Ramon, that "the old gods are dead." In this respect at least, Ted and Fred

seem to acknowledge Ramon's insight as they grapple with the sense that the traditional metaphysical support for American commercial republicanism and its claims to human happiness and excellence are no longer as apparent or persuasive as they once were, even to Americans. In particular, postwar American self-identity rested on certain assumptions about capitalism and US military prowess.

Throughout *Barcelona*, Ted offers a running philosophical defense of capitalist economics. Ted's gods preach a gospel of individualism and self-regarding materialism that claims to provide the basis for individual happiness and healthy civic life. The self-help gurus Ben Franklin, Andrew Carnegie, and Frank Bettger are the "philosophers" of this new age. Ted insists that in sales he discovered not only a profession but also a "culture" and a "theory of human relations" that offers the utopian prospect of a commercial sphere in which there are no winners and losers and in which businesses make people's "lives more agreeable" to the benefit of the "whole economy." While acknowledging that artists have had a profound impact even on American culture with their mockery of bourgeois values (e.g., Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*) and that the naiveté of much of this self-help lit opens it up to the facile criticism of "half-wits" (such as Fred), Ted's defense of capitalism seems to rely on an idealized version of commerce. He emphasizes the value of earning trust: "Being bluntly honest" about your product "is always safe and best." Ted's ideal of business is a far cry from the credit default swaps and insanely leveraged deals of the post–Cold War Wall Street "casino capitalism" that precipitated the 2008 economic meltdown. He stresses the importance of meaningful consent as seen in his "Maneuver X," a low-pressure sales technique that requires a customer to take an affirmative step to assume moral responsibility for one's decision. Maneuver X presupposes faithful transmission of honest and accurate information about the product being sold.

But Stillman hints that Ted's idealized version of commerce may be dependent on moral virtues that are not integral to capitalism. It was only under the influence of a charismatic business prof in senior year that the anti-capitalist prejudice of Ted's youth dissipated. But it was to Jack Tyrrell, savior of IHSMOCO and Ted's mentor that he owed the most for his career. Tyrrell is a kind of Platonic philosopher king who combined military courage, clandestine cunning, and the ability to read souls in order to determine their true vocation. Tyrrell, however, was also "the last of the greats," one of those "magnetic personalities of the World War II generation," whose formative experiences in life and business were very different from the young men who will succeed him at the firm, such as Ted and his colleague Dickie Taylor.

Stillman's mild critique of the commercial spirit may extend further than simply the problem of transmitting values and virtues from one generation to the next. However, he leaves it to Marta, the least intellectually curious of

the Trade Fair girls, to give the most elaborate attack on American capitalism when she rehearses for Fred Ramon's account of the horrors of bourgeois life in America: "Ramon is very persuasive and painted a terrible picture of what it would be like to live the rest of her life in America with its consumerism, crime and vulgarity. All those loud badly dressed fat people watching their eighty channels of television and visiting shopping malls. The plastic throw-everything-away society with its notorious violence and racism. . . . And finally, the total lack of culture." The audience is struck less by Marta's hackneyed tirade than by Fred's priceless response: "It's a problem."

Why don't we see an enthusiastic defense of American life from the super-patriotic Fred? Stillman allows us to suspect that there is some tension between the twin pillars of American Cold War power, between self-regarding commercial values, on the one hand, and public-spirited military virtues, on the other.[6] We recall Fred's own disapproval of bourgeois life when he insists that he quit his Wall Street job to join the Navy because he hated the idea of being "stuck indoors for the next forty years, with two weeks off to go snorkelling annually," not to mention "all the fighting-for-freedom, defending democracy, shining-city-on-a-hill stuff, which I really buy." This disdain for the softer mores associated with commercial life perhaps underlies much of Fred's annoyance with Ted throughout the film, not to mention his general ambivalence toward the concept of private property that prompts Ted—frequent victim of Fred's insouciance about the fiduciary obligations of borrowers—to observe that there is sometimes "a fine line between borrowing and theft."

In terms of military might, the fundamental American Cold War assumption is that the Soviets can only be contained (if not actually defeated outright) by US military force either alone or in alliance. The three acts of violence that punctuate the action in the film—the bombings of the American Library and USO Office, as well as the assassination attempt on Fred—expose the negligible impact of low-grade indigenous guerilla attacks on US targets. These feeble efforts will not spark a general anti-American revolt or even reverse the course of Spanish entry into NATO. But the military assumption that the Cold War will be won or lost primarily by soldiers, tanks, and missile systems is challenged repeatedly in the film by Stillman's subtle exploration of the impact of propaganda. As Ramon reminds us throughout, the hearts and minds of potential American allies can be swayed by the anti-American propaganda ever-present on the European Left (we would now add the *National Front* extreme right). Admittedly, US Cold War strategy could be self-defeating with counterproductive American interference in the internal affairs of other countries. The cost to American prestige by this containment strategy is highlighted by Stillman's delightful satire of US policy in Latin America in a scene in which the comically bellicose Fred literally crushes a

"cadre" of fierce red ants threatening the peace-loving black ants at a picnic to the disgust of the horrified Catalans. Indeed, Stillman makes American complicity in the phenomenon of anti-Americanism an important subtheme of the film. Whether it be Fred's careless pillow talk with Marta that first put him on Ramon's radar as a CIA operative, or the US consul general's insistence that anti-Americanism originates in the American media (whom he likens to those who report on the world's ant farm, but also happen to hate ants), Stillman seems to identify the source of anti-Americanism as something at least partly within the American soul insofar as this soul finds itself locked in the ideological grip of the Cold War.

THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

Despite the undoubtedly durable and well-organized US war effort, Stillman suggests that the deeper challenge to American commercial republican values lies in the private as opposed to the public realm. *Barcelona* is a classic comedy in the Shakespearian mold as it concludes with a clutch of happy couples coupling. But it is a comedy in which the theme of romantic love is deeply embedded in political concerns. Stillman compels us to consider: What does love mean in a world in which "the old gods are dead"? The decline of traditional religion and morality in the modern era also means that American political ideology perhaps lacks the metaphysical supports that it once had. Any discussion of love in the film takes place in a context in which the public dominates the private. It is as one commentator observes a heavily American "guy-o-centric" perspective in which the female and Spanish characters are practically never present on screen without at least one of the American male protagonists.[7] In Stillman's *Barcelona* even love, the traditional domain of women, is seen almost entirely from the point of view of men.

The male-driven dialogue of the film includes seemingly endless speculation about the erotic foundations of human happiness. This focus appears most sharply with respect to the idea of beauty. The opening scene witnesses Ramon, seducer of the Trade Fair girls, announcing "perfecto" as he looks at the image of his latest conquest in the mirror. Presumably, it is during these sessions that Ramon perfected his argument that "the idea of physical beauty . . . is the closest thing that remains to divinity in the modern world." With the passing of the old gods, so too presumably go the old ways. Under Ramon's influence Marta will insist that the idea of marriage is "extremist thinking." Ted informs Fred early on that the sexual revolution, which arguably began in the United States, "hit Spain later than the US but went far beyond it." In progressive Barcelona especially "everything was swept aside. . . . The world was turned upside down, and stayed there." In contrast to Ramon's

divinization of female beauty, Ted offers a jeremiad against the evils of erotic attraction: "the inordinate concern for physical beauty has wrecked . . . lives." Following his painful breakup with his girlfriend Betty back in the States, Ted vowed to only go out with "plain or homely women" in order to "free romance from the chains of physical beauty and carnality." Ted's rational approach to love results in a curious blindness to one of the Trade Fair girls Aurora's beauty, and to his unwise attempt to employ Maneuver X with Montserrat. In Ted's complicated, even contradictory, anti-materialism, Stillman displays the perhaps uniquely American tendency to romanticize commerce, while de-eroticizing romantic love.

As Mary Nichols observes, on the sole question of the idea of beauty, Stillman is somewhat sympathetic to the otherwise repellent Ramon.[8] Ramon seeks an ideal of beauty that is universalizable and can inspire devotion. Whereas Ted rejects the body purportedly in pursuit of the beauty of the soul, Ramon views physical beauty as the conduit to insight about soul insofar as the beautiful female form is the only thing left in the modern world that can give mere mortals even a dim awareness of perfection. But Ted's anti-materialism produces a curiously unidealistic perception of love. While Fred proposes that it is possible that Montserrat—the object of both of their affection—is the "one woman" who can bring him happiness, Ted insists that there is no "one" ideal soul mate for any particular person. Apparently, for Ted, there is at best a range of human types who can more or less satisfy each partner's emotional and erotic longings. In this respect, Fred and Ramon are closer to each other than either is to Ted, for Ramon's bold inversion of Ted's version of Cartesian dualism advanced the proposition that the impenetrability of soul, at least since the demise of the old gods in our cynical materialist age, paradoxically leaves the body as the only source of knowledge remaining about the residual ideal of immaterial substance.

Ramon's new age theology is clearly aestheticism masking hedonism, but it reads surprisingly well in comparison with Ted's pragmatic eroticism and utilitarian piety (Ted informs us that he consults the Old Testament "for advice on romantic matters") or in contrast to Fred's nationalistic "city-on-a-hill" civil religion. The difficulty in the attempted fusion of commerce and romance is represented by the Trade Fair girls who are pulled between two poles—Ramon and the Boynton cousins. Ramon flatters female vanity and skillfully arouses dread about the vulgarity of American life. However, despite their receptiveness to Ramon's anti-American propaganda, Stillman reminds us that the Trade Fair girls are themselves agents of the expansion of American consumer lifestyle to Spain.[9] Even here the political context intrudes on the private realm, for it is the Castilian Greta, who calls herself "not very Catalan," who displays an instinctive distrust for the America-bashing Ramon, and seems to find Ted's self-regarding religiosity at the

injured Fred's hospital bedside quite charming. Ted assures us that his future wife Greta is not put off by the purported vulgarity of America: "Actually [she is] looking forward to the eighty channels of television and abundance of consumer products in the US. I mean it doesn't bother her at all." That is to say, Greta appears to be attracted to the text of American life, as opposed to the titillating, but completely fictional, subtext represented by Ramon's conspiracy theories and tales about Ted's fetishistic tendencies lurking beneath his strait-laced bourgeois habits.

The Spanish women characters in *Barcelona* appear rather unironic and strangely humorless. But then again, the "guy-o-centric" perspective of the male drama is likely too limited by the erotic desires of the men to fully explore the complex question of female autonomy in a time of dramatic social and political change. Perhaps the only glimpse of an authentic, spontaneous moment of life that is not entirely seen through the eyes of young American men is the charming scene in which the Catalan women flamenco dance among themselves on a patio unaware of the voyeuristic Ted and Fred watching from the staircase above. It is an episode of simple beauty, but the audience cannot help but wonder if the same scene would look or feel the same set in Chicago or at "the Lake" in cottage country back in the States. Out of its native context, would this elegant, intricate, and highly gendered dance appear anachronistic or merely sad nostalgia? Stillman leaves us to ponder whether the romantic flamenco can inhabit the same moral universe as the egalitarian, androgynous, and potentially delicious American hamburger.

Whit Stillman's *Barcelona* concludes with an American triumph. Ted, Fred, and Dickie Taylor win the hearts of the Spanish girls who return with them to the States and devour tasty American burgers at the Lake. And as we know, despite the opposition from many on the progressive left, Spain did wind up joining the anti-communist alliance that would soon prevail over the Soviet Union. This is, however, perhaps a qualified victory. Late Cold War America faintly resembles Alexander the Great's empire, which famously lost its Greekness as the victorious men brought home foreign wives. In this closing scene, Stillman brings back the question of the relations of the genders in America, an issue largely suppressed throughout the romantic adventures of the two American lads abroad. Unlike American women who have certain expectations post-sexual revolution about their male partner's role in their personal and professional fulfillment, Ted informs Dickie Taylor that Spanish women "don't take it personally" when their American husbands and boyfriends act like jerks. One suspects that Stillman senses that the cheery acceptance of the excuse *cosa de gringos* (a gringo thing) is unlikely to help resolve the problems of strained gender relations that will emerge with such prominence and urgency in post–Cold War America.

THE FEMALE DRAMA: WOODY ALLEN'S *VICKY CRISTINA BARCELONA*

The plot of Woody Allen's film *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* revolves around the experiences of two American women in their late twenties. Vicky is working on a master's thesis on Catalan identity, a subject she has been fascinated with since falling in love with Gaudi architecture as a teen. Cristina is styled a "filmmaker," having completed a twelve-minute film which she wrote, directed, and acted in, the theme of which being why love is so hard to define. The narrator tells us that the two friends are similar in all things except their views on the important topic of love. Despite Vicky's love for Gaudi and her ability to be powerfully moved in a magical way by Spanish guitar, the narrator claims that in matters of love she is practical and currently engaged to be married to Doug. Vicky adores Doug because he is decent, successful—professionally and financially we are left to gather—and understands the beauty of commitment. Cristina, on the other hand, is looking for deep passion and accepts that in love there must be pain, having just broken up with a boyfriend back in America. Although she does not know what she wants, she is certain, according to the narrator, that she knows what she doesn't want.[10]

The two female friends arrive in post–Cold War Barcelona, spending the summer there before Vicky gets married to Doug in the fall. They are hosted by a distant relative of Vicky's family, Judy Nash and her husband, Mark. Mark Nash is an American businessman located in Barcelona whose wife Judy is a socialite moving in American and Catalan high circles, although she does not appear to be gainfully employed.

WOMEN, CAPITALISM, AND ART

Significant differences initially stand out between Stillman's and Allen's characters. First, Catalan men and women will be seen through the eyes of two American women rather than men. Both American women have been to college and Vicky is now pursuing a postgraduate degree while Cristina is very fashionably a "filmmaker" cum "photographer," pursuits that indicate significant leisure grounded in unearned wealth. When Mark Nash first asks her what she does, Cristina responds, "I'm at liberty," giving the impression that she does not have to "do" anything for a living. Vicky is engaged to Doug, a successful young professional in the financial district in New York City, who is looking for houses in the Hamptons and whose father has friends in the American embassy in Spain who can arrange a snap wedding in Barcelona should Doug arrive there by surprise.

Needless to say, Vicky and Cristina enjoy high social standing and financial security that is always there even if it remains unseen. One commentator accuses Allen of simple racism and blanketing Barcelona in white privilege by having his audience view Barcelona through the eyes of these two wealthy, female American characters.[11] Yet, we would suggest an alternative interpretation. The economic, social, and political security that Vicky and Cristina enjoy gives them the freedom to pursue their sexual desires without inhibition or ulterior motives. They do not have to consider, as most women throughout history have had to do, their male partner's money, social or political status, or even citizenship, when engaging with him in pursuit of pleasure, sexual or otherwise. As Cristina says to Vicky when the two are debating whether to fly to Oviedo with Juan Antonio: "I'm a big girl. If I want to sleep with him I will, if not I won't." This freedom that Vicky and Cristina enjoy, from Allen's point of view, goes some way in bringing the true nature of female sexual desire and how it is satisfied to the surface. Such desire and the question of how women, mainly American but also Catalan and all women, experience love, sex, and pleasure and how this relates to "freedom" is a central if not *the* central phenomena explored in the film.

The Catalan characters in Allen's film are also older and seemingly of higher social status than the characters (with the possible exception of Ramon) in Stillman's film. Juan Antonio (Javier Bardem) and Marie Elena (Penelope Cruz) have already been married and divorced by the time the film starts, and both, like Vicky and Cristina, have been to "college" or the Catalan equivalent, art school. Interesting to note is that while they play a divorced couple in the film, Bardem and Cruz are actually married in real life. Juan Antonio and Marie Elena both seem to be artists of some regional if not national fame, as we learn that their "hot divorce" was a really big deal in the art world. Allen's film, moreover, does not end with the Shakespearean resolution of happy couples tying the marriage knot. Rather, the plot of Allen's film centers around three women and one man in various configurations.

The political context that is the background of Allen's film also differs from that of Stillman's film. In *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*, the Cold War is over and American global capitalism, represented by Ted Boynton in Stillman's film and Doug in Allen's film, appears economically and politically triumphant. European, or more particularly Catalan, high culture now seems to depend on the wealth that this triumphant capitalism produces. Vicky and Cristina, and the audience of Allen's film, first see and hear about Juan Antonio at a party thrown for local artists and collectors at an art gallery owned by a friend of Mark and Judy Nash. Moreover, Juan Antonio is initially mistaken for another Catalan artist who has been commissioned by Mark to paint pictures for the walls of his Barcelona office. American multinational corporate wealth, it seems, has become the new patron of European art. Is Juan Antonio

attending the party to explore the possibility of his receiving such patronage as well? The first thing Juan Antonio says to both Vicky and Cristina when he approaches them in a restaurant after the party at the art gallery is a one-word question: "American?" Juan Antonio is interested, following up with Cristina with: "What colour are your eyes?"

The impact that American global capitalism and the wealth it produces has on European art and high culture is a question, therefore, that Allen's film raises.

THE AMERICANS

With the apparent triumph of American global capitalism, the film suggests that "big politics" has ended. Yet, for the women and men who inhabit Allen's post–Cold War Barcelona, the "personal is political," or questions of justice, freedom, beauty, and violence have moved from the public to the private sphere.[12] Perhaps the "privatization" of political questions, as it were, can best be explored through the character of Vicky. Engaged to be married to Doug in the fall but engulfed by her erotic desire for Juan Antonio, Vicky, during her summer in Barcelona, is confronted with a choice between two alternatives. This choice is most aptly expressed by her older friend Judy Nash. Of her husband Mark, who she sees as Doug thirty years from now, Judy says: "I love him, but I'm not in love with him." Allen seems to say through Judy that American men offer women the emotional stability of *love*, which involves economic, social, and political security, but excludes sexual satisfaction. European men, on the other hand, offer women the adventure of being *in love* that, while entailing emotional, socioeconomic, and possibly political turmoil, promises to heighten sexual desire and the possibility of its fulfillment. Which one will you choose, Allen seems to be asking American women?

For Vicky the choice between the security of *love* and the adventure of being *in love* comes to her through Doug, her fiancé-husband and young representative of the American capitalism from which she comes, and Juan Antonio, her on-again–off-again Spanish lover and representative of the Catalan identity she studies but in the end seems unwilling to embrace. Indeed, Doug and Juan Antonio often present themselves beside each other, on the cell phone or in the flesh, for Vicky throughout the film. For instance, take Juan Antonio's proposal to Vicky and Cristina of a ménage à trois in Oviedo and Vicky's attempts to turn him down. In what is surely one of the most erotically titillating conversations between men and women in modern American film, Juan Antonio approaches the two women in a restaurant and, after confirming that both women are American, learning their names and, we

think, the color of Cristina's eyes, he invites both to fly to Oviedo with him for the weekend, closing the initial proposal with a commanding, "We leave in one hour." Vicky pushes back though, and to make the offer more attractive Juan Antonio explains, "I'll show you around the city, we'll drink good wine, we'll make love." Vicky asks, "Who exactly is going to make love?" Juan Antonio: "Hopefully the three of us." Although Cristina cannot repress an excited smile, Vicky says, "Look Signor, maybe in another life." Juan Antonio, though, is persistent and asks, "Why not? Life is short, life is dull, life is full of pain, and this is a chance for something special. [. . .] You are Vicky and you are Cristina, or is it the other way around?" Of Vicky's wordy attempts to reject him Juan Antonio asks Cristina, "Does she always analyze every inspiration until its grain of charm is [. . .] uh, how do you say it, ehhh, squeezed out of it?" All Cristina can say is, "Actually, my eyes are green." Juan Antonio tries to close the deal by saying, "You are both so lovely and beautiful," and to Vicky, "What offended you about the offer? Surely not that I find you both beautiful and desirable?" In the middle of Vicky's final attempt to turn Juan Antonio down, Cristina blurts out, "I would love to go to Oviedo."

Giving the two women space to think about his offer, Juan Antonio backs away from their table. The debate between the two women begins. Cristina excitedly says, "Oh my god this guy is so interesting." Due to some confused and mistaken whispering by Judy Nash in the art gallery, Vicky responds, "If I heard right, he was violent with his [ex] wife." Although for Cristina this means that Juan Antonio is not one of those factory-made zombies, Vicky declares, "I'm not going to Oviedo with this charmingly candid wife-beater. You find his aggressiveness attractive but I don't, and he's certainly not handsome." Cristina: "I think he's very handsome, he's sexy and you have to admire his no bullshit approach." Now, for the first time since the opening scene in the taxi from the airport, Doug makes his way into the plot. Vicky's cell phone rings and she answers it: "Hi, I can't talk right now, I have to save Cristina from making a potentially fatal mistake. I'll call you back. I love you too." We know it's Doug calling from New York, the heart of American global capitalism. Cristina insists: "I took a liking to this guy in an instant. He's not one of those cookie cutter molds. He's creative, artistic." Vicky, angry, says: "Cookie cutter molds! Is that what you think of Doug?" Cristina: "Doug, who said anything about Doug?" Of course, it is Vicky who is saying something about Doug. With Doug's cell phone interruption, Vicky now contemplates the factory-made zombie, cookie cutter mold Doug, with the interesting, handsome, sexy, no bullshit, creative, artistic, but perhaps wife-beating Juan Antonio. Vicky and Cristina fly to Oviedo.

In Oviedo, Cristina, trying desperately to go to bed with Juan Antonio at the end of the first day, goes to his hotel room and admits that he is "home

free" to have his way with her. Unfortunately, just before Juan Antonio can undress her on his bed, Cristina becomes nauseous due to an ulcer that we now learn plagues her, interrupting the rendezvous. Cristina, obeying doctor's orders, recuperates in bed, leaving Vicky and Juan Antonio alone together in what Juan Antonio has characterized as her "last days of freedom" before her marriage. Telling Vicky he was born in Oviedo, he proposes that they visit his father, who still lives there. Vicky accepts and through the visit she begins to soften up toward Juan Antonio. During a romantic, candle light dinner that evening and after Vicky has drunk much wine and is enjoying the conversation with this intriguing Catalan artist, Doug inserts himself for the second time. Vicky picks up her ringing cell phone and this time we actually see Doug in New York talking to her through the phone. He has found a great house in the Hamptons with tennis courts and a swimming pool. Pretending that she can't hear him because of a bad connection, she hangs up and returns to Juan Antonio. Going to listen to some beautiful Spanish guitar music after dinner, Vicky is moved in that magical way again while she and Juan Antonio observe each other's faces. On the walk back to the hotel through the park, and after Vicky pressures him to say he is no longer in love with Marie Elena and that he finds her, Vicky's, face very beautiful, she and Juan Antonio kiss and then make love. Thus, despite all of her efforts it is not actually Cristina but Vicky who has sex with Juan Antonio first.

Forty-eight hours after the return flight from Oviedo, Juan Antonio phones Cristina, *not* Vicky, to invite her to a wine tasting the next afternoon. Vicky tries hard not to show her jealousy and disappointment, telling Cristina she's happy Juan Antonio phoned her. Later that night, in bed and lost in memories of her night of pleasure with Juan Antonio, Vicky receives a call on her cell phone from Doug, the third time he manages to insert himself into the plot. Seeing him again talking into his phone in New York, Doug excitedly tells Vicky that he plans to arrive in Barcelona shortly and that his Dad's friends in the Spanish embassy will arrange a snap wedding for them, repeating the big formal ceremony in the fall when they return to America. Vicky's tepid, stuttering response says it all: she is not happy with this proposal. Doug, knowing what her response conveys, says, "You don't sound bowled over. [. . .] You sound a bit reluctant." Vicky, lying in bed, finally brings herself to say this is a "fine idea" and then a "great idea." Doug tells Vicky he loves her and all she can do is hang up the phone.

Soon after this phone call Doug arrives in Barcelona and he and Vicky marry in the American consulate. The question Allen provokes his audience to ask is: Why does she do it? Why does Vicky go ahead and marry Doug even though we know from the scene between her and Juan Antonio in front of the library and after lunch at the old amusement park that Vicky is jealous of the relationship that has flowered between Juan Antonio and Cristina? It

seems that despite being completely free to live as she chooses, Vicky feels obligated to Doug because she has already agreed to marry him prior to arriving in Barcelona; she has made a "social contract" with him, as it were, and she feels bound to fulfill its terms. Although Americans may view the "social contract" as the basis of their *political* freedom, what good is it in our private world if, for women at least, it means a life devoid of sexual pleasure? Indeed, it would seem that Catalans, who are seen sometimes as mere pawns of larger forces beyond their control—the throne and altar of the old Spain, the historical materialism that lay behind the communist ideology of civil war Spain and the Soviet era, or the passions that are the opaque source of artistic inspiration in modern Spain and that Allen explores—are less inhibited in their pursuit of sexual fulfillment than Americans such as Vicky who understand themselves as rational, autonomous agents making and therefore being bound by their own choices. Is Allen suggesting that the conditioning of character necessary to produce political happiness in the form of stable democratic processes that secure civil rights and liberties, is actually damaging to or destroys our chances for private, erotic happiness?

Cristina, apparently less inhibited than Vicky, unabashedly strikes out to be *in love* rather than merely to love. It is in Cristina, therefore, that the unadorned nature of female sexual desire and how it is fulfilled, as Allen sees it, will be most directly brought to the surface. This desire is clearly aroused by physical attractiveness, made obvious by the handsome object of its attention, Juan Antonio. Cristina and Juan Antonio are alike in this in that both are aroused by, pursue, and appreciate physical beauty. However, physical beauty is not all that recommends Juan Antonio to Cristina's desires, but it is that beauty's suggested connection to violence—perhaps correctly noticed by Vicky—that really grips Cristina. At the party thrown for local artists and collectors in the art gallery owned by a friend of the Nash's, Cristina first *sees* Juan Antonio. Immediately attracted to him, she asks Mark Nash if he is the painter commissioned to do a series of pictures for his office wall. Upon *hearing* from Mark Nash that he is not, but rather that he, Juan Antonio, is that artist who had a fiery relationship with that violent woman who was nuts, Cristina cannot repress a smile and her eyes are full of desire. She then hears from Judy Nash that Juan Antonio and his violent, nutty wife "had this really hot divorce; she tried to kill him or he tried to kill her." With Cristina's "What!?" we know that she is only further enticed with such rumors of attempted killing or nearly being killed. Judy concludes with, "It was a really big thing in the art world. We don't move in those bohemian circles, so I don't know."

Although Allen suggests it may be easy to arouse feminine sexual desire with a masculine beauty clandestinely associated with a violent temperament, the difficulty in actually satisfying it is suggested in the "gentle violence"

or "consensual force," as it were, that characterizes the lovemaking we see between Cristina and Juan Antonio. It is the second lovemaking scene in particular that brings these contraries in the feminine libido to the fore. The first scene occurs after Doug's phone call to Vicky proposing that he come to Barcelona to marry her. Right after this Cristina, who "kept her food down" unlike in Oviedo, makes love to Juan Antonio in his house. This scene is very erotic and passionate, and the audience sees much skin and kissing. Soon after, when Juan Antonio and Cristina are taking a stroll through the old town of Barcelona, we learn from the narrator that Juan Antonio was friends with all the "whores." After Vicky and Doug marry, the second scene occurs. Cristina has been out on a bike ride with Juan Antonio during which the narrator tells us that she was getting used to the idea of being an ex-pat, believing herself to have a European soul with a romantic, tragic, free-thinking view of life. Cristina seems to have adopted the Catalan identity that Vicky can only study. We soon see her on Juan Antonio's kitchen floor, he making love to her while holding her hands to the floor behind her head.

Despite hobnobbing and holding her own in bars and cafés with the creative Catalans of all sorts who form Juan Antonio's circle of friends, Cristina is as quintessentially American as Vicky. Like Ted Boynton she has an attachment to private property and the character traits that it entails. This comes to light at the offense she takes upon learning that Marie Elena has rifled through her luggage. Eventually, Cristina, Juan Antonio, and Marie Elena become a circle of three lovers in which Marie Elena is calm and Juan Antonio goes through a very creative period. Yet, the narrator tells us that Cristina soon began to feel a growing restlessness that she recognized but dreaded. Unable to stop this restless feeling, Cristina breaks off with Juan Antonio and Marie Elena, tells Vicky of the split, goes to Paris for a few weeks, then comes back and returns with Vicky to New York, empty-handed or "mateless," as it were. Cristina, therefore, like Ishmael in Melville's *Moby Dick*, suffers from a recurring case of the hypos.

THE CATALANS

Juan Antonio is the handsome, sensitive, Catalan painter who attracts and whose arms, figuratively speaking, seem capable of holding three women at the same time. It also becomes clear that Juan Antonio takes or absorbs from the women around him. As one commentator suggests, one of the key attractions that the two American women hold out to Juan Antonio in addition to their beauty is their language: Juan Antonio wants to improve his English, and spending time with either Vicky or Cristina or both will further this goal.[13] This would explain Juan Antonio's hilariously funny habit of insisting

that Marie Elena speak English in Juan Antonio's house when they are with Cristina. Perhaps more significant is Juan Antonio's taking of his artistic style and vision of the world from Marie Elena. As Marie Elena says in Juan Antonio's garden, "He stole everything from me, his whole style. [. . .] Your whole way of seeing is mine." Upon being questioned on this point by Cristina, Juan Antonio admits, "I took more from her than I like to admit, that's why I'm always so sensitive when she brings it up."

Is Juan Antonio, seemingly always with or wanting more than one woman and taking from them at the same time, actually a "Ramon" twenty years later, but this time seen through the eyes of two American women rather than men? Juan Antonio does share Ramon's attraction to and respect for the beauty of the female form, a form that seems to give him artistic inspiration and creativity when, of course, he is not taking such from Marie Elena. Yet, unlike Ramon, Juan Antonio connects such beauty to violence. Contemplating a crucifix in Oviedo, Juan Antonio tells Vicky and Cristina that he was in love with a most incredible woman, but "she put a knife into me." Juan Antonio clearly has a "Christ" complex, it seems, being victimized by the dazzling but brutal Marie Elena. Confronting Marie Elena in the guest bedroom of the house that they used to share together, Juan Antonio denies her contention that despite her mood swings she always has his best interests at heart. "Not when you try to kill me" he says. "Oh that," Marie Elena responds with a whiff of her hand. "Yes that, that small detail," Juan Antonio whines. Marie Elena, the beautiful woman of artistic genius, is also the tyrant who can end his life at any moment if he is not careful. This seems to be comically reiterated at the end of the film. After Vicky and Juan Antonio contemplate a "frightening," "chaotic," and "erratic" painting of Marie Elena's, the artist herself storms in, shooting a gun, nearly killing Vicky and Juan Antonio in the process. To be fair, though, it is actually Juan Antonio in the end who accidentally shoots Vicky in the hand. Perhaps he shares some of Marie Elena's violent streak that Cristina seemed to sense and found so attractive.

Marie Elena is Juan Antonio's ex-wife whom he cannot seem to get out of his life. She is, according to Juan Antonio's (perhaps mistaken) characterization, the "antithesis" of Vicky. Thus, unlike the rational, autonomous moral agent that her dark-haired rival Vicky seems to be, Marie Elena initially appears as the high-strung, chain-smoking, European sex-goddess with overly charged emotions and violent mood swings that all American women are ready to hate. However, we soon discover that Marie Elena is much more than this caricature suggests, and much more beautiful. In Juan Antonio's garden we learn that in art school she was discovered not just as a talent but as a "genius." As the plot unfolds it becomes apparent that a key aspect of her genius is an overflow to those around her that makes Marie Elena the most giving character in the movie.

Marie Elena's giving nature is first brought to light when we learn that she gave Juan Antonio his whole style and vision of the world. As Marie Elena says to him, "You adopted my vision as your own." Yet, Marie also stimulates and gives gentle direction to the artistic talent of her light-haired American rival, Cristina. To Cristina, who believes that she just has to come face to face with the fact that she is not gifted, Marie Elena says she takes beautiful photographs. From here, Cristina's love and talent for photography grows and flourishes. Marie Elena advises her to take pictures with an antique rather than a digital camera, and has a dark room set up for her in Juan Antonio's basement so Cristina can experiment with developing her own film. Of course, Marie Elena herself, smoking cigarettes, becomes Cristina's best subject. The relationship between Cristina and Marie Elena becomes so good that on a trip the three of them—Cristina, Marie Elena, and Juan Antonio—take back to Oviedo to visit Juan Antonio's father, Marie Elena confides to Cristina that she, Cristina, is the "missing ingredient" that can briefly allow the love between Marie Elena and Juan Antonio to achieve completion. (Does Cristina become the "child," as it were, of Marie Elena and Juan Antonio, perhaps another relationship Allen suggests and explores indirectly or under the surface?).

The narrator tells us in the next scene that Marie Elena and Juan Antonio make love one afternoon with Cristina's blessing, although Cristina felt bothered by "the thought of the two of them in bed and full of intensity." Yet, she then relaxed and let herself go with the flow of things. As their lovemaking continued, the pair must have let Cristina snap a picture of them as we see a still shot of Marie Elena and Juan Antonio in bed together just behind the heads of Cristina and Marie Elena when the two women are locked in a kissing embrace in the darkroom. This brings us to the second way in which Marie Elena gives to and nurtures Cristina. She expands Cristina's knowledge of her body and how she relates to others through it by silently initiating and then engaging in sex with her. Cristina tells Vicky and Doug this happened once, that she enjoyed it, and has since slept with Juan Antonio and enjoyed that too. It seems that Marie Elena expands not only her awareness of her body but also gives Cristina a deeper sense of herself or who she is as a person. In response to Doug's judgmental question. "Would you say then that you are a bisexual?" Cristina, seeing no need for labels, says, "I'm me."

To book end this exploration of Stillman's and Allen's films, we should note that in dividing our discussion into the "male drama" and then the "female drama," we have clearly borrowed language and concepts from Plato's *Republic*.[14] Moreover, for Plato it is in the "female drama" that the philosopher kings and queens are introduced. So, is there a philosopher in the films who can learn to read souls to allow for human flourishing? This brings us back again to the last scene in Allen's film with Juan Antonio

and Marie Elena. Having learned that Cristina has left Juan Antonio and Marie Elena, Vicky confesses her "affair" and feelings for Juan Antonio to Judy Nash, who immediately sets about to bring Vicky and Juan Antonio back together. The narrator tells us that without Cristina the relationship between Juan Antonio and Marie Elena went back to its old destructiveness, and Marie Elena leaves Juan Antonio once again. Having been told by Judy Nash that Vicky is unhappy with Doug and is really in love with him, Juan Antonio phones Vicky and, despite his protests that, "I'm not the kind of man to come between a husband and a wife," implores her to spend the next afternoon with him. She agrees, and the next morning after excited preparations as to what blouse she will wear, Vicky, with that erotically anticipatory music in the background, finally finds herself alone again with Juan Antonio. They kiss, this time in the art gallery of his home after much wine and good food in his garden, but they do not actually manage to make love again. As mentioned above, Marie Elena bursts in, firing a gun. *After* wrestling the gun from her hand, Juan Antonio tries to comfort the hysterical Marie Elena with a gentle voice and in the Spanish language she loves: "Listen to me my love. It's okay my love." The gun in his hand, it goes off and Vicky is accidentally shot in her hand. She cries out, "You're both crazy. This is not my life."

On the surface one can say that Vicky cries out because she is in physical pain from the bullet wound. Yet, we think Vicky's anguished cry actually represents a deeper spiritual pain; she realizes, looking and listening closely to the pair in this scene, that Juan Antonio will never love her or Cristina as much as he loves Marie Elena, and this hurts. Even so, Vicky, finally able to read Juan Antonio's soul, also learns that love between a man and a woman can be for a lifetime, even if the marriage that encloses it cannot. Thus, we can agree with Nichols that beneath it all, Allen "shows that human life is good only because it is not perfect," and that he "affirms the goodness of life; he searches for a reason to hope."[15]

NOTES

1. Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1992 [1851]).

2. See, for instance, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* or James's *Daisy Miller* and *Pandora.*

3. George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2015 [1938]).

4. Mark C. Henrie, "Text and Subtext in *Barcelona*." In *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman*. Mark C. Henrie, ed. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), p. 100.

5. Lauren Weiner, "Whit Stillman's Restorative Irony." In *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman*. Mark C. Henrie, ed. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), p. 27.

6. Henrie, "At Whit's End," xi.

7. Donald Lyon, "Places in the Heart." In *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman*. Mark C. Henrie, ed. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), p. 158.

8. Mary P. Nichols, "Whit Stillman's Comic Art." In *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman.* Mark C. Henrie, ed. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2001), p. 16.

9. Henrie, "Text and Subtext," 106.

10. See Joanne Rapf, "It's Complicated Really: Women in the Films of Woody Allen." In *A Companion to Woody Allen* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 268.

11. Renee Curry, "Woody Allen's Grand Scheme: The Whitening of Manhattan, London, and Barcelona." In *A Companion to Woody Allen* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 279–281.

12. See also Menachem Feurer, "The Schlemiel in Woody Allen's Later Films." In *A Companion to Woody Allen* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 404–405 and Brian Bergen-Aurand, "Barcelona: City of Refuge." In *A Companion to Woody Allen* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p. 433.

13. See Jonathan Romney, "Vicky Cristina Barcelona." *Film Comment* 44/4 (2008): 68.

14. Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Allan Bloom, ed. (New York: Basic Books, 1991), p. 451c.

15. Mary P. Nichols, *Reconstructing Woody: Art, Love, and Life in the Films of Woody Allen* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), pp. 11, 17.

Part II

CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN POLITICS AND POETRY

Chapter 5

Putting Together Courage and Moderation in Plato and Shakespeare

Kenneth DeLuca

Though both considered virtues, courage, and moderation pull the human soul in opposite directions. One element likes motion, the other rest; one element looks outward, the other inward; one element generates universal principles that become more important than life itself, the other conventions or institutions whose rationality is so persuasive they come to be seen as substitutes for nature itself. Courage and moderation generate different forms of happiness, as well as different ways of looking at things. Plato's *Republic* suggests that both must nevertheless somehow be incorporated into political life. Shakespeare, in his dramatic consideration of the Roman republic, too, suggests both virtues are necessary. In *Coriolanus* and *Julius Caesar*—one play about the beginning, the other about the end of the Roman republic—Shakespeare illuminates the implications of the failure to reconcile them.[1]

One of the problems, perhaps *the* problem that Socrates encounters in his attempt to create a city in speech in the *Republic* is keeping both Glaucon and Adeimantus on board. The first city in speech, the so-called true city that Adeimantus helps Socrates found, has at least the shadow of justice according to Adeimantus but repulses Glaucon, who rebels against it. The second city, which Glaucon's rebellion helps found, Glaucon likes so much he is induced to drop the question (i.e., is injustice preferable to justice?) that causes Socrates to look for a city in speech in the first place; but this second city that Glaucon likes so much Adeimantus (with Polemarchus) in effect overturns for his objection to it forces Socrates to begin again. What causes one brother to forget his beginnings causes the other to go back to them. Where one sees only an answer, the other sees only a question. The two brothers do not just disagree; they disagree fundamentally. When Glaucon takes over the conversation at the start of Book 2, his first move is to abstract from the phenomena. He introduces three ideas of the good and would use these ideas to judge

justice. When confronted by a question already abstract, Glaucon attempts to answer it through further abstraction. He judges the particular in the light of the universal. Adeimantus, by contrast, when he asserts himself does so not on behalf of abstraction, but on behalf of the real world. Objecting to his brother's flight into the realm of the hypothetical, which includes a story involving a magical ring, Adeimantus draws attention to experience. He talks about what fathers do with their sons. Instead of abstracting from experience, he uses experience. He takes his cues from what people say. Unlike Glaucon, who seeks the essence of things and is therefore quick to see through what is in front of him, Adeimantus highlights reputation or opinion. Whereas for Glaucon opinion obscures reality, for Adeimantus opinion is reality. Instead of judging the particular in the light of the universal like Glaucon, Adeimantus judges the universal in the light of the particular. For Glaucon, seeming must be overcome in order to get to being. For Adeimantus, seeming is being. In other words, opinion has a real effect.

This bipolar contrast between Glaucon and Adeimantus manifests itself in practice as well as thought, in what each wants the city in speech to do and even in what each man does or how he argues. Glaucon advocates guardians for the city in speech; men who exemplify gentleness at home and harshness abroad—in other words, men whose virtue is that they can do whatever the situation calls for. Guardians are not creatures of habit. They are always present in their actions for they are their full author. The reason Glaucon is so offended by Adeimantus's city of necessity is that in it he does not have to be anything at all. As Glaucon is attracted to arguments that get to the essence of things, he is attracted to policy that will enable him to realize his own internal essence. What this means is that for Glaucon action carries meaning. There can be no going through the motions; he must be a participant. Socrates sees this immediately in Glaucon's rebellion against the first city in speech. Glaucon does not just disagree with it, he finds it offensive, and it is offensive because he imagines himself participating in it. So in the aftermath of Glaucon's rebellion, Socrates begins referring to the city in speech not as something they are creating, but something they are in. Suddenly appearing in the dialogue are these kinds of expressions: "we'll" need more of 'x' "; "we'll" take land; "we'll" go to war. And, when Socrates asserts that it is "our job" to assign jobs in the newly reformed city in speech, Glaucon emphatically agrees. In Book 3, by contrast, when Socrates is discussing poetry with Adeimantus, he asserts that Adeimantus's own argument would require the regulation of Homer, and Adeimantus agrees that Homer must be regulated but makes a point of telling Socrates that the argument should not be considered his. Glaucon wants involvement; Adeimantus detachment. Glaucon takes a side; Adeimantus wants to remain on the outside. Even when Adeimantus asserts himself, as he does at the start of Book 4, he keeps his

outsider position, "What, then, 'he said,' oh Socrates, would your apology be, if someone should say . . ." Adeimantus even stands outside of his own objection.

For Glaucon action makes manifest the hidden essence of the soul, whereas for Adeimantus action is dubious. So Glaucon approves reform that is hierarchic or that rewards virtue, whereas Adeimantus approves reform that maintains order. So for Adeimantus one man-one art is the beginning of justice, but for Glaucon the beginning of justice is represented by the guardians. For Glaucon, the city is just when it has a place for the very best, whereas for Adeimantus the city is just when everyone knows his place. Glaucon sees virtue as the province of the few; Adeimantus sees it as a necessity for all. He completely agrees with Socrates that both the young and the multitude will need virtue. Adeimantus's view of who needs virtue reflects the virtue he thinks people need and that animates him, moderation. Perhaps it is due to Adeimantus's seeing the *polis* from the outside in, and as a whole requiring its participants to know and play their part and only their part—in other words, to moderate their ambition, or perhaps it is due to human life itself, which suggests that unlike other virtues all people need moderation almost all the time since desire is almost always present in everyone, whatever the case may be, it does seem that moderation must be widely distributed. Moderation cuts across, at least in comparison with courage, which animates Glaucon and which the guardians need. Perhaps it is due to Glaucon's bias—his grand ambition or perhaps the nature of things, but since courage requires extremes in order to show itself and pushes to the extreme, courage is best left to the best. Whether their respective virtues are an epi-phenomenon of their political views or their political views of their virtues, the fingerprints of their respective virtues are all over what they say and do. If what Socrates says is true that the city in speech is the soul writ large it is because the moderation of Adeimantus and the courage of Glaucon show up there.

If this is right, particularly illuminating and not to be passed up will be those moments when the one brother takes over from the other. Such moments in the dialogue resemble those democracies experience when one party has run the show for a while and then loses control to the opposition. The longer it rules, the further it pushes its principles and the more manifest those principles become—at the extremes exist the extremes, which cannot but incite its opposition to respond with principles of its own whose clarity cannot but be heightened by the pressure of the contest into which it has just stepped. One such moment occurs when Glaucon, having occupied the stage since his sacking of the city of pigs, suddenly loses his station to Adeimantus after agreeing with Socrates's suggestion that the god-like guardians are not made; they are born:

S: So, then, being bold should we assert for a human being too if he is going to be gentle towards his own and those he knows, is it necessary by nature for him to be philosophic and a learning lover?
G: Let us assert.[2]

Since the guardians are as they are by nature, the issue of their education and rearing does not concern Glaucon. Note, above, Socrates makes a point to invoke Glaucon's boldness, not his understanding, and perhaps it is more the former than the latter that is at work in Glaucon's giving Socrates the green-light to bypass the guardians' education. In appealing to the very character trait whose manifestation in the guardians is what attracts Glaucon to the guardians in the first place, in getting Glaucon to agree that there is no need to illuminate the manner in which that character trait is to be developed in the guardians, Socrates makes apparent the problematic character of Glaucon. Glaucon's courage generates a self-sufficiency which ironically makes it impossible to tell the difference between courage and delusions of courage. Thus, Adeimantus's intervention, right here, in support of the move to investigate the manner in which the guardians are to be educated is exactly what the doctor ordered.

Just as Glaucon supposes that without knowing the good he can identify the forms it takes, or that without knowing justice what type of good it is, Glaucon here assumes that the character of a guardian owes nothing to education and rearing. The true, as it were, is seen or immediately apprehended. "To see," that is, make sense of, is as easy as looking. But perhaps the boldness Glaucon sees as necessary in the guardians is due to the boldness Socrates himself suggests is involved in Glaucon's thinking. Courageous Glaucon sees the world through courage-tainted glasses. He sees seeing as unproblematic, which shows up in the form his argument takes. In referring to the three types of goods, Glaucon uses the word *eidos* (form), which is the neuter perfect participle of the verb meaning to see (*eido*). Literally speaking, a form is a thing having been seen. If understanding is through the forms, understanding "x" simply involves opening one's eyes.

Glaucon's problem is the opposite of his brother's. Whereas Adeimantus separates himself from his object of inquiry, Glaucon mixes himself up with it. The universal categories he employs readily mask his interestedness and whitewash his willful impositions. They give him a free pass to treat the world as a blank slate on which to make manifest his own soul. His metaphysics generates standards shot through with his own particular longings, which he does not think to detach himself from in order to challenge. So, since courage looks like it involves tolerating pain or the threat of injury or death, Socrates is able to persuade Glaucon that courage in its ideal form is the conquest of soul over body, which Socrates exploits when he gets

Glaucon to agree that the guardians would not need any private pleasures. Glaucon elevates a necessary evil to a principle of action. As Adeimantus's understanding makes action or participation dubious, Glaucon's makes mere deliberation reprehensible, but its reprehensibility is due to questionable standards. Through Glaucon, Socrates shows the danger of mixing politics and Achillean ambition—imposing standards whose defensibility depends on the self-same standards. Courage needs a vantage point outside of itself as much as Glaucon needs Adeimantus. Thus, Plato is at his poetic best when here he has Adeimantus intervene to answer Socrates's question. Those who believe in the self-sufficiency of their own virtue require rescue from the outside.

With Adeimantus as his interlocutor, Socrates does not emphasize what the guardians have by nature, but instead the degree to which that nature can be regulated from above:

> Don't you know, then, that the beginning of every work is the greatest, and especially with whatever is young and tender? For at that time it is most especially shapeable, and the stamp is sunk-in which anyone might wish to imprint on each thing.[3]

With Glaucon, the emphasis is on what the guardians can do; with Adeimantus how much needs to be done to them. In the above passage, every verb is in the passive except with respect to the agent doing the stamping. Whereas Glaucon's epistemology supports the authority of the participant, Adeimantus takes it away. This contrast shows up in the words they tend to use in regard to the universal. With Glaucon, it is *eidos*. With Adeimantus, *tupos*—an impression or stamp.[4] And whereas for Glaucon forms fuel and are a sign of courage, since they justify action and in being suspended on air require daring to embrace, for Adeimantus they are corrupting. The forms that Socrates induces Adeimantus to indict are the stories of poets and the seductive precedents they set. Since Glaucon emulates Achilles, Socrates chooses well; Adeimantus knows firsthand how the models of the poets have corrupted his brother and is therefore suspicious of the poets. Socrates rides this suspicion so that before long Adeimantus is every bit as involved in the city in speech as his brother, but in a different way:

S: To say the god—being good becomes the cause of bad things to anyone must be fought against in every way and no one say these things in his own city, if it is going to be well-lawed, nor anyone hear, neither young nor old, not story-telling in meter, not without meter, so that these things being said, if they should be said, are not holy, not good fortune for us, and these things themselves are not in harmony with themselves.

A: I am a fellow-voter with you of this law, and it pleases me.[5]

Socrates has been arguing that the poets must be prevented from promoting the idea that the gods do bad things, because it makes it impossible to have a law-ruled society. Gods violating laws cannot but create human copycats. Law-violating gods will cause people to think there is a standard beyond the law instead of merely obeying the law, creating instability, creating Glaucons. Instead of explaining what is bad about the bad things that the poets portray the gods as doing or what is good about the good things they do, Socrates seals his analysis off from any attempt to transcend it by invoking the gods themselves. Saying, even hearing, these things is deemed not only bad luck and disuniting, but also impious or unholy. Socrates and Adeimantus begin with the assertion of the malleability of the young, which causes them to discuss poetry's effects on the young, which leads to the discussion of the portrayal of the gods in poetry—that which makes the biggest impression. This is termed unholy because it hurts the young as well as the city, but what if the gods and city obscure a higher standard? On the surface of things, Socrates invokes the gods in order to demonstrate the need to regulate the poets, but his true purpose is to arouse Adeimantus's piety. Socrates's own poetry exemplifies the dangers of poetry. Socrates's poetic account, his distorting interpretation of poetry, demonstrates the danger to which his account alludes. The young are blind to poetry's deeper meaning. Adeimantus sees in the gods, as Socrates portrays them, models of propriety, exemplars of self-control. They do nothing out of whim or interest. They exist to point the way and are in need of messengers. Glaucon aspires to become a god, Adeimantus a herald. However, Adeimantus, in dreaming of becoming an angel of moderation, has immoderately forgotten himself. He forgets their original reason for discussing poetry—its effect on the young. The moral purity of his cause, or at least its look, blinds him to the power he has just given himself—regulating not just what poetry says, but what people hear, not just the young, but also the old, and not just poetry but also prose. Just as Glaucon's enthusiasm for the guardians causes him to merge with the city in speech, Adeimantus's immersing himself in this moral mission also causes him to merge with the city in speech not as a participant but as a founder. He takes pleasure in signing into law the call to arms against poetry promoted by Socrates's account. He experiences the pleasure of legislating from above; however, his pleasure comes at the expense of those in the city in speech. His power as legislator requires them to forfeit the power to legislate for themselves.

Socrates's dual purpose guardians attract Glaucon, because between the guardians two purposes of helping friends and harming enemies lies an unspoken third purpose: having to decide, being free, to do the one or the other. Glaucon craves the discretion of a guardian, but what attracts Glaucon repels Adeimantus. How is a guardian to be kept in check or law-abiding? How is the city to become, remain, rational? Whereas Glaucon requires

discretion, Adeimantus is suspicious of discretion. Glaucon looks at things from the inside out; Adeimantus from the outside in. From Adeimantus's vantage point, volition is a problem. Human beings need institutions. Whereas Socrates overcomes Glaucon's repugnance for the city of necessity by getting him to jump into the skin of a guardian, he overcomes Adeimantus's fear of the city of heroes by elevating him out of the city and into the position—with Socrates—of co-censor of the poets. In dealing with Glaucon, Socrates can use Glaucon's trust in forms in allocating to the guardians the job of distinguishing friend from foe. The truth is immediately intelligible; acting upon it is where the challenge lies. For Adeimantus, by contrast, truth is ambiguous. In response to Socrates's assertion about the simplicity of the god, Adeimantus will only say, "from what you've said."[6] He might agree now, but he wants it known that he reserves the right to disagree later. Adeimantus's circumstantial "yes" is in keeping with the circumstantiality of the phenomena. As they change, it changes. Socrates, in promoting the essence as opposed to the reality of things, makes Adeimantus circumspect; he will not be seduced into going out on a limb. For Adeimantus, there are no forms in which to trust, so he must hold back. Glaucon, unlike Adeimantus, cannot settle for a nominal view of the truth. He needs intelligibility to overcome doubt and relieve guilt in advance. Glaucon's metaphysics are in the service of courage; they free him to act. In dealing with Adeimantus, it is not his belief in the intelligibility of the beings or the world but of the soul that Socrates exploits. In order to justify rule from the outside in, the inside has to be as clear as the outside. In order to draw Adeimantus back into the city, therefore, Socrates turns to beings whose outsides are all insides, that is, the gods. On the wings of a moral mission to regulate the poets' depiction of the gods, which is itself in keeping with Adeimantus's morality, Socrates draws Adeimantus into a meditation on the gods that boils down to a belief in the constancy of the gods, for the gods are perfect and therefore change would entail a move away from perfection. As Socrates says:

> Then the god is altogether (*komide*) simple and true in deed and speech, and neither himself changes nor deceives others, not through phantasms and not through speeches and not through sending signs, not while awake or dreaming.[7]

The gods always show up as they are; the highest beings, the peak of existence, are what they seem. Now, since the gods are all soul, what can be said of the gods can be said of the soul, and with respect to both there are no mysteries or hidden truths, that is, idiosyncrasies that would induce the god to alter its form or require a particular soul to be handled in a special way. There may be particularity, but all particularity can be handled with the same universal.

That Socrates's simple account of the gods cannot be simply true is suggested by the fact that Olympus has more than one god. If perfection had one type and variations from it were departures from perfection, how can all the gods be perfect? Perhaps one god is perfect, and the others departures from perfection; or, all the gods together are perfect. Either way, the gods would not be "altogether simple." Perhaps this explains Socrates's choice of words. He says "the god," not the gods. A closer look at the Greek causes us to wonder what Socrates is really saying. The adverb *κομιδῇ*, "altogether," comes from the feminine noun *κομιδή* meaning "attention," "care." If we take the word as a noun, Socrates's statement would be translated, "with respect to caring for, then, the god is simple and true in deed and speech." Translated this way, Socrates's assertion would concede that the gods change their form, for while their form might be various and complex, their intent would remain simple and true. *Komide*, however, as the ear suggests, is even more plastic than this, for it sounds like *komode*, the third person present subjunctive singular of *komodeo*, to caricature or make a comedy. If we take the word this way, Socrates would be saying, "then the god being simple and true in deed and speech would be making a joke." Whatever the case may be, like the god, what Socrates is saying is not simple or simply clear; Adeimantus, however, takes Socrates's words straight, "so it seems to me myself, 'he said,' from what you're saying." Of course, "from what you're saying" does not mean that he sees Socrates's meaning as ambiguous, but rather that to him it is clear as day. Based on a simple reading of Socrates, Adeimantus reads the gods as simple; and based on a simple understanding of the gods, Adeimantus reads Socrates simply. Through this discussion of the moral effect of the poets' reading of the gods, Socrates gets Adeimantus to cautiously read him. Adeimantus makes a point to say that he agrees with Socrates as far as his understanding will allow, and only within the context of Socrates's words. Adeimantus, in other words, will not import anything from the outside or export outside anything from within. He refuses to take liberties, to allow the pleasure he has already admitted the argument brings him to enhance the argument's persuasiveness or its power. No interpretation, no extrapolation, allowed. From within the confines of Socrates's *logos*, he accepts Socrates's *logos*, and that is all. Since words are being turned to in order to limit discretion and restrain ambition, since words are the building blocks of the institutions Adeimantus has in mind to inculcate virtue and promote unity, Adeimantus here practices what he will preach. He, too, can live within borders. In founding institutions, he will not violate their premise by allowing enthusiasm to get the better of him. The literal wording of Adeimantus's expression of assent to Socrates's aforementioned assertion that the gods are altogether simple now makes sense.

> Thusly, "he said," it seems to me and to myself.[8]

In order to moderate or govern oneself, just as is the case with the polis, there must be a ruling and a ruled element, which means that the self must be split. The problem is that establishing this split is easier said than done. Doing it right would seem to require the kind of judgment that only this split could bring about.

In Book 4, Socrates attempts to skip looking for moderation so that he can begin looking for justice. His reason for doing this is made evident here by Adeimantus, for Adeimantus in pushing moderation to an extreme does not seem to need justice. And, the government he implies he now exercises over himself; he is now ready to exercise over the city:

> In every way, "he said," I agree to these models (*tupous*), and so would use them as laws.[9]

Socrates having whitewashed poetry and its depiction of the gods and supported Adeimantus's belief in his objectivity has made Adeimantus ready to legislate. Despite his experiencing the corrupting effects of the laws, he thinks he is now ready to reform the law. But how does Adeimantus know whether the laws he would use to reform the corrupt city are themselves the product of this corruption? Adeimantus needs a standard outside the law in order to enable him to reform the law, but Socrates—making use of Adeimantus's moderation—has persuaded him that the truth is simple. Interpretation, reading into things, is an attempt by an unruly soul to skirt the law. However, without a standard to look up to, Adeimantus has no basis for reforming the law. Socrates has armed him with confidence by leading him to assume that the soul is knowable or objectifiable, but he has not given Adeimantus an objective, and has made it impossible for him to justify looking for one. Justice is about not bringing in anything of one's own—no self-interest. The sign that one is on the right track is not participating in that which is being reformed. Ironically, one can only be just when one has no reason to be just or to care. This causes moderation to slide into harshness, as Socrates suggests in Book 2 and as becomes even clearer in Book 4. Since Adeimantus's understanding of justice requires objectivity, it culminates in the division of a human being into soul and body, governor and governed, which reaches its fulfillment with the soul's alienation of the body. Harshness makes clear the soul's complete rule over the body; absent an interest or standard of rule, it becomes the standard. Though courage and moderation could not be more different, both end the same—in tyranny.

Plato's *Republic* helps us see that the fundamental political problem is putting together courage and moderation. In order to further develop our

understanding of this problem, it would help to locate it within the thought of another writer writing in a different context so as to make clear that the problem that we are thinking through is not just the manifestation of a particular writer's frame of mind or a particular age's difficulties. Moreover, in locating the courage-moderation split in another writer, we could test Plato's analysis. Does it shed light, does it jibe, or does it fall flat or contradict what we see elsewhere? With these questions in mind, we turn now to Shakespeare.

SHAKESPEARE'S *CORIOLANUS*: THE PROBLEM OF COURAGE

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* begins with a show of courage, not by Coriolanus, but by the citizens, that is, "the people"—those who Coriolanus says are completely lacking in courage and therefore despises:

First Citizen: You are all resolved rather to die than to famish?
All: Resolved, resolved.[10]

The people are on the verge of starving, so they opt to die fighting. They would deal with the problem of their imminent death by going to their deaths. Rather than die one way, they will die another. The first citizen, perhaps, picking up on the strangeness of this plan gives it a democratic excuse:

First Citizen: First you know, Caius Marcius is chief enemy to the people.
All: We know't, we know't.
First Citizen: Let us kill him, and we'll have corn at our own price. Is't a verdict?
All: No more talking on't; let it be done. Away, away![11]

The first citizen makes clear they will not just die fighting; they will die killing Marcius, public enemy number one. If they are going to die, they will take him with them. They will die for a cause. That said, the first citizen does not dwell on the killing of Marcius, on the heroism of the deed or the glory that would flow from it. One would think he would. His plan means violent death for some, perhaps many. They outnumber him, but he is good at killing, and they are amateurs. One might think the prospect of death at Marcius's hands would summon from the first citizen the rhetoric of the military man. Rather than appeal to the sort of reward only one or a few might get, he instead appeals to a reward in which all might share: kill Marcius and the corn will flow. The tendentious connection between these two events—one man's death and cheap corn—seems to cause a second citizen to immediately

interject, "one word, good citizens"; but the first citizen rolls over him in order to make good the connection:

> We are accounted poor citizens, the/ Patricians good. What authority surfeits on would/ Relieve us. If they would yield us but the superfluity/ While it were wholesome, we might guess they/ Relieved us humanly; but they think we are too/ Dear; the leanness that afflicts us, the object of / Our misery, is as an inventory to particularize their / Abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them. Let / Us revenge this with our pikes ere we become / Rakes. For the gods know I speak this in hunger / For bread, not in thirst for revenge.[12]

The difficulty of explaining how one man's death will bring about cheap corn requires a long explanation. The first citizen, therefore, cannot afford to yield the floor to the second citizen until he makes this connection clear, for his call to arms rides on the persuasiveness of his account. His first move is to call attention to the relative rank of the people in comparison to the patricians so as to deprive the superior rank of the patricians of content. Some are held in low regard, others high, but the regard in which both are held is not based on anything but looks. The first citizen says nothing about the merit of the patricians or whether their status reflects their natural superiority. Just as Coriolanus dismisses the surface, that is, his body, and the pain that battle inflicts in order to give expression to and make manifest his constant soul, so the first citizen dismisses the surface difference between those with authority and those without in order to call attention to the soul underlying all Romans. The first citizen's discovery of a soul empowers him to reject the material world on behalf of equality. Coriolanus's discovery of a soul empowers him to reject the material world on behalf of the greatness of the one. Is this the basis of the tragedy of *Coriolanus*?

After the first citizen lowers the patricians by divesting their rank of meaning, he invests with meaning the manifest suffering of the people. The suffering of the people is not the result of chance; it is engineered by the patricians in order to make the people look inferior and the patricians superior. The longing for recognition—pride—causes the patricians, and Marcius above all, to ignore the humanity of the people in order to provide their supposed superiority a basis. So, according to the first citizen, everything that aims up is suspect—thus his skipping over the glory of killing Marcius—as is the suffering of the people. Here, the hunger of the people is blamed on the patricians, but at another time it may be their squalid housing. This is not to say that in either case the patricians are blameless. However, given the conventional character of political life, given its necessary dependence on institutions and laws as well as habits and opinions and the myriad ways these intermingle, in political life an aggrieved citizen can always trace an effect to a cause. The

difficulty lies in determining intentionality. Not however for the first citizen whose certainty about morality, that is, humanity must be respected, justice is equality, drives him to indict the patricians. The courage of the people is every bit as moral as Marcius's, as Marcius himself comes close to seeing, as is evident in his assessment of the Senate in the wake of their granting the people five tribunes:

> The rabble should have first unroofed the city,/ Ere so prevailed with me; it will in time/ Win upon power and throw forth greater themes/ For insurrection's arguing.[13]

According to Marcius, the people are not so much moral as moralistic. They harness morality in order to manufacture the anger necessary to create unrest and grab power they do not merit or know how to use. He views the people in the same way as the people view the patricians. As the first citizen and Marcius enable us to see, each side looks up to an opposing moral and dismisses the moral of the other side. This has the effect of making each side blind to its own flaws but sharp-sighted in seeing the flaws of the other side, as the first citizen and Marcius show. Marcius substantiates the first citizen's view that the patricians have contempt for the people, and the first citizen substantiates Marcius's view of the people's morality-fueled activism.

Once the first citizen establishes to his satisfaction the link between the patricians and the people's hunger, he puts this to work. He issues his call to arms. However, in making his case against the patricians, he forgets himself and blows his cover. He speaks not of food, but "revenge," of repaying having been subjected with subjecting, that is, he speaks of a soul-good, not a body-good, not food. The first citizen begins with an attack on pride but concludes as its agent: "since you would make me a rake," that is, a soul-less instrument, you shall feel my "pike." Unless they proceed to eat the patricians, the only hunger this will satisfy is their hunger for justice.

Right after the first citizen invokes justice, he brings in the gods, "For the gods know. . .," in an attempt to purge his call to arms of its moral rapaciousness. As the corrupt soul of the patricians is visible to him, so his own clean soul is visible to the gods. Underlying his attempt here to win absolution is the same formula at work in his attempt to indict the patricians: the knowability of intentionality; its admissibility in the court of public opinion; and the rationality of judging guilt and innocence. The first citizen in reeling in his righteous indignation, in asserting his motive is food, not justice, is attempting to reconcile the end of his explanation with its beginning. In the beginning, all authority is suspect; in the end, he claims the authority to punish the patricians for the crime of sinning against equality. So he backtracks in an attempt to scrub righteous indignation from his battle cry. The people,

as it were, are not putting their moral foot down on the patricians. They are just trying to feed their children. They are citizens, not of Glaucon's feverish city, but of Adeimantus's healthy city, the city of necessity and one man, one art. The people merely want to stay alive, so the first citizen would have Rome believe, but his speech, when taken as a whole, tells a different story. To act out of hunger is not the same thing as arguing that one is acting out of hunger. In the first case, one is a mechanical being; in the second, one frames mechanical necessity as a moral standard. Political life has changed the people. They are not what they were at first precisely when they attempt to portray themselves as if they are. Their selfishness has not disappeared; it imbues their arguments, which, on the one hand—as Marcius says—makes their arguments self-serving but, on the other, renders them dependent on others. Coriolanus does not see the redeeming side of this new hero type—the macho man of righteous indignation, who, like Coriolanus, can also take pride in being relentless, being never at home, eyes and ears always attentive, not to kill the enemy, but to launch a lawsuit or push a reform. He—this new hero type—reveals the problem with Coriolanus's courage. Coriolanus sees himself in opposition to political life, despite the fact that he originates in political life. He thinks because his virtue was forged on the anvil of time that it is natural. In a way, Coriolanus was framed. He was born into a young republic in need of martial vigor and to a mother who nursed him to live for glory, and having had no father, nothing checks his belief in his virtue as emerging naturally as opposed to being the artifice of a strong hand. Like the political man, Coriolanus gets his start in a war against injustice—he is there at the founding when all hands were necessary to overcome the tyranny of the Tarquins. This experience induces Coriolanus to suppose that virtue shows up directly through action. Speech is conventional or artificial. It obscures what is really there. Coriolanus pushes the distinction we saw in Glaucon to an extreme. Coriolanus's virtue, like Glaucon's, does not get mediated through words or through political activity; it shows up directly in deeds, in his battlefield heroics and the scars on his body. It shows up as itself, so we see that Coriolanus cannot hold his tongue against malicious accusations or don the look of humility, for this would be a retreat from himself and proof that he lacks the virtue he has spent his whole life proving that he had.

In order to flesh out the problem of courage, Shakespeare uses the birth of the Roman republic because it is during its founding moment when courage is most needed and it is within a republic that courage is most out of place. In order to flesh out the problem of moderation in *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare uses the end of the Roman republic when Rome's focus is administering not expanding its empire and the challenges Rome faces come not from without, but from within. Here, courage recedes in importance and moderation grows. Caesar, Rome's greatest man, does not even have the

fortitude to swim across a river and without Cassius would have drowned. In *Coriolanus*, the challenge is how to reconcile the righteous indignation of the people, which takes offense at hierarchy, and the Coriolanus view of virtue, which takes offense at equality. Unlike Coriolanus, the people are open to mediation. Although they demand corn at their own rates, they accept five tribunes instead. The world of words in which the people are forced to operate prepares them for the experience of having one thing put in terms of another. Coriolanus has no such experience. Any deviation from himself he deems a betrayal of himself so to deviate from himself leaves him with no self to which to return. In the Rome of *Julius Caesar*, hierarchy is not considered an affront to the humanity of every citizen. The problem is interpreted away. Here, seeming or opinion rules. The great men of *Coriolanus* show their virtue by refusing to surrender their lives; virtue is being. The great men of *Julius Caesar* show their virtue by taking their own lives. What looks like cowardice is taken to be manliness. In *Coriolanus*, manliness is shown in battle with the external world; in *Julius Caesar*, with the internal.

SHAKESPEARE'S *JULIUS CAESAR*: THE PROBLEM OF MODERATION

Julius Caesar begins with a tribune chastising some commoners for being in public on a workday, and for being in public without the mark of their trade. In *Coriolanus*, the tribunes represent the people's unwillingness simply to be ruled or confined to the private realm; in *Julius Caesar*, the tribunes attempt to keep the people in their place and at home. Although the tribunes originate from the crowd, they stand above the crowd. They are on the outside looking in. In *Coriolanus*, the tribunes are ambitious—they scheme to undermine Coriolanus. In *Julius Caesar*, the tribunes have no ambitions, and in fact work to restrain the ambitions of the people. In *Coriolanus*, the problem is interestedness; in *Julius Caesar*, disinterestedness. So *Coriolanus* gives us Coriolanus—a man so interested in demonstrating his worth he is willing to destroy his country, friends, and family, while *Julius Caesar* gives us Brutus, a man so disinterested he never acts alone. The assassination of Caesar is a group endeavor. In refusing to take sole responsibility for commemorating Caesar's life, he provides Antony the opportunity to avenge Caesar's death and undermine his project. Brutus's disinterestedness makes him easily gulled by interested schemers like Cassius and Antony. Fittingly, Shakespeare names the play on courage after the name Marcius gives himself; and he does not name the play on moderation after the play's moderate man, Brutus, but someone else. To have named the play after Brutus would

have been a stab in the back of a man whose life and death demonstrated his ability to subordinate his ambition to a higher calling.

After berating the commoners for not knowing their place, one of the two tribunes—Flavius, the other is Marrulus—asks a commoner his profession, who dutifully responds, a carpenter, which prompts Marrulus to intervene:

> Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?/ What dost thou with thy best apparel on?—/You, sir, what trade are you?[14]

Marullus, here, is not just informing citizens of the law; he is holding up to them a mirror whose reflection will induce shame. The work attire of the commoners, like the home life their job enables them to afford, has become a purely private affair, a matter of their own choosing. The gap between what they see and what the law requires the tribunes use to make an impression that will counter this privatization and cause the commoners to think twice. The tribunes want to impregnate the commoners with a political conscience that will battle their purely "idle" selves and endure after everyone parts ways. Government cannot be everywhere. If men are going to be kept in place, they need an internal check.

In response to Marullus's question, the commoner—a cobbler—responds coyly, which—as we shall see—ignites a small fire:

Cobbler: Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am but, as you would say, a cobbler.
Marullus: But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.
Cobbler: A trade, sir, that I hope I may use, with a safe conscience, which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.
Flavius: What trade, thou knave? Thou naughty knave, what trade?
Cobbler: Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me. Yet if you be out, sir, I can mend you.
Marullus: What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?
Cobbler: Why, sir, cobble you.[15]

A few moments ago, Flavius referred to the commoners as "mechanical" precisely at the moment when they had hoped to manufacture their mechanical subordination. The tribunes have in mind a mechanistic Rome in which the whole runs smoothly because the parts—individual citizens—perform mechanistically their function. The cobbler, however, rebels. He is too smart for that. His first move is to prey on the tribunes' arrogance by employing respectful language. He dons the posture of submissiveness by seeming to admit that his profession is a lowly one, but his "as you would say" shows it is all a lie, for it hoodwinks the tribunes into reading "cobbler" as they

truly "would say" or use this word, not as a specific profession, but as the general term then in circulation for all lowly professions. The cobbler unmechanistically exploits the tribunes' mechanistic thinking. The tribunes like to generalize, as is evident in their labeling all commoners "mechanical" and their readiness to reduce each man to his profession. The tribunes like to traffic in abstractions, for from the height of Olympus one need not get one's hand dirty in particulars.

Having duped the tribunes into reading cobbler as "cobbler," the cobbler has some fun; he shows how a perfunctory exchange between a superior and an inferior can also serve as sport. He both subordinates himself to their authority in respectfully answering their questions, while also rising above their authority in order to use their curiosity for his own and his entourage's amusement. Just as he takes advantage of the double-sense of the word "cobbler," he also takes advantage of the double-sense of other images and words associated with his craft: he "mends bad soles"; he promises to "mend" the tribunes of their lost self-control. His puns illustrate the problem with the tribunes' point of view. They want things to stay put, to occupy one place, but a pun works by making use of a word that can be in two places at once. And its use by the cobbler suggests that what is true of words is also true of human beings. Whereas the tribunes had hoped to put the "mechanical" commoner in his place, the commoner—however briefly—puts them in theirs. He rebels against the term "cobbler" and would force its overthrow.

To be human means to try to make sense of things, to show that various particular instances of things have something in common. In order to overcome the inchoate mass of a world of particulars, a word or idea pops out that seems to rise above the particulars. Though of the particular—it must come from somewhere!—it is uncontaminated by the particular and puts the particulars in their place, sort of like the way the word "cobbler" pops out to shed light on all the various mechanical professions (i.e., those receiving their ends from above or not formulating their own ends, which would make them devoid of discretion, honor ineligible and base), or the way ordinary men pop out of their particular circumstances and become tribunes. In the opening of *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare suggests we think about this operation by pitting the particular instance of a phenomenon against the abstraction it has generated. Cobbler does battle with "cobbler." The profession that gave rise to the term that sheds light on all mechanical professions has produced a particular example that contradicts the meaning of the term that his profession generated. In other words, "cobbler" is an injustice to the cobbler. Here, moderation—putting things in their place—and justice conflict. Putting things in their place has come at the expense of the particular. Though the cobbler wins the battle, he appears to have lost the war, as Flavius suggests after the commoners leave for home, "See whe'er their basest mettle be not moved./ They

vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness."[16] The tribunes have cut out the tongue of the cobbler—his best quality—and leave him with his hammer and nails.

Shakespeare begins his play on moderation with an indictment of moderation. The virtue that puts things in their place must be put in its place. Moderation operates by trafficking in universals whose origins are forgotten. Moderation wants to put things in their place, but in order to do this right it must be in two places. In order to make this point, Shakespeare makes a hero of an anonymous cobbler—a sort of generalization of his own, a mini-Julius Caesar against moderation run amok. In singling out cobbling for a general point, unlike the tribunes, Shakespeare is just, for shoe-making involves the mastery of universal and particular. Making a good shoe requires a sharp eye for the particular—the shape of the foot, a person's weight, travel conditions, and so on. Shakespeare, unlike the tribunes, puts the cobbler to good use.

NOTES

1. Platonis, *Rempublicam*, S. R. Slings, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). All translations are my own.
2. 376B–376C.
3. 377A.
4. Think of the word "typewriter;" "type" comes from *tupos*.
5. 380B–380C.
6. See 383A.
7. 382E.
8. 383A.
9. 383C.
10. *Coriolanus*, Signet edition, ed. Reuben Brower (New York: Penguin, 1988), 1.1.4–6.
11. 1.1.7–13.
12. 1.1.15–25.
13. 1.1.219–222.
14. *Julius Caesar*, Folger edition, eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), 1.1.7–9.
15. 1.1.10–23.
16. 1.1.66–67.

Chapter 6

Shakespeare's Princess

Education for Love and Rule in The Tempest

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Along with the famous theatrical performances within *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tempest* includes a masque that similarly operates as a reflection on the role of the theatrical and a partial demonstration of the educative aims of Shakespeare's plays. Both *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* include theatrical performances about "love's authority" and political founding. In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the founding moment is conspicuous, even if the political action is not the dominant theme, as it is set in Athens at the wedding of the legendary Athenian founder, Theseus, and Hippolyta. The political context of *The Tempest* involves a marriage joining the kingdoms of Milan and Naples. Consolidating the two Renaissance Italian monarchies raises the image of uniting Italy and calls attention to the question of who rules in Rome. Along with the geography of uniting northern and southern parts of Italy, the explicit references to ancient Rome keep the focus on the question of a Roman founding. Gonzalo reminds the other members of the ship's party that the Tunis from which they sail was Carthage, and they speak of Dido and Aeneas, calling to mind Book Four of Virgil's *Aeneid* as they mention Carthage and banter about the similarity of their journey toward Italy with that of Aeneas before founding Rome (2.1.77–86).[1] As the action of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* does not repeat the tragedies of its source material, so does the plot of the *Tempest* alter the tragedy of Aeneas and Dido. In its place, a more successful union is formed, one that will allow their joint rule; thus, a kind of reversal of the ancient Roman founding takes place. Reversing the plot while maintaining the geography (and even involving the relevant deities) surely shows that something new is afoot. Attention to the masque scene and the words of the goddesses updated by Prospero shows the play to be about founding a new Rome, one that displaces the ancient Rome and the Church's Rome with something that appears to be "altogether new."

EDUCATING A PRINCE(SS)

In *The Tempest*, we see the intentional education of a princess by a man who was previously dedicated to "liberal studies" and to the "bettering of his mind" above all other ends (1.2.190).[2] I will suggest that Miranda is educated as a prince, as the prince(ss) of a new political scheme prepared by Prospero during the opportunity provided by his island exile. In a very superficial way, Miranda appears to be quite a naïve character, an innocent girl who is the beneficiary of the play's political outcome. Yet, Prospero himself indicates that she has been prepared for her ruling role and for one that may be grander than merely recovering rule in Milan. In the opening Act of the play, he tells her that he "thy schoolmaster" has "made thee more profit/ Than other princes can" (I.2.171–174). If Prospero's exile shows the problems of a philosopher-king, his education of Miranda demonstrates the possibility of a philosophic education that serves political rule.[3] A close look at the character of Miranda and at some of the broad features of the play will demonstrate the ways in which this education is profitable. It is specifically suited to her new rule.

Miranda's training for her royal role also indicates the possibility of a new order. He not only teaches her the political lessons necessary for her to become a successful prince, or princess, in the narrow sense, but also through her establishes something new.[4] *The Tempest* opens with the storm that overthrows inherited titles and we meet Prospero, who has by inheritance a title to the dukedom of Milan, which he has evidently lost due to lack of *virtu* proper to princes. The play involves his scheme to recover this power. Yet, if he will gain it, it is less clear that it will be the restoration of inherited power or the establishment of an altogether new principality. It appears that he will need to use the means suited to one who lacks the command to gain his position of power, and I will suggest that it bears comparison to Machiavelli's "greatest examples" of those who have established altogether new orders.[5]

Shakespeare's work demonstrates a realist's caution about imagined republics and principalities.[6] Gonzalo's imagined republic (4.1.148–157), drawn from Montaigne and his own fanciful dialogue with Plato about his "imagined republic" offers a representation of both the dreamer and the realist's check on that dream. In Antonio's response to this, he says, "The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning" (2.1.158–159). Sebastian and Antonio present a living reminder of the ambitions that make the imagined golden ages difficult to maintain, and Antonio's words remind us that Gonzalo's vision ignores the question of bringing such a state into being. It ignores the question of founding something altogether new.

Before we get ahead of ourselves, let us look to the beginning. *The Tempest* begins with a storm that throws into question all lines of authority and

overthrows the efficacy of all titles to authority.[7] With those questions about political authority and their natural roots thrown open, we learn that Prospero commands the storm. Miranda is the first to speak from the safety of the island, asking her father to "allay" the "wild waters" she supposes he has used his "art" to put in a tempest (1.2.1–2). Miranda for her "piteous heart" does not remain humble in her estimation and imagination of her possible power. She is the daughter of Prospero and prepared to imagine herself in a position of great power before Prospero reports her station and before the specifics of this opportunity are revealed with the appearance of Ferdinand. Before she is told that she is a princess by blood and a superior one by education, she imagines herself with god-like powers:

Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth or ere
It should the good ship so have swallow'd and
The fraughting souls within her. (1.2.10–14)

She would drown not humans but the sea itself. She would like to overcome the power that is held by the sea that separates her from the world of other humans and the seats of power. She indeed does not remain in total ignorance about her status, but she reports that she remembers being treated like a little princess: "Had I not/ Four or five women once that tended me?" (1.2.46–47) As Miranda imagines herself a god of power and recalls the servants she once had, Prospero begins his account of his identity by telling her: "Thy father was the Duke of Milan and/ A prince of power" (1.2.54–55). As she would be a god of power, he reports that she is the daughter of a prince of power. While he elevates the expectations of an island castaway, he moderates her divine imagination of herself as part of her political education. When she asks either in ignorance or playfulness, "Sir, are not you my father?" Prospero does not offer a direct answer:

Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was Duke of Milan; and thou his only heir
And princess no worse issued. (1.2.56–59)

This passage reminds us that bloodlines are never dependent on blood alone. Legitimacy relies on wise words and virtuous deeds. The honesty and chastity of her mother is the condition of her inheritance. This might indeed raise doubts about her legitimacy as it comes amidst a tale in which legitimate power is overturned and all of Prospero's otherworldly ends are neglected and usurped, and it is precisely in this context that Prospero calls

her "princess" for the first time. As if to remind us that one "sooner forgets the death of a [mother] than the loss of a patrimony,"[8] Miranda asks no further questions about her mother, and we are never told what happened to her when Prospero and Miranda were expelled. We do not know whether she is alive, whether she died naturally, or was murdered in the course of Antonio's usurping Prospero's worldly power.

More important than Miranda's bloodline, at this point, is her education.

She demonstrates that education with her next question:

O the heavens!
What foul play had we, that we came from thence?
Or blessed was't we did? (1.2.59–61)

She recognizes that foul play may be involved in the acquisition of principalities, adding a question of whether nefarious political action—which she terms innocently enough as foul play, like acting outside the rules of a game—was really a blessing.

Prospero's answer supplies a very important political lesson:

Both, both, my girl:
By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,
But blessedly holp hither. (1.2.62–63)

It was by foul play, but blessings might be brought about through foul play. Prospero reminds Miranda not to forget the beginnings like Gonzalo does. The foundations of those things that might be new, even those that bring blessings, may be brought about by foul measures.

Prospero goes on to describe these means by which political successes are achieved, contrasting Antonio's methods with his own dedication to his secret studies. While he "neglect[ed] worldly ends, all dedicated/ To closeness and the bettering of [his] mind (1.2.89–90), Antonio is able to "set all hearts i' the state/ To what tune pleased his ear." Prospero's silent introspection draws him increasingly within himself, while Antonio considers not only what is exterior but how to lead others to it. As Prospero describes the growth of Antonio's ambition and his own neglect of worldly ends the contrast between ambition and bettering of one's mind becomes very clear. Miranda, conversely, gets an education in the necessities and limitations of politics and a portrait of a character suited to political power. The most significant contrast comes between Prospero's account of his satisfaction with the size of his realm, "Me, poor man, my library/ Was dukedom large enough" (1.2.109–110). Prospero's studies contrast Antonio's expansive ambitions, but we soon learn that the latter's ambition

comes at the cost of independence. He submits to the king of Naples, who seems intent on building a Neapolitan empire. Insatiable ambitions come at the cost of independence, but independence is not really characteristic of Prospero's situation either. In his library, he remains dependent on the virtue of his brother, which fails and leads to the exile under the influence of the Neapolitans.

It should be clear that the lesson that Miranda will gather shows her that radical independence, like that of a god of power, is not possible, and that even "a prince of power" must pay attention to the ambitions of political men. It appears that there is no mere independence. There is only power of one's own exercised in a princely manner or dependence on others that one should not trust. Just as she becomes aware that she has a claim to a principality by inheritance, she learns and remembers lessons in acquiring an "altogether new" principality.

After Prospero recounts their expulsion, Miranda most clearly displays her awareness of harsh political realities: "Wherefore did they not/ That hour destroy us?" (1.2.138–139). She looks for reasons because she sees that the obvious move is to eliminate the bloodlines of potential rivals to authority. Whether or not she feels the pity that she expresses in her opening lines, she is not naïve enough to expect it from others. She looks instead for reasons this might have been a sensible political calculation.

Prospero's response shows that such a mode of question fits the education he expects her to receive: "Well demanded, wench/ My tale provokes that question" (1.2.139–140). As he explains, he moderates her harshness not with pity but with a lesson in attention to the appearances of things, explaining that "With colours fairer painted their foul ends" (1.2.140–144). Along with all the nefarious means necessary, coloring one's "foul ends" with "fair" appearance is often necessary to avoid hatred. Prospero reminds Miranda that "love" from the people matters but clearly shows its limits. His people's love was not sufficient to prevent his expulsion. Antonio may not be better loved, but he was able to achieve popular fear without hatred by simply not killing them, and, as Prospero reminds Miranda, it was only by fortune that this did more than conceal their deaths.

Miranda very quickly recognizes the necessity of foul play to attain political power, and Prospero reminds her of the need for fair appearances to clothe such ends. Following Miranda's use of the word "fair" shows those who pay attention to the girl's words just how well she has learned this lesson. In her initial meeting with Ferdinand, she says of him: "If the ill spirit have so fair a house,/ Good things will strive to dwell with't (I.2.457–459). A careless listener will see her to say little more than that Ferdinand is a good-looking young man and that she is excited about the prospect of a relationship with him. Further reflection might consider her naïve enough

to believe that external appearances always match the inner character. If she had not so recently learned the opposite lesson, we might think she falls prey to appearances. With Miranda's lesson about fair appearances in mind and careful attention to the words Shakespeare gives her here, we might see much more of her grand plan unfold. As she refers to the beauty of his body, she chooses the word "house," for it, after all, involves the royal house of Naples. Incautious Ferdinand has already blurted out that he will make Miranda queen of Naples. His fair house and her still-secret title to Milan will make for a very fair prize indeed. Yet, in his directness, simplicity, and maybe even his smiling eyes, she sees the package that can make fair many foul deeds. If she has learned the lesson about appearances, she is not taken in by these appearances, but rather sees the utility of his appearance for her schemes. His simplicity makes it clear that he will be trusting and never think ill of her designs. His fair appearance will be quite a suitable façade for the plans she has. In Ferdinand's appearance and promise of Naples, the scope of her expectations has very quickly taken on quite grand proportions and all of Italy (at least) is now in her sights. Her next use of the word "fair" comes at the end of the play, and more clearly indicates Miranda's own ambitions and Ferdinand's role in them. In the middle of their chess game, Miranda accuses Ferdinand of playing her false and Ferdinand says he would not do so for "all the world." Miranda's response shows her ambitions: "Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,/ And I would call it, fair play" (5.1.173–174).

While the scene is a mere game, Miranda appears to announce the division of labor characteristic of their new rule—his force and her fraud. She remembers that the secret to successful foul play is the ability to color it fair. She revealed early on that she was aware that one does acquire new principalities without foul play and now indicates her ability to call them fair. Lending her fair appearance to their acquisition, she envisions it as a project without bounds. She will not be content to be a mere princess of the Italian monarchies but seek to build a new empire. The imperial overtones run throughout the play if we but remember the location of Milan and Naples on opposite ends of Italy. Successfully uniting those would look like successfully wresting control over all of Italy, and insofar as it involves Rome, it entails the image of world conquest. Lest we forget these stakes, the banter among the Gonzalo, Adrian, Gonzalo, and Sebastian reminds about Carthage and Dido reminds us that the journey from Carthage (now Tunis) to "Rome" repeats that of Aeneas, the journey undertaken to found Rome and its empire. The Neapolitans' seems to have their own imperial plans in marrying Claribel to a Tunisian prince and building an alliance with Milan. So what will be noteworthy will be the character of the empire that Miranda will operate.

A BRAVE NEW WORLD

The character of what will be new about the new Rome is revealed most fully in the masque, the play within the play. There that we see Juno, rather than Venus, establishes the ruling order and reigning hopes for the new world. To celebrate the engagement of Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero presents a show that involves a manifestation of three goddesses. The fantastical images of their singing and dancing bring delight, and it gives some insight into the production of a play and the purposes for such fanciful shows. His vision is fanciful and it brings on stage pagan gods that do not grace Shakespeare's stage with their direct presence. Behind the images presented, Prospero's power over the gods is called to our attention. In this fanciful imagery we get a gentle image of the immense power that his magic represents. These comments make clear that Prospero's power is not ordinary magic; it is much greater than the collection of spells Sycorax was able to employ, something more powerful than the ancient pagan gods, new world or old. Yet, it is not unlimited, for he relies on the fortunate nearness of the ship that he brings to his island in the tempest.

In the masque he displays Ceres, Iris, and Juno as his puppets. Iris enters first; she bridges the heavenly and the earthly, as a rainbow and a messenger. She comes to light after a storm like a promise not to bring watery destruction again. She combines the tempestuous and the clear light of day. She addresses Ceres and describes her with all manner of agricultural imagery, emphasizing the watering of the earth that aids fertility and requests at the behest of Juno, "queen of the sky," that Ceres leave these employments and: "Here on this grass-plot, in this very place/ To Come and sport" (4.1.73–74). Iris makes clear that Juno's request involves a temporary abandoning of the cares for necessity, a "sport" that might be equally important. This playing will not "hold a mirror up to nature." Rather it will reflect the business at hand in a light and fanciful manner that pulls its audience away from the pressing business of the day. Unlike the flat mirror, this celebration will be refracted and arrayed in rich and varied colors that delight even as they convey the significance of the celebration for those that take care to consider the words used in the celebration.

Before Ceres is willing to bless this marriage, she wants assurance about the absence of Venus: "Tell me, heavenly bow,/ If Venus or her son, as thou does know,/ Do now attend the queen?" (4.1.87–88). Because Venus arranged the "marriage" of Proserpina and Dis (Hades and Persephone), Ceres will not keep company with Venus. She seems to suggest that there will be only love or prosperity. "Proserpina" is easily mistaken for Prosperina, which might make her sound like the daughter of Prospero. This would make Ceres's offspring Prospero's offspring and point to a kind of bounty or prosperity as

the outcome of his success. Iris's assurance of Venus's absence means the release of Proserpina; it is the beginning of spring, but perhaps the end of winter, understood as deprivation and scarcity. This assurance also heralds the entrance of Juno.

With the issue of Roman politics at stake and the references to Dido and Carthage, this entrance provides quite a powerful image. Venus and Juno have quarreled for a very long time, and Venus has long triumphed. As we are reminded of Dido and Aeneas, Juno's Carthage and Venus's Rome, and the tragedy of Dido and Carthage, we remember that Venus triumphs because Rome is destined to rule the world and Carthage must be destroyed. In Prospero's masque as Juno presides and Venus is gone, it looks like Carthage at long last has a chance to rise again. Lest we forget that this victory has a political meaning, Ceres introduces Juno as the "Highest Queen of state" (4.1.101). While all of this suggests the rule of something new in Rome, a festival of pagan gods hardly suggests the triumph of Christian Rome. Some third thing—Juno's Rome—will be the result.

As Juno's victory is a triumph of Prospero's art, the blessings of the goddesses reveal something of the content of this new order. Juno sings her blessings (4.1.106–109). She promises wealth, honor, and a fruitful marriage, but not love. The unruly passions governed by Venus are excluded from the chaste and secure marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand. Ceres extends the blessing in a manner that gives us further indication of Prospero's hope for a new order. Corn, wine, marriage, and rulers: everything that Gonzalo imagined is all now promised to Miranda and Ferdinand. Ceres continues:

> Spring come to you at the farthest.
> In the very end of harvest.
> Scarcity and want shall shun you,
> Ceres blessing is on you. (4.1.110–118)

No promise of eternal love; only endless bounty. Not only does Ceres promise bountiful harvests to accompany a fruitful marriage, but an end to scarcity. We are almost immediately reminded that these are not goddesses speaking, but spirits under the command of Prospero. Prospero's powers, greater than that of the gods, claim the capacity to overcome natural scarcity. A new kind of knowledge will allow a new kind of power to eliminate natural want, bring prosperity, and overcome scarcity. Excluding Venus, Proserpina can be permanently freed from the underworld, unleashing the riches of Pluto. Ceres promises an eternal spring. As Prospero reminds his audience that these images are the product of his art, he offers an image of an art that releases the powers confined within the earth, bringing an end to scarcity and a new security against deprivation for Miranda's new empire.

ART, EROS, AND PLAY

This promise, however, remains intact only as long as Venus is gone. A vision of the end of the scarcity depends upon an abstraction from erotic power. Shakespeare is well aware of this limitation to the promise of eternal prosperity, and Prospero himself is aware of it as he calls attention to the absence of Venus in his play. Prospero's attention to the absence of Venus, his action under "the most auspicious star" of her absence, acknowledges that her erotic powers cannot simply be eliminated and they cannot be brought under his control. Rather than direct control, Prospero's art might temper the unruly passions of lustful Venus by directing Ferdinand and Miranda's hearts toward something more than immediate satisfaction. Their desires are clothed in the civilized attire that will suit them to future rule.

Rather than fundamentally transforming the world by eliminating elements of its fabric (or the permanent exile of a goddess), Prospero's art provides images for a new political world. It beautifies the marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda, providing for the rule of Juno's political authority and Ceres' prosperity. The unruly erotic forces associated with Venus cannot be eliminated, but they can be given a far less attractive appearance. Shakespeare does this by the way in which he presents the erotic desires of Caliban, and Prospero knows that he cannot be ignored as much as Miranda does not "love to look upon him" in the opening scene of the play (1.2.311). He is a villain who casts an ugly appearance, but he also represents the necessity that Prospero and Miranda cannot live without. Moreover, he includes a whole set of desires of his own that turn out to be more complex than his initial announcement that he must eat his dinner.

While it is easy to simply cast Caliban as a base character who wants dinner and Miranda's body, whose desires lead him nearly to violate Miranda, and whose immoderation land him as a slave to the drunken Stephano and Trinculo and their "book," many have noted his complexity and his capacity for beauty. His very name suggests that he is Shakespeare's consideration of the "noble savage."[9] Yet, he is also described as a monster and we see his monstrosity in his inability to fit the beautiful and the base in his nature together into any well-ordered whole.[10] His desires nonetheless imitate a kind of erotic ascent.[11] His dashed hope to have "peopled else/This isle with Calibans" (1.2.351–2) extends beyond immediate physical gratification to the imagination of a legacy, a progeny that bears his name and who will outlive him and extend his name. In this base formulation, Caliban presents the beginnings of an eros directed toward immortality.[12] His oft-considered claim to the island, his claim to right over it, envisions not only familial legacy but also a patriarchal kingdom that begins to have political dimensions.[13]

Caliban's appreciation of the island's beauty, which he expresses both to Stephano and to Prospero (1.2.348, 2.2.145) and then in his own reverie (3.2.135) shows his appreciation of beauty.[14] Yet, this consideration of the beautiful and his hopes for its endurance opens him to the expectation of divine presence in a quite ridiculous manner. His entangling the high and the low becomes fully manifest while drinking with Stephano and praising his "celestial liquor." This immediate embrace of "spirits" also exhibits his hopes for a god. His misguided longing for something "not earthly" whetted by the crew's stash lead him to bow before the bearer of that cup while he "kisses the book" (2.2.139). In this burlesque sacrament, Shakespeare shows Caliban's longing directed toward a religion of supplication, sacramental drinks, and worshipping a book. His desires, having been lifted from the material, are directed to the divine in a way that makes him utterly ridiculous.

Caliban's offers a beautiful speech describing an experience of beauty that directs his longing toward immortal Beauty:[15] "Be not afeard. This isle is full of noises,/ Sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not/ I cried to dream again" (3.3.144). As he describes his experience of sounds that "delight" without hurting, he nearly defines beauty by separating his experience from any other kind of bodily gratification.[16] As he turns to the "twangling instruments" he brings the incorporeal experience of music; we see him find in the uncoordinated sounds of wild nature the harmonies that offer nearly infinite delight. By the end of his speech, the clouds open, offering him riches, as the instruments provide beautiful music, they lift his spirit to the heavens and the highest hope for the greatest beauty.[17] The vision nearly grants him entrance into the heavens, yet it falls short. Caliban has moved through the stages of an erotic ascent from a single beautiful body to a longing for immortal beauty. Yet, this experience does not heal or harmonize his soul. Instead, "he cries to dream again."

Beginning with the sounds of insects like the cicadas in Socrates's famous myth, Caliban is charmed to the desire for permanent music.[18] Unlike Socrates and Phaedrus, he does not want to stay awake and talk about his visions, longings, or the powerful of beautiful speeches, but rather he wishes only to remain asleep where dreams of a more beautiful worlds remain possible for him.[19] Through these stages of Caliban's eros, Shakespeare depicts the development of a longing for immortality and shows how ugly the hope to fulfill erotic longing can become. Instead of the beautiful Venus, we see Caliban's erotic longing and his hopes for immortality. Prospero and Miranda keep the existence of such longing in mind as they build a new politics and new myths ensuring immortal prosperity while they remain free from enslavement to such a spell. In Ferdinand, we get to see the effectiveness of this new myth-making for a member of the new political order. His immortalizing hopes are manipulated into an unreflective support for the promise of

the new order. Just as Prospero describes the temporary nature of his "present fancies" (4.1.122), Ferdinand sees in them a promise that will endure "ever" (4.1.123).

Seen in contrast with the attachment to permanence and hopes for immortality in earthly and heavenly paradise on the part of the Caliban and Ferdinand, Prospero's beautiful reflection on temporality stands out all the more and shows a deep connection to his new attention to temporal politics. During the masque, Prospero's goddesses whisper together, a very strange device for figures given form to enact Prospero's fancies. Holding both the efforts to delight with a wondrous play and the concern for a conspiracy on his life in mind, and making a (subtle) show of doing so, allows Prospero's art to offer multiple political educations at once. On the level of its images, the scene provides a brave new world of boundless prosperity and an end to scarcity. Commanding the gods can become commanding nature and producing boundless material goods. Yet, with its interruption, Prospero exhibits for Miranda the need for such images and the simultaneous necessity of dealing with the harsh realities of conspiracy.

In the beautiful moment when the goddesses whisper to one another, we have something that reminds anyone attending carefully of the way that Prospero holds the fair and the foul together in his mind. As Ferdinand's declares, "this place paradise" (4.1.122–124), Prospero knows it is not paradise. His spirit begins to remind him of this, but he delays confronting it. As he brings the imagination of earthly paradise to the young lovers, he is temporarily distracted by the plot against him. Hesitating to break the spell, he commands the whispering goddesses to "hush . . . Or else our spell is marred" (4.1.128). "Before he stops to address the harsh realities, it is also crucial to maintain the fair images. In these moments, he exemplifies a fullness of human possibility, maintaining fanciful beauty while breaking ugly plots.

In the lingering moment, there is the urgent business of a dance. The dance offers the image of a harmonious world. Iris calls for the nymphs from the brooks to the land for a dance. As Iris commands creatures of the water to the land, the harsh sea becomes temperate nymphs watering the plains, continuing the image of fertility. Such harmony befits the promise of prosperity and fertility offered by the whole masque. In the forty lines between the whispering and Ariel's explanation of what was on his mind at the time, we get this beautiful image of a harmonious world and one of the finest speeches in all of Shakespeare's work. Shakespeare's Prospero offers powerful and sobering poetry. He stops amidst a conspiracy to do so, for he recognizes the importance of his poetic images to tempering and taming otherwise violent natural forces.

His famous speech shows something of his view, as it presents temporality as characteristic of all action just as Prospero has given greater attention to

worldly ends than he has in his life so far. This comparison of life, political efforts, and all human action to the masque, the play he has just put on, provides a powerful reflection on the relation of art and life, one that gives new purpose to political aims just as it diminishes their ultimate significance:

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air; . . .
> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. (4.1.148–158)

By contrast with Gonzalo's dream of a perfect commonwealth, Caliban's lingering hopes for eternity, and Ferdinand's adoption of the myths of a perpetual new order, Prospero's famous speech embraces the temporality of achievements comparing them to a play. Instead of dispiriting resignation, Prospero's speech explains why he is able to turn from the task of bettering his mind to that of educating a prince and why he seizes the opportunity to effect worldly ends. Towers and palaces, *loci* of the political, no matter how great, are no more permanent than the foundations of the vision he has just enacted. They are no more, but in that, they are just like the play he has just put on. While his earlier self may have seen such impermanence as a reason to ignore things that will not endure, he has changed. To ask why one might put one's energies into politics is no more reasonable than asking why one would write a play, perform a play, or make sure that a work of art is the best one possibly can make it. Not catching a conscience, but rather playing well becomes the aim itself. It does not gain significance by contact with the permanent; it is only a play. Its very purposelessness endows the effort with earnest commitment, the purposeful purposelessness of play. Only in light of false hopes for eternal things do such temporal things lose their significance. Life, rounded with sleep though it may be, is lived to the fullest when it does not lose its luster in attachment to another world. Prospero's masque, his political actions, and his ontological reflections together serve a commitment to life, which grows in beauty as it is conceived as a kind of play.

Indeed, the actions that Prospero undertakes (and the insights that allow it) aid in the task of "bettering his mind" rather than debasing it. He must attend to the human things and in so doing he learns valuable lessons about the very stuff of life in the souls of human beings.[20] While he uses magic to enact his art, the contrivances do not substitute for attention to the characters of those who are vital to his plot. Having gained from fortune the opportunity to bring about a large-scale change in the life of his daughter and political life, Prospero works the characters of Ferdinand, Antonio, Alonso, and Sebastian

to bring about the end that serves his aims. Educating Miranda through art rather than pedantic lessons shows him moving human characters in a manner that does not reduce them to instruments of political machination. His art and his attention to politics requires attention to the life in the world, attention to things that are, and thus to bettering his mind more than would a retreat into the hope to attach his mind only to unchanging things. Attention to the successful use of his art requires that he pay attention to the human world, its hopes, its fears, and its longings, as well as those necessities frequently driving it. Since these things constitute his world and his self, his mind's experience becomes richer for the effort. He gains true self-knowledge.

As Prospero concludes his list of those things that will fade into air, he famously speaks of "the great globe itself" evoking the theatre and the world, suggesting the deep similarity for one who is able to play in such a grand manner. Because "we are such stuff as dreams are made on," the stuff of life gains the importance of providing a foundation for those very dreams of beauty that tempt us to wish for an escape from all "stuff." While the myths of the new order offered by Ceres raise the value of the material by promising its endurance, Prospero's vision raises the value of the material because it is the condition of all other human possibilities. The beauteous dreams of human beings are not "made on" something permanent or separate from our mortal lives; they are the product of living souls.

In the final act, we find Miranda and Ferdinand playing a game. As they play chess, Miranda urges Ferdinand to try harder and draws the important lesson about foul play and fair appearances: "Yes, for a score of kingdoms you should wrangle,/And I would call it fair play (5.1.173–174). Rather than telling him not to play false, she urges him to play as well as possible "for the world." As much as this expresses divisions of labor regarding force and fraud, it shows that Miranda has learned just how much playing is indeed *the thing*. She has come to take play quite seriously but not to suffer under the illusion that it is more than play. In a way, the play *is* the thing because living a game makes the virtues of playing it well vital to a flourishing human life.

As Prospero gives earnest attention to his play amidst a foul conspiracy, Miranda wants her play to be in earnest. Because she has come to see the world as such play, there is no reason for her to neglect "worldly ends" and political ambitions for the sake of some otherworldly goal. Instead, it allows her to take the task of political management as seriously as one would take crafting the best play one could for a stage that will, like the great globe itself, dissolve. It allows her to engage in the kind of serious play that makes the exercise of insight and character possible. Taking play seriously demands more than treating political life as a meaningless joke, it involves the recognition of those features of the world that allow playing well. Instead of neglecting worldly ends, it treats human character, human interaction, political

ambition, and political opportunities as parts of a world worth knowing and a life worth living. In learning to treat the temporal as worthwhile, Miranda gains a political education that will alleviate the zeal of false hopes for the permanence of a political order while avoiding the resignation that would retreat from temporal politics for the sake of something permanently free from the foul elements of human life. Miranda learns to seek the beauties of life not as a god of power but as a human who exercises her capacities to engage and shape the very stuff of human life.

NOTES

1. See Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book 4.

2. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, edited by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999).

3. Plato, *Republic* 473d–e. For the connection between *The Tempest* and the tripartite soul, see Paul A. Cantor, "Prospero's Republic: The Politics of Shakespeare's The Tempest," in *Shakespeare as Political Thinker* (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2000), 241–259; Harry Jaffa, "The Unity of Tragedy, Comedy, and History: An Interpretation of the Shakespearean Universe," in *Shakespeare as a Political Thinker*, 34. On the discussion of philosopher kings in the *Republic*, see Mary P. Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community* (New York: SUNY, 1987), 99–123.

4. See Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter 1 for the distinctions among principalities. The Italian cities mentioned in Chapter 1 are Milan and Naples.

5. See Machiavelli, *Prince*, Chapter 6.

6. See Andrew Moore, *Shakespeare Between Machiavelli and Hobbes: Dead Body Politics* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2016).

7. Along with the upending of hierarchies in the storm, the opening scene raises the question of authority and nature with the question: "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" (1.1.17).

8. Machiavelli, *Prince*, Chapter 17.

9. His name contains the Greek word for the beautiful—*kalos*—is also well recognized as an anagram drawing from Montaigne's "On Cannibals." Michel. De Montaigne, *The Essays*, translated by Donald Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 150–159. For considerations of Caliban and colonialism, see, for example, Meredith Ann Skure, "Discourse and the Individual: The Case of Colonialism in 'The Tempest'," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40:1 (1989): 42–69; Deborah Willis, "Shakespeare's Tempest and the Discourse of Colonialism," *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 29:2 (1989): 277–289; Bill Ashcroft, *On Post-Colonial Futures* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 81–102; Bill Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

10. Consider Plato, *Phaedrus* 229d–230a. For considerations of the unity of the soul in Plato's *Phaedrus*, see Michael Davis, *The Soul of the Greeks* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 2011), 211–232; Mary P. Nichols, *Socrates on Friendship and Community* (New York: Cambridge, 2009), 90–151.

11. See Plato, *Symposium* 203b.
12. Plato, *Symposium* 207aff.
13. Plato, *Symposium* 208d.
14. Plato, *Symposium* 211d.
15. Cf. Plato, *Symposium* 212a.
16. See Marsilio Ficino, *Commentary on Plato's Symposium on Love*, translated by Sears and Jayne (New York: Spring Publications, 1985) for a relevant account of the hierarchy of the senses and types of beauty.
17. Cf. *Symposium* 212a, *Phaedrus* 247c.
18. *Phaedrus* 259c.
19. *Phaedrus* 258a.
20. See Mary Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991) for a thorough account of political life as a preparation and vital part of philosophical life.

Chapter 7

Reading Tolkien through the Lens of Solzhenitsyn's Analysis of Ideology

On Art, Responsibility, and Progress

Germaine Paulo Walsh

This chapter examines the works of J. R. R. Tolkien in light of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's analysis of ideology. A comparison of these writers may initially strike one as an odd pairing, given the many differences between the two men, both in their literary styles and in their life experiences. Tolkien lived a relatively quiet, unremarkable life as an Oxford don, and his best-known writings are works of fantasy, featuring imaginary creatures such as elves, dwarves, and hobbits, living in an imaginary past. Solzhenitsyn, by contrast, lived a life of high drama, turmoil, and extraordinary suffering—including, most famously, eight years within the gulag (the Soviet Union's system of forced labor camps) followed by years of internal exile—and his best-known writings are historically based depictions of what life was really like under Soviet Communism, especially for those subjected to its most severe brutalities. Despite these differences, however, a deeper look leads to the recognition of some striking similarities between the two writers.

Both Tolkien and Solzhenitsyn composed formal lectures wherein they discussed the nature of art: Tolkien, in "On Fairy-Stores," and Solzhenitsyn, in his Nobel Lecture. In this chapter, I examine their arguments in these lectures, and I consider how each writer's respective view of the nature of art is exemplified in his own literary work. This chapter is composed of three sections, each addressed to a key theme raised explicitly by Solzhenitsyn in his Nobel Lecture: the nature of art, the social responsibility of the artist, and the idea of progress. In each section, I begin by discussing Solzhenitsyn's account of each theme, and then, through the lens of Solzhenitsyn's account, I turn to examine Tolkien's works.

THE NATURE OF ART

Solzhenitsyn provides his most explicit account of the nature of art in his 1972 Nobel Lecture. He begins by referring to the various ways that art has been understood and utilized, the ways we "confidently deem ourselves its masters," whether through selling it for money, using it simply for amusement, or adapting it toward fleeting concerns (*SR*, 513).[1] Yet art resists all such reductive efforts. By calling attention to art's inherent and seemingly indestructible capacity for transcendence, Solzhenitsyn argues, in the words of James Pontuso, that art "strives to uncover something essential."[2]

Solzhenitsyn goes on to provide a sketch of two types of artists. The first is an embodiment of what, in his 1978 Harvard Address, he refers to as the "mistake . . . at the foundation of modern thought," that is, "anthropocentrism" (*SR*, 572).[3] This artist "imagines himself the creator of an autonomous spiritual world" for which he takes "total responsibility" (*SR*, 513).[4] Such an artist is bound to fail, to "[collapse] under the load" which "no mortal genius can bear," just as "in general, the man who declares himself the center of existence is unable to create a balanced spiritual system" (*SR*, 513).

The second type of artist, by contrast, avoids the "mistake" of anthropocentricity, as he "recognizes above himself a higher power and joyfully works as a humble apprentice under God's heaven" (*SR*, 513). While not taking upon himself the "total responsibility" assumed by the former type of artist, this artist nevertheless assumes a kind of responsibility for "all he writes or paints—and for the souls which apprehend it," that is "graver and more demanding still" (*SR*, 513). Understanding that he did not create the world and that he does not "control" it, this artist, nevertheless, does not doubt its "foundations" (*SR*, 513). It is "given" to such an artist, Solzhenitsyn remarks, to perceive the "harmony of the world," including both "the beauty and the ugliness of man's role in it" (*SR*, 513). The artist conveys this harmony even—or perhaps especially—in light of all those things that might prevent human beings from seeing beyond *dis-harmony*, for example, "even amid failure," and even while experiencing "the lower depths of existence—in poverty, in prison, and in illness" (*SR*, 513).

Tolkien provides his most explicit account of the nature of art in his essay, "On Fairy-Stories."[5] His chief focus in this essay is to provide a defense of the form of literature known as fairy story, from which the genre of fantasy emerged. Tolkien would eventually become famous as an author of fantasy, of course, but the fact that he himself was engaged in such writing was unknown to all but his closest friends at the time that he presented this lecture.[6] While fairy stories have special and unique attributes, insofar as they are "written with art," they convey meaning just like other literary forms (*OFS*, 58–59).

Tolkien, like Solzhenitsyn, maintains that the human capacity for art has a divine source. More explicitly than Solzhenitsyn, however, Tolkien defines the human capacity for art as participation in the divine creativity, and he even coins a new term to describe this capacity, that is, "sub-creation." This term conveys Tolkien's belief that, while the capacity to "create," to bring forth something from nothing is, strictly speaking, limited to God, human beings share in the divine creativity through their capacity to reform, reorder, or remake the objects within the created world.

Echoing Solzhenitsyn's account of art, Tolkien associates fantasy, as a form of literature, with the search for truth and goodness. Responding to critics of fantasy who question its rationality, Tolkien insists that its "fantastic" elements are not evidence that such literature involves dreaming or mental disorder, but rather that fantasy, like all literature, is "a rational, not an irrational, activity" (*OFS*, 60, note 1). Similarly, disputing Andrew Lang's assertion that children are especially attracted to fairy stories simply because they wish "to believe," Tolkien counters that, in his experience, both children and adults appreciate fairy stories *not* because such stories satisfy a desire "to believe," but rather, "to know" (*OFS*, 54). As I have argued elsewhere, Tolkien points to the capacity of literature to spark the "wonder" that is the starting point of philosophy in its quest for wisdom, and he maintains that fantasy is the genre of literature best able to accomplish this.[7]

In explaining how fantasy utilizes the imagination and allows for a "recovery" of vision, Tolkien outlines two contrasting views of artistic capacity: one rooted in a subjectivist or idealist perception of the world, and the other in an objectivist or realist perception of the world. Tolkien's presentation of these two views of artistic capacity is similar, in many respects, to Solzhenitsyn's sketch of the two types of artists in his Nobel Lecture.

With respect to the imagination, Tolkien states that, "in recent times, in technical not normal language," the imagination has come to be understood as "the power of giving ideal creations the inner consistency of reality" (*OFS*, 59). Although he does not refer explicitly to any particular philosopher, this characterization of the imagination reflects the arguments of philosophical idealism, especially as expressed by Kant.[8] This way of characterizing the imagination would seem to follow from Kant's description of the imagination as a faculty that provides a "schema," a way of organizing or shaping the world in thought.[9] Tolkien takes issue with this understanding of the imagination, asserting that he finds "the verbal distinction philologically inappropriate, and the analysis inaccurate" (*OFS*, 59). Though not mentioning Aristotle by name, Tolkien follows the argument of the *De Anima* in asserting that the "mental power of image-making . . . should appropriately be called Imagination" (*OFS*, 59).[10] In this view, the imagination is the faculty that enables human beings to call to mind an

object even when it is not physically present, for example, the face of an absent friend, and even to conceive of a "fantastic" object, that is, an object that does not correspond to a real thing, for example, putting together the green from grass with the (normally yellow) sun, to a conceive of a "green sun" (*OFS*, 61).

Tolkien insists that the proper term for the capacity of "giving to ideal creations the inner consistency of reality" is "Art" (*OFS*, 59) of which the highest expression is "left to words, to true literature" (*OFS*, 61). Art is the link between imagination and "Sub-creation" (*OFS*, 59). Thus art, Tolkien argues, makes a "Secondary World," in which normal, everyday things are depicted and arrayed in a convincing way. Fantasy differs from other forms of literature in that the "Secondary World" it "sub-creates" includes not only objects that exist in the "Primary World," but "fantastic" ones, for example, elves, dwarves, giants, or dragons (*OFS*, 61).

One of the uses of fantasy, according to Tolkien, is "recovery." Though expressing a reluctance to become directly involved "with the philosophers," he cannot explain how fantasy offers recovery without addressing an issue of epistemology. Recovery, he argues, entails the "regaining of a clear view," and "includes return and renewal of health" (*OFS*, 67). It does *not* entail "seeing things as they *are*," but rather, " 'as we are (or were) *meant* to see them'—as things *apart from* ourselves" (*OFS*, 67, emphasis added). In this account of recovery, Tolkien takes issue with Kant's claim that "things in themselves" (*Dinge in sich selbt*) cannot be known, that the human mind has no direct access to them. Commenting on this passage, Alison Milbank argues that Tolkien is "saying something quite radical," in that he is showing us the way to overcome "the subjectivity of Kantian perception" by a return to Thomistic realism.[11]

Like Solzhenitsyn, Tolkien links the exercise of the artistic capacity with freedom, properly understood. The recovery that fantasy offers enables the artist to be " 'free with' Nature . . . be her *lover* not her *slave*" (*OFS*, 69, emphasis added). Fantasy, Tolkien suggests, is the form of art most likely to aid in recovery, because it is so well suited to revealing the "strangeness of things," and thereby their "otherness." Tolkien's account of the way in which fantasy contributes to recovery is similar to, and may well have drawn from, G. K. Chesterton's account of Aquinas's philosophical realism. In *St. Thomas Aquinas*, Chesterton argues that, for Aquinas, recognition of the "strangeness of things" is "the light in all poetry, and indeed in all art," and is linked to the "otherness" of things, to their "objectivity."[12] Chesterton characterizes Aquinas's approach as that of the true contemplative or true artist, in contrast to the "false contemplative" who "looks only into his own soul," or the "selfish artist" who "lives only in his own mind,"[13] and he describes Aquinas's epistemology in this way:

> According to St. Thomas, the mind acts freely of itself, but its freedom exactly consists in finding a way out to liberty and the light of day; to reality and the land of the living. In the subjectivist, the pressure of the world forces the imagination inwards. In the Thomist, the energy of the mind forces the imagination outwards, but because the images it seeks are real things. All their romance and glamour, so to speak, lies in the fact that they are real things, things *not* to be found by staring inwards at the mind.[14]

Recovering this understanding of reality, Tolkien maintains, assists human beings to unlock their "hoards," to free themselves from their "possessiveness" (*OFS*, 67). In doing so, they learn that freedom is exercised through participation in an order which they did not create, that is, through the free exercise of their share in the divine creativity.

In addition to recovery, Tolkien identifies another use of fantasy, that is, "consolation," and his account of consolation is reminiscent of Solzhenitsyn's characterization of art's capacity to transcend reason, to allow us to "glimpse the Inaccessible" (*SR*, 514). Tolkien explains how fantasy offers consolation by contrasting fairy story with tragedy. Central to tragedy is *catastrophe*, that is, a sudden turn downward, such that the drama ends in sorrow or sadness. Central to fairy story, by contrast, is what Tolkien calls *eucatastrophe*, or the "good catastrophe," a sudden turn upward, such that the story ends in "joy," and thereby provides what Tolkien calls the "Consolation of the Happy Ending" (*OFS* 75). Yet, this form of consolation is not, Tolkien insists, "escapist" or "fugitive," given that, even while experiencing this unexpected joy, the reader realizes that the event is not final, that "there is no true end to any fairy-story" (*OFS*, 75). Furthermore, the reader realizes that the event cannot be fully explained by reference to any human capacity or skill but that it points to the likelihood of divine aid, of "a sudden and miraculous grace: never to be counted on to recur" (*OFS*, 75). Echoing Solzhenitsyn's description of the artist's capacity to perceive the underlying "harmony of the world," its "foundations" (*SR*, 513), Tolkien describes this experience of consolation as "a piercing glimpse of joy . . . that for a moment passes outside the frame," and he surmises that it results from "a sudden glimpse of *the underlying reality or truth*" (*OFS*, 76–77, emphasis added).

According to Tolkien's account of consolation, the fantasy writer does not simply describe the soul's longing for transcendence; he or she conveys the story in a manner that moves readers themselves to experience this transcendence.[15] Commenting on the ways in which Tolkien's own works of fantasy make this experience possible, Milbank identifies three "moments of eucatastrophe" in *The Lord of the Rings*: when Gollum wrests the Ring from Frodo at the Cracks of Doom, thereby fulfilling the task that Frodo was unable to accomplish; when at the Gates of Mordor with the army of Gondor and Rohan

that is about to be destroyed by the forces of Sauron, Gandalf announces the coming of the Eagles; and when Faramir and Éowyn, at the House of Healing, experience the effect of the fall of Sauron.[16] Milbank argues that Tolkien's poetic skill is perhaps most powerfully conveyed through his ability to

> provoke in us a longing for a happy ending that does not negate but fulfills the "natural desire for the supernatural" that both Augustine and Aquinas taught, and which is most famously expressed by the former's *Confessions*: "our hearts are restless until they rest in You." Tolkien goes even further than Augustine's autobiography that describes a soul yearning for the divine, by making his reader *perform* this desire for the transcendent, although in some cases—indeed many—the reader may not know what he or she longs for.[17]

ART, IDEOLOGY, AND THE DRAMA OF THE SOUL

In his Nobel Lecture, Solzhenitsyn raises the question of the artist's "responsibility," that is, his "duty toward society" (*SR*, 520–521). While Solzhenitsyn identifies a number of potential dangers that artists may face, his primary focus is on the danger of ideology: that artists may become susceptible to ideology or oblivious of it.

By ideology, Solzhenitsyn does not mean simply a set of social or political principles, as, for example, in the context of contemporary American politics, when one distinguishes between a "liberal ideology" and a "conservative ideology." Rather, for Solzhenitsyn, ideology combines "anthropocentrism," that is, the rejection of any higher authority over human beings, with the belief that human life can be wholly remade or reshaped in accord with intention and planning. As Erikson and Mahoney state, ideology is not "a neutral synonym for 'worldview' but refers to a sociopolitical theory beginning in utopianism and ending in social engineering" (*SR*, 212).

Solzhenitsyn makes two interrelated points about ideology that directly relate to his understanding of the responsibility of the artist. First, ideology is rooted not in truth but in a lie, or what he refers to repeatedly in discussing the nature of communist ideology, as *the* lie, that is, the assertion that human life can be wholly altered in a way that eradicates all tensions and conflict. In the words of Raymond Aron, Solzhenitsyn teaches us that the "deadly snare of ideology" is rooted in "the illusion that men and social organizations can be transformed at a stroke."[18] This is what Solzhenitsyn refers to when he states in the Nobel Lecture that, under communist ideology, a "primitive rejection of all compromise is given the status of a theoretical principle and is regarded as the high virtue which accompanies doctrinal purity" (*SR*, 521). The regime that comes into existence based on ideology, that is, under

Soviet communism, is a new kind of regime. Solzhenitsyn refers to it as an ideological regime or an ideocracy. While it has some similarities to tyranny, it nevertheless differs from any previous tyrannical form in requiring not simply that all who live within it conform to the law, but that all *participate* in the ideology, in "the lie." Second, in justifying anything and everything done in pursuit of its illusory end, ideology seeks to eradicate each person's "conscience," each person's judgment of good and evil, and thereby destroy morality. Solzhenitsyn refers to this in the Nobel Lecture, in remarking that ideology teaches that there are "no lasting concepts of goodness and justice valid for all mankind" (*SR*, 521).

Solzhenitsyn provides what is perhaps his most powerful account of how ideology undermines morality in the chapter of *The Gulag Archipelago* entitled "The Bluecaps." He argues,

> To do evil a human being must first of all believe that what he's doing is good. . . . Fortunately, it is in the nature of the human being to seek a *justification* for his actions. Macbeth's self-justifications were feeble—and his conscience devoured him. . . . The imagination and the spiritual strengths of Shakespeare's evildoers stopped short at a dozen corpses. Because they had no *ideology*. Ideology—that is what gives evildoing its long-sought justification and gives the evildoer the necessary steadfastness and determination. That is the social theory which helps to make his acts seem good instead of bad in his own and others' eyes. Thanks to *ideology*, the twentieth century was fated to experience evildoing on a scale calculated in the millions. (*GA*, Vol. 1, 173–174)[19]

Through long and painful reflection on his experiences, Solzhenitsyn claims to have learned the most fundamental truth about human existence: the ineradicably mixed character good and evil in each human being. Let us pause here to consider his process of reflection that culminates in this insight. In two of the most powerful chapters of *The Gulag Archipelago*, "The Bluecaps," and "The Ascent," Solzhenitsyn traces the development of the soul among the members of two groups within the gulag system, the interrogators and the prisoners. In "The Bluecaps," he discusses the men who serve as interrogators within the state security apparatus, the "bluecaps," who are from the perspective of *zeks* like Solzhenitsyn, "our torturers" (*GA*, Vol. 1, 144). Solzhenitsyn conveys both the horrifying acts they perform, and the horrifying souls they develop.

After describing the bluecaps' appalling behavior and character, Solzhenitsyn ruminates how they have come to be what they are. Shockingly, Solzhenitsyn admits that, had the circumstances of his life been even slightly different, he could have ended up a bluecap rather than a *zek*. He relates how, while at university, many young men, including Solzhenitsyn himself, were

targeted for recruitment into the security services, but something inside them resisted the temptation. While acknowledging that this experience of internal resistance was stronger in some than in others, he nevertheless surmises that, with enough time and effort, they could have seduced everyone, even Solzhenitsyn himself. Reflecting on this fact, on the monster he might have become, he states the following:

> And just so we don't go around flaunting too proudly the white mantle of the just, let everyone ask himself: "If my life had turned out differently, might I myself not have become just such an executioner?"
>
> It is a dreadful question if one really answers it honestly. (*GA*, Vol. 1, 160)

In "The Ascent," Solzhenitsyn focuses on the experience of the prisoners within the gulag. Once each *zek* grasps the horror of camp life and realizes how long he or she will have to endure it, each faces a stark choice: "the great fork of camp life" or the choice between "life" and "conscience" (*GA*, Vol. 2, 603). On one path one places one's own survival above all else, and this will be at the cost of other people. Those who choose "life" begin a kind of descent into depravity—stealing food, acting as informants, and so on. On the other paths lies "conscience." Here one begins a kind of "ascent" into humanity, though often at the cost of one's life.[20] In turning away from the pursuit of survival at all costs, these prisoners begin a process that, while painful, leads to certain moral and spiritual benefits. He describes a movement toward moderation and restraint; an "understanding mildness" that enables judgment with "mercy"; learning to "love" at least "those close to you," and to "recognize genuine friendship" (*GA*, Vol. 2, 611).

Near the end of the chapter, Solzhenitsyn articulates the central insight of his deep reflection into the truth of human existence, and his comments here are worth quoting at length.

> Looking back, I saw that for my whole conscious life I had not understood either myself or my strivings . . .
>
> It was granted to me to carry away from my prison years on my bent back, which nearly broke beneath its load, this essential experience: *how* a human being becomes evil and *how* good. . . . Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, not between political parties either—but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates with the years. And even within hearts overwhelmed by evil, one small bridgehead of good is retained. And even in the best of all hearts, there remains . . . an unuprooted small corner of evil.
>
> And since that time I have come to understand the falsehood of all the revolutions in history: They destroy only *those carriers* of evil contemporary with

> them (and also fail, out of haste, to discriminate the carriers of good as well). And they then take to themselves as their heritage the actual evil itself, magnified still more. (*GA*, Vol. 2, 615–616)[21]

In understanding the ineradicably mixed existence of good and evil within every human being, Solzhenitsyn sees the illusion upon which ideology is based.

In his *legendarium*, Tolkien provides a dramatic portrayal of the mixed character of human nature, and thereby, one might say, meets Solzhenitsyn's expectation for the artist to attest to this fundamental truth of the human condition. Tolkien provides his most compelling account of this truth in his dual depiction of the hobbits Frodo and Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*.

Frodo is a central character in the story, the hobbit who reluctantly accepts the seemingly impossible task of conveying the One Ring to Mt. Doom, its place of origin in Mordor, in order to destroy it. Much of the drama centers on Frodo's interaction with Gollum, a hobbit originally named Sméagol, who had previously possessed the Ring, and who eventually serves as Frodo's guide into Mordor. Frodo learns Gollum's history from Gandalf at the beginning of the story, but Frodo is reluctant to believe that Gollum is a hobbit, maintaining that no hobbit could act in the way that Gollum has, that is, engaging in lying, stealing, and coldblooded murder.

Gandalf's account of Gollum's history is reminiscent of Solzhenitsyn's claim about the ineradicably mixed character of human nature, and it is this truth that Frodo is so unwilling to believe. When Gandalf tells Frodo that Gollum came from a clan of hobbits who later migrated to the Shire, Frodo is incredulous. He remarks to Gandalf, with "some heat," that "I can't believe Gollum was connected with hobbits, however distantly," regarding that as "an abominable notion" (*LOTR*, 54). "Hobbits don't cheat," Frodo claims, and they certainly could never commit murder (*LOTR*, 54). Frodo's reluctance to believe that Gollum is a hobbit reveals not only Frodo's understanding of "hobbitic" nature in a general sense but also the limits of his own self-knowledge. He insists that a hobbit could never cheat or kill, because he thinks that he could never do any of these things—that he lacks the capacity for evil, at least, in its most serious forms.

Gandalf touches on this issue in his response to Frodo, as he seeks to persuade Frodo that Gollum, while evil, is not *wholly* evil, and thus could become good, and that other hobbits, including Bilbo and Frodo himself, are not *wholly* good, and thus, like Gollum, could become evil. In the face of Frodo's indignant rejection of Gandalf's account of Gollum's history, Gandalf responds by telling Frodo, "I think it is a *sad* story . . . and it might have happened to others, even to *some hobbits that I have known*" (*LOTR*, 54, emphasis added). What "you don't see yet," Gandalf tells Frodo, is that

> Gollum was not wholly ruined. . . . There was a little corner of his mind that was still his own, and light came through it, as through a chink in the dark: light out of the past. It was actually pleasant, I think, to hear a kindly voice again, bringing up memories of wind and trees, and sun on the grass, and such forgotten things.
>
> But that, of course, would only make the evil part of him angrier in the end—unless it could be conquered. Unless it could be cured. Gandalf sighed. Alas! there is little hope of that for him. Yet not no hope. (*LOTR*, 55)

Gandalf tells Frodo that Gollum, while searching for Bilbo to regain the Ring, was eventually captured by orcs and, under torture, revealed to Sauron that the Ring was taken from him by "Baggins" from the "Shire." Frodo, grasping immediately what this means for him, and for all the inhabitants of the Shire, exclaims, "What a pity that Bilbo did not stab the vile creature, when he had a chance!" (*LOTR*, 59). Gandalf, however, tries to persuade Frodo that, despite the grave peril they now face, Bilbo did well in *not* killing Gollum. In a comment reminiscent of Solzhenitsyn's depiction of the choice between "life" and "conscience," Gandalf argues that, because Bilbo showed "pity" and "mercy" toward Gollum, refusing to "strike without need," Bilbo "has been well rewarded. . . . Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity" (*LOTR*, 59).

At this point in the story, Frodo simply cannot comprehend Gandalf's reasoning. Frodo even insinuates that Gandalf's reasoning is foolish, as it justifies allowing an evil person who poses a genuine threat to go on, rather than stopping that person when one has the chance. He asks Gandalf, how could it be that "you, and the Elves, have let him live on after all those horrible deeds?" (*LOTR*, 59). Frodo goes on to remark that even if, as Gandalf claims, Gollum once was a hobbit, "Now at any rate he is as bad as an Orc, and just an enemy. He deserves death" (*LOTR*, 59). Gandalf's reply, perhaps the most profound statement within the book, is worth quoting at length.

> Deserve it! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgment. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many—yours not least. (*LOTR*, 59)

Although Frodo cannot, as yet, understand Gandalf's words, he remembers them, and he ponders them. As he gains experience, especially of his own

limitations and susceptibility to evil, he becomes better able to appreciate the truth of Gandalf's words. This is brought to bear most strikingly in the scene in which Frodo finally encounters Gollum.

As Frodo and Sam are struggling to find a way through the hills of the Emyn Muil to enter Mordor, they realize that Gollum is following them, and they capture him. Facing the point of Frodo's sword, Sting, Gollum surrenders and grovels on the ground, begging Frodo not to hurt him. Frodo must decide what to do with Gollum, since Gollum cannot be kept bound, and if unbound, cannot be controlled. Hence Frodo must either kill him or allow him to become something like a companion. Sam, reasoning in the same way Frodo did when Gandalf first told him about Gollum's history, says that, because Gollum has just tried to kill them, and will surely try to do so again once he gets the chance, they must kill him. Frodo, however, pauses to reflect on his earlier conversation with Gandalf. Reaching his decision, Frodo speaks, as it were, to Gandalf (whom he believes to be dead):

> "Very well," he answered aloud, lowering his sword. "But still I am afraid. And yet, as you see, I will not touch the creature. For now that I see him, I do pity him." (*LOTR*, 615)

Frodo's own painful struggles in bearing the Ring have brought him to the point where he sees the truth of Gandalf's claim. He understands the terrible burden of the Ring, having faced many struggles to overcome the temptations for power and self-preservation it has offered, and he realizes now that, as Gandalf suggested, any hobbit could end up like Gollum, including Frodo himself. Hence, in spite of his quite rational fear, he decides to accept Gollum's promise to serve as his guide into Mordor.

THE IDEOLOGY OF PROGRESS

In the Nobel Lecture, Solzhenitsyn addresses both those living in the communist East and those living in the liberal democratic West. To all those living under communism, Solzhenitsyn's message is to "not participate in lies" (*SR*, 526). Specifically to the artists living under communism, however, he proposes something more: to strip away violence's method of "veiling itself in a mist of lies," and by reexposing "*truth*"—the truth of an underlying standard of good and evil—"*to defeat the lie*" (*SR*, 526).

While Solzhenitsyn regards communism as a far worse, far more virulent form of the ideological lie, he also recognizes what Mahoney calls "a more restrained version of the lie"[22] in the ideology of Progress (*SR* 605) to which many in the democratic West ascribe. Progressive ideology shares with

communist ideology the erroneous belief that historical development can overcome all of the tensions and contradictions of human life and thereby eliminate the fundamental condition of human life. Both communist and progressivist ideology assert that the fundamental distinction is between progress and reaction, rather than between good and evil, and in this sense, both assert a "lie."

Mahoney notes that Solzhenitsyn's assessment of the liberal democratic West underwent some modification from the 1970s (when he composed his Nobel Lecture and Harvard Address) through the 1990s, and Mahoney regards the 1993 lecture, "We Have Ceased to See the Purpose,"[23] as Solzhenitsyn's "final and comprehensive statement to and about the Western world."[24] In this essay, Solzhenitsyn examines the central claim of progressivist ideology, "that Progress would engulf all aspects of existence and mankind in its entirety" (*SR*, 594). Referring to Turgot, the eighteenth-century French economist who first articulated the Idea of Progress, Solzhenitsyn reminds us that Turgot posited that "*economic* development would inevitably and directly lead to a *general mollification of the human temperament*" (*SR*, 594, emphasis added). We must acknowledge, Solzhenitsyn states, that progressivist expectations have been met, "even stunningly surpass[ed]," in "the field of technological civilization," but *only* in this field, not in others (*SR*, 594). Hence Turgot's assertion of a necessary link between economic development and all other aspects of human life has proven to be unsound. Most significantly, the progressivist assumption that material well-being would result in psychological and spiritual well-being has been discredited, given that we now find ourselves in a condition in which "our wants grow unchecked," but we "find no fulfillment" (*SR*, 595).

If we make an honest assessment of the consequences of Progress, Solzhenitsyn states, we will "stop seeing Progress . . . as a stream of unlimited blessings," but rather "as a gift from on high" sent as a "trial of our free will" (*SR*, 596). This is apparent in at least two ways. First, we see that the products of our "technocratic Progress" bring on consequences that are, in some respects, actually harmful to us. Our use of the "gifts" of the telephone and television, for example, often lead to greater fragmentation from each other, and from the "natural flow of life" (*SR*, 596). Similarly, the "gift" of a longer lifespan often results in the elder generation becoming "a burden" to the younger one, and the experience of old age as a time of "loneliness" and "abandonment" (*SR*, 596). Hence the "gifts" of technological progress both "enrich" and "enslave" us, in that we experience "a nagging sadness of the heart" even "as creature comforts continue to grow" (*SR*, 595).

The greatest shortcoming of progressivism, however, is seen in our approach to death (*SR*, 596). The "loss of a clear and calm attitude towards death," Solzhenitsyn remarks, is the clearest sign of our spiritual

"helplessness" and our "intellectual disarray" (*SR*, 596). Even as material well-being improves, a "chilling fear of death"—a fear unknown to the ancients—"cuts into the soul of modern man" (*SR* 596). Connecting this fear to "our insatiable, loud, and busting life," Solzhenitsyn echoes Heidegger and Pascal in pointing out how our attempts to become engrossed in everyday life, or immersed in diversions, are in fact ways of turning away from the problem of our mortality. Employing an analogy from physics, Solzhenitsyn speaks about the movement of progress in a striking way.

> Progress was understood to be a shining and unswerving *vector*, but it turned out to be a complex and twisted *curve*, which has once more brought us back to the very same eternal questions which loomed in earlier times, except that facing these questions then was easier for a less distracted, less disconnected mankind. (*SR*, 596, emphasis added)

Solzhenitsyn suggests that there are two ways of responding to the return of the eternal questions. One alternative is to conclude that our experience of "alienation," "apathy," and subsequent "loneliness" is the result of modern man's having finally accepted the hard truth that human life has no intrinsic meaning, no underlying purpose. This path leads to what Solzhenitsyn describes as "the howl of existentialism" (*SR* 596). Another alternative, the one Solzhenitsyn recommends, is that we refuse to "simply lose ourselves in the mechanical flow of Progress," and instead, seek to "harness [Progress] in the interests of the human spirit," to direct its "might towards the perpetration of good" (*SR*, 596). This will require us to once again face the "eternal questions," in a manner that seeks to restore the "internal harmony between our spiritual and physical being" (*SR*, 596). Solzhenitsyn argues, in a way that is reminiscent of points he makes in *The Gulag Archipelago* and other works, that this task will require a restoration of moral seriousness, of "the concepts of Good and Evil," and recognition of "the unchanging Higher Power above us" (*SR*, 596).

Tolkien addresses the idea of Progress in the context of his explanation of one of the uses of fantasy, that is, to provide "escape." He begins his discussion of escape by noting that the critics of fantasy, in a tone of scorn, accuse it of being "escapist" (*OFS*, 69). Tolkien regards this accusation as involving both "misuse of words" and "confusion of thought" (*OFS*, 69). Remarking that, in what the critics of fantasy call "Real Life," escape is considered "very practical, and may even be heroic," Tolkien asks why it would be wrong for an imprisoned man to try "to get out and go home" (*OFS*, 69). Evoking something strikingly similar to the image of the cave from Plato's *Republic*, Tolkien remarks that, the "outside world has not become less real because the prisoner cannot see it" (*OFS*, 69). Willfully confusing "the Escape of the

Prisoner with the Flight of the Deserter" (*OFS*, 69), such critics reveal themselves to be like the inhabitants of Plato's cave, who try to silence anyone who questions whether the shadows are real or proposes leaving the cave. In a comment reminiscent of Solzhenitsyn's characterization of totalitarian ideology, Tolkien remarks that, in precisely this vein, "a Party-spokesman might have labelled departure from the misery of the Fuhrer's or any other Reich and even criticism of it as treachery" (*OFS*, 69). Such critics "prefer the acquiescence of the 'quisling' [i.e., collaborator][25] to the resistance of the patriot" (*OFS*, 69–70). They are so subsumed within the dominant trends of modern thought, Tolkien suggests, that they seek to shut down any criticism of it, any alternative ways of thinking.

To illustrate his point, Tolkien explains that, because fantasy questions one of the most cherished tenets of modernity, that is, belief in progress, it is accused of "escapism." That is, fantasy tends not to include, and even less to praise, technological achievement—things like mass-produced "electric street-lamps," "factories," and "motor-cars"—and thus, from the perspective of the critics, fails to recognize "real life" (*OFS*, 70–71). The charge of "escapism" is thus a sign of the critics' belief in what Solzhenitsyn calls progressivist ideology, that is, that technological advancement is both inevitable and inherently good. Tolkien responds by arguing that the one who accepts the "true" escape offered by fantasy, in contrast to the critics of fantasy, "does not make *things* (which it may be quite rational to regard as bad) his *masters* or his *gods*, by worshipping them as inevitable, even 'inexorable' " (*OFS*, 70, emphasis added).[26] Turning the tables on the critics, he questions whether they fully grasp what "real life" is.

> Not long ago—incredible though it may seem—I heard a clerk of Oxenford declare that he "welcomed" the proximity of mass-production robot factories, and the roar of self-obstructive mechanical traffic, because it brought his university into "contact with real life." . . . [T]he expression "real life" in this context seems to fall short of academic standards. The notion that motor-cars are more "alive" than, say, centaurs or dragons is curious; that they are more "real" than, say, horses is pathetically absurd. How real, how startlingly alive is a factory chimney compared with an elm-tree: poor obsolete thing, insubstantial dream of an escapist! (*OFT*, 70–71)

Among the kinds of art which, unlike fantasy, tend to receive the accolades of critics, Tolkien suggests that many offer only "false" escapes. Much of what is deemed "'serious literature," Tolkien argues, is in fact "no more than play under a glass roof by the side of a municipal swimming bath" (*OFT*, 71). Such literature does not really address serious matters, but it rather reflects something like being subsumed within Heideggerian everydayness or

Pascalian diversions. Fantasy, by contrast, "may invent monsters that fly in the air or dwell in the deep," but it does not "try to *escape from* heaven or the sea" (*OFT*, 71, emphasis added). That is, unlike much of the literature preferred by fantasy's critics, fantasy does not turn away from serious matters, but it rather addresses the "permanent and fundamental things," thus taking up the proper task of all art (*OFT*, 70).

Tolkien also speaks of other approaches to art, some of which respond to what Solzhenitsyn refers to as "the howl of existentialism" (*SR*, 596), in that they call attention to existentialist claims about the "boredom," "weariness," and "anxiety" of modern life (*OFS*, 67). Such concerns give rise to artistic approaches that offer "mere manipulation and over-elaboration of old material," or "fantastical complication of shapes to the point of silliness" (*OFS*, 67). While such art may be "clever," it is also "heartless" (*OFT*, 67). Worst of all, perhaps, is an approach to art that responds to existentialist claims by "making all things dark and unremittingly violent" (*OFS*, 67). Commenting on this passage, Mary Keys remarks that Tolkien may be alluding to "the tragic social experiments of fascism and communism in the twentieth century," which sought "to 'liquidate' " society "in order to attempt to make ex nihilo."[27]

Turning the arguments of the critics on their head, Tolkien suggests that it is modern art, not fairy story, that is "escapist," that is, that seeks to escape from serious matters, from real life. Echoing Solzhenitsyn's claim, Tolkien refers to the desire to escape from death as the "Great Escape," and he regards this desire as that of "the genuine *escapist*," or the genuinely "*fugitive* spirit" (*OFS*, 74). While critics of fantasy accuse it of refusing to engage with real life, Tolkien argues that it is in fact in many forms of modern art that such "escapism" reveals itself, given that what is most distinctive about modern art is its refusal to confront the reality of death. Modern art tends either to focus solely on the pleasures of mundane existence, or to propose the wholescale reconstruction of human nature or human order, often through a violent effacement of what has gone before. It is fantasy, by contrast, that takes death seriously, that is willing to genuinely confront it. One of the chief ways fantasy does this, Tolkien argues, is by showing what it would really be like for human beings to be immortal. Much of the best fantasy literature, he argues, conveys "the burden" of immortality, in the form of "endless serial living" (*OFS*, 85).

Tolkien conveys this within his *legendarium* by the contrast he offers between elvish immortality and human mortality. While Elves and Men are virtually identical in their physical nature, they differ as to the nature of their souls. The Elves are "natural" beings, in that they are fully satisfied within the created world, whereas Men are "supernatural" beings, in that, however much they love the created world, it can never fully satisfy them (*OFS*, 28).

The Elves refer to Men as "the guests," perceiving that the souls of Elves and Men are "akin . . . yet not the same," given that Men's souls, unlike the Elves' souls, are not "confined to Arda [the world], nor is Arda their home."[28] Within the *legendarium*, human mortality is understood not as a curse, but as a "gift" of the creator, Ilúvatar, to Men. While Men often struggle to accept death as a "gift," the Elves can help them to do so. From the Elves' point of view, their own seemingly endless life within "the circles of the world" (*LOTR*, 1063) can become burdensome, such that mortality, that is, the human experience of death, seems to offer a kind of relief or freedom. This perspective is expressed in the title the Elves give to the story of Beren and Lúthien, the Man and Elf whose great love leads them, against all odds, to wrest a silmaril from the crown of Morgoth, the first Dark Lord. In the end, Lúthien accepts mortality, human death, in order to remain with Beren. Referring to this story as *The Lay of Leithian*, "Release from Bondage," the Elves express something like envy for Lúthien, who alone among the Elves has truly died, and thus been released to go "beyond the confines of the world."[29]

NOTES

1. All references to Solzhenitsyn's 1972 Nobel Lecture, 1978 Harvard Address, and 1993 lecture, "We Have Ceased to See the Purpose," are from *The Solzhenitsyn Reader: New and Essential Writings 1947–2005*, Edward E. Ericson Jr. and Daniel J. Mahoney, eds. (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2006), referred to hereafter as *SR*.

2. James F. Pontuso, "Being, Time, and Art: Solzhenitsyn's Reflections on Heidegger's Question," *Society*, Vol. 51, Issue 2, February 27, 2014, 156–168, quotation on 164.

3. In the Harvard Address, Solzhenitsyn identifies this mistake as "the proclaimed and practiced autonomy of man from any higher force above him," and he refers to it variously at "anthropocentricity," "rationalistic humanism," and "humanistic autonomy," *SR*, 572.

4. Pontuso thinks that Solzhenitsyn may be referring here to Nietzsche, who advocated for the self-creation of both identity and moral standards, "Being, Time, and Art," 166, note 65.

5. Tolkien delivered the essay as a public lecture at the University of St. Andrews in 1938. It was first published in 1947, in revised form, in *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. All references are to J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tolkien On Fairy-Stories*, Expanded Edition, with Commentary and Notes, Verlyn Flieger and Douglas A. Anderson, eds. (London: Harper Collins, 2014), referred to hereafter as *OFS*.

6. When Tolkien delivered the lecture, with the exception of *The Hobbit*, none of the vast collection of works that he would come to call his *legendarium* was yet published. However, he had already composed most of "The Silmarillion," that is,

the vast compendium of texts depicting the creation of the world and the deeds of the ancient elves, and he was in the early stages of writing *The Lord of the Rings*.

7. Germaine Paulo Walsh, "Philosophic Poet: J.R.R. Tolkien's Modern Response to an Ancient Quarrel," in Ralph C. Wood, ed., *Tolkien among the Moderns* (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 14–20.

8. It may be more accurate to say that certain ideas or arguments associated with Kant, however much they may involve a kind of popularization and over-simplification, are in the background of Tolkien's discussion here. As Alison Milbank explains, there is strong evidence to suggest that Tolkien's understanding of art was influenced by the French neo-Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain. Drawing on Thomistic principles, Maritain sought to articulate a new theory of art, and much of Maritain's critique was directed against Kant. While it is impossible to know whether Tolkien ever read any of Maritain's works, G. K. Chesterton, who was a major influence on Tolkien, certainly did. According to Milbank, Chesterton was likely introduced to Maritain's philosophy through his friend, the artist Eric Gill, who assisted Monsignor John O'Connor in the first English translation of Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism*. See Milbank, *Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians*, ix–x, and 16–25.

9. Kant states that "The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination," and is itself "distinguished from an image," *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, Norman Kemp Smith, trans. (London: Macmillan & Co., 1929), 182.

10. Distinguishing imagination from both "perceiving" and "discursive thinking," Aristotle refers to it as an activity that "lies within our power whenever we wish (e.g., we can call up a picture, as in the practice of mnemonics by the use of mental images)," *De Anima*, Book III, Ch. 2, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, Richard McKeon, ed. (New York: Random House, 1941), 587.

11. Milbank, *Chesterton and Tolkien as Theologians*, 19. Similarly, Paul Kocher maintains that Tolkien here criticizes "those of the idealist school from Berkeley down to our modern phenomenologists who, each in his own way, echo Coleridge's dejection, '. . . we receive but what we give / And in our life alone does Nature live,' " *Master of Middle-earth: The Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien*, 76–77.

12. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 541.

13. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 541.

14. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 541.

15. Commenting on Tolkien's account of consolation, Milbank refers to the four levels of biblical interpretation of the patristic and medieval period: the literal, allegorical, moral or tropological, and anagogical. Tolkien's account of *eucatastrophe*, Milbank argues, is consistent with the latter; it is "not so much a realist trope of events turning out well as an anagogical anticipation of the Last Judgment," 112.

16. Milbank, 123.

17. Milbank, 112.

18. Raymond Aron, "Alexander Solzhenitsyn and European 'Leftism,'" in F. Flagg Taylor IV, ed., *The Great Lie: Classic and Recent Appraisals of Ideology and Totalitarianism* (Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2011), 366–376, quotation on 376.

19. All references denoted *GA* are to Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (New York: Harper & Row, Vol 1, 1974, Vol. 2, 1975, Vol. 3, 1978).

20. Solzhenitsyn reiterates this point at the end of the chapter, when, after having described his "ascent," he concludes by giving the last word to those who lost their lives along the way: "But from the burial mounds I have a response; 'It's very well for you to say that—you who've come through alive!" (*GA*, Vol. 2, 617).

21. Solzhenitsyn makes a very similar argument, even using some of the same wording, near the end of the chapter, "The Bluecaps." After admitting that, had his circumstances been different, he might have become a bluecap rather than a *zek*, Solzhenitsyn states the following: "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being" (*GA*, Vol. 1, 168).

22. Mahoney, *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, 46.

23. Solzhenitsyn delivered the lecture to the International Academy of Philosophy in Liechtenstein in 1993, shortly before his return to Russia. Mahoney, in *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, refers to the lecture as the "Liechtenstein Address."

24. Mahoney, *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, 21. Also, in introducing the lecture, Ericson and Mahoney remark that Solzhenitsyn here offers a "salutary self-correction" to the critique of Western society he offered in his 1978 Harvard Address, *SR*, 591. Mahoney maintains that in comparing this lecture with the Harvard Address, one notices several differences: a change in "tone," the likelihood of a "certain mellowing," and a greater appreciation for "the basic solidity of Western societies rooted in the rule of law," *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*, 21.

25. As Flieger and Anderson explain in their extended commentary on the text, the term "quisling" comes from the Norwegian politician Vidkun Quisling, "who from 1942 until the end of World War II held the office of Minister President in occupied Norway, while the elected leadership was in exile. After the war Quisling was found guilty of high treason and executed," *OFS*, 116, note 88.

26. Tolkien reiterates this point in another part of the essay, remarking that "Fantasy is founded upon the hard recognition that things are so in the world as it appears under the sun: on a recognition of fact, but not a slavery to it," *OFS*, 75.

27. Mary M. Keys, "J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again*: Recovering a Platonic-Aristotelian Politics of Friendship in Liberal Democracy," in Joseph J. Foy and Timothy M. Dale, eds., *Homer Simpson Ponders Politics* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2013), 212.

28. J. R. R. Tolkien, *Morgoth's Ring* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 315.

29. J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion*, Christopher Tolkien, ed. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 186–187.

Chapter 8

Social Dance in the Films of Whit Stillman

Carl Eric Scott

STILLMAN'S *OEUVRE*

The *auteur* director/screenwriter Whit Stillman has given us five feature films: *Metropolitan*, (1990), *Barcelona* (1994), *The Last Days of Disco* (1998), *Damsels in Distress* (2012), and *Love & Friendship* (2016). As cinematic instances of the "comedy of manners" form, they feature much dialogue and larger-than-typical casts of characters. Yet, they are quite accessible and delightfully funny. And as Mary Nichols showed in her essay "Whit Stillman's Comic Art," they are also films that reward careful study.[1]

Social dance is one among a number of select subjects that Stillman's films deal with again and again. These Stillmanian subjects include (1) the impact of the sexual revolution, (2) self-deluding approaches to romance (like "opposites attract" or "dating down"), (3) the tensions between couple-love, friendship, and "group social life," and (4) the half-hidden place of Christian religion in modern life.[2] Social dance might actually be the champion of these repeat subjects, as every single one of Stillman's films positively exhibits it. In three of his films, social dance plays a central role: *Metropolitan*, in which debutante dance parties frame the action, *The Last Days of Disco*, in which the characters interact at a discotheque, and *Damsels in Distress*, in which a group of college women devise a program of uplift featuring tap dance, Fred Astaire routines, and an invented Latin dance. I will argue that interpreted together, these three films sketch a story about social dance in modern democratic times—times that only began to fully unfold with what we typically call the 1960s Revolution.[3]

Metropolitan portrays the social scene connected to debutante dances. These dances were sponsored by "Society," which not so long ago was the term used to describe the Ivy League-ish and WASP-ish class at the top of

America's permeable, but nonetheless real, "caste system."[4] The dances were opportunities for young persons who belonged to this class, or who aspired to belong to it, to meet and court. While the film is cagey about its dramatic date, careful analysis shows it likely occurs in the very late 1960s.

The next film in historical order, *The Last Days of Disco*, presents the idea that classic disco was not a mindless trend, but at its best, an effort to rectify an early 1970s "dearth of dancing." The film's somewhat idealized discotheque, the "Club," shows how disco could be thought of as an attempt to *return* to the classiness, the organized group social life, and the emphasis upon skilled dancing, that had characterized the dominant social tone prior to "pre-Revolutionary" America, albeit in a manner that accepted the egalitarian, hedonistic, and sexually liberated imperatives of the new era.

Damsels in Distress, set in the 2000s, occurs well after the Revolution is consolidated. The film's college scene is pretty dismal—"a tone of male barbarism predominates," the education is sketchy, and suicidal depression is common. The group of would-be heroines seek under the leadership of the Violet character to improve things with a program that includes an attempt to start a new dance craze. However, almost no one comes the night they book a club for its debut. Violet's and her friends' failure to establish this new dance craze is obscured by the final two scenes, which are fantasy sequences where all the characters dance with one another.

Thus, what we might call Stillman's "social dance trilogy" reveals this progression: (1) the passing of the older American pattern of social dance and its Society-dominated context, (2) a briefly successful attempt to revive social dance in a reworked form, and (3) an illustration of a failed effort to start a revival of social dance today.[5] This trilogy differs from Stillman's first three films, which if ordered according to narrative date, are *Metropolitan*, *Last Days of Disco*, and *Barcelona.* In these, the three sets of characters connect in certain slight ways. For example, by seeing *Metropolitan*'s Audrey in the Club, we learn that she became a successful editor in book publishing, and once interviewed *Disco*'s Charlotte for a job. Beyond these character connections, the three are tied together in the way they document the life struggles of Stillman's own preppie-ish peer group amid the changes unleashed by the 1960s Revolution. In *Metropolitan*, they are in their college years, in *Disco*, in the out-of-college career-starting years, and in *Barcelona*, in the early career but not-yet-married years. While it is unclear what amount of the material is autobiographical in origin, Stillman has said that aspects of the scripts do reflect his own experiences, such as his time in Spain, or his time frequenting Studio 54.

Unlike the authorial construct of Stillman's main trilogy, the thematic "trilogy" posited by this essay is an interpretive construct. Interestingly, it is again *The Last Days of Disco* that ties everything together. Here I have

in mind both the film and Stillman's unique "novelization" of its script, *The Last Days of Disco*, *with Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards.* What makes *Disco* the proper interpretive center point for the social dance story is that several of its characters articulate a similar *account of dancing's recent history*. Our procedure will be, first, to examine that account, second, to consider it against a sketched larger history of social dance in America, and third, to look at the significance of social dance in each of the three films, in order of dramatic date.

DANCING'S 60S-THRU-70S HISTORY, ACCORDING TO THE DISCO FANS

Just as Jimmy Steinway in *The Last Days of Disco* is becoming attracted to Charlotte, we get her pronouncement that "before Disco, at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, this country was a dancing *wasteland*. You know the 'Woodstock Generation' of the 1960s, who were so full of themselves and conceited? None of those people could dance."

Because Charlotte is given to making unqualified statements with absolute confidence, we might wonder if this is really Stillman's view. He surely knows that the hippies hoped that their free-form music would unleash the dance as never before and that they had some instances of success with this. He surely knows that only a handful of years before the hippies, the craze for the twist had broken the previous lock couple-centered dances had on social dancing, unleashing a whole slew of steps that did not necessarily require a partner, such as the "mashed-potato," the "Watusi," and so forth. Additionally, the dialogue that surrounds Charlotte's statement hints that it ought to be taken with a grain of salt. After a round of dancing at a bar called Rex's, Charlotte playfully asks, "Did people ever really dance in bars? I thought that was a myth." Upon Jimmy saying that his brother did so, she says his brother must be "a *lot* older" and then launches into her Woodstock generation statement. Jimmy's reply is a guarded "Huhn."[6]

Charlotte doesn't really know the details of recent dance history. If we take a moment to think about it, we realize there were social scenes that her "dancing wasteland" of the late 1960s to early 1970s did not reach into. Take, for example, the dancing exhibited on *Soul Train* or the country music scene. Moreover, Stillman tells us that the regulars at Rex's (mostly preppie types) never stopped dancin' and were still using, circa 1980, "all the steps and dance tricks of the early-sixties or pre-sixties."

But as long as such qualifications are made, Stillman would endorse Charlotte's pronouncement. Two other characters in *Disco* also talk about a late 1960s/early 1970s dearth of dancing. Josh, the most admirable character

in the film, says this to Tom about his excitement when the disco trend began, "Finally, dance music's back! Dance places can't be far behind. . . . I loved the idea that there'd be places for people to go dancing after the terrible social wasteland of our college years. . . . What I found terribly encouraging was when the time in life came to have a social life, there'd be all these great places to go to. Because, as you'll remember, for many years there were none."[7] Tom is shown nodding in agreement with the last statement. We also should notice that both Josh and Charlotte use the same word "wasteland."[8] Thus, three characters attest to the dancing dearth, two of them using highly similar language. Stillman himself has said nearly the same thing as Josh does, when recounting his *own* reaction upon first hearing "Do the Hustle" in 1975.[9] And since the novelization indicates that Josh and Tom were twenty-seven at the time of Josh's statement, we can date their "college years," and thus the dancing dearth also, to the early 1970s.[10]

Why did this dancing dearth occur? A variety of factors were in play, but widespread drug use was a big part of it. LSD and marijuana encouraged a stoner vibe antithetical to dance and, while amphetamines were also part of the drug trend, they did not set the main tone. Stillman's audio commentary describes a lack of dance nightclubs for the younger set in his own experience of 1970s New York City in contrast to what had previously been available. My guess about this detail is that clubs had not yet figured out a business model in sync with the exploding bohemian youth culture. That is, few in the late 1960s yet knew how to *regularize* the wildness encouraged by the Revolution. Moreover, two very popular musical styles that developed out of the psychedelic/folk rock boom, hard rock, on the one hand, and earnest singer-songwriter pop (e.g., James Taylor, Roberta Flack) on the other, positively worked against social dance patterns. While other music styles of the time did lend themselves to dance, such as country rock and funk, they also tended to emphasize, as did the radical politics many Americans became involved in at the time, an earthiness of fashion and manner hostile to the formality of social dance. It seems the disco style began in reaction to such currents, by way of certain Black artists putting string sections and such on top of funk bass lines, in order to reassert a classic Afro-American pattern of ritzy aspiration. These artists felt that one could be funky *and* classy, Afro *and* affluent, and so on.

Such explanations of the dearth rely less upon Stillman's work and more upon my own thinking prompted by popular music studies.[11] But Stillman also blames rock music, and suggests that the *coolness* encouraged by it was a problem. "Disco mercifully overthrew one of the big, tiresome concerns of the rock era: avoiding frequent smiles or looks at your partner. The dance floor was made safe for unshaded happiness again."[12] This fits with the praise the key characters have for the "ridiculous" cha-cha in *Metropolitan* and the

antipathy they have for *avant-garde* jazz in *Barcelona*. A vibe of *seriousness* puts a damper on social dance.

SOCIAL DANCE IN AMERICA

A number of obviously important factors in the history of social dance are beneath the radar of *Disco*'s characters. What follows is an attempt to sketch the broader story. Man is a political and a rational animal, as Aristotle held and as Mary Nichols teaches, but also, as Nichols has consistently stressed, an erotic and poetic one. Out of this set of related but potentially conflicting aspects of human nature comes the phenomenon of social dance. Again, what we mean by the term is dance which facilitates the interaction of community members, and in particular between the sexes.[13] In many of the "figural" dances, such as line or square dances, there is no one partner of the opposite sex, and the steps bring one in contact with everyone in the dance. So social dance can represent—and help actuate—a society's overall approach to both courtship and community. That means it can foster and symbolize the idea of fraternity, and just as often, it can delineate class distinctions.

In considering social dance's development in America, there are five key factors or milestones to keep in mind. First, in America, social patterns were governed more by democratic imperatives than aristocratic ones, even if a continual tug-of-war between the two was at work. Alexis de Tocqueville described that tug-of-war as follows:

> whatever the general effort of a society to render citizens equal and alike, the particular pride of individuals will always seek to escape the [common] level. . . . In aristocracies, men are separated from one another by high, immovable barriers; in democracies, they are divided by a multitude of small, almost invisible threads that are broken every minute and are constantly changed from place to place. Thus, whatever the progress of equality . . . a great number of small private associations in the midst of the great political society will always be formed.[14]

Being invited to an exclusive dance in a democratic society is an instance of certain "aristocratic" tendencies, some of which Tocqueville believed are natural to humans, reasserting themselves. Interestingly, this passage describes America since the 1960s to a greater extent than it does prior to it, when the existence of a "caste system" was a recognized fact of social life. It also almost perfectly describes the way in which "the Club" in *Disco* was a democracy-embedded institution driven by certain proud aristocratic instincts, albeit one which never attempted to solidify the boundaries of its

social set. Second, American social dance *began* in a courtship situation like the one featured in Jane Austen's novels, at least in the sense that courtship was a situation no longer dominated by arranged marriages. It was now essentially up to young persons "to arrange their own marriages," as Austen scholar Elizabeth Kantor puts it. Kantor highlights certain suggestions from Austen that the (relatively new) "assembly balls" and "country dances" held in many towns in Britain in the early 1800s aided the young in making their own matches. "Ironically, it was the limitations that allowed the freedom. . . . They made it safe (well, relatively safe—as safe as such an inherently life-altering thing can be) for women to fall in love. Partly because the rules allowed women to get just close enough to men, but not too close. And partly because those same rules facilitated some up-front screening of the male population."[15] In *Metropolitan*, we observe a similar combination of socially established boundaries and the freedom of the young persons within these. The boundaries are more flexible but are still invitation-governed. We can say that somewhere between the dance events Austen describes in her novels and those Stillman presents in *Metropolitan* lies the basic pattern of social dance for Society-bred Americans up until the 1960s, at least as it occurred outside of nightclubs.

Third, the overall social dance pattern of the 1800s saw a gradual decrease of figural dances, like quadrilles or square dances, in favor of couple-centered dances such as waltz and tango. These dances involved more bodily contact, that is, what was later celebrated as "dancing cheek-to-cheek." This shift was noticeable by the 1880s, and occurred prior to the really overt impact of Afro-American music that begins in the early 1900s. It is possible to overinterpret this change, as many of the European court dances prior to the 1700s seem to have featured a greater ratio of couple-centric dancing to figural dancing than the social dances of early 1800s Britain and America.[16] Nonetheless, we might say that the late 1800s is a time where the social dance representation and encouragement of group interaction are more and more replaced by that of couple-centric interaction.

Fourth, from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s period, social dance more and more occurs, not at invitation-only events, but at the *nightclub* and at other more bohemian and democratic social gatherings. Society-organized events of course continue, but the nightclub becomes increasingly important to the development of dance. While many nightclubs develop official or unofficial methods of exclusion—including racial segregation practices—the key feature of the archetypal nightclub is its potential openness to any person of the society. This facilitates cultural exchange. As Josh describes "the Club" in *The Last Days of Disco*, "Everyone's here. Everyone you know and everyone you don't know." It is a situation he links with conversational "exchanges of ideas and points of view." The nightclub could also, however, be a rather

rough and seedy place. We naturally recall the stories about jazz music's origins in New Orleans bars primarily meant to serve the clientele of brothels, or perhaps we think forward to the skuzzy 1970s CBGBs club, the key testing ground for new wave and punk rock. But a nightclub could choose to emphasize an attunement to Society and its manners, and many of the most famous ones did, such as the original Roseland Ballroom and the Stork Club.

Rock 'n' roll presents a fifth milestone. Much more can be said about it than the scope of this chapter allows. For social dance, what was particularly important about the rock 'n' roll moment is what occurred about seven or so years into it, with the arrival of the twist and all the partner-less dances that followed in its wake. The twist freed the hips for more fluid and sexually charged movements. Neither the evocation of sex nor the freedom to dance without a partner was entirely new to social dance—some of the dances of the ragtime and early jazz period were crudely suggestive, and a whole number of partner-focused dances featured options for episodic breakaway dancing. What was new was how partner-optional dance steps became, post-twist, the norm.[17]

Thus, by the 1960s the community symbolically represented on the dance floor not only has no figural pattern that suggests the idea of fraternity, but to the extent the dancers aren't dancing the new steps while facing one another, it contains little suggestion of courtship for the sake of marriage. Instead, it contains strong suggestions of individualistic orientation and liberated sexual relations. It is also the case that, by way of switching between the various new steps, or blending them, the dancing can become free-form, allowing for the possibility of greater individual expression. The dancer is also freed to switch back-and-forth between social modes: dancing with a particular partner, working through the crowd to flirt with potential partners, dancing with a group of friends, or totally losing oneself in the music—all of these are options from moment to moment. Such dancing is also open to the possibility of a collectivist Dionysian moment. Disco will reintroduce a seriousness about learning specific steps that had become downplayed by the late 1960s, but it is important to note that the above description of *partner-optional free-form dancing* fits what happens in Stillman's Club. In fact, it is the main pattern of social dance that has held to the present.

With these points about the larger American social dance story in mind, we can now move to a discussion of the three films.

METROPOLITAN

In *Metropolitan*, a holiday season of debutante dances, described by Nick Smith as an "organic" outgrowth of New York City's "Urban *Haute*

Bourgeoise" (UHB), is what allows the action of the plot to unfold. The dances, which we seldom directly witness, facilitate the private "after-party" gatherings which are the setting for most of the film's scenes. When writing the script Stillman anticipated a very low production budget, which ruled out ballroom scenes with hundreds of extras. He may also have thought that the candid conversations he wanted to portray would take place more naturally at the informal "after-parties" where the older adults and the conventions that guide behavior at debutante balls would be absent.[18] So while the plot depends upon (a) formal dances for Society undergraduates, and (b) a socially defined moment for a young woman to be presented as a debutante, we do not see much of the actual dancing, nor any of the actual debutante introductions.

What we do see is the characters dancing the cha-cha at an after-party. Dialogue from Sally indicates that it is a standard step learned in the kind of "dancing school" familiar to her social set, and Nick praises it for being "ridiculous." It certainly is portrayed as fun. It is also notable that it is one of the first activities, besides their conversation, that we see the group engaged in.

What we hear is just as important. Nick says that he "wants to support these kinds of parties" and he lays out the case to Tom Townsend for his continuing to attend them, despite Tom's socialist ideals. While Nick's praise for the ridiculousness of the cha-cha and the "vulgarity" of the televised debutante event called "The International" might seem to be merely ironic, he is at bottom serious about his support. In one of *Metropolitan*'s most important speeches, Nick tells Tom, "So many things which were better in the past have been abandoned for supposed convenience. . . . It's a small thing, but symbolically important. Our parents' generation was never interested in keeping up standards." Nick's rant about detachable collars could have been made about the importance of keeping up the older dance steps like the cha-cha. Or of maintaining the debutante dances themselves. In the full script, Tom asks Charlie why Nick has speculated that this might be the "last deb season as we have known it." Charlie lays out one fairly practical explanation: "The parties take a lot of work and organization. This has traditionally been done by elderly ladies commonly referred to as the 'Old Biddies.' But the Old Biddies aren't getting any younger. When they start to disappear, who's going to take their place? I don't think there's anyone."[19] That of course fits with what Nick says about their "parents' generation." While Nick and Charlie, and their convert Tom, are (late-in-the-day) articulators of and believers in the "ideals" of the UHB set, the others of that set, such as Sally, Cynthia, and Fred, do not idealize the situation—they have not thought about the likelihood of the deb scene's decline, and they might welcome the change when it does come. Unlike them, the elderly women who organize the parties have long been believers in Society and its maintenance; but these women are also

unlike Nick, Charlie, and Tom, in that they came by that belief in the days when it was standard for their set. In any case, they are not being replaced. Society no longer believes in itself. That is, the effort to maintain an informal aristocratic class within a modern democracy, one hopefully more "natural" than artificial, to use Thomas Jefferson's terminology,[20] is no longer one that its inheritors are willing to make.

Stillman left the dramatic date for *Metropolitan* ambiguous on its own terms, but when interpreted as part of the main preppie-trilogy, there is evidence that allows us to narrow the date to a Christmas season in the late 1960s or early 1970s.[21] So, when Nick says he doesn't want to stick around for the decline of the debutante scene, which he and Charlie see as imminent due to "everything that is going on," the goings on that they have most in mind are *those of the 1960s Revolution.* We might say that what the film shows us is the "last days of Society."

THE LAST DAYS OF DISCO

Stillman's social dance trilogy might make us wonder whether Society, and pre-Revolutionary morays generally, were the main two props holding up social dance in modern democratic times, such that a return to it is impossible after they have gone. By this reasoning, contemporary partner-less dance would be regarded as a *non-social* form of dance—individualism would be considered its core feature. Thoughts of this sort, however, are *not* voiced by the characters of *Disco.* From their perspective, dancing had gone through a season of neglect due to hippie errors and arrogance, but it could be readily restored, and that restoration would naturally occur, not through revivalism, but through *up-to-date* music and steps. When disco itself ends, they seem surprised. In the words of the novelization, Josh takes Van's report about the radical drop-off in disco sales "very, very hard." Only after a stunned pause does he launch into his exaggerated "disco will never be over" speech that serves as a kind of summary Stillmanian statement about disco. In that speech, Josh looks forward to the days when disco will return. He does not have a historicist view of social development, in which a definite direction logically unfolds, but more of an ups-and-downs cyclical view. He hasn't noticed the larger social dance pattern of (1) an early 1800s mix of community-centered and couple-centered dances being replaced by (2) couple-centered dances entirely, and then (3) by an individualistic dance pattern.

From Stillman's perspective, however, it is fine that Josh and company have not arrived at anything like such a view. In fact, his film suggests that disco dance cannot be regarded as *asocial dance*, but at its best was a successful return to many aspects of the classic social dance pattern. It is, in my

terminology, "partner-optional free-form dance," but Stillman portrays it as fun, healthy, and fostering moments of group-oriented and couple-oriented interaction. The possibility of it being too lust-stirring is plainly shown as well, but that is not where the accent is placed. Moreover, the best dancers are the ones who build their apparently free-form dancing upon the form-attentive work of mastering a number of distinct steps, such as the Hustle. We might also note that in his positive description of the dancers at Rex's, who know *both* the early 1960s and pre-1960s dance steps, Stillman emphasizes the *continuity* between the partner-optional steps like the twist and the classic social dances. And we see the same idea of continuity in *Damsels*, when Violet lists the waltz, the Charleston, *and* the twist as three dance crazes that she highly admires.

This is very important. There are plausible nightmare accounts of where "disco" is ultimately taking us, and what we have noticed about the regression of social dance in an individualistic direction could be incorporated into them. In speaking of these accounts, it is important to remember that our common usage of "disco" has two distinct meanings: (1) the classic disco of the 1975–1981 period, (2) the larger family of somewhat similar styles, including Euro-disco, techno, hip-hop, and many more, that begin with classic disco and have dominated dance clubs from the 1980s to the present. The nightmare accounts typically describe this larger disco family as being characterized by monotonous rhythm, regular evocation of lust, and exclusion of musician participation in favor of computer-dependent production.[22] The trends that dominated dance-club music after the classic disco era made these fears plausible. By the 1990s, the up-to-date dance club was one where the lights allowed little eye contact, and where the music was way too loud for conversation. The edginess of Rave, and of some kinds of hip-hop, set the tone.

But if Stillman's portrayal of classic disco (*Disco* is released in 1998 directly in the face of such trends) was accurate enough, then a basic point of his film was that the dance scene *doesn't have to be that way*. In his discotheque, for example, the possibility of some conversation exists. *Disco* does illustrate that the classic disco scene endorsed the sexual revolution, and a type of drug-hedonism. And there were other similarities between disco and the 1960s counterculture. For example, disco was eager to combat anti-Black and anti-gay discrimination. But disco parted ways with the 1960s by rejecting its emphasis upon *coolness*; it had no use for the edgy and the serious, and did not cast itself as an oppositional alternative to any supposed "establishment." Stillman's loving portrayal of disco as a craze that had at its heart a yearning to return to a robust era of social dance[23] makes the argument that the trend of mechanistic dance music began with it rather less portentous. If modern democratic persons, even when still swept up in the imperatives of

the Revolution, could healthily react against a dearth of dancing, then perhaps human nature will also perpetually pull back against trends into reductionistic popular music and asocial dance. The possibility of continuity with earlier patterns of dance will remain.

DAMSELS IN DISTRESS

The first dancing we see in *Damsels in Distress* (2012) is at a fraternity party to a song called "2 Hott 4 Da Universe," which the credits tell us was put together by a group of producers who call themselves 4-Track Murdah. The song is as mediocre, and at times as base-sounding, as those titles would suggest, but Violet and her group of "damsel" friends, by enthusiastically dancing to it, add a spark to the party and get everyone dancing.

Violet and her group (three undergraduate women who room with her), are better known for rehearsing tap dance and Fred Astaire musical numbers. These are offered as part of program of "treatments" for depression that they offer at their suicide prevention center. Treatments also include cleanliness, perfume, and vintage-like fashion. We also see them bringing their friends to a Texas slide dance night at the local bar. That is a success, but as indicated, when they try to initiate a new dance craze, an invented step called the "Sambola," nearly nobody comes. We don't see the student body's reaction to their performance of a Fred Astaire musical, but they seem on track to deliver a show that, if nothing else, they will have had a great time getting ready for—one of the two fantasy sequences which close the film grows out of their rehearsal and features all the young men and women characters dancing to "Things Are Looking Up," a song featured in the 1937 Astaire film *A Damsel in Distress.*

Still, the failure of the Sambola has to be tough for Violet, because early on in *Damsels* she says, "I know people can have useful careers in many areas. . . . But I want to do something especially significant in my lifetime, the sort of thing that could change the course of human history, such as starting a new dance craze. Something that could improve the lives of every person and every couple." Later on, when asked why she so admires the individuals she regards as the inventors of the waltz, the Charleston, and the twist, she elaborates, "Dance crazes enhance and elevate the human experience, bringing together millions of people in a joyous celebration of our God-given faculties, and passing these delightful modes of physical expression down through the generations, though not so much anymore." Several things are notable about these two statements. First, there is the fundamental praise of social dance as an activity of life-celebrating use of the body that brings people together, both as groups and as couples. If the exaggerated tone is comic, everything

in this essay shows that Stillman must be serious about the idea that establishing a new dance could have a quite lasting and positive impact. Second, social dances ideally also bring the generations together—as much as each generation identifies with the dance trends of its own time, each also benefits from certain dance modes being passed down to it. Third, the overall state of social dance is now at a low point. By ending her statement with "though not so much anymore," Violet most obviously indicates that the older steps are seldom passed down, but there is no grammatical reason why that clause doesn't apply to her entire statement. In sum, through Violet's statements, Stillman declares social dance to be *very good*, but also indicates that fewer and fewer people partake of this goodness.

We might wonder, then, if the basically optimistic attitude the characters of *Disco* could have about dance still applies. Disco's momentary revival of the social dance *spirit* did not lead to a revival of the couple/group-focused *forms* of classic social dance. By the time we arrive at the twenty-first century, the dancing that occurs is typically of the sort elicited by the likes of "2 Hott 4 Da Universe." The classic forms of social dance are looked upon as bizarre by most of Violet's peers, and they are not interested in trying newer reworkings of these, such as the Sambola. The Damsels can make the best of the degraded disco at a frat party, and can get friends to join in with a niche-y Texas slide trend, but overall, the dance landscape is a much-diminished one.

But the film does not invite us to consider these realities of twenty-first-century life with a heavy heart. *Damsels in Distress* has the dramatic mode of *fantastical satire*, a mode only slightly utilized by Stillman in his first three films, and seldom by any other contemporary screenwriters. For example, instead of treating us to realistic dialogue about the spread of ignorance about basic subjects among today's undergraduates, *Damsels* treats us to an absurd scene in which it is revealed that two of the frat bros *have never learned the colors*. Instead of realistically dramatizing (purportedly) increasing rates of depression and suicide among millennials, as well as similar rates of what has been called "adult dysfunction," it presents the comic idea of Robertson Hall, a college building that has seen many unsuccessful suicide attempts made from its only-two-stories-high balcony. A realistic film about contemporary college life circa 2011 could dwell upon the darker sides of the "hook-up scene," one aspect of which is, as many a prominent essay has informed us, a predatory male behavior. This predatory behavior, as the heinous slogan "no means yes, and yes means anal" heard on some campuses in 2011 suggests, thrives at the ambiguous line between rape and consent, and welcomes the mainstreaming of heterosexual sodomy.[24] But *Damsels* only alludes to this in passing, by its title, by the frat-bro Frank at one point repeatedly and angrily using the b-word, and by, in one of the film's most fantastical conceits, commenting on the increased interest in heterosexual sodomy through

the example of a French grad student who seeks to live by the precepts of the medieval Cathar sect. It is comic art of a high order that can get the audience laughing—though not dismissively—about such contemporary issues that are more typically presented in modes of depressive worry or outraged activism.

These examples also point to the way *Damsels* presents itself as an entirely post Revolution film. For example, there will be no musing here, as there was in *The Last Days of Disco* and *Barcelona*, about how far the sexual revolution might go. It does show us, however, that the aftermath of the sexual revolution is not a sexy place, but rather, something like a boorish party where a group of young women might at best be grateful that they "showed those guys a good time, and without anything really terrible happening." Similarly, Society is now simply gone. Its last vestige, the fraternity, long ago descended into barbarism, and is about to be "extirpated" anyhow. The characters of *Damsels* are not even aware of Society's absence, and partly because, in contrast to those of the main Stillman trilogy, they come from more middling social backgrounds. Finally, liberal education is pretty much dead. While the *Metropolitan* set was more well-read than typical and those in the *Disco* set fretted here and there about the dumbing-down of scholarly pursuits, the education in *Damsels* is presented as very sketchy. The only class of notable intellectual content is the idiosyncratic offering "Flit-Lit: The Dandy Tradition in Literature."

All in all, the Revolution and the democratization of everything have *won.* But *Damsels* suggests that the proper attitude toward this is one of cheerily determined efforts at mitigation, and at making do. In the scene where the fraternities' "Roman Holidays" event degenerates into a melee with the "barbarians" of Doar Dorm, the Damsels humorously observe that this illustrates that civilizations fall by means of internal rot and external attack. Outrage at "Roman Holidays" chaos causes the college to close the fraternities, to which Violet says, "Even after civilization ends, people are still going to need a place to stay!" That is perhaps the key line of the film. *Damsels in Distress* is about beginning small efforts of recovery amid the now-evident ruins of our civilization (evident, at least, to Stillman and his fans!) and even when one has pretty limited prospects for success.

People still fall in love, after all. This fact does not change, despite a hundred worried essays about "rape-culture," the "Tinder-verse," and so on. And young people may still find healthy ways to channel their instincts for love, that is, still find ways to court well. Similarly, they may remedy some of the ignorance their poor education has saddled them with (Thor's story), and mitigate the depression their now-barbaric society predisposes them to. Just as *Damsels* promotes this spirit of hope-focused dedication to renewal, it mocks decline-focused social commentary. The fraternity boy, Thor, can learn the colors and Violet can rectify the error of her dating-down theory

even if something as ambitious as starting a dance craze might not be possible in these times. Or, should we rather say that Violet just needed more allies to make the Sambola fly?

Stillman leaves that key question unresolved. It will be up to the young people with Violet-like ambitions of our time, or of a generation to come, to see if her vision of a partial renewal of social dance patterns is possible. And again, while starting "an international dance craze" may be a pretty tall order, with a bit of collective work a localized tradition can get going. When I arrived at St. John's College in the late 1990s, just as the revival Swing was reaching its peak, the college was in the enviable situation of having preserved for many decades a dance tradition at its own balls which was now back in style. And when I came to New York to study with Mary Nichols, one of the unexpected joys the retreats she and her husband, David, graciously hosted at Hatch Lake for their graduate students, were the line dances that Mary taught.

VIOLET AS A SIGN OF HOPE

Through Violet, Stillman is able to poke fun at *his own* distinctive traits as a social critic. She seems to be an exaggerated version of who he would be in college, were he a millennial, and a damsel to boot. She is too proud and too eccentricity-cultivating at times, as Violet's friend, Lily, rightly indicates. Violet's obsession with social dance could be interpreted as Stillman mocking himself. But that would not deny that Stillman, to paraphrase Josh after his big disco speech, mostly believes what he has said. And through Nick in *Metropolitan*, Josh in *Disco*, and Violet in *Damsels* Stillman has said a good deal about social dance. It is Violet who says the most. Social dance does bring couples, groups, and generations together. It is an expression of joy, even one of religious gratitude for the goodness of bodily life, although the very "ridiculousness" contained in many of the dances, which banishes a too serious "cool" manner, brings a comic element to this gratitude.

Thus, the dearth of social dance, starkly felt by his particular peer group from 1970 to 1975, but in many ways felt even more acutely in our times, is for him an unmistakable symptom of the ill-health of our social life. Now while our analysis has heightened the sense conveyed by *Metropolitan* that something particularly supportive of social dance was lost with the passing of Society, in no way does Stillman point to the possibility of Society's return. But what of social dance itself? We have already pointed to the real possibility of localized revivals. And on a wider scale it is a sign of hope that it is *Violet* who has the vision for renewal.

Although it would take another essay to adequately explore, Violet is a unique and important creation, and for reasons that go beyond her embodying certain aspects of Stillman himself. She brings together the creative aristocratic eccentricity of the hipster, and the compassionate democratic "outreach" of the youth leader. Stillman does *not* present her interest in lost social practices as driven by an egotistic cultivation of her own uniqueness. She is criticized by Lily for not recognizing society's need for a "large mass" of people dedicated to what is "normal," and while there is something to this, in the main the criticism does not really fit, and in fact suggests how Violet differs from our usual picture of the hipster. For her pursuit of lost practices largely comes from a caring democratic sense of what her generation really needs.

Finally, there are suggestions that part of what makes Violet unstable is her being blessed (and cursed) with prophetic intuitions. One example is the strange account Rose gives of Violet as a young girl, when Violet is obsessed with performing odd repetitive tasks lest her parents die, which culminates in the hilarious but disturbing pay-off line: "And the really sad thing was, her parents *did die!*" This can be interpreted as more than a joke, that is, as also being a hint that Violet is something of a prophetess—she did ritualistic things to ward off her parents' untimely death, because at some level she knew it was coming. One wouldn't need to accept that interpretation, however, to still arrive at a strong sense that Stillman uses the Violet character to *explore future prospects*, and to illustrate that an attitude that could be shallowly described as "optimism" is the appropriate response to our civilization having unambiguously arrived at a stage of decline. Violet compares herself to Sisyphus after the failure of the Sambola, but that failure is not followed by a period of depression. Rather, scenes near the end of the film underline her continued dedication to putting on the Astaire show. The happy ending of *Damsels* consists of our seeing that Violet will find her mate and a cinematic fantasy that displays her vision for social dance. In Violet, Stillman has given us a revealer of hopes, an example of resilience and an all-American tap-dancing prophetess of happiness. When a character of such symbolic resonance thinks her ambition of starting a dance craze is not a crazy one, we can only conclude that Stillman feels that the story of social dance in America is not over.

NOTES

1. Mary P. Nichols, "Whit Stillman's Comic Art," *Doomed Bourgeois in Love: Essays on the Films of Whit Stillman*, ed. Mark C. Henrie (Wilmington: ISI Books, 2001).

2. On the last of these topics, see Peter Augustine Lawler, *Homeless and at Home in America* (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2007) Chapter 15, "Disco and Democracy."

3. My use of the term "the Revolution" means to convey that far more was involved than a change in sexual mores. Typical usage employs the adjective "1960s" to indicate when this Revolution most clearly *began*, but scholarly accounts recognize that various aspects of it unfolded over the course of the 1970s and beyond. For why it should be seen as the arrival of *full modernity*, see Carl Scott, "Carl's Rock Songbook, #26: The Three Stages of Modernity" and "Carl's Rock Songbook #28: Intermediate Modernity," *First Things*, in the *Postmodern Conservative* blog, November 19 and 23, 2011.

4. E. Digby Baltzell, *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy & Caste in America* (New York: Vintage, 1964). This book is mentioned in *Metropolitan*. Cc. David Brooks's account of Society's 1960s–1970s fade-out in *BOBOs in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), pp. 18–35.

5. I first sketched this "social dance trilogy" in several "Carl's Rock Songbook" posts at the *Postmodern Conservative* blog at *First Things*. These are Songbook #s 67–71, October 15 through November 28, 2012.

6. Whit Stillman, *The Last Days of Disco, with Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000), pp. 151–152.

7. Ibid, p. 29.

8. The term echoes the Eliot poem and The Who's 1971 song "Baba O' Riley," the chorus of which declaims against a stoner-ish "teenage wasteland."

9. Audio commentary, *The Last Days of Disco* (Criterion Collection edition) chapter 12.

10. Ibid, p. 28. Josh and Tom being 27 in 1980 would indicate 1953 birthdates, and 1971–1975 college years. The events of *The Last Days of Disco* are said by Stillman to occur in the years 1980–1982 (audio commentary, chaps. 17 and 24).

11. See Martha Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul: The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), and Geoffrey O'Brien, *Sonata for Jukeboox: Pop Music, Memory, and the Imagined Life* (New York: Counterpoint, 2004), chapter 12.

12. Stillman, Whit, *The Last Days of Disco, with Cocktails at Petrossian Afterwards* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2000), pp. 53–54.

13. "Social dancing in most cultures is a choreographic activity devoid of ritual meaning (such as dances that incite to war, honor a deity, exorcise demons, or ask for rain, . . . etc.). It is . . . expression of *joie de vivre*. It is an orderly, rhythmic activity that allows the participation of all—men and women, young and old, either jointly or in separate groups. It . . . creates a sense of belonging among the participants. . . .

One constant is the interaction of men and women on the dance floor." Ingrid Brainard, "Social Dance: Court and Social Dance before 1800," *The International Encyclopedia of Dance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

14. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, translated, edited, and with an introduction by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 578 (II, 3.13, #s9–12).

15. Elizabeth Kantor, *The Jane Austen Guide to Happily Ever After* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2012), p. 239.

16. *Dancetime DVD! 500 Years of Social Dance, Volume I: 15th–19th Centuries*, C. Téten and Dancetime Publications, 2002.

17. See the delightful documentary film *Twist*, directed by Ron Mann, 1992.

18. There is a reference in the full script to "one of the 'old biddies' who organize the dances" being present at the dance. Whit Stillman, *Barcelona & Metropolitan: Tales of Two Cities* (Boston: Faber & Faber, 1994), p. 190.

19. Ibid., p. 240.

20. Thomas Jefferson, Letter to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813, *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Petersen (New York: The Library of America, 1984) p. 1304; cc. Edmund Burke's use of "natural aristocracy" in his *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, as quoted in Brooks, *BOBOs in Paradise*, 2000, pp. 23–24.

21. In *Disco*'s novelization, Stillman tells us that in the "early seventies" Sally went "through the usual long-hair, druggie phase that so marked that generation," and that she "had begun her first tentative steps toward a recording career" in the "late sixties/early seventies period." (226) In *Metropolitan*, we witness the first of those steps, her date with a record businessman. Thus, *Metropolitan* probably has to occur before 1972, and after 1967. Similar dates are arrived at if one thinks about Audrey Rouget being at the Club, i.e., in 1980 or 1981, and being said to be the "youngest person ever to be made an editor in the history of Farrar, Straus." And then there is this: in 1969, when identifying with SDS, Stillman was invited to a Manhattan debutante dance party (Monique P. Yazigi, "The Whit Stillman Rat Pack," *The New York Times*, May 31, 1998).

22. Bayles, *Hole in Our Soul*, 1994, p. 284. Cc. chap. 14 of O'Brien, *Sonata for Jukebox*, 2004.

23. One aspect of classic disco that many overlook is that not a few of its fashions and lyrics celebrated the classiness of the 1930s–1940s scene. Chic's "Everybody Dance" at one point voices the Duke Ellington slogan *It Don't Mean a Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing*. Consider also the lyrics of Stevie Wonder's "Sir Duke."

24. Zach Howard, "Yale Punishes Fraternity for Sexist Chanting," *Reuters*, May 17, 2011. I will add that I saw this slogan written in graffiti at a fraternity-heavy college town in 2012.

Part III

CONVERSATIONS FROM TRAGEDY TO COMEDY

Chapter 9

History, Tragedy, and Rebellion in Camus's Adaptation of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*

Denise Schaeffer

Albert Camus premiered his stage adaptation of William Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* in 1956 in Paris to critical acclaim. At this point in his career, Camus was already well known for a number of works, including his novels *The Stranger* and *The Plague*, his major theoretical works *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*, and several stage plays including *Caligula*, *The Misunderstanding*, and *The Just*. He would go on to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. Camus admired Faulkner a great deal, referring to him in an interview as the greatest American writer. However, Camus's adaptation of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* need not be understood simply as an homage to an author he personally admired. As John Philip Couch has argued, Camus's *Requiem* "stands as a kind of personal tribute to Faulkner . . . but at the same time it represents a significant commentary on his own writings for the stage."[1] I would extend Couch's observation to suggest that the adaptation also functions as a site of exploration of some of Camus's larger philosophical preoccupations, especially his ideas about tragedy and rebellion.

Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* is a sequel to his earlier novel, *Sanctuary*, which chronicles the dramatic downward spiral of Temple Drake, a Southern debutante who is kidnapped, raped and ends up forced into prostitution in a brothel. *Requiem* picks up the story of Temple's life eight years later. She has married the man (Gowan Stevens) whose heavy drinking and irresponsible behavior toward her as a younger man contributed to the circumstances leading to her rape and abduction. She is now a wife and mother living in respectable society but remains haunted by her sordid past. She has hired a housekeeper and nanny for her two children, a Black woman named Nancy who has her own checkered past as drug user and former prostitute, and the two women share a bond despite their differences of race and class. We learn

that the brother of Temple's abductor and rapist is now blackmailing her to abandon her family and run away with him, and has leverage over her in the form of some erotic letters that she wrote during that period in her life. Temple is set to go away with him, and plans to take one of her children with her. Nancy learns of Temple's plan, and reacts by smothering the younger child, to prevent Temple from leaving and to prevent the dissolution of a family. The dramatic action of *Requiem* traces the aftermath of this act of homicide, as Nancy is sentenced to death for her crime and accepts her sentence with equanimity, while Temple struggles to confront and confess her own role in the chain of events that led up to her child's death and Nancy's sentencing: "Why do you and my little baby both have to suffer just because I decided to go to a baseball game eight years ago?"[2]

This brief synopsis captures only one dimension of Faulkner's work, which has a complex hybrid structure that interweaves two quite distinct narratives. The work consists of three Acts, each of which is divided into a prose section that describes the history of the town in which the story is set, by way of the history of major landmarks in the town (the courthouse, statehouse, and jail), followed by a section of dialogue written in dramatic form, including detailed stage directions. The historical narrative recounted in the prose sections has been called a fable of "civic genesis"[3] of Jefferson, Mississippi, in the fictional Yoknapatawpha County in which many of Faulkner's works are set, whereas the story of Nancy and Temple unfolds only in the dramatic sections.

Camus was neither the first nor the last to adapt the dramatic sections of *Requiem* for the stage. Perhaps the most prominent is Ruth Ford's production, which played in both London and New York.[4] Other adaptations were also staged in Berlin, Zurich, and various other cities. These productions, however, were generally met with tepid receptions and sustained only limited runs, whereas Camus's adaptation played continuously in France for eighteen months, and then toured through Europe and Northern Africa.[5] Moreover, whereas other adaptations did little to alter Faulkner's novel other than removing the prose sections, Camus did not simply eliminate those sections but also changed a number of things in the dramatic sections as well. While preserving the basic facts and chronology of the narrative that unfolds in Faulkner's dramatic sections, Camus made some alterations that, I shall argue, have significant thematic implications.

The first thing one notes about Camus's adaptation is his decontextualization of the action from its original setting in the American South. In Faulkner's version, the conflict of the novel is fueled in part by socially imposed conditions specific to the historical context of the American South, which places the relationship between an uneducated black woman and her white employer within the context of racial inequality and prejudice, even as the two women bond over the less-than-respectable aspects of their lives.

Camus leaves out the racial context altogether in and removes all references to the local setting that loomed so large in Faulkner's work. The setting in Camus's version could be anywhere. Furthermore, he changes the vernacular language, replacing Nancy's simple dialect, for example, with "elegant, almost Racinian" language.[6] Some commentators characterize such changes primarily in terms of accommodation to a French audience. Collingwood, for example, argues that Camus not only alters Faulkner's vernacular language and also "exploits the conventions of classical theatre to make *Requiem* more accessible not only to his French audience, but to audiences worldwide familiar with the conventions of this theatrical genre."[7] More broadly, commentators focus on the practical necessities of translating Faulkner's novel into a live stage production. Collinwood states that "Camus streamlines scenes throughout his version in order to maintain the forward momentum of the action," and Couch argues that because Faulkner's *Requiem* is "a novel less of action than of articulated introspection,"[8] Camus "was forced to remold most of the dialogue . . . to suit the demands of the stage and round out the characters."[9]

While these observations are useful and echo some points that Camus himself expressed, this chapter will focus on a different dimension of Camus's adaptation—one that commentators have noted but only minimally explored. Beyond recognizing the expectations of his audience and addressing the practical considerations of staging a complex plot originally rendered in fictional time, it is also the case that Camus's adaptation engages with some more substantive, philosophical concerns that guided his artistic choices. Camus outlines his approach to adapting Faulkner's work for the stage in his Forward to the published text of his adaptation. As he presents his rationale for the changes that he made, he begins with the straightforward need to eliminate the lengthy prose sections in order to craft a stage drama, and to focus on the scenes in dialogue to furnish "the raw material of dramatic action." He adds that "they could not be lifted as is," and goes on to explain how and why he made changes to the dramatic sections.[10] Camus's rationale for why he did not use Faulkner's dramatic text "as is" points beyond the practical or considerations of staging a live performance and leads into the territory of ideas.

The first point Camus makes in his rationale is without a doubt rooted in technical concerns, as he notes the difference between fictional time and dramatic time, and explains that he needed to redistribute and refine the dialogue to achieve greater "terseness, condensation and alternation of tension and explosion," and to enhance character development and thematic cohesion.[11] Next, Camus turns to the issue of adapting the distinctive linguistic style of Faulkner's characters, posing what he calls "the problem of language." By this he does not mean simply the difficulty or complexity of Faulkner's style: "Despite appearances, Faulkner's style is far from resistant to dramatic

transcription." Indeed, Camus praises Faulkner for having "resolved . . . without even being aware of it, the problem of a language for modern tragedy." Faulkner achieves this by creating characters whose language is "at the same time simple enough to be their own and lofty enough to reach the tragic."[12] Elsewhere, Camus refers to the challenge of "putting the language of tragedy into the mouths of contemporary characters. Nothing, indeed, is more difficult, since a language must be found that is natural enough to be spoken by contemporaries and sufficiently unusual to suggest tragic tone."[13]

It is with regard to precisely this challenging aspect of creating a modern tragedy that Camus praises Faulkner's achievement. "Faulkner's style, with its staccato breathing, its interrupted sentences, its repeats and prolongations in repetitions, its incidences, its parentheses and its cascades of subordinate clauses, gives us a modern, and in no way artificial, equivalent of the tragic soliloquy." Camus goes on to observe that Faulkner's style grasps "the very breathlessness of suffering" and creates "an interminably winding spiral of words and sentences that conducts the speaker to the abyss of sufferings buried in the past."[14] Interminable winding may work in a novel, but it does not work well in a play being performed in real time, which of course furnishes one reason why Camus needed to simplify Faulkner's language overall while preserving, as he puts it, a few echoes or touches of that style. Based on this part of Camus's explanation, Couch argues that Camus "felt it wise to slacken the tone in order to avoid monotony."[15] But avoiding monotony is not Camus's only concern; he indicates that some of his changes were made not simply in order to tighten the pace but also to address substantive considerations. Specifically, Camus explains that, unless used "sparingly," Faulkner's signature style would not only become monotonous on stage but "would also run the risk of reducing tragedy to the melodrama it always threatens to become."[16] This implies a particular understanding of the distinction between tragedy and melodrama, which I shall explore below, and suggests that in his adaptation Camus was mindful of preserving this distinction.

In the concluding paragraph of his Forward, Camus offers "one further word" on his adaptation, focusing on the final scene of *Requiem*. He notes that in Faulkner's original, the scene includes several long speeches about faith, in which Faulkner reveals "his strange religion." Camus's explanation for how and why he reworked the scene points beyond the problem of language, toward a critique that he undertakes in the name of the very paradox to which this strange religion replies:

> Nancy decides to love her suffering and her own death . . . she thus becomes a saint, the strange nun who suddenly invests the bordellos and prisons in which she has lived with the dignity of a cloister. This basic paradox had to be preserved. . . . I therefore cut and tightened those speeches and made use of Temple

instead in order to challenge the paradox that Nancy illustrates and throw it into stronger relief.[17]

In Camus's hands, Nancy and Temple's speeches and exchanges do not only become shorter but also take on a somewhat different tone.[18] Nancy still embraces her fate, but with a less exclusive and unrelenting emphasis on the afterlife and salvation, and with a less naïve expression of hopefulness. A closer look at what Camus chose to strip out of this scene helps us to understand the particular character of the "paradox" that he hoped to both challenge and to sharpen, and how that paradox reflects his understanding of both rebellion and tragedy. To develop this argument, I shall first discuss Camus's understanding of tragedy, and the distinctiveness of modern tragedy in particular, specifically as he presents it in his 1955 lecture, "On the Future of Tragedy." I then turn to his concept of revolt, or rebellion, as it is developed in *The Rebel* (*L'Homme Revolté*). Finally, I will discuss how these two concepts are reflected in Camus's adaptation of Faulkner's novel.

CAMUS ON TRAGEDY

There are several features to Camus's discussion of tragedy that are especially salient to understanding his project in *Requiem*. His most extended treatment of the question of tragedy is found in a lecture, "On the Future of Tragedy," which he gave in Athens in 1955, just as his adaptation of *Requiem* was taking final shape. The lecture both lays out a theory of tragedy and poses the question of whether a distinctively modern form of tragedy is possible. As noted by Julian Young, the essay "represents the theoretical reflections of a philosopher who was also a practicing playwright, a playwright whose works are to a certain extent 'theory-driven.' "[19]

Camus begins by contending that there have only been two great periods of tragic art in the West, separated by twenty centuries: the first in ancient Greece that stretches from Aeschylus to Euripides, and the second bookended by Shakespeare and Racine. Camus considered these two periods to be exceptional and looked to their "peculiarity" to "tell us something about the conditions for tragic expression" more generally. Tragic ages are not quiet ages; they occur "at moments when the lives of whole peoples are heavy both with glory and with menace, when the future is uncertain and the present dramatic."[20] This initial statement is a rather broad description that could apply equally well to a number of different periods in history. Leaving aside the question of periodization, Camus then draws from these particulars a general conclusion that "the tragic age always seems to coincide with an evolution in which man, consciously or not, frees himself from an older form

of civilization and finds that he has broken away from it without yet having found a new form that satisfies him."[21]

Such in-betweenness is an essential feature of tragedy that distinguishes it from melodrama, and which manifests in another way as well. Whereas melodrama concerns a struggle between self-evidently good and evil forces, in tragedy, Camus argues, the moral legitimacy of each side is "ambiguous." The opposing forces are "equally legitimate, equally justified." For example, in Sophocles's *Antigone*, Camus observes, "Antigone is right, but Creon is not wrong." Thus tragedy is characterized "first and foremost" by tension—specifically, an irresolvable conflict "between two powers each of which wears the double mask of good and evil."[22]

In Greek tragedy, the revolt of the individual hero against fate ultimately leads to a reaffirmation of the power of that fate against the attempted (failed) revolt. The hero "denies the order that strikes him down, and the divine order strikes because it is denied." Thus the failed revolt and its aftermath serve to underscore the limits of the human. With the rise of the scientific worldview in the post-Cartesian age, however, the matter is different. "Man is alone and confronts nothing but himself."[23] Without the counterweight of a cosmic/religious order, the human being is no longer a tragic figure rebelling against fate but rather becomes simply an unencumbered "adventurer."

It is in this context that Camus raises the question of whether a distinctively modern tragedy is even possible. Tragedy is born "each time the pendulum of civilization is half way between a sacred society and a society built around man." As the pendulum swings ever more toward the latter, and "the individual increasingly asserts himself, the balance is gradually destroyed and the tragic spirit finally falls silent."[24] The "triumph of individual reason" causes the spirit of tragedy to "dry up."[25]

While Camus associates this desiccated condition with post-Cartesian modernity, he goes on to explain that in the twentieth century, conditions are once again ripe for tragedy. The pendulum is once again "half way." The relevant antagonistic backdrop for the individual's self-assertion is a distinctively modern one—not the cosmic order of ancient tragedy, but rather, "the world of history," which similarly incites the tragic hero's revolt. History "has put on the mask of destiny . . . humanity has refashioned a hostile destiny with the very weapons it used to reject fatality. After having deified the human reign man is once more turning against this new god."[26]

In other words, the "weapon" with which modernity rejected pre-modernity's confidence in a stable cosmic order (and thus in "fatality") is its historical sensibility; modern thought then imbues history with a new sense of fatality, and erects it as a "new god." This new god may seem more compatible with human reason, but to Camus it is monstrous. "The world that the eighteenth-century individual thought he could conquer and transform by reason and

science has in fact taken shape, but it is a monstrous one. Rational and excessive at one and the same time, it is the world of history. But this degree of hubris, history has put on the mask of destiny."[27] This leads to a renewed tension—and the possibility of a distinctively modern "half way." The tension between the individual, "armed with the power to question," and the idea that the individual is subsumed by larger historical forces or the march of progress, is precisely what makes the time once again ripe for tragedy.

Against this backdrop, Camus argues that human beings must "keep alive our power of revolt."[28] To preserve the capacity for revolt, or as more commonly translated, rebellion, is to preserve the individual over and against history. At the same time, Camus observes, "Man doubts whether he can conquer history; all he can do is struggle within it."[29] Faulkner is, of course, well known for creating characters who struggle with the weight of the past. What Camus seems to have seen in *Requiem*'s characters is a struggle that transcends their personal histories and even the history of the American South; it is a universal struggle between the individual and the weight of history. This elevation from the particular to the universal is in keeping with Camus's discussion of the achievement of modern tragedy, and his praise of Faulkner's ability to articulate a language in which particularity and universality coincide.

Camus's comment that man can only "struggle within history," taken together with his insistence that "the power of revolt" must be kept alive, prompts us to examine his understanding of the character of this struggle. What sort of tragic sensibility arises from that struggle, and what "power of revolt" animates it? Camus suggests that modern history's "mask" of destiny is an illusory quality that human beings have imputed to it, thus encouraging revolt as opposed to passivity; at the same time, he emphasizes the importance of awareness of human limits. This awareness of limits is essential for a proper understanding of human revolt, as well as for a proper understanding of tragedy, as we have seen. Here it is useful to delve more deeply into Camus's understanding of rebellion.

CAMUS ON REBELLION

Camus opens *The Rebel* by observing that there are crimes of passion and there are crimes of logic. He is particularly interested in the latter, in crimes that don "the apparel of innocence" insofar as they are pursued in light of some morally justifiable end. Camus is particularly concerned with the systematic violence of the twentieth century, rationalized in the name of history or other abstract ideals, but one can also see why Nancy's actions in Faulkner's *Requiem* may be considered in light of this notion. Rebellion,

for Camus, is an "irrepressible demand of human nature" in response to the suffering and injustice in the world, to which the rebel says "no." The rebel affirms that there exists a line that cannot be crossed. Rebellion defends the human against such infringement, and takes a stand "in the name of certain values which are still indeterminate but which he feels are common to himself and to all men."[30] This human commonality is essential to Camus's understanding of rebellion, which, in recognizing an essential humanity that must be defended, is also precisely what gives expression to that humanity. This leads him to formulate an understanding of rebellion that is inextricable from human solidarity: "I rebel, therefore we exist." What the rebel affirms and defends, Camus argues, "always belongs to something inside him that does not belong to him alone," and yet should not conceived of as a transcendent essence or abstract principle.[31]

In *The Rebel*, Camus discusses various forms that human rebellion can take (metaphysical, historical, and political), and also clarifies his ideas about rebellion per se. At its core, rebellion confronts oppression and asserts a limit to how human beings may legitimately be treated. Rebellion may arise out of the individual's own experience of suffering or on behalf of another, incited by "the mere spectacle of oppression of which someone else is the victim."[32]

Reflecting on this instinctive response to suffering and injustice, Camus seeks to derive a "rule of action"; in other words, Camus poses the question of what rule of action should guide the rebel's response to the injustice or suffering he or she seeks to oppose. The instinctive response is not sufficient in itself; "at least it should be possible to find a guiding principle."[33] Deriving a guiding principle or rule of conduct is both necessary and difficult in a world that has been divested of traditional sources of such guidance, a world in which the individual has become conscious of the absurd—that is, of the apparent futility of the human yearning for meaning and moral clarity in a secularized universe that does not provide objective moral standards or final answers to questions of meaning and value. "The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world."[34] Consciousness of this silence, "like methodical doubt, has wiped the slate clean. It leaves us in a blind alley."[35] In this "blind alley," human beings must confront a number of questions that Camus explored in several of his works: "[I]f man alone is the sole creator of his values and purposes, does this mean that his freedom is unlimited? Does it imply the nihilist logic that anything is therefore possible—including revolutionary violence and terrorism? Is it possible, in other words, to recognize limits on the exercise of freedom without appeal to higher law or objective truth?"[36]

It is against this backdrop that Camus insists in *The Rebel* that it is "absolutely necessary that rebellion find its reasons within itself, since it cannot find them elsewhere."[37] Like Nietzsche, Camus is concerned to avoid

absolute nihilism and to consider whether human beings can formulate their own values. Camus is particularly interested in whether rebellion supplies within itself any guidance on the question of whether there is any right or duty to kill. "We shall know nothing until we know whether we have the right to kill our fellow men, or the right to let them be killed,"[38] a question made especially acute for him in light of the systematic violence of the twentieth century, committed in the name of one ideology or another. Camus is concerned that "awareness of the absurd, when we first claim to deduce a rule of behavior from it, makes murder seem a matter of indifference."[39]

Rebellion would seem to be the opposite and even the antidote to such indifference, insofar as it takes a stand in defense of human life. Yet, the rebel's instinctive reaction to suffering or injustice entails its own risks, and is insufficient as a response, because when confronted with an unjust and incomprehensible condition, the "blind impulse" of rebellion is "to demand order." Especially when it takes a political form, rebellion "protests, it demands, it insists that the outrage be brought to an end and that what has up to now been built upon shifting sands should henceforth be founded on rock. Its preoccupation is to transform." Such impulses are necessary but dangerous, since "to transform is to act, and to act will be, tomorrow, to kill."[40] This is why Camus thinks it so necessary that rebellion "examine itself," and refuse to remain content with its own "blind impulse." It must seek its own moral principles in a world in which all moral principles have been relativized or are suspect, in which "reasoning assures us at the same time that we can kill and that we cannot kill."[41] The rest of *The Rebel* details both the necessity and the difficulty of finding such principles and guidance purely within rebellion, purely on the level of the human, without recourse to any higher or extrinsic sources of value or meaning and yet at the same time without devolving into nihilism.

Fidelity to awareness of ambiguity, and hence to moderation, seems to be the most significant quality that distinguishes the genuine rebel from the revolutionary. In *The Rebel*, Camus associates revolution, especially organized political revolutionary movements, with a stance of "absolute certainty" in the attempt to "shape actions to ideas, to fit the world into a theoretic frame."[42] While the "revolutionary spirit" may originate, like rebellion, in a desire to "affirm the dignity of man" and to "defend that part of man that refuses to submit,"[43] the zealous aspiration to seek justice can easily outstrip this initial, reactive aim, eventually tending toward violence and even tyranny. "The principles that men give to themselves end by overwhelming their noblest intentions."[44] This is the case even when the initial impulse is an impulse of genuine rebellion. It is on this basis that Camus contends that pure, "unadulterated" virtue tends to be homicidal; however, "pure cynicism" can be murderous as well. A genuine rebellion avoids both of these

poles; it "refuse[s] to legitimize murder because rebellion, in principle, is a protest against death."[45] By rejecting the notion that murder can ever be morally justified as a means to an end, rebellion aims to "preserve the common existence that justifies its insurrection."[46] Thus, a genuine rebellion must be measured and must recognize its own limits. "The rebel realizes that a quest for total justice inevitably debases men and altogether negates justice. But as a combatant against . . . oppression the rebel cannot resign himself simply to ignoring and living with the injustices of society. The true rebel undertakes the difficult task of finding a middle way between amoral revolutionism and passively immoral quietism."[47]

This difficult task of finding a "middle way" means that rebellion has a necessarily liminal quality; indeed, this is the most essential feature of genuine rebellion as Camus theorizes it. It is also the most precarious—not only politically, but also psychologically. "The initial anguish runs the risk of turning to comfort."[48] Such comfort can take different forms, from faith to historicism to nihilism. Acutely aware of such temptations, Camus insisted that human beings must learn to live "without appeal," finding "no rest" in God or in history. A genuine rebellion defines, "in contradiction to nihilism, a rule of conduct that has no need to await the end of history to explain its actions" and thus refuses to justify murder as a means to an end. "In order to exist, man must rebel, but rebellion must respect the limit it discovers in itself" and must remain in "a perpetual state of tension."[49] Part Five of *The Rebel*—the work's concluding section and the culmination of its argument—is titled "Thought at the Meridien." Striving to remain always and perpetually in such a liminal state, existing precariously at the meridien, Camus's genuine rebel "can never find peace."[50]

TWO REQUIEMS: CAMUS'S ADAPTATION OF FAULKNER

We are now in a position to discern how Camus's understanding of tragedy and rebellion are reflected in his adaptation of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*. Faulkner's Temple seems clearly unable to resist the pull of the past, as she prepares to give up her respectable new life, abandon her family, and run off with a man from that past. When she attempts to save Nancy from her sentence by asserting her own responsibility for the child's death, this too is a surrender to the long line of events in her history leading to this point; history, in a sense, becomes responsible for the child's death. Conversely, Nancy's understanding of her own role is to take action against this flow of events—an act of revolt. "Nancy Minogue's violent attempt to save Temple's home" may thus seem justified insofar as "Temple's case is one requiring the most

drastic remedies."[51] Nancy interprets her own action as an act of resistance to the powerful history that Temple seems unable to escape, and judges and justifies her action from a divine vantage point outside of history. One seems to be left, then, with a choice between capitulation to history, on the one hand, or a rebellion against history's power that appeals to a divine power. Neither alternative exhibits the in-betweenness that Camus sees as essential to both tragedy and to rebellion, as discussed above, and neither reflects his understanding of the distinctive demands placed on tragedy in a world characterized by awareness of cosmic indifference and silence in the face of the human desire for moral clarity.

Camus notes that in Faulkner's hands, Nancy "becomes a saint," a "strange nun who suddenly invests the bordellos and prisons in which she has lived with the dignity of a cloister."[52] In his own version, Camus tones down Nancy's pure saintliness. Although she remains a rather simple and traditionally religious character, her speeches about her confidence in her eternal salvation are shorter. Most notably, Camus drastically reduces Nancy's statements that she simply "believes." By tempering Nancy's absolute certainty, he makes her a less saintly and more complex character. In the final scene, when asked by Temple, "Why didn't you send me the word [of the death sentence]?" Faulkner has Nancy reply, "Because that would have been hoping." She goes on to explain how difficult it is for human beings to let go of hope, but she seems to exempt herself from this affliction. Indeed, Stevens responds to her by suggesting, "You mean, when you have salvation, you don't need hope?" To which Nancy replies: "You don't even need it. All you need, all you have to do, is just believe."[53]

Camus alters this scene in several ways. In his version, Nancy's reply to Temple begins with the words "I don't know," and she does not exempt herself from the human desire to hope. Nancy indicates that she *had* initially hoped, "despite everything (*malgré tout*)," for a miracle. She then explains that it is difficult for human beings in general to let go of hope, reproducing much of Faulkner's language, but Camus has her conclude by returning to her own situation, noting: "But, now, no miracle, no more hope. It's better." Camus alters her attorney's response as well; instead of suggesting that the certainty of salvation makes hope unnecessary, he asks, "Is it really better, Nancy?" To which she replies affirmatively. She then adds that one must "simply believe."[54] Thus, although Nancy remains a character who "simply believes," Camus complicates the relationship between hope, faith, and salvation in a way that suggests more inner struggle on Nancy's part. Describing his own vision of Nancy, Camus refers to her as "a murderer and a saint at the same time,"[55] which sharpens the paradox she represents. Furthermore, Camus truncates Nancy's speeches about Jesus, which are substantial in Faulkner's original, preserving only a brief reference to her love for "notre

frère," who stood with and died for prostitutes and thieves. Camus also gives Temple a very different reaction to Nancy's expressed love for her savoir. When Nancy encourages her to "have faith," Temple replies: "Faith in whom? . . . If you want to say that it is necessary for me to humble myself before someone, it is before you, and you alone, that I wish to do so," as she falls to her knees in front of Nancy.[56]

Perhaps the most significant alteration that Camus makes to Faulkner's dialogue is that he deletes Temple's expression of a moral justification for the murder of her child: "So good can come out of evil." While Faulkner's original grants Temple this moment of solace (indeed, Gavin Stevens, Nancy's defense attorney, replies: "It not only can, it must."),[57] Camus refuses to allow such solace, in keeping with his view that humans must learn to live "without appeal." Camus was skeptical of attempts to justify the taking of human life by appealing to an abstract ideal or to some future good. It is also consistent with his view of tragedy, which, in contrast to melodrama, preserves a degree of moral ambiguity, as discussed above.

Even as Camus eliminates Temple's comfort in the thought that good can come from evil, he also moderates her nihilism, which is a converse form of solace or "rest." Camus was acutely aware that even a secularized universe offers the tempting consolation of moral justification. "History is not lacking in either religions or prophets, even without Gods."[58] This is a function of the human desire for certainty, the desire of the human being to do "nothing but what he fully understands."[59] In Faulkner's text, Temple exhibits this characteristic human discomfort with uncertainty, saying: "Even if there is [a heaven] and someone waiting in it to forgive me, there's still tomorrow and tomorrow. And suppose tomorrow and tomorrow, and then nobody there, nobody waiting to forgive me." She adds: "If there is none, I'm sunk. We all are. Doomed. Damned." In response, Gavin Stevens agrees: "Of course we are."[60] Camus eliminates this exchange, which does not simply shorten the text but also throws "the paradox into sharper relief," as he states in his Forward, as the tension is not resolved into either serene faith or nihilistic despair. In Faulkner's *Requiem*, only two more lines of dialogue follow Gavin Steven's statement that "of course" humans are damned: her husband, Gowan, calls out "Temple" from off stage, and Temple replies, "Coming." These are the last spoken words in Faulkner's dialogue, followed by the sound of retreating footsteps and the turn of the jailer's key in the lock. Camus renders this final exchange slightly differently:

Gowan: Come, Temple, one must return.
Temple: Return? With whom?
Gowan: With me. Bucky [their remaining child] is waiting for us.
Temple: With you. Yes. Why not![61]

Throughout Camus's *Requiem*, as in Faulkner's, Temple expresses doubts about salvation and Nancy's attempts to justify human suffering as part of a divine plan. At the same time, Temple exhibits an unfulfilled yearning for peace and relief from the painful uncertainty of living day after day on earth. Camus preserves her doubt and her pain; he preserves and even heightens her restlessness by denying its collapse into utter despair. He does not end his play with a simple pronouncement of human damnation; rather, he concludes with a reminder of human connection. This resonates with his presentation of genuine rebellion as grounded in awareness of both the absurdity of human existence and the connectedness of human beings in the experience of this absurdity. Similarly, the earlier spectacle of Temple kneeling—before Nancy, a flawed human being, rather than before a divine savoir—also reflects this complexity and heightens the liminal quality of both characters.

In Faulkner's original, Nancy and Temple represent two sharply divergent perspectives. Nancy's serene faith and sense of certainty about her own salvation is contrasted with Temple's skepticism and insistence that without the certainty of salvation achieved through divine judgment, humanity is utterly damned and doomed. In his adaptation, Camus complicates the perspective of both characters, primarily by excising their statements in Faulkner's original that seem to posit a framework in which these two alternatives—salvation versus damnation—are the only alternatives available to human beings confronting the ambiguity of existence. This is consistent with the emphasis he places on tension and ambiguity in his more theoretical works, as we have seen. In sum, many of the alterations that Camus made in his adaptation of *Requiem for a Nun* can be understood in light of his philosophical preoccupations rather than simply as concessions to the practical requirements of translating Faulkner's work to the stage.

NOTES

1. John Philip Couch, "Camus and Faulkner: The Search for the Language of Modern Tragedy," *Yale French Studies* 25 (Spring 1960): 120–125.

2. William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), 237.

3. Don Harrison Doyle, *Faulkner's County: The Historical Roots of Yoknapatawpha* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 65.

4. Ruth Ford and William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun: A Play from the Novel By William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1959). See also Barbara Izard and Clara Hieronymus, *Requiem for a Nun: Onstage and Off* (Nashville: Aurora Publishers Inc., 1970).

5. Tara Collington, "Requiem pour une nonne," *The Literary Encyclopedia*. First published February 9, 2009 (https://www.litencyc.com, accessed August 9, 2019).

6. Couch, 125.

7. Collington, "Requiem pour une nonne," 3.
8. Ibid, 3.
9. Couch, "Camus and Faulkner: The Search for the Language of Modern Tragedy," 121.
10. Camus, "Foreward to *Requiem for a Nun*, 1957," in *Lyrical and Critical Essays* (New York: Vintage, 1970), 311–315; 313.
11. Ibid., 313.
12. Ibid., 313, 317.
13. Camus, "Preface," in *Caligula and Three Other Plays*, trans. Stuart Gilbert and Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage, 1962), vii.
14. Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, 314.
15. Couch, "Camus and Faulkner: The Search for the Language of Modern Tragedy," 123.
16. Camus, "Preface" to *Requiem pour une nonne*, in *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, 314.
17. Ibid., 315.
18. Couch's response to this alteration is to observe that Camus was "unfaithful to the moral order of Faulkner's vision." "Camus and Faulkner: The Search for the Language of Modern Tragedy," 125.
19. Julian Young, *The Philosophy of Tragedy: From Plato to Žižek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 235.
20. Albert Camus, "On the Future of Tragedy," *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, 296.
21. Ibid., 298.
22. Ibid., 302.
23. Ibid., 306.
24. Ibid., 305.
25. Ibid., 297.
26. Ibid., 306.
27. Ibid., 306.
28. Ibid., 309.
29. Ibid., 306.
30. Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 16.
31. Ibid, 15–16. Wasiolek also discusses Camus's antipathy toward such abstractions, arguing that Camus "revolted" against a conception of human nature "raised above time and the contingencies of history" as a "mutilation." Edward Wasiolek, "Dostoevsky, Camus, and Faulkner: Transcendence and Mutilation," *Philosophy and Literature* 1:2 (Spring 1977): 131–146; 132.
32. Camus, *The Rebel*, 16.
33. Ibid., 10.
34. Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (New York: Vintage, 2018), 28.
35. Camus, *The Rebel*, 10.
36. Terry Hoy, "Albert Camus: The Nature of Political Rebellion," *The Western Political Quarterly* 13:3 (Sep., 1960): 573–580; 573.
37. Camus, *The Rebel*, 10.

38. Ibid., 4.
39. Ibid., 5.
40. Ibid., 10.
41. Ibid., 8.
42. Ibid., 106.
43. Ibid., 105.
44. Ibid., 240.
45. Ibid., 297, 285.
46. Ibid., 290.
47. Fred H. Willhoite, Jr., "Albert Camus' Politics of Rebellion," *The Western Political Quarterly* 14/2 (June 1961): 400–414; 411. For additional analyses of Camus's understanding of rebellion, see, for example, John Foley, *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008) and Matthew Sharpe, *Camus, Philosophe: To Return to Our Beginnings* (Amsterdam: Brill Academic Publishers, 2015).
48. Camus, *The Rebel*, 8–9.
49. Ibid., 283, 22.
50. Ibid., 285.
51. Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963), 139.
52. Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, 315.
53. Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, 233–234. On this point, see also Mary Ann Frese Witt, "Imprisonment in Camus' 'Modern Tragedies': Les Justes, Requirem pour une nonne, Le Malentendu," *Comparative Drama* 5:1 (Spring 1971): 3–20.
54. Camus, *Œuvres Complètes Vol. III* (Paris: Gallimard, 2008), 836–837. Translations are my own.
55. Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, 314.
56. Camus, *Œuvres Complètes*, 837.
57. Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, 179.
58. Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 53.
59. Ibid., 53.
60. Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*, 242–243; 245.
61. Camus, *Œuvres Complètes*, 840.

Chapter 10

A Vindication of Novels

Jane Austen's Conversation with Mary Wollstonecraft[1]

Natalie Fuehrer Taylor

Novelists, according to Mary Wollstonecraft, know "little of human nature, work up stale tales, and describe meretricious scenes, all retailed in a sentimental jargon, which equally tend to corrupt the taste and draw the heart aside from its daily duties."[2] In order to disabuse women of their fondness for novels, Wollstonecraft suggests mocking them. "If a judicious person, with some turn for humor, would . . . and point out . . . how foolishly and ridiculously they caricatured human nature, just opinion might be substituted instead of romantic sentiments" (185). Jane Austen seems to respond to Wollstonecraft's challenge through the words of Anne Elliot, the heroine of her last novel, *Persuasion*. "Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much a higher degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything."[3] "With some turn of humor," that is so characteristic of her, Jane Austen does indeed point out the foolish and ridiculous character of human beings. In some important respects, the characters of Austen's *Persuasion* reflect Wollstonecraft's stinging critique of women and echoes Wollstonecraft's great hope for a liberal and egalitarian political order. However, neither Wollstonecraft nor Austen simply recites the claims of liberalism. Rather, they are in conversation with liberalism. Neither Wollstonecraft nor Austen draws the sharp separation between the private sphere and the public sphere that liberalism does. The romantic sentiments that form our attachments in the private sphere foster the virtue necessary for a more liberal and egalitarian political order. In this respect, Wollstonecraft and Austen have more in common with ancient thinkers than modern political philosophers.[4] At the same time, Austen does not

merely repeat Wollstonecraft's political philosophy in a genre considered more frequently enjoyed by women. Rather, she articulates a model of femininity and masculinity that allows for both love and friendship to be the basis of marriage in a manner that Wollstonecraft did not think possible. In doing so, Austen vindicates the novel.

Published in 1792, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is Mary Wollstonecraft's most famous treatise. Wollstonecraft entered the political and intellectual fray of her time by calling for the end to the distinctions between the sexes. She laments the prejudice of civilization has left women in an unnaturally weak, though ostensibly elegant condition. The weak and fragile bodies of women are cultivated, like flowers taken out of their natural environments, by their educations—educations conceived by men. "One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers" (7). Eager to please, women sacrifice their reason and the virtue to attention to the body and vacuous graces. Wollstonecraft is particularly critical of the upper classes for they abuse their privilege and their leisure. We should note that Wollstonecraft condemns the entire class, not just the women, though "the prevailing opinion of sexual character" would render the women in the upper classes most vulnerable to the vicious character Wollstonecraft describes. Unlike men of all classes, women are not drawn into a larger public sphere and remain concentrated on "the minute parts" (183).

Wollstonecraft argues instead that women should be educated toward virtue and made self-sufficient. "Consequently, the most perfect education, in my opinion, is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart. Or, in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent. In fact, it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason" (21). This reform would surely improve the condition of women, but it would also improve the character of men and the relationship between men and women. Wollstonecraft does not write merely on behalf of her sex, but out of "an affection for the whole human race" (3). Indeed, the entire human race depends on the improved character of women. "Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become the companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue" (4). And, although Wollstonecraft is often remembered for her biting criticism of the women of her day, her male contemporaries are not spared. Men have neglected their duties as husbands and fathers for the sake of pursuing pleasure. This has encouraged their wives to concern themselves solely with cultivating their beauty. "But, till men

become attentive to the duty of a father, it is vain to expect women to spend time in their nursery, which they, 'wise in their generation' choose to spend at their glass"(6). The humiliating dependence of women on their husbands gives birth to a desire to be pleasing. If men were less "anxious to make them alluring mistresses than . . . rational mothers" and, if they demonstrated this principle by practicing greater domestic virtues, women would direct their efforts toward the nobler ends. Wollstonecraft appreciates the mutual influence men and women have in fostering reason and virtue and, so, the emancipation of women depends on the reason and virtue of men.

Should men and women be governed by reason in the choice of their spouse, marriage would be an example of friendship. "Friendship is a serious affection; the most sublime of all affections, because it is founded on principle, and cemented by time" (73). Wollstonecraft contrasts friendship with love. "Love considered as an animal appetite, cannot long feed on itself without expiring. And this extinction in its own flame, may be termed the violent death of love" (73). Love's fleeting nature makes it dangerous. A woman, who has been the object of a man's desire, will seek constantly to renew that desire and when she is unable to excite her husband's desire, she will seek to satisfy her vanity in another way. "[A]nd love—even innocent love, soon sinks into lasciviousness when the exercise of a duty is sacrificed to its indulgence" (73). So great is the contrast between friendship and love, Wollstonecraft argues that it is not possible for friendship and love to coexist. It is the fault of novelists that women continue to believe that it is. "Love, such as the glowing pen of genius has traced, exists not on earth, or only resides in those exalted, fervid imaginations that have sketched such dangerous pictures. Dangerous, because they not only afford a plausible excuse, to the voluptuary who disguises sheer sensuality under a sentimental veil; but spread affection, and take from the dignity of virtue" (73–74). Improved education, which quiets the passions and fortifies reason, would contribute to a more content and happy marriage. Women "would be contented to love but once in their lives; and after marriage calmly let passion subside into friendship—into that tender intimacy, which is the best refuge from care" (119). The marriage would be happy, not in the least part, because husband and wife would no longer indulge romantic sentiments. Women would, however, be able to discharge their duties in a manner befitting a human being. Marriage, for Wollstonecraft, is "the foundation of every social virtue" (Wollstonecraft 71). The private roles of husband and father, wife and mother, are bound up with men's and women's roles as citizens. Therefore, the sexes must be educated to foster virtue in one another for the sake of political life, as well as for the sake of the individual. In contrast to liberalism, which establishes the separation between the separation of the public and private spheres, Wollstonecraft blurs the distinction between them.

Mary Wollstonecraft died just five years after the publication of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and just before Jane Austen's novels became widely published. Wollstonecraft almost certainly had no knowledge of Austen's novels and evidence that Jane Austen was familiar with Mary Wollstonecraft is scant. Yet, a conversation between these writers becomes more distinct when considering their works side by side. Austen's characters in *Persuasion* do reflect Wollstonecraft's hopes for women, men, and marriage in a more liberal and egalitarian political order. However, Austen does not simply articulate Wollstonecraft's philosophy into the more pleasing form of a novel. Rather, Austen responds to Wollstonecraft's views on marriage by suggesting the possibility of pairing sensibility and reason, love and friendship.

Throughout Jane Austen's adult life, Great Britain had been at war with France. Austen began writing her last novel, *Persuasion*, on August 8, 1815. It was the day the defeated Napoleon began his voyage to St. Helena.[5] Although disillusion would soon follow, Janet Todd observes, "in her novels she allowed characters to feel pride in a new assured maritime power, and even more, to revel in the entrepreneurial aspect of naval service, the possibility of prize money and the advancement for the enterprising (officer) class."[6] I would add to Todd's observation by suggesting that the peace, and the new stature and wealth of the naval officers, offers a possibility for political change and the emancipation of women in Austen's last novel. *Persuasion* concludes with the assertion that the naval profession "is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance" (328). This is quite a claim on behalf of the British Navy, which defeated Napoleon. Jane Austen's *Persuasion* tells us the story of the transformation of aristocratic feminine and masculine virtues into those that are necessary for a more liberal and egalitarian political community.

The first and most obvious indication of the ambivalent political circumstances in the novel is the displacement of Sir Walter Elliot from Kellynch-hall, the seat of "the ancient and respectable family" (6). Sir Walter exemplifies the vicious character of women, described on the pages of Mary Wollstonecraft's political treatise. We are quick to learn that foremost among his qualities is the often observed "Elliot pride." The novel begins, "Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the Baronetage" (5). Austen's further introduction to the head of the Elliot family echoes Wollstonecraft's description of privileged women of her time.

> Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot's character; vanity of person and of situation. . . . Few women could think more of their personal appearance than he did. . . . He considered the blessing of beauty as inferior only

> to the blessing of a baronetcy; and the Sir Walter Elliot, who united these gifts, was the constant object of his warmest respect and devotion. (6–7)

By attributing such a character to the head of a respectable family, Austen points out how foolish and ridiculous—and contemptible—that character is.

As off-putting as Sir Walter may be to Wollstonecraft's twenty-first-century heirs, he was able to boast "a wife of very superior character" (7). The choice of her husband seems to have been Lady Elliot's one, though very serious, lapse of sound judgment. Austen gives us insight into the marriage forged between this ridiculous, vain aristocrat and the excellent, sensible woman. "She had humoured, or softened, or concealed his failings, and promoted his real respectability for seventeen years; and though not the very happiest being in the world, had found enough in her duties, her friends, and her children, to attach her to life" (7). Lady Elliot's marriage was one of endurance and fulfillment of duty. Any happiness that she may have enjoyed during her life did not come from her husband.

The opening lines of *Persuasion* convey that Sir Elliot is not only vain but backward looking. He is concerned for the history of his family but has done little to ensure its future. Unfortunately, Lady Elliot died relatively young and her husband is no longer protected from himself. And, like the women described by Wollstonecraft, the excessive attention to his body has prevented Sir Walter Elliot from fostering the virtues appropriate to his rank, which would allow him to perpetuate the Elliots's good name. Sir Walter has accumulated considerable debt flattering his vanity. Not even his family's impressive history can prevent the inevitable. Sir Walter's eldest daughter, who suffers from many of the same vices as her father, is not able to imagine ways by which to cut their expenses. However, Sir Walter's middle daughter, Anne, sees a number of solutions to their financial troubles. "She wanted more vigorous measures, a more complete reformation, a quicker release from debt, a much higher tone of indifference for everything but justice and equity" (17). Sir Walter would not be persuaded by justice and equity. He would rather rent the estate than to live without the comforts of his class.

Mr. Shepherd, Sir Walter's agent, notices that "This peace will be turning all our rich Navy officers ashore" (24). And, indeed, it does not take long before Mr. Shepherd identifies a naval officer, Admiral Croft, to rent their home, Kellynch-hall. "[T]hey are so neat and careful in all their ways! . . . Every thing in and about the house would be take such excellent care of!" (25–26). This introduction to naval officers brings to the reader's mind the domestic virtues of the brave and gallant men, who defeated Napoleon. On a broader level, this description suggests to us that these naval officers are worthy caretakers of the political order. Sir Walter's general objections to the Navy confirm the officers' merit in a more liberal regime. "I have two

strong grounds of objection to it [the profession]. First, as being the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction, and raising men to honours which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of" (27). The naval officers are self-made men and, presumably, displayed some amount of virtue in winning honors for themselves. Sir Walter's second objection to the profession is it takes its toll on a man's appearance. Mr. Shepherd quiets Sir Walter's misgivings by assuring him that Admiral Croft is "a very hale, hearty, well-looking man, a little weather beaten . . . but not much; and quite the gentleman in all his notions and behavior" (30). Although the naval officers represent a new ideal of masculinity, they retain a standard of gentlemanliness, lost or corrupted by Sir Walter's vices.[7]

As plans are made to rent Kellynch-hall the reader is also introduced to Mrs. Croft. The match between Admiral Croft and his wife seems to be more suitable than that between Sir Walter and his wife for Mrs. Croft displays virtues, which are equal to and worthy of her husband. It has not escaped the notice of other scholars that Mrs. Croft reflects Mary Wollstonecraft's hopes for women as rational creatures.[8] An equal partner in the marriage, Mrs. Croft had been part of the discussions, which lead to the Crofts renting Kellynch-hall. Mr. Shepherd describes her as "a very well-spoken, genteel, shrewd lady." Mrs. Croft "asked more questions about the house, and the terms, and taxes, than the admiral himself, and seemed more conversant with business" (31). Mrs. Croft's strong mind is matched by her strong body. Unwilling to be separated from her husband, Mrs. Croft accompanied the admiral to sea. When Mrs. Croft's brother, Captain Wentworth, announces that a naval ship is no place for a lady, Mrs. Croft's spirited response recalls Wollstonecraft's condemnation of the artificial graces displayed by the women (and men) of her day. "But I hate to hear you talking so, like a fine gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days" (91). The marriage of two rational and virtuous people is happiness for the individuals and a more egalitarian and liberal political order.

Although Sir Walter Elliot has rented his family's estate and the new tenets seem to anticipate a changing political order, the future is uncertain. Sir Walter has no sons and, although Lady Elliot passed away several years ago, he has not remarried. The likely heir to Kellynch-hall is Sir Walter's nephew, Mr. Elliot. Hopes that he would marry Elizabeth Elliot have long been dashed. When the Elliots re-move to Bath, Sir Walter is not on speaking terms with his heir. On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. Croft have no children. The aristocratic political order, determined and preserved by birth seems to be decaying and on the verge of being replaced by a more liberal and egalitarian political order. This possibility, however, depends on Sir Walter's middle daughter, Anne, and Mrs. Croft's brother, Captain Wentworth. In

an aristocracy, Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth are persons of little or no consequence. However, due to their virtues, which are cultivated in the course of the novel, Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth fulfill and, yet surprise, Mary Wollstonecraft's expectations for women, men, and marriage in a liberal and egalitarian political order.

Soon after meeting Sir Walter, the reader is introduced to his second daughter, Anne Elliot. In contrast to her father, she does not immediately display the vices, which had so exasperated Mary Wollstonecraft. Quite the contrary, Anne is characterized by her "elegance of mind and sweetness of character, which must have placed her high with any people of real understanding" (8). Anne's virtues are natural to her, but she lacks the conventional and the social refinements that are valued and cultivated by the upper classes and exemplified by her father and her sister. To them, "she was only Anne" (9). Stripped of any descriptions, "only Anne" leaves us with the individual, outside of the decaying social order that Sir Walter and Elizabeth inhabit. Although Anne is unappreciated by her father and her sister, she is admired by her mother's best friend and intimate of the family, Lady Russell. To Lady Russell, Anne "was a most dear and highly valued god-daughter, favorite and friend . . . it was only Anne that she could fancy the mother revive again" (9). Our first impressions of Anne are of a woman with a strong mind and who is on the margins of the aristocratic political order.

However, we soon learn that Anne's character is more complicated than our initial introduction. We learn that Anne resembles her father in an important respect. Anne is also backward looking. She does not read the Baronetage, but she does read the navy list, a record of the British Navy's ships, their commanders, and their voyages. When Mr. Shepherd proposes the idea of renting Kellynch-hall to Admiral Croft, Anne quickly and easily accounts for the admiral's tour of duty. Anchored in her home in Somersetshire, Anne follows the British Navy because she was once very much in love and engaged to be married to a young naval officer, Captain Wentworth, coincidently Mrs. Croft's brother. In the summer of 1806, Anne reflected more conventional qualities and was considered "an extremely pretty girl, with gentleness, modesty, taste, and feeling" (35). When her engagement to Captain Wentworth was coldly received by her father and by Lady Russell, Anne quickly broke it. Although the romance between Anne and Captain Wentworth was short, the consequences were enduring. "Her attachment and regrets, had for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth; and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect" (38). The brief romance did not ignite in Anne a desire to excite love in another as Wollstonecraft may have feared, but she is hostage to her passions nonetheless. Rarely leaving Kellynch-hall or the small circle of friends and family who live in the neighborhood, it is all the more difficult for Anne to escape her memories of Captain Wentworth

and all the easier to harbor a love for him. It is not difficult to believe that Anne may be vulnerable to novels and the notions of love promised by them.

As the emperor and tyrant Napoleon is exiled, the British Navy returns to shore, and the decaying aristocracy is replaced by a new ideal. Political life seems poised for meaningful change, which would allow women to enjoy greater freedom. Yet, Anne Elliot suggests the ambivalence of these circumstances. She may follow the example of Mrs. Croft, and to some extent her mother, by allowing her reason and virtue to secure her future. Or, she may, like the heroines of novels, indulge her emotions. *Persuasion* is the tale, though hardly stale, of a woman's capacity to temper her feelings with reason. In this regard, the novel is the means by which women may be educated toward the ideal imagined by Mary Wollstonecraft. The judicious Jane Austen vindicates the novel. However, in vindicating the novel, Jane Austen does not simply parrot Wollstonecraft Enlightenment feminism. She also disproves Wollstonecraft's argument that love and friendship cannot be held in the same heart.

It is unclear what will happen to Anne as the Elliots prepare to forfeit Kellynch-hall. Anne is reluctant to go to Bath and it looks as if she does not have a place with her father and sister, who attach so much importance to beauty and artificial graces. Elizabeth suggests that Anne spend a few months with their younger sister, Mary Musgrove, who lives in a neighboring village, "for nobody will want her in Bath" (44). And, so, it is decided. Anne will spend the fall in Uppercross among the Musgroves, that include, not only Mary and her husband, Charles, but Charles's parents and sisters. We learn that Uppercross is "a moderate-sized village . . . in the old English style" (47). The residents at Uppercross recognize hierarchy and propriety, but are not slaves to it. Indeed, the Musgroves are cheerful and welcoming. They, perhaps, resemble the middle class described by Mary Wollstonecraft in the *Vindication*. They are not weak or artificial beings like their neighbors at Kellynch-hall, but they are susceptible to the contagious corruption of the upper classes. It is here in Uppercross or among the Uppercross party that Anne and Captain Wentworth come under the example of the Crofts. They cultivate their reason and reconcile it with their passions and are prepared for marriage in a more liberal and egalitarian political order.

Captain Wentworth is the second naval officer that we meet in *Persuasion* and it is important to keep in mind that our first impressions of Captain Wentworth are prior to the peace. "He was, at that time, a remarkably fine young man, with a great deal of intelligence, spirit, and brilliancy" (35). The narrator tells us that the match between Captain Wentworth and Anne could not be approved of by Sir Elliot or by Lady Russell because the naval officer "had nothing but himself to recommend him" (36). Similar to "only Anne" we are led to see Captain Wentworth as an individual and outside of

convention. Although Captain Wentworth could not boast wealth or rank in 1806, he was full of winsome confidence. "He had always been lucky; he knew he should be so still.—Such confidence, powerful in its own warmth, and bewitching in the wit which often expressed it, must have been enough for Anne; but Lady Russell saw it differently.—His sanguine temper, and fearlessness of mind, operated very differently on her. . . . It only added a dangerous character to himself. He was brilliant, he was headstrong" (36–37). Lady Russell was particularly effective in persuading Anne to break her engagement to Captain Wentworth.

By the time Anne is brought back into the company of Captain Wentworth, he has made a considerable fortune. Captain Wentworth has learned to temper his passions with reason. As a result, the reader witnesses Captain Wentworth's judgment improving and his feelings toward Anne change in the course of the novel. At the outset, Anne accepts Captain Wentworth's continued anger toward her and how he must have understood her decision. "He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill; deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shewn a feebleness of character in do so, which his own decided, confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity" (80). Captain Wentworth's disposition toward Anne suggests how he too is influenced by his passions and his determination.

These descriptions of Captain Wentworth give us an impression of boldness and we can easily imagine how a British Navy comprised of such sailors could defeat the imperial Napoleon. Captain Wentworth does not immediately display the same domestic virtues as Admiral Croft, which make him quite literally able to take care of a house and, more abstractly, the new political order. Not only is *Persuasion* the tale of Anne Elliot's education, but it is also the tale of Captain Wentworth's education. Like Anne, he will also have to reconcile his emotions with his reason in order to attain the necessary virtues for the new political circumstances.

Austen allows her readers to see that the virtues of a naval hero are similar to those of a father. Captain Wentworth happens into the room where Anne is caring for her nephews. One of the small boys is climbing on his aunt and will not be disciplined by her. Silently, but surely, Captain Wentworth pulls the little boy from Anne. "In another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him; some one was taking him from her . . . his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck, and he was resolutely borne away, before she knew that Captain Wentworth had done it" (104). This incident is the only gallant act that we witness by a naval officer in *Persuasion*. For readers who are anticipating great and romantic gestures from a man, who served in the navy that defeated Napoleon, this is an unlikely, even disappointing, act of heroism. But, Wollstonecraft's

readers will notice that this fictional act of heroism does *not* "corrupt the taste and draw the heart aside from its daily duties" as Wollstonecraft condemns the tales told in novels. The incident gives us pause to contrast Captain Wentworth with the young boy's father, Charles Musgrove. We never see Charles caring for his children, but we find him continually distracted from his domestic concerns by the pursuit of pleasure, in particular hunting. As a result—and true to Wollstonecraft's predictions—his wife fails to fulfill her domestic responsibilities and also seeks pleasure either in complaining of her imagined ailments or in the company of others. Anne is often left to care for Mary's children. And, so, we have a hint that Captain Wentworth may follow the example of Admiral Croft and make a good husband to a reasonable and virtuous woman. It remains to be seen if he will choose a wife of reason or if he will choose one with more conventional attributes.

Charles's young, unmarried sisters are by no means as vicious as Elizabeth Elliot, but they are more conventional than Anne. They "brought from a school at Exeter all the usual stock of accomplishments, and were now, like thousands of other young ladies, living to be fashionable, happy, and merry" (53). Although the Miss Musgroves seem to be harmless enough, Wollstonecraft's readers must be a little wary of the two young ladies. Anne appreciates their prettiness and good spirits, but she does not envy the Miss Musgroves. In preferring one of the Miss Musgroves to Anne, Captain Wentworth seems to be in danger of preferring pleasure to "the nobler ambitions" of Anne.

It is not long before it becomes clear that Louisa Musgrove will rival Anne for Captain Wentworth's affections. Although her sister, Henrietta, is prettier than Louisa, Anne notices that Louisa has higher spirits. Anne could imagine that Louisa's disposition would be more attractive to Captain Wentworth. Louisa seems assured of winning his heart during a long walk that the young people take during the late autumn. As the party sets out,

> Anne's object was, not to be in the way of any body. . . . Her *pleasure* [Austen's emphasis] in the walk must arise . . . from the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and withered hedges, and from repeating to herself some of the few thousand poetical descriptions extant of autumn, that season of peculiar and inexhaustible influence on the mind and taste and tenderness, that season which has drawn from every poet, worthy of being read, some attempt at description, or some lines of feeling. (108–109)

Anne is absorbed in poetry and in the sentiments that it evokes. Her pleasure comes from indulging her feelings.

As the large group falls into pairs, Captain Wentworth comments that it is a nice day for a long drive, which admiral and Mrs. Croft are taking. He thinks

aloud, "I wonder whereabouts they will upset to-day. Oh! It does happen very often, I assure you—but my sister makes nothing of it—she would as lieve be tossed out as not" (109). Louisa's reply is spirited and romantic, but it reveals that her spiritedness entails a lack of prudence. "If I loved a man, as she loves the Admiral, I would be always with him, nothing should even separate us, and I would rather be overturned by him, than driven safely by anybody else" (110). Louisa does not imagine an alternative to either separating from her beloved or being overturned. As we shall see, Mrs. Croft smartly negotiates a way to be with her husband and to avoid placing herself in danger. It requires the virtue of an equal partner in the marriage.

The exchange between Louisa and Captain Wentworth upsets Anne and we realize how fragile her elegant mind is. "Anne could not immediately fall into quotation again. The sweet scenes of autumn were for a while put by—unless some tender sonnet, fraught with an apt analogy of the declining year, with declining happiness, and the images of youth and hope, and spring, all gone together, blessed her memory" (110). Anne is so absorbed in her own unhappiness that she is unable to recall random lines of poetry, except those lines, which are overwrought.

As the party continues on their walk, it arrives at Winthrop, the less elegant home of the Musgroves's cousins and Henrietta's suitor. Mary will not condescend to call on their relations, despite Charles's rightful insistence that he and his sisters should pay their respects to the family. Henrietta is very nearly persuaded by Mary's "Elliot pride" until Louisa intervenes. Though Louisa convinces her sister to call on their cousins, she somehow escapes the obligation and stays behind with Captain Wentworth. She reports to him that Henrietta would have been persuaded by Mary's arrogance had Louisa not been firm with her. The dashing young naval officer compares Louisa with her sister and notices that she is the more decisive of the two. "Your sister is an amiable creature; but *yours* is the character of decision and firmness, I see . . . It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on.—You are never sure of a good impression being durable. Every body may sway it; let those who would be happy be firm" (113–114). Seeing that Captain Wentworth is pleased with her character, Louisa takes the opportunity to improve his impression of her at Anne's expense. She tells the Captain that Anne was persuaded by Lady Russell not to marry Charles. Overhearing the conversation and knowing Captain Wentworth's criticism must surely apply to her, Anne is again overcome by her emotions. Her mind and her body are weak.

Fortunately, admiral and Mrs. Croft happen to pass in their carriage. Too tired to walk any farther, Anne accepts a ride in the carriage. And, though Anne's mind and body are in a weak state, she is able to benefit from the Crofts's good example. Just as Captain Wentworth predicted, the admiral,

Mrs. Croft, and Anne were in danger of being overturned by the admiral. They avoid an accident because Mrs. Croft knows just the right moment to take the reins. "But by coolly giving the reins a better direction herself, they happily passed the danger; and by once afterwards judiciously putting out her hand, they neither fell into a rut, nor ran foul of a dung-cart; and Anne, with some amusement at their style driving, which she imagined no bad representation of the general guidance of their affairs" (120) and of a more egalitarian marriage based on love and friendship.

Soon after the Uppercross party's long walk, the young people make a trip to Lyme to visit Captain Wentworth's friend, Captain Harville. Again, we are given another example of Louisa's spirit and her desire to be pleasing to Captain Wentworth. "The young people were all wild to see Lyme . . . and, in short, Louisa, who was the most eager of the eager, having formed the resolution to go, and besides the pleasure of doing as she liked, being now armed with the idea of merit in maintaining her own way, bore down all the wishes of her father and mother for putting it off till simmer; and to Lyme they were to go" (122–123). Upon their arrival at Captain Harville's lodgings, the Uppercross party meets Captain Benwick, who is living with the Harville family. Captain Benwick's private life "rendered him perfectly interesting in the eyes of all the ladies" (125–126). Captain Benwick had been engaged to Captain Harville's sister, but had put off the marrying, hoping for a promotion and greater fortune. Before the two could marry, Fanny Harville died and Captain Benwick continued to mourn her. Steeped in her own emotions, Anne compares herself to Captain Benwick. "[H]e has not, perhaps, a more sorrowing heart than I have. I cannot believe his prospects so blighted forever. He is younger than I am; younger in feeling, if not in fact, younger as a man. He will rally again, and be happy with another" (126–127). Anne's sympathy for Captain Benwick hints at a bit of self-pity on Anne's part. Captain Benwick and Anne have more in common than broken hearts. Like Anne, he reads poetry and the two easily fall into conversation about their mutual interest.

Peter Knox-Shaw has noted that Anne and Captain Benwick discuss poems by Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron. Although Scott's poems have a martial spirit, Byron's poems are more romantic. "Yet though erotic interest is central in them, political themes are always present—both western feudalism and oriental despotism come under fire, and private life is rendered throughout as acutely sensitive to the repercussions of social system."[9] Knox-Shaw reminds his readers that Byron was aware of Wollstonecraft's feminist philosophy and would have been familiar with her repeated comparison of women in English society to a harem. However, Knox-Shaw notes a significant difference between Wollstonecraft and Byron. For Wollstonecraft, "exit from the harem entails a sexual fast, in the youthful

Byron's scheme of things the harem gate opens onto the highway of grand passion."[10]

Anne's recommendations to Captain Benwick suggest that Austen, in a similar vein as Wollstonecraft, seeks to correct those readers who would lend themselves easily to their passions. Anne gently tells Captain Benwick that

> she thought it was the misfortune of poetry, to be seldom safely enjoyed by those who enjoyed it completely; and that the strong feelings which alone could estimate it truly, were the very feelings which ought to taste it but sparingly . . . she ventured to recommend a larger allowance of prose in his daily study; and . . . mentioned such works of our best moralists . . . calculated to rouse and fortify the mind by the highest precepts. (131)

Prose must correct the consequences of poetry. The mind or reason must quiet the passions. Yet, Austen also appreciates that the great moralists are also in need of some correction. Anne has not forgotten her earlier comparison between herself and Captain Benwick and she recognizes her own hypocrisy. "Anne could not but be amused at the idea of her coming to Lyme, to preach patience and resignation to a young man whom she had never seen before; nor could she help fearing on more serious reflection, that, like many other great moralists and preachers, she had been eloquent on a point in which her own conduct would ill bear examination" (132). Germaine Paulo Walsh has observed that a character's response to misfortune suggests his or her likelihood of practicing virtue and achieving happiness.[11] Anne's capacity to recognize her misfortune and correct her vices, which follow from it, promises the reader Anne's happiness.

The novel is a correction to both poetry and to prose. Like poetry, the novel does appeal to our sentiments. And, like the prose of great moralists, the novel may also appeal to reason or principle. Jane Austen's *Persuasion* exemplifies this capacity of the novel and vindicates it by educating women to exert greater reason and to practice virtue. Yet, it does so by allowing for human passions.

The correction of poetry with prose, the passions with reason, marks a change in Anne Elliot as we have known her since the start of the novel. The morning following Anne's conversation with Captain Benwick, the narrator tells us that Anne "was looking remarkably well . . . having the bloom and freshness of youth restored by the fine wind which had been blowing" (135–136). Anne's restored physical appearance even catches the eye of a young man, who turns out to be Mr. Elliot, the heir to Kellynch-hall. The attention paid to Anne does not go unnoticed by Captain Wentworth. "His expression seems to say, 'That man is struck with you,—and even I, at this moment, see something like Anne Elliot again'" (136). Just as Anne's physical weakness

reflected her mental weakness, Anne's restored physical appearance promises a restored strength of mind.

It is not long before Anne's mind and judgment are tested. The party from Uppercross ventures out on to the Cobb to enjoy one last walk before returning home. As the party makes its way down the steps from the higher part of the Cobb to the lower, Louisa insists that "she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth . . . He advised her against it . . . he reasoned and talked in vain" (142). Louisa's spiritedness and her desire to please Captain Wentworth are no match for reason. She would not defer to his judgment. Louisa jumps, falls, and lies unconscious. No longer absorbed in overwrought poetry and her own feelings, Anne responds immediately. She begins issuing orders like a naval officer. All defer and respond to her sound judgment.

Louisa is taken to the Harville's and will stay there until she recovers from the head injury she sustained. In the meantime, some must return to Uppercross in order to inform Louisa's parents of the accident. It is decided that Captain Wentworth, Anne, and Henrietta will go. As they are traveling, Captain Wentworth laments his part in the accident.

> Anne wondered if it ever occurred to him now, to question the justness of his own previous opinion as to the universal felicity and advantage of firmness of character; and whether it might not strike him, that, like all other qualities of the mind, it should have its proportions and limits. She thought it could scarcely escape him to feel that a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favor of happiness, as a very resolute character. (152)

It is not long before Anne's curiosity is satisfied. Indeed, Captain Wentworth does seem to have learned an important lesson from the accident. They must decide on a way to break the news to Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove. Captain Wentworth suggests a plan for doing so and asks Anne for her opinion of it. He has renewed respect for her judgment. "But the remembrance of the appeal remained a pleasure to her—as a proof of friendship, and of deference for her judgment" (153).

The time in Uppercross has confirmed Anne's earlier inclinations concerning her father's and her sister's vices. Anne does not seem sad or regretful about the change at Kellynch-hall. Anne "had in fact so high an opinion of the Crofts . . . she could not but in good conscience feel that they were gone who deserved not to stay, and that Kellynch-hall had passed into better hands than its owners" (160). Although the Crofts represent a new political order, which is marked by its liberal and egalitarian character, the Crofts are not without regard for their responsibilities. Anne "felt the parish to be so sure of good example, and the poor of the best attention and relief" (160). And, though the Crofts retain some of the same virtues as the gentry once exemplified, they are

not weak, dependent, and vain. The Crofts assure Anne that they have made very few changes to her home and mention just two. Rather than keep their umbrellas in the butler's room, the Crofts keep them near the door. Unlike the elegant but weak upper classes, the Croft's do not spare themselves the smallest exertion and place it on servants. The second change that the admiral made was to remove the mirrors from his dressing room. "Such a number of looking-glasses! Oh Lord! There was no getting away from oneself. So I got Sophy to lend me a hand, and we soon shifted their quarters; and now I am quite snug, with my shaving glass in one corner" (163). With the assistance of a wise woman, a man may eliminate all of the vain attention paid to his person and concern himself only with matters of necessity.

Arriving in Bath, Anne soon meets the man, who had admired her in Lyme, her father's heir, Mr. Elliot. Having been recently reconciled with the head of his family, Mr. Elliot is a constant visitor in Sir Walter's home and it is not long before Lady Russell, and even Anne herself, begins to consider Mr. Elliot a possible suitor to Anne. He is the perfect match by all conventional measures. Yet, Anne tells Lady Russell, "we should not suit" (206). Lady Russell appeals to Anne's vanity. "I own that to be able to regard you as the future mistress of Kellynch, the future Lady Elliot—to look forward and see you occupying your dear mother's place. . . . You are your mother's self in countenance and disposition" (206). Anne is almost persuaded by Lady Russell's vision of Anne occupying her mother's place and she nearly gives in to her vanity—until the image of Mr. Elliot is brought to her mind. Anne's "*judgment* [my emphasis], on a serious consideration of the possibilities of such a case, was against Mr. Elliot" (207). And, so, in the most important respect, Anne will not become what her mother had been: a woman, whose judgment and conduct must be pardoned by "youthful infatuation which made her Lady Elliot" (7). Judgment *and* feeling, not vanity, will determine Anne's choice of a husband.

Soon after realizing that she could never accept Mr. Elliot, Anne hears the news that Louisa Musgrove, to everyone's surprise, is engaged to Captain Benwick. Anne must finally admit that she had been harboring hopes that Captain Wentworth's affection for her would be renewed. The news "brought the colour into her cheeks when she thought of Captain Wentworth unshackled and free" (216). Austen's language suggests to us that a marriage between Captain Wentworth and Louisa would be a condition of slavery for Captain Wentworth. The example of marriage as a condition of slavery is immediately followed by an example of marriage as state happiness and independence. Seeing admiral and Mrs. Croft together delights Anne. "Knowing their feeling as she did, it was a most attractive picture of happiness to her . . . as they walked along in happy independence or as they met friends" (217). Marriage, rather than autonomy, gives the pair independence. For Austen

marriage between two people, who are well suited for each other, is a happy condition and one which promises each individual a fuller life than he or she would have had outside of marriage.

Encouraged by the news that Captain Wentworth is "unshackled and free," Anne takes command of her future. In contrast to her passive behavior at Uppercross, her object is no longer "not to be in the way of any body." She literally puts herself in the way of Captain Wentworth. As he enters a concert in Bath, "he was preparing only to bow and pass on, but her gently 'How do you do?' brought him out of the straight line to stand near her" (235). Captain Wentworth must also take steps out of his determined path as he stops to speak with Anne. No longer unduly influenced by vanity of rank, Anne "felt equal to everything which she believed right to be done" (235). Anne is rewarded for her initiative. Speaking of Captain Benwick and Fanny Harville, Captain Wentworth insists, "A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a women" (237). The reader and Anne cannot help but hoping that Captain Wentworth is speaking of himself as much as he is Captain Benwick.

As the conversation continues, Captain Wentworth blames himself for Louisa's accident. "She would not have been obstinate if I had not been weak" (238). He seems to testify to the mutual influences of men's and women's vices and, conversely, to the mutual influence of their virtues. And, again, we cannot help thinking that Captain Wentworth is not simply speaking about Louisa's accident, but also alludes to his reaction to Anne's decision to break their engagement. Anne realizes that Captain Wentworth understood it to be an example of "feebleness of character." She seemed to be weak. However, if we consider the matter from Anne's point of view, which she will eventually share with Captain Wentworth, she was actually demonstrating strength of character and adhered to her sense of duty. On the other hand, Captain Wentworth had at that time appeared strong, able to disregard opinion, make his fortune, and seemingly forget about Anne. But, he never tried to persuade Anne to continue or renew the engagement. This may be considered a weakness on his part. This is implicit in his remarks at the concert and explicit by the end of the novel. In other words, Captain Wentworth recognizes a failure of his judgment. These hints, along with his apparent jealousy over Mr. Elliot, leave Anne with the impression that "He must love her" (241). The correction to their passions by their reason has left Anne and Captain Wentworth poised to follow admiral and Mrs. Croft's example in the more liberal and egalitarian political order.

The novel reaches its climax during a conversation between Captain Harville and Anne as Harville waits for Captain Wentworth to complete some correspondence. As preparations for Louisa's wedding to Captain Benwick are made, Captain Harville cannot help thinking of his sister. He does not think she would have forgotten him so soon as Captain Benwick seems to

have fallen in love with another woman. Anne replies, "It would not be the nature of any woman who truly loved" (301). This conversation allows Anne to convey to Captain Wentworth that she continues to love him. However, it also allows Austen to articulate her sympathy with Mary Wollstonecraft's Enlightenment feminism, published nearly twenty-five years earlier. Anne is quick to clarify her claim to Captain Harville. "It is, perhaps, our fate, rather than our merit. We cannot help ourselves. We live at home, quiet, confined, and our feelings prey upon us. You are forced on exertion. You have always a profession, pursuits, business of some sort or other, to take you back into the world immediately, and continual occupation and change soon weaken impressions" (301–302). Nina Auerbach observes that Anne, in contrast to Captain Harville, is not sentimental on this point. "Her modest and simple tone should not blind us to what she is saying: women do not pine for love and suffer over men because they are by nature more sensitive and emotionally refined, and thus, as it were, 'created to suffer.' They suffer because their social role creates for them a life without exertion, in which state one's feelings become a torment."[12] Auerbach rightly points us back to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft argues that women's circumstances, not their nature, leave them prey to their passions.

As Anne explains women's constancy, she and Captain Harville are interrupted by a noise. "Captain Wentworth's hitherto perfectly quiet division of the room. It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down" (301). Although Captain Wentworth retrieves the pen, we are made aware that his grasp of it is faulty. Hoping to persuade Anne of men's more constant feelings, Captain Harville calls upon examples from books. Anne dismisses them. "Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling theirs own story. Education has been their in so much higher degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow it to prove anything" (304). Auerbach points out that this is Anne's only complaint (and indeed one of Austen's very few explicit complaints) against society.

> It is mild, but telling. Society's conventional view of women is dictated by men, because better education allows men to write all the books. Only unequal education prevents women from writing as many books as men do, and presumably, books that are as good. . . . This emphasis upon unequal education rather than inherent inequality once again recalls Mary Wollstonecraft's central thesis in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; in fact, Jane Austen did write the books whose lack Anne Elliot deplores.[13]

Auerbach concludes her discussion of this passage by telling us, "These speeches reveal Anne as worthy, not only of Wentworth but of Mrs. Croft as well."[14]

As the novel comes to a close, another man takes up his pen. Sir Walter was "at last to prepare his pen with a very good grace for the insertion of the marriage in the volume of honour" (323). There is finality to Sir Walter's notation. There will be very few, if any new entries, for Sir Walter to make. The story of the ridiculous, contemptible aristocrat has come to a close, just as we see Anne's new life beginning. After Sir Walter notes the marriage in his book, we learn the circumstances of Anne's marriage to Captain Wentworth. Unlike Jane Austen's other heroines, Anne has no residence or property of which to boast. Captain Wentworth will take his wife to sea. In other words, he will *not* behave "like a fine gentleman and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures" (91). Although Anne does not gain land through her marriage, Janet Todd notices that Anne does become "the mistress of a pretty landaulette," which represents her greater freedom.[15] I would add that Anne's new carriage also recalls Mrs. Croft's equality to her husband and her virtue. Anne learned an important lesson from Mrs. Croft about married life while watching her take the reins from her husband. A husband, who treats his wife like a rational creature instead of a fine lady, is sure to have a wife who is prudent and virtuous. In taking up his pen Sir Walter, a foolish, vain aristocrat, records the beginning of a new liberal political order which promises greater freedom and equality for women.

Jane Austen vindicates the novel by offering us a new model of femininity, masculinity, and marriage in her last novel, *Persuasion*. As the British Navy is turned ashore after the defeat of Napoleon and the aristocracy begins to decay, Austen sees the possibility for a more liberal and egalitarian political order. Citizens of such a political regime would require new virtues, such as those advocated by Mary Wollstonecraft in her 1792 treatise, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Throughout the course of the novel, its central characters, Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth, temper their passions with reason. In the end, they reflect the virtues Wollstonecraft finds necessary for a more liberal and egalitarian political order. Yet, Austen does not find it necessary to sacrifice Anne's and Captain Wentworth's love for each other for the sake of their friendship. Austen persuades us of the novel's capacity to reconcile "just opinion" with what Wollstonecraft dismissed as "romantic sentiments" (185).

NOTES

1. This essay has been in the back of my mind since I was a graduate student at Fordham University. The idea to consider Jane Austen in light of Mary Wollstonecraft came from Mary's friend, Michael Zuckert, who Mary brought to Fordham to be our teacher too. Over the years, this essay has been read, not only by my teachers, but also by others scholars, who studied with Mary. I am particularly grateful to Germaine

Paulo Walsh for the thoughtful attention to my essay so many years ago. It is stronger for her insights. The essay has also benefited from numerous conversations that I have had with my husband Flagg Taylor about Jane Austen's novel.

2. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988), 183. Page numbers in parentheses.

3. Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1899), 304.

4. Wollstonecraft and Austen scholars have demonstrated the various ways in which each woman's political philosophy resonates with Aristotle's philosophy. See, for example, Sandrine Bergès, *The Routledge Guidebook to Wollstonecraft's* A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Nancy Kendrick's "Wollstonecraft on Marriage as Virtue Friendship," in *The Social and Political Philosophy of Mary Wollstonecraft*, edited by Sandrine Bergès and Alan Coffee, Natalie Taylor's *The Rights of Woman as Chimera*: *The Political Philosophy of Mary Wollstonecraft*, Anne Crippen Ruderman, *The Pleasures of Virtue: Political Thought in the Novels of Jane Austen*, and Germaine Paulo Walsh, "Virtue and Friendship in *Persuasion*: Jane Austen's 'Aristotelian' Understanding of Happiness," in *Nature, Woman, and the Art of Politics*, edited by Eduardo A. Velásquez.

5. Peter Knox-Shaw, *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 220.

6. Janet Todd, *The Cambridge Introduction to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

7. Naval officers have not been identified as the standard for masculinity by either Wollstonecraft or Austen. Wollstonecraft is quite critical of sailors in the *Vindication*. Because there are subject to a hierarchy, they, like women, do not cultivate reason and are rendered dependent and, therefore, vicious (17). We need only to recall Wickham in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* to appreciate the new ideal naval officers in *Persuasion*.

8. See, for example, Peter Knox-Shaw's discussion of *Persuasion* in *Jane Austen and the Enlightenment* and Nina Auerbach's treatment of Mrs. Croft in her essay, "O Brave New World: Evolution and Revolution in *Persuasion*."

9. Knox-Shaw, 234.

10. Knox-Shaw, 234.

11. Germaine Paulo Walsh, "Virtue and Friendship in *Persuasion*: Jane Austen's 'Aristotlian' Understanding of Happiness," in *Nature, Woman, and the Art of Politics*, edited by Eduardo A. Velásquez (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 268.

12. Nina Auerbach, "O Brave New World: Evolution and Revolution in *Persuasion*," *ELH* Vol. 39, No. 1 (March 1972), 126.

13. Auerbach, 126.

14. Auerbach, 127.

15. Todd, 121.

Chapter 11

From Tragedy to Love

Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale

Sara MacDonald

TYRANNY'S TRAGEDY

Shakespeare's final plays, *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, are famously problematic, defying traditional categorization as either tragic or comic—scholars often think of them as a combination of the two. For those scholars who think this combination of genres signifies a whole greater than its parts, the plays are referred to as romances. In addition to the difficulty of categorization, each of them contains difficult or fantastical elements, leaving interpreters at a loss as to how to understand them. Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* is no exception. Audiences experienced large transitions in both spaces, moving between Sicily and an imagined Bohemia, and in time, as sixteen years are to have passed from the play's beginning to its end. At the same time, we transition from seeming world views, beginning in a position akin to that of ancient Greece and ending in an apparently Christian world.

The first part of *The Winter's Tale* reenacts the Greek tragic view. Leontes, driven by his pride, attempts to usurp the power and wisdom of the gods. As a result, all he cares for is destroyed, and Leontes must face the emptiness of his existence. In the second part of the play, nature, particularly that of humans is laid bare, and here we see the root of human corruption, but also the possibility of its redemption in love. In the final act of the play, the two previous moments are reconciled. Leontes knows himself to be a fallible and fallen creature. And yet, in the face of the woman he loves, Leontes learns that he might both love and be loved, if only he has faith that the divine will compensate for his deficiencies. *The Winter's Tale* asks its audience to consider the philosophic history of the Greco-Christian world, so as perhaps to

remind them of its transformation as well as the political lessons one might learn from the same.

SICILIAN TRAGEDY

The Winter's Tale opens depicting the apparently well-governed state of Sicily. The king has his queen and Sicily has an heir and the hopes for another royal child. The couple relaxes in a pleasant reunion with Leontes's childhood friend, Polixenes. However, within moments this seeming peace is shown to be a mere façade, dependent on the goodwill of the king. With startling quickness, Leontes is overcome with jealousy and, losing control of himself, he loses sight of his own good as well as that of the people he loves and governs.

At first glance, it looks as though Leontes's jealousy is groundless, without any rational explanation. Yet, scholars have noted that Leontes only begins to suspect Hermione's infidelity after Polixenes raises the potential guilt of the two kings' sexual maturity.[1] Leontes is then awakened to his adult self and the temptations and responsibilities to which he must attend. As children, Polixenes says, the two men "knew not/ The doctrine of ill-doing."[2] Polixenes also tells us that he and Leontes were like twinned lambs; they were as one. We further know that the two men have not seen each other since childhood.[3] Given their closeness as children and their long separation, Leontes has not yet recognized himself and Polixenes as two autonomous adults. Instead, he continues to think of them as wholly united in their interests, just as they were when children. Put differently, like a child, Leontes continues to think of himself as the center of the world, and assumes that Polixenes's interests match or serve his. Hence we might explain the ease with which he dismisses Polixenes's concerns for Bohemia despite his long absence. There can be no cause that would incite Polixenes's interest that would not also concern Leontes, and as Leontes is not worried about Bohemia, Polixenes should not be either.[4]

Hermione, however, presents a challenge to this position. She should not be shared, romantically at least, by the two kings. Polixenes reminds us and Leontes of this fact when he refers to the temptation women represent. Erotic desire indicates the separation and difference between individuals. Other desires, once felt, merely require the procurement and consumption of the desired object. The object is then subsumed within the individual. Eros, however, demands that the object of one's desire remain, in a fundamental fashion, other and different. Once aroused, erotic desire has the effect of revealing a world in which the individual is not necessarily the center. Leontes suggests his displeasure with this experience by describing the time

he spent courting Hermione as "crabbed" and "sour."[5] He was forced, even if momentarily, to consider the autonomy and will of another. Having been married now for several years, Leontes seems to have forgotten this lesson. He has not been habituated to recognize the autonomy of others and, instead, assumes that they will what he does. As Leontes desires Hermione, he begins to believe that Polixenes must as well, and seeing Hermione walking with Polixenes exclaims, "Too hot, too hot! To mingle friendship far is mingling blood."[6] Leontes, assuming a unity between himself and his friend, assumes that the love he has for Hermione is also shared in the same kind and the same degree. This, however, cannot be withstood, and so Leontes must divorce himself from both his wife and his friend. It is not surprising that when he believes he has been betrayed, he is moved to see Mamillius as a younger version of himself. Just as Polixenes comments on their previous innocence, now Leontes recalls an easier time, one wherein his "ornaments" were "muzzeled" so as not to be "too dangerous" to their master.[7]

Leontes is the only one capable of seeing and judging the whole. Like a Greek tragic hero, Leontes's suspicions are quickly transformed by his *hubris* into certainty, even though proving himself "correct" means confirming that he has been made a fool of and casts doubt on the Mamillius's as a legitimate heir to the throne.

Seeking evidence to confirm the veracity of his beliefs, Leontes sends Hermione and Polixenes on a walk alone together, so that he can watch their actions from afar. Even though Hermione hesitates, suggesting that they might, rather, wait for him in the garden, when the two finally obey his command, he immediately responds, saying, "Gone already! Inch-thick, knee-deep, o'er heads and ears a forked one!"[8] When he then meets Camillo, he dramatically misinterprets Camillo's acknowledgment that Polixenes decided to stay as a result of Hermione's entreaty. Leontes takes this as confirmation that the entire court already knows about their supposed affair.[9] Not understanding Leontes's purpose, Camillo then blunders by saying that Polixenes stayed to "satisfy" Hermione, a word into which Leontes reads greater meaning.[10] In both seeing the "evidence" of Hermione walking with Polixenes and then taking the "counsel" of Camillo, Leontes is satisfied that his suspicions are correct and must take action, first plotting to kill Leontes, and, that failing, imprisoning Hermione and sending their newborn daughter to be left on some foreign isle.

Previously, Leontes's self-centeredness had allowed him to believe that there was no distinction between what he understood or believed and what was actually true. This easy identification of himself with the world is ruptured when he thinks he has been betrayed by those closest to him. By quickly acting to punish first Polixenes and then Hermione, Leontes tries to salvage some of his former certainty.

Paulina, however, adds another layer of devastation. Rather than seeing him as justified in his actions, the citizens of Sicily might actually think he is a tyrant, for as Paulina says, "I'll not call you tyrant, but this clear usage of your Queen . . . something savours of tyranny."[11] Paulina, who sees Leontes nature clearly, hesitates to call him a tyrant, lest he punish her for speaking the truth. Faced with this new threat to his identity, Leontes again thinks it's a problem that he can fix and he immediately begins to soften the outward appearance of his actions. Rather than have the newborn baby burned to death, he has Antigonus leave her unattended in foreign land. Correspondingly, he quickly moves to publicly try Hermione, saying, "Let us be cleared of being tyrannous, since we so openly proceed in justice."[12]

Finally, Leontes is faced with the will of Apollo. Even before he sends a delegation to Delphi, Leontes explains that he already knows the truth; the oracle is merely to "give rest to th' minds of others."[13] The words of the god are not an end in themselves, but, rather, are to serve Leontes's purpose. But even the gods seem to betray him, for the oracle denies all of his accusations, stating, "Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless, Camillo a true subject, Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten, and the King shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found."[14] Faced with having to choose between the will of the gods or his own, Leontes chooses his own, saying, "There is no truth at all I'th'oracle."[15]

Leontes's denouncement of Apollo is met immediately with the death of Mamillius. However, even when Leontes then believes that he has offended the gods, he still imagines that he has sufficient power to right what he has wronged. He immediately makes plans for a course of action to rectify the problems he has caused: "Apollo, pardon My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle. I'll reconcile me to Polixenes, New my wooing to the Queen, recall the good Camillo."[16] Paulina then presents him with a problem that even he knows he cannot solve: the Queen, she says, is dead. Leontes is forced to bow to the force of nature and the pressure of necessity. Whatever control Leontes has over his kingdom, however much he can depend on the love of his advisor, friend, and wife, the finite nature of the world is not something he can control.

Almost instantaneously, the illusionary world that Leontes had inhabited is rent apart. One of the consequences of imagining oneself as the center of the world is the belief that the truth is also a consequence of one's will. Once he determined that Hermione and Polixenes had betrayed him, Leontes staked the veracity of all other facts on his being right, saying of their alleged affair, "is this nothing?/ Why then the world and all that's in't is nothing," and "if I mistake/ In those foundations which I build upon,/ The centre is not big enough to bear."[17] When it is revealed that Leontes is wrong about Hermione and Polixenes, everything else that he had predicted is ironically proven true.

The center does not bear and the limitations of the finite world that he thought he governed absolutely are shown in their fullness. With the loss of his queen and heir, Leontes knows that his power is also illusory.

With the seeming death of all those he loved, Leontes's story seems to come to a tragic end. He is offered no hope for a happy ending. Imagining at first that the Queen has merely fainted and might yet recover, Paulina quickly smothers this possibility, saying, "I say she's dead—Ill swear't . . . O thou tyrant . . . betake thee/To nothing but despair."[18] Nothing is left for Leontes except the remembrance of what he has done and a constant despair.

THE GARDEN OF BOHEMIA

The Winter's Tale moves from Sicily to the more natural Bohemia. The audience is never given the opportunity to discover what specifically Leontes learns from his sixteen years of regret. Instead, in this more natural place, we are given a chance to witness human nature as it manifests itself in the coming of age of Florizel and Perdita. Their story is to serve as the lesson.

It is difficult not to notice the dramatic change in setting and tone when the play moves from Sicily, which is similar to a Greek city enveloped in tragedy, and the romantic pastoral of Bohemia.[19] We are notably never admitted to the court at Bohemia even when the plot of the play moves to its shores, just as we never see the countryside of Sicily. The courtiers from Bohemia describe the entertainments of Sicily as "magnificent" and "rare," whereas one must be drugged to enjoy the entertainment of Bohemia.[20] The art in Paulina's gallery is "singular" in its beauty.[21] Moreover, although it is ultimately corrupted by Leontes's tyranny, we know that a formal system of justice exists in Sicily and that the accused are given an opportunity to defend themselves in a court of law. Even Leontes understands that he must make a show of going through the formal process. By contrast, in Bohemia, Perdita admits no art other than that which nature itself provides, and Polixenes makes no attempt to guise his rule in convention when he stumbles upon Perdita and Florizel and learns the fullness of their intentions. Where Sicily is developed and cultured, Bohemia is natural and even ungoverned. In Bohemia bears eat people; they do not take part in stage productions.

While Polixenes is the king of Bohemia, he seems to be a king in form only, with very little power or effect. We first meet him at the end of an extended period, nine months, away from his homeland, and, although he then argues that concerns for his state drive him home, it does not take Hermione long to convince him to stay even longer.[22] We later find that his son is able to spend days away from home, courting a shepherd's daughter without the king's knowledge, let alone consent. Even when Polixenes threatens to disinherit him

of the throne, Florizel is unrepentant, and chooses Perdita over and against the commands of his father. The beauty that we discern here is one of limit, a lesson that Antigonus learns immediately, and which is depicted in Polixenes's futile rule over his son, if not his state. The rugged coastline and wild bears that greet Antigone upon arriving in Bohemia signal that this island remains in a predominantly natural state, one that find parallels in the nature of its citizens. With the conventions of Sicily stripped away, Bohemia allows the play's readers a clearer look at human nature.

Lest we imagine that Leontes's *hubris* is caused by his interaction with the city, in Bohemia we find that the root of his "corruption" lies in human nature more broadly writ. Initially, apart from the threats posed by the environment, Bohemia seems akin to the Garden of Eden. Although the Shepherd's family is certainly assisted by the gold found with Perdita, the family nonetheless seems content with relatively simple pleasures. While we are not struck by the intelligence of either the Shepherd or the Clown, we know that they are well-intentioned, praying for those they believe have perished in the storm and caring for Perdita as part of their family. As the story of Bohemia unfolds, however, the initial innocence we witness in the Shepherd and his son is quickly overshadowed. Symbolically, this is emphasized when most of the characters we meet in Bohemia take on disguises, as almost everyone hopes at one point or another to deceive and thus betray another.

Paulina earlier assures the guard that it is just for him to allow her to take Perdita from her mother's jail cell on the grounds that the baby did not inherit the crimes of her mother, saying, "You need not fear it, sir;/This child was prisoner to the womb, and is/By law and process of great nature thence/Freed and enfranchised, not a party to/The anger of the King, nor guilty of—/If any be—the trespass of the Queen."[23] While undoubtedly correct about Perdita's connection to whatever Hermione's crimes might have been, Paulina's position does not allow for the possibility of an inherent fault writ in human nature. In this light, one might understand Polixenes's gentle correction of Perdita's refusal to use cultivated flowers. In response to her suggestion that it is ethically wrong for human to ape the act of creation by transforming what occurs naturally into something new, Polixenes says, "Yet nature is made better by no mean/But nature makes that mean; so over art/which you say adds to nature, is an art/that nature makes . . . What does mend nature—change it rather—but/The art itself is nature."[24] Whether flowers are made better by our attention or cultivation, our time in Bohemia shows that human nature, left unattended, falls easily into corruption.

This is most clearly shown in the coming of age story of Florizel and Perdita. We are tempted to excuse the romance between Florizel and Perdita as a natural and good development, and, as we shall see, this judgment is partially correct. Following their innate desires, the two young people fall in

love only to be disrupted by the seemingly arbitrary demands of a father and a king. This, however, is only part of the picture. In choosing Perdita over Polixenes and Bohemia, Florizel asserts his autonomy over and against the world that nurtured him. Key to this account is the lack of women, excepting Perdita and the lesser character of Mopsa, from the island state.

While the queen of Sicily is arbitrarily and unjustly "exiled" from her court, there is no attempt to explain the seeming absence of a mother or queen in Bohemia. Instead, children, like Perdita, miraculously appear. In Sicily, women, like Hermione, represent desire and individual autonomy. Alternatively, Bohemia exists like a Garden of Eden prior to the fall, and, thus, prior to the attainment of knowledge, either good or bad.[25] Its inhabitants, for the most part, rest in a state of childlike innocence. In Sicily, passion, in the form of women, is imprisoned, exiled, left for dead. In Bohemia, neither Eve nor the snake has yet been recognized.

Up to the sighting of Perdita, we can imagine the simplicity of Florizel's desires and the ease with which they would have been fulfilled. As a young boy and a prince there is presumably not much that Florizel could have wanted that he did not obtain. Perdita, however, represents the forbidden fruit. In loving her, Florizel is put in the position of recognizing a distinction and even conflict between his desires. He believes his love for this woman will be at variance with his love for his father, noting, "I'll be thine, my fair,/ Or not my father's. For I cannot be own nor anything to any if I be not thine."[26] Florizel believes, rightly or wrongly, that loving Perdita means betraying his father. This is an essential moment in Florizel's development. His desire for Perdita competes with his love of his father. Like Adam and Eve, who must choose between obedience to God or their impulse for freedom, and thus power, Florizel is faced with making a choice between two competing desires. The full freedom of his will is thereby manifest. He can be obedient to his father or he can choose his own will over and against what he believes he is supposed to do.

There is something unthinking and even wrong in the singularity of the choice that Florizel makes. Given that the king could be predicted to oppose Florizel's choice, one might excuse Florizel for his decision to hide his romance. However, Florizel does not show the slightest regret or sense of guilt in betraying his father as he does. Further, as we see but Florizel does not acknowledge, Polixenes is not opposed to the match in itself. Instead, he wants Florizel to acknowledge his filial obligations by recognizing that his father might rightly and not unreasonably have some say in the matter, if only because he seeks the good of his son. In disguise, Polixenes tries to counsel Florizel, saying, "Reason my son/ Should choose himself a wife, but as good reason/ The father, all whose joy is nothing else/ But fair posterity, should hold some counsel/ In such business."[27] Polixenes, at this moment and unlike Leontes, does not demand that Florizel relinquish his will for the sake of his

father. Instead, there is the possibility of loving both Perdita and Polixenes. This, however, requires Florizel to temper his desire, at least momentarily, so that the broader picture might be accounted for.

These seemingly reasonable limits, however, are too trying for Florizel. In the face of opposition, he quickly asserts the fulfillment of his singular desire for Perdita over and against the whole, regardless of the consequences. Florizel reassures Perdita that his "desires Run not before . . . [his] honour, nor . . . [his] lusts Burn hotter than . . . [his] faith."[28] But this is not entirely true, for, as he tells his father, he is willing to destroy all of Bohemia for her sake.[29] Further, once Polixenes has discovered the couple, Florizel is undaunted and wants to steal away with Perdita, even though it means leaving the kingdom without an heir and the probable death of the shepherd who has raised Perdita as his own daughter. When Camillo seeks to give him advice, Florizel says that he will be advised, "by [his] fancy. If [his] reason/ Will be thereto obedient, [he] have reason./ If not, [his] senses better pleased with madness."[30] Without even an attempt to persuade his father, Florizel intends to run away with Perdita on a ship that is not prepared, and seek unknown lands without any means.[31]

Gaining consciousness of the possibility of choice and thus the freedom of his will, Florizel seeks to be freed from all limits, save his love for Perdita. Neither father, nor homeland, not even prudence, will contain him. Autolycus, the prince's loyal, if secret admirer, is the perfect manifestation of this desire. As a thief, he does not respect the boundaries that define others. He is portrayed almost always in disguise, as though he would be freed from even his identity.[32]

In the first part of the play, as a consequence of his actions, Leontes realizes the limited nature of his power. His finite nature is shown as corrupt as the world upon which he placed all his hopes. After all, all the people he loved are now thought dead. This is further exemplified in Bohemia, where bears roam freely and individuals wear disguises so as to more easily betray each other. Yet, as much as we fault Florizel, we know his love for Perdita is true. However unstable the physical and finite order, his love seems infinitely stable. His happiness, however, depends on finding a firm, if finite, footing upon which his love might be actualized. To this end, all of the characters of Bohemia, including Autolycus, eventually make their way to Sicily, and the two disparate parts are reconciled.

While the last scene in Sicily ended with Paulina offering Leontes nothing but despair, we know almost immediately that something has changed in the sixteen years that pass before we return to its shores. Cleomenes begins Act IV by encouraging Leontes to forgive himself, for, as he says, the heavens have already done so.[33] Although Paulina quickly notes that Cleomenes has a pragmatic reason for his assurances, for if the king does not remarry, the

kingdom will be without an heir, Dion does not see a necessary contradiction between their practical concerns and a more universal truth and good. As he says, "What more holy/Than to rejoice the former Queen is well?/What holier than, for royalty's repair,/For present comfort and for future good,/To bless the bed of majesty again/With a sweet fellow to't?"[34] Cleomenes and Dion suggest the possibility that one's particular and finite interests might be reconciled with what is universal and infinite. Whereas Leontes had originally imagined that his own reason and will were sufficient to such a reconciliation, the claim that the heavens have already forgiven him, suggests that this is possible only with divine intercession.

Just prior to our introduction to Florizel and Perdita in Bohemia, Shakespeare introduces the ancient Greek convention of a Chorus personifying the nature of Time. In so doing, he signals the play's transition from the world of Greek tragedy to what Hegel would classify as a romantic comedy.[35] Warning us that the transition is not merely one of sixteen years, but a transformation in beliefs, the Chorus says, "Since it is my power/To o'erthrow law, and in one self-born hour/To plant and o'erwhelm custom. Let me pass."[36] While the passage of time had previously offered Leontes only despair, now it offers some hope: "What of [Perdita] ensues/I list not prophecy, but let Time's news/Be known when 'tis brought forth."[37] While prophecies suggest that one's action might influence what is to come one way or another, Time's comfort is that all will eventually be revealed.

With the arrival of the characters from Bohemia, it is Leontes's love and desire that we first note. The sight of Florizel reminds Leontes of his great friendship with Polixenes.[38] And, although it leaves us feeling uneasy, the sight of Perdita, who looks so much like her mother, incites more specifically his desire.[39] By drawing our attention to Leontes's, albeit short-lived, attraction to Perdita, Shakespeare allows Leontes the opportunity to both recollect and relive the first scene of the play. When he had previously allowed his desire to turn to jealousy and rage, Leontes now responds by tempering his desire with reason and compassion. When Florizel asks him to be an intermediary with Polixenes, Leontes agrees. Rather than asserting his own desire for Perdita over and against the will of Florizel, he recognizes the legitimacy of Florizel's love and becomes his intermediary.[40]

Leontes tells Florizel he will help because he recognizes that Florizel's honor has not been overcome by his desire. How he knows this is not fully clear, yet Leontes's judgment on this count seems accurate. Florizel was driven to an extreme position of willing only his love for Perdita over and against all other possibilities, but in this love, at least, he is not a tyrant.

From the very beginning of their relationship, Florizel had to recognize Perdita, a mere peasant, as an individual, different from himself. This difference is imaged for us throughout the sheep-shearing scenes. When we

first see them, the couple exchange places; Perdita is dressed as a queen, and Florizel is a peasant. Florizel then trades clothes with Autolycus, aptly becoming a thief, while Perdita becomes a man so that they might make their escape. Shakespeare demonstrates their rapid coming of age by a quick succession of changes in their appearance. By the same method he draws our attention to their particular participation in their common project.

Unlike the crabbed romance of Leontes and Hermione, we get a sense from the conversations between Florizel and Perdita that their wooing is reciprocal and pleasant. Perdita even takes on the role of suitor, and, immediately prior to their escape, Florizel pulls Perdita aside so they, together, might discuss their plans.[41] Neither Florizel nor Perdita assumes possession of the other, and, indeed, Florizel praises her, saying, "Each your doing,/ So singular in each particular,/ Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds/ That all your acts are queens."[42] Florizel loves Perdita in all her particularity.

Further, Florizel's choice of Perdita over Polixenes is not entirely arbitrary. Rather, he says again and again that he will not break his oath to her.[43] Having promised himself to Perdita, Florizel accepts his oath as obligatory. Whatever his natural obligations to his father, Florizel recognizes the superior claim of a vow he has consciously and wilfully entered into.

Finally, although the continuous change of costume indicates particularity and growth, we also know that these are disguises that both characters will shed when they have come finally into their own. When they arrive in Sicily, we are told that they have not yet married, and so Florizel has not yet irrevocably denied the consent and love of his father. Hence, he now concedes the rationality of at least attempting to persuade Polixenes, asking Leontes to act as his advocate. Florizel allows for the possibility that his love for Perdita might be inclusive of not merely their wills, but also the good of the broader community.[44]

Leontes's persuasive abilities regarding the compatibility of Florizel's honor and desire are never tested. Instead, that he chooses to help the young couple is sufficient, for, in the next scene, Perdita is recognized as Leontes's heir and the prophecy of the god comes to fruition, for having found what was lost, the king also regains an heir.[45] This, however, is not the end of the play. Shakespeare suggests the secondary nature of the oracle's fulfillment by leaving all of its activity offstage, with its wonders left to be described by a series of unnamed gentlemen, not one of whom appears to have witnessed it in full. The further step demanded by Paulina and demonstrated in *The Winter's Tale* is the faith that human nature can be made compatible with the divine itself. Hence, Leontes and the others make their way to Paulina's gallery so that another "miracle" might transpire. Prior to the statue of Hermione coming to life, Paulina tells Leontes that he must "awake [his] faith."[46] By

having this more difficult miracle appear on stage, Shakespeare asks his audience to awaken their faith as well. As Paulina says, it is necessary that we see Hermione, for "were it but told, [it] should be hooted at/like an old tale."[47]

Shakespeare leaves the reality of this miracle in question. On the one hand, we have evidence from Antigonus, who swears he saw her spirit at the moment of her death, and it was she who told him where to leave the baby and then correctly prophesized his death. Moreover, while Paulina is the only one to witness Hermione's death, she invites anyone who doesn't believe her to go see for themselves.[48] On the other hand, Hermione says that she "preserved" herself upon hearing the hope offered by the oracle, suggesting that she didn't die at all.[49] Shakespeare leaves the decision as to what happened to us. Whatever we believe is left to our own consciences.

Even if we choose the more likely account that Hermione was never really dead, but only in hiding, we cannot deny that something miraculous does take place. As virtuous as we know Hermione to be, we also know that she is only a woman and not God. It is thus with some disbelief that we witness Hermione's and Leontes's reconciliation. A miracle does take place. Leontes has exiled their baby daughter with the intent of killing her; he has falsely accused, imprisoned, and thereby "killed" his wife; these actions have resulted in the actual death of their son. Antigonus has also died. Yet, against all the odds, Perdita has been found. Further, despite his horrific crimes, Hermione forgives Leontes, and "hangs about his neck."[50] Hermione's love is such that she can suffer because of Leontes's crimes, and still welcome him as her husband.

It is Autolycus who brings this happy ending to pass, for he brings the Shepherd and his son to Sicily, hoping to do the prince and himself a good turn. They in turn reveal the treasures that were found when Perdita was discovered, thereby confirming that she is Leontes's daughter. Autolycus seems like a strange choice for this role. After all, he seems to be interested only in his own comfort and satisfaction.[51] Through Autolycus, however, Shakespeare's overall argument becomes clear, for not just kings and queens, but even Autolycus can be redeemed. Just as Leontes needs to merely have faith that Hermione will come to life, so Autolycus need only ask for forgiveness.

Autolycus tells us that he plays the role of the prodigal son.[52] Those familiar with the story know that this son, having spent all of his inheritance and done nothing worthwhile, is welcomed home by his father merely because he is sorry for what he has done and seeks to return.[53] Autolycus is *The Winter Tale*'s prodigal son. Having spent all of his capital and achieving nothing, he must turn to those he would have destroyed by his own self-seeking, and ask for forgiveness. Thus, he approaches the Shepherd and the Clown, saying, "I humbly beseech you, sir, to pardon me all the faults I have committed to your worship,

and to give me your good report to the prince my master."[54] Like the prodigal son, Autolycus is welcomed with open arms.

In Greek mythology, Autolycus is the mythological descendent of Mercury, the Roman equivalent of Hermes, or Hermione. Hermione, like Hermes, is the messenger god who mediates between the physical and metaphysical realms. And, given the Christian overtones that dominate the scene of her resurrection, she becomes the Christ who, through her forgiveness of Leontes and more figuratively of everyone, makes possible the redemption of Autolycus and ensures that all of the characters have a happy ending.[55]

LET HER NAME BE GRACE

On the grounds of this argument, one might think that *The Winter's Tale* has nothing interesting to say about politics. Instead, it seems to be a meditation of theology. After all, after tyrannically asserting his will over the lives of those he loves, Leontes is shown, in no uncertain terms, that he is not in control. He thus renounces himself, withdrawing from the world and only engaging in activity at the compulsion of Paulina, a character who takes on the role of Paul the evangelist, converting the gentiles to the Christian order. In Leontes's absence, the beauty of the world is revealed. Perdita and Florizel, not yet awake to the possibility of their autonomy, grow like Adam and Eve in the garden prior to the advance of temptation. Finally, Leontes is rewarded for his faith by a vision of the resurrected god. Yet, it is precisely the political consequences of this movement to which *The Winter's Tale* points.

In the midst of his suffering and what he calls affliction, Leontes finds neither God nor even the miracle of a resurrected wife, but just his wife, who has been hidden from his sight for the past sixteen years.[56] Of course we might understand that Leontes has found God, but not in any explicit fashion. Not excluding implicit works of grace, *The Winter's Tale* indicates that Leontes's new faith is the explicit work of very human characters. Paulina directs the course of his purgation and Hermione's love stands in for the divine. However good they are, neither woman has any particular claim to divinity. Instead, Hermione's wrinkles and Paulina's sadness at the death of her husband indicate that both women are human in all the ways dictated by our natures.[57]

But this is exactly the miracle that Shakespeare, at least, seeks to explicate. Hermione, a mere woman, forgives Leontes for inhuman crimes. One might argue that with the return of Perdita, Hermione's forgiveness of Leontes is not that miraculous. After all, their daughter has been returned unharmed. We cannot, however, forget the death of Mamillius, for certainly neither Hermione nor Leontes would be able to. Hermione answers the desire of Leontes with a kind of charity and grace that restores Leontes to his kingdom.

Moreover, the suffering of Leontes and Hermione is as significant as it is particular. It is not the fate endured by everyone in the play. In this play, Hermione dies, and lives, so that she might forgive others. If we allow the possibility that Hermione's resurrection points to that of Christ's, then we understand that her forgiveness is akin to that of the divine. As a result of her death, or more broadly, the death of Christ, others are able to forgo, at least in part, this same ordeal. The love that Hermione extends to Leontes, Shakespeare suggests, is like the love of the divine to all human beings and this love does not require sixteen years of pain in return. Rather, our goodwill seem sufficient to ensure a happy ending for most. Thus, except for a few lines expressing anxiety, Florizel and Perdita are never brought to the full realization of any error in their wills. They do not feel the pain of suffering, and, instead, all of their hopes are fulfilled, even those they did not know they had, such as Perdita's reconciliation with her true home and family. The young couple seemingly floats away on Shakespeare's goodwill. Shakespeare's characters are given various paths to the same end, depending on the state from which they start the journey, and only one is brought to a full understanding of his fallenness. In other words, neither the great actions nor the great suffering of tragic heroes is required to achieve good and just ends. After all, it's the work of a nameless shepherd and son who saved Perdita, and the act of a thief that returned her to her home.

Despite their losses, a son and a husband, the surviving characters get a happy, human ending. There is no sense of unease at the end of this play. Whatever their continuing struggles will be, we understand that they are "precious winners" and happiness will predominate.[58] And while Paulina's loss is yet fresh, there is no sense in the play's conclusion of the separation of the human from the divine. Instead, Shakespeare imagines a God whose love is able to render sufficient the deficiencies of human character. As a result, Shakespeare suggests that in returning this love, human beings can find satisfaction, both in and through God, but also in the very human relationships they enter into. Aristotle argues that perfect friendships will be rare and friendships with the divine cannot exist. Shakespeare alternatively tells us that friendship with the divine is possible, and, as a result, we might find many more true friends in our human lives, if only we can follow the divine model and offer forgiveness.

NOTES

1. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), I.ii.70–73. For example, see, Scott Colley, "Leontes's Search for Wisdom in *The Winter's Tale*," *South Atlantic Review* 48:1 (January 1983), 43–53; Walter S. H.

Lim, "Knowledge and Belief in *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 41:2 (Spring 2001), 325–326; and Stephen J. Miko, "Winter's Tale," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 29:2 (Spring 1989), 259–275.

2. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.98.
3. Ibid., I.i.25–30.
4. Ibid., I.ii.15–25.
5. Ibid., I.ii.102–105.
6. Ibid., I. i.108.
7. Ibid., 1.2.155–159.
8. Ibid., 1.2.183–184.
9. Ibid., 1.2.213.
10. Ibid., 1.2.230.
11. Ibid., II.iii.215–218.
12. Ibid., III.1. 1–5.
13. Ibid., II.i.190.
14. Ibid., III.ii.130–135.
15. Ibid., III.ii.138.
16. Ibid., III.ii.151–154.
17. Ibid., I.ii.290–291, II.i.100–102.
18. Ibid., III.ii, 201–207.
19. For example, see Arthur Quiller-Couch, "Shakespeare's Later Workmanship: *The Winter's Tale*," *The North American Review* 203:726 (May 1916), 750; and Philip M. Weinstein, "An Interpretation of Pastoral in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 22:2 (Spring 1971), 97.
20. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, I.ii.12.
21. Ibid., V.iii.12.
22. Ibid., I.ii.10–14 and I.ii.30–60.
23. Ibid., II.iii. 58–62.
24. Ibid., 4.iv. 89–97. In his response, one might also recognize a complicated dialectic being offered with respect to the relationship of grace and works.
25. See Stephen J. Miko, "Winter's Tale," 265; and Philip M. Weinstein, "An Interpretation of Pastoral in *The Winter's Tale*," 97–109.
26. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iv.42–45.
27. Ibid., IV.iv.402–406.
28. Ibid., IV.iv.32–34.
29. Ibid., IV.iv.370–373.
30. Ibid., IV.iv.477–480.
31. Ibid., IV.iv.495–500.
32. For an interesting account of the role of disguises, particularly that of Autolycus, see Lee Sheridan Cox, "The Role of Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 9:2 (Spring 1969), 283–301.
33. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, V.i.6.
34. Ibid., V.i.29–33.
35. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Arts*, volume 1, trans. T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford, 1998), 79.

36. Ibid., IV.i. 7–9.
37. Ibid, IV.i.25–26.
38. Ibid., V.i.125–129.
39. Ibid., V.i.222.
40. See also Larry Champion, "The Perspective of Comedy: Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*," *College English* 32:4 (January 1971), 435, 446–447.
41. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iv.130–134 and IV.iv.655.
42. Ibid., IV.iv.142–145.
43. Ibid., IV.iv.475, 483, and 488.
44. While I agree with Weinstein's critique of Florizel, I also believe it is somewhat one sided. See, Philip M. Weinstein, "An Interpretation of Pastoral in *The Winter's Tale*," 97–109.
45. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, 132–133.
46. Ibid., V.iii.95.
47. Ibid., V.iii.116–117.
48. III.ii.200–205.
49. Ibid., V.iii.125.
50. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.113.
51. On Autolycus's role in the play's resolution see Lee Sheridan Cox, "The Role of Auolycus in *The Winter's Tale*, and Joanne Field Holland, "The Gods of *The Winter's Tale*," *Pacific Coast Philology* 5 (April 1970), 34–38.
52. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, IV.iii.94.
53. Luke 15:11–32.
54. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, V.ii.144–146.
55. See also, J. A. Bryant Jr., "Shakespeare's Allegory: *The Winter's Tale*," *The Sewanee Review* 63: 2 (Apr.–Jun. 1955), 202–222.
56. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.76.
57. See Walter S. H. Lim, "Knowledge and Belief in *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 41: 2 (Spring 2001), 317–334.
58. Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, V.iii.131.

Chapter 12

The Tragic and the Equitable in Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Ethics*

Stephen Sims

Despite the clear connection between poetry and politics in ancient political philosophy, scholars rarely connect Aristotle's *Poetics* with his political thought. Some believe that Aristotle meant to liberate poetry from political or moral censure.[1] According to this view, poetics, like ethics and politics, has its own criteria for judgment and is not accountable to the laws. In doing so, Aristotle avoids subordinating art to politics as Socrates did in the *Republic*. Of those scholars who do acknowledge the political and ethical dimensions of poetics, none shows the connection between Aristotle's defense of poetry and his defense of political life.[2] In each, however, Aristotle affirms the possibility of moral virtue reinforcing the possibility of avoiding tragedy. Aristotle does not just happen to defend poetry from Socratic criticism, but does so to teach the importance of equity and prudence, deliberation and choice.

We can find this political and moral teaching in the *Poetics* in several ways. We can see it in Aristotle's attempt to create a "science" of poetics, one which ultimately fails due to the complexity of both poets and poems. It turns up again in Aristotle's account of the nature and genesis of poetry, and imitation in general, each of which shows how we can know particulars as both particulars and members of a kind. Most of all, Aristotle's discussion of tragedy, especially Aristotle's observation that the equitable man cannot be tragic, shows how deliberative choice is an alternative to tragic necessity, or that Odysseus and Penelope can be understood as a comic alternative to the tragedy of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. Poetry, even tragedy, reinforces Aristotle's teaching that human life can be good, noble, and just to the degree that it makes room for human virtue.

SOCRATIC POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND POETRY

Reviewing poetry in Plato's *Republic* will help us understand Aristotle's defense.[3] Socrates banishes poetry, specifically tragedy and comedy, from his city in speech. Both are morally suspect for the city by promoting passions and thus irrationality.[4] Poetry also supports bad theology, showing unjust and immoderate gods. The traditional objects of poetry—the gods and passions—are to be excised.[5] Human suffering, in the case of tragedy, and human absurdity, in the case of comedy each threaten to undermine political order.[6] Poetry does so by rendering beautiful human imperfection and the individuation of each thing rather than the species. Representing human imperfection and individuation is dangerous for the politics found in his city in speech, since the city in speech is meant to be a perfect whole.

Socrates later softens his criticism of poetry in the *Republic*, arguing that if it or "one of its friends" can defend itself of the charge of being morally suspect, the city will permit it. Poetry must still justify itself before the court of the city; politics maintains its rule over poetry. The philosophic legislator rules the poet, and his legislation is poetic education. The stories of the city must be politically correct, rather than a way of seeing human nature.[7] Poetry also turns the mind toward imitations of things, as they are experienced in this world. It ties the soul to the partial, the concrete, and particular instead of the whole, the idea, and the universal. As such, it appears unphilosophic and undermines our capacity to know truth; after all, Socrates claims that philosophy is the sight of pure forms, in which concrete reality only participates rather than being in the realest and truest sense.[8] Lingering on the concrete and particular makes poetry useless for philosophic knowing, if not an invidious distraction from the contemplation of that which really is.

Poetry weakens both political practice and contemplative beholding. If it is to have a place in the city, poetry must be at once theoretically orthodox and support the rule of the philosopher-king. The perfect unity of the city in speech results in the double condemnation of poetic imitation. Its defense must be on the grounds of what it shows us as both knowers and doers.

POETRY AND KNOWLEDGE

Aristotle begins the *Poetics* by identifying poetry as a human craft concerned with putting together beautiful stories.[9] These beautiful stories are imitations, especially imitations of human action.[10] Actions are good or bad especially due to the actor's character. Good and bad characters provide an account for the difference between tragedy and comedy. Tragedy's subject matter is the

characters and actions of mature and serious people, while comedy deals with foul and trivial people.

Imitations also vary according to how the poet imitates human actions. Some poets report actions and narrate the story, while other poets seek to make themselves invisible through drama.[11] Narrative poetry is the speech of the poet, and drama is the actions of the actors; speaking and acting distinguish the kinds of poetry. Homer tells us the story of Achilles's anger, and Sophocles shows us the actions of Antigone and Cleon. But in providing these distinctions, Aristotle also shows their instability: Homer and Sophocles belong to the same category of poet in that they imitate people with superior characters. Again, Sophocles and Aristophanes belong to the same category, for each composed plays rather than narrative poems. By showing us that Sophocles can be put in more than one category depending on the way in which we distinguish poems and poets, either according to the object imitated or how the object is imitated, Aristotle reveals a necessary limitation of speech: we must qualify our categories when confronted with complex individuals like Sophocles. The poet, as a real individual, does not fit easily into the distinctions of speech.

Furthermore, Aristotle's distinction between narration and dramatic literature—speaking and acting—cannot stand in the way he initially formulates it. Homer blended narration and dialogue, which makes categorizing the *Iliad* a narrative poem rather than a drama difficult.[12] Homer blends the virtues of drama and narration by allowing us to see both the purposes and the actions of the characters, putting them together in a way that simple narration or simple drama cannot. Homer's poetry portrays the actions and thinking of his characters by uniting speech and deed, narration and drama. Homeric poetry, unifying speech and act, challenges the previous classification of poetry.

Aristotle blurs even the distinction of tragedy from comedy. Again, Homer shows himself as a singular poet difficult to classify when Aristotle reminds us that Homer wrote a comedy lost to us, the *Margites*.[13] Beyond blending narration and drama, Homer can also imitate more than one sort of human being.[14] Indeed, even the extant epics of Homer do not imitate only morally mature characters; the *Iliad* contains the vulgar Thersites and the ridiculous Dolon. Moreover, Aristotle classifies the *Odyssey* as both a tragic poem and a comic poem.[15] Homer is both a tragic and a comic poet, and his particular poems partake of both tragedy and comedy. The species and forms[16] of poetry—tragedy and comedy—narrative and drama—have porous borders. The kinds of poets also have porous borders, as Homer easily slips from one kind to another.

Homeric slipperiness shows the limitations of speech and thought. In order to make an intelligible whole out of poetics, we mentally divide poems and poets into kinds. This division and classification is necessary to understand

poetry. But difficulties arise while reducing certain poets, or indeed certain poems, to one species or another. The deeds of Homer, writing both comic and tragic poems or writing poems that are only ambiguously tragic, like the *Odyssey*, show that the kinds of poetry necessary for thinking and speaking about poetry do not tell us the whole truth of poetry. A poet's deeds defy our definitions, suggesting that deeds may fit only uneasily into our speech about deeds. By showing us the necessity and limitation of categorical speech, Aristotle prepares us for his teaching on tragic human action, since tragedy involves understanding human action in terms of speech rather than speech in terms of action.

The division of poetry and poets into categories, necessary for reasoning, obscures the complexity of individual poems and poets. Reason errs when it reduces individuals like Homer to specific categories. This necessary error of reason raises questions about how we should reason about human life. If our category leaves out some individual who belongs within it, or includes one who does not, we reason with an admixture of error. Reason and its universalizing are prone to error when dealing with human things. Aristotle's initial moves in the *Poetics* respond to Socrates by showing that the universals required by dialectic do not coincide perfectly with human life. To force the reality of human things into logical wholes is to do violence to that reality. The Socratic city, and its philosophy, are wholes that can only maintain their wholeness by steadfastly ignoring the exceptions.[17] As such, the Socratic lawgiver banishes poetry because its charm lies in emphasizing the differences of the members within the whole, emphasizing the particularity of Helen or Penelope within the class of women. If poetry dwells on particularity, is it not inimical to the theoretical life and knowledge, confirming Socrates's condemnation? To elevate irreducible difference over shared nature would seem to lead to a form of irrationalism. For poetry to save itself from this result, Aristotle shows the way in which poetry shows a particular mode of knowing that does justice to the integrity of each individual and the integrity of the universal. Like Homer, human knowledge is of two kinds, theoretical and poetic.

THE BEGINNING OF POETRY

Aristotle finds the origin of poetry within human nature. Human beings are mimicking animals, as we see especially with children. Aristotle observes that a child's first learning is playing through mimicking.[18] Children first learn by becoming something other than what they are. A child learns what a king is by pretending to be a king. Through mimicking, the child seeks to know the nature or character that produces the mimicked actions. Playing has a most serious object—discovering what is necessarily invisible in human life, or

moving beyond the easily seen to those things much more difficult to discern. Our plays and artistic imitations make plain what is most obscure.

Imitations, the product of mimicry, also teaches. In this way, the observer of the imitation—the actor acting—is a learner as well. As Aristotle observes, "it is natural that all are gladdened by imitations" for "we delight in contemplating the very precisely made images of things that in themselves we see with pain, such as dishonorable beasts and corpses."[19] Our delight in contemplating poetic objects stems from the pleasure of learning, which is not restricted to "the philosophers" but includes all, even if the pleasure is small. Specifically, the contemplator of poetry rejoices when he learns and "brings together in thought"[20] what "each thing is." Poetic learning has to do with recognizing each thing in its particularity—and so Aristotle tells us poetic knowledge is seeing "this is that."[21] Understanding the real identity of that which presents itself to us is poetic knowledge. Knowledge gained through poetry is similar to the recognition that forms of part of well-wrought tragedies; coming to know the real identity of an individual or an action, passing from ignorance to knowledge, is integral to tragedy. Since it is not possessed until the recognition of the hero, we can infer that the lack of poetic knowledge—recognizing the particular—is a prerequisite for tragedy.

Aristotle defends poetry from the accusation that it is harmful or irrelevant to civic virtue by identifying a different kind of knowledge. Knowledge, especially as spoken of by Socrates, is seeing the universal and learning its definition. Poetry shows the peculiarity and strangeness of the members of that universal. It is recognition of the concrete thing.[22] Thus, we might say that knowledge of the real thing that presents itself to us is poetic knowledge. This sort of knowing is not opposed to knowledge of universals, but rather supports it. A peculiar thing, act, or person that we experience is both an instance of its kind but also something strange that sheds new light on its kind. By shedding new light on the universal, the poetic knowledge of the real individual makes us wonder about what we thought we knew. In wondering, we philosophize.[23]

Wisdom might be said to begin in poetically recognizing that we did not know what we thought we knew. Consequently, although poetry is knowledge of particularity, poetry is not opposed to philosophy. Indeed, Aristotle argues that poetry is more philosophic than history because it is universal and history is not.[24] It is also more "serious"[25] than history. Historical human life is less bound by necessity than human life as depicted by poetry.[26] Anything can happen in history, and it includes the most implausible events happening to the most implausible kind of person. The character in a poem, however, being a certain kind of person, should do or say things according to a kind of necessity or probability. The just man does not do unjust things. Hence, a just man in a poem should not steal, murder, or cheat. Poetry is universal in

that it shows us the nature of human action and character; while it lingers on the individual as individual, it remains true to the nature that the individual shares with other members of its kind. Poetry is a sort of philosophic seeing itself, inasmuch as the observers of poetry "theorize."[27]

Aristotle responds to the dual attack on poetry in the *Republic* by articulating a different mode of knowledge, a poetic knowledge that combines the universal and particular. This poetic knowledge is knowledge of particularity, especially human action. It shows that human action is intelligible only inasmuch as knowledge of the particular before us is possible. To the degree that poetry successfully teaches us how to recognize the peculiarity of the individual, it supports civic virtue. Poetry is more philosophic than history as its stories follow the necessities of nature rather than the vagaries of chance. Poetry ties the universal to the particular without absorbing the particular into the universal or annihilating categories altogether. Another way of stating this curious character of poetry is that it is about what is predictable and necessary, but also about what is strange and wondrous. We see this aspect of poetry in Aristotle's treatment of tragedy.

TRAGEDY AND TRAGIC ERROR

Aristotle tells us that tragedy is an imitation of a complete action that reflects the fearful and the pitiable.[28] The fearful and the pitiable arise especially "contrary to expectation but in consequence to one another." The objects of fear and pity in tragedy are due to intelligible causes—they are not random or due to *tuche*—but are unexpected, at least to the tragic figure. Because tragic consequences are not by chance, it seems that they must be by nature.[29] To the degree that they are unexpected, they are due to a part unknown nature.

Aristotle defines tragedy as "an imitation of an action that is serious and complete, with magnitude, that, by means of pleasing speech, but with its kinds separate in its proper parts, is of people acting and not through report, and accomplishes through pity and fear the cleansing of experiences of this sort."[30] The action that Aristotle has in mind is human action and thus an imitation of life itself.[31] Hence, the greatest part of tragedy is the story or plot (*muthos*) rather than characters themselves. Story, along with its parts such as reversal and recognition, is what guides the soul of the spectator.[32] Further, the story is the soul of the tragedy and its beginning.

What is a story? Stories are not such due to the unity of a character. All the actions of Heracles or Odysseus may be interesting in themselves, but they do not make up a unified story. Homer, Aristotle says, saw this beautifully—that not every detail of Odysseus the man is relevant to the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. The whole of a story "ought to be such that when a part is transposed or

removed, the whole becomes different and changes. For whatever makes no noticeable difference if it is added or not added is no proper part of a whole."[33] The poet writes according to a kind of necessity in that every part of the poem must be present precisely where it is. Nothing is superfluous. Every part within the whole is the result of understanding the nature of the whole.[34]

Stories that do not have poetic unity are merely "episodic." In such accounts, one event follows another with little to no probability or necessity. A proper tragedy, on the other hand, should come into being with the poetic unity described above, and thus reflecting an intelligible whole. At the same time, the events should be "contrary to opinion," for such events are more wonderful. We wonder when we are conscious of our ignorance, especially when our ignorance is contrasted with received opinion.[35] Inasmuch as the events of tragedy are more wonderful, they increase our feelings of pity and fear. Things that first appear to be chance are more wonderful when they appear purposeful, such as when a murderer dies because of a representation of his victim.

Tragedy is about the intelligible but unexpected. The unexpected results in a reversal of what the tragic character thinks should happen. Our opinions about human life tell us that the actions of Oedipus should not result in the miserable life of Oedipus; his fate seems to be out of joint with his intentions. Poetry reveals that our account of nature or reality is incomplete, since the unexpected is still possible. Aristotle fleshes out the problem of knowledge and acting represented by dwelling on the tragic character. The tragic character should flourish for the way in which he behaves, but quite the opposite happens. This reversal is due to his error.[36] The story of tragedy turns on the tragic character finally recognizing the truth, and thus his error.[37] But what kind of reversal is tragic? Furthermore, what kind of error is a tragic error? To answer these questions, Aristotle considers the kind of person the tragic character must be.

If a bad man were shown faring well despite his vice, the audience would experience righteous anger. If a bad man in good circumstances were to be shown being put into bad circumstances, we should feel some satisfaction. In each case, portraying the bad man is untragic. In the former, the lack of tragedy follows from the lack of love of humanity, or philanthropy.[38] The latter is not pitiable since we do not pity those who deserve their fates. Tragedy supports philanthropy, our natural love of those who are like us, and in doing so supports friendship and justice.[39] If bad people are not fit subjects for tragedy, what sort of good person is tragic? Aristotle claims that it would be horrible (with the connotation of repulsive) if tragedy showed the equitable man declining into misfortune. The tragic character, while still better than us, the audience, is between the vicious (or the unjust) and the equitable. This person is one who errs (*hamartia*) and does wrong, but not out of a vicious

character.[40] The tragic person endures bad fortune due to *hamartia*, some mistake or erroneous judgment. The tragic figure is only a certain kind of moral character. In his moral typology at this point, Aristotle distinguishes the equitable, the unjust and vicious, and the person between these extremes. We understand why the wicked are not an appropriate subject—the wicked flourishing is morally revolting, and the wicked suffering inspires neither fear nor pity. Why does Aristotle exclude the equitable from tragedy? To answer this question, it is useful to consider Aristotle on equity.

Equity and Justice

Aristotle's specific account of equity is in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[41] There, he observes that equity is strange or out of place (*atopos*). On one hand, equity seems to be different from justice, for we distinguish them in speech and think that equity is superior to justice. On the other hand, it seems to belong to the same genus as justice.[42] As equity belongs to the genus of justice, it can be reduced to what is just. As Aristotle puts it, "It appears strange for those who follow the argument, if the equitable is something praiseworthy, despite its being other than the just. For if they are different, either the just is not a serious thing or the equitable itself is not just; or, if both are serious, they are the same thing."[43]

If both justice and equity are desirable, we make them the same thing. The specific virtue is absorbed into the generic virtue. If we insist that they are different from one another, and that equity is superior to justice, then we harm justice and seem to praise injustice. Aristotle, however, judges that both sides of the argument are correct in different ways. The sense in which the equitable is better than the just is not because the equitable exists in a genus superior to the just things. It belongs within the genus of just things, while being better than a certain kind of justice. Thus, "the just and the equitable are the same thing, and although both are serious, the equitable is superior." How can two things which are the same also be unequal? Aristotle explains the perplexity: "Although the equitable is just, it is not just according to the law. The equitable is instead a correction of the legally just."[44] The perplexity of equity's relation to justice arises due to identifying justice with the law.

Justice is spoken of as lawfulness twice in Book 5 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The legally just is justice in a universal sense, named from its affinity for the law. The law aims at the common good, and justice is virtuous action for the sake of the common good.[45] The legally just is also distinguished from the naturally just.[46] According to this distinction, the legally just is what is just according to human decision and convention.[47] The naturally just has "the same power everywhere" and is not based upon human decision.[48] Although law is necessary for human life, it is imprecise. As Aristotle puts it, "all law

is general, but it is not possible to speak correctly in a general way in all matters. In those cases, then, where it is necessary to speak generally, but it is not possible to do so correctly, the law takes what is for the most part the case, but without being ignorant of the error involved in doing so."[49] The law and the legislator remain blameless, despite its awareness of the necessary error of law, for "the error resides not in the law or the lawgiver, but in the nature of the matter at hand" for "such is simply the stuff of what actions are made." Human action is particular, and law, what we say is just, must be universal.

But the particularity of human action is not the only culprit in the disjunction between law and justice. Aristotle writes that "when the law speaks generally, but what happens is an exception to the general rule, then it is correct, where the lawgiver omits something and erred (*harmetema*) by speaking unqualifiedly, to rectify that omission with what the lawgiver himself would have said."[50] The making of law is tragic, but equity is the virtue that corrects tragedy. It does so by altering or suspending the universal rule of justice to make it fit with the particulars of the situation. It can do so through prudence. The virtue of *gnōmē*,[51] or "knowledge," allows the prudent person to see what is equitable, correcting the law. Exercising *gnōmē* requires *sungnōmē*, or "knowing with." The equitable man, in correcting the law, "knows with" his fellow citizen. This shared knowledge allows the equitable person to take less than he deserves and to judge in a forgiving manner. Aristotle's treatment of equity makes clear the limitation of law as an expression of the just. Law is attractive in its simplicity—it defines a certain class of actions as just or unjust. The equitable person understands that political justice or unqualified justice cannot be reduced to the simplicity of law. Equity qualifies the completeness of the law by recognizing human actions may be just even if they do not fit under the law. The law, as a category of justice, leaves some just actions out. The city that reduces justice to law would replace freedom with necessity, the particular with the universal and political rule with paternal rule.[52] A city which is ruled by law alone would be unaware of its own limitations, and understand itself to be a complete whole, needing nothing outside itself. As prudence is tied especially to equity, the city that recognizes law alone would also be imprudent. Equity is the virtue that most of all rests on prudently knowing the imperfection of both the city and the individual. The one who is unaware of his own imperfection and his need for others is the tragic figure.

EQUITY AND POETIC KNOWLEDGE

The tragic figure is neither wicked nor equitable, but "better than us."[53] As such, he fares well especially because he comes from a good family and has a

good reputation.[54] He commits a mistake (*hamartian*), and ends up doing and suffering injustice, like murder, parricide, incest, cannibalism. Each tragic figure is also seeking justice or avoiding injustice. Oedipus sought mastery over all, to avoid parricide and incest. Instead, his quest for divine mastery ends in his recognition of his parricide and incest. Atreus turns his brother Thyrestes into a cannibal eating his own children because of Thyrestes's adultery with Atreus's wife. Orestes killed his mother because she killed his father. In each case, the suffering of tragedy is connected to a strict interpretation of justice, a sort of *lex talionis*.[55] In each case, there is little to no prudent consideration of how to live a common life in the sense of trying to avoid the brutal results of giving each what he or she deserves. There is no attempt then at prudent reconciliation, *gnōmē*, or knowing with one another. As such, tragic actions might be intelligible by the light of justice—the tragic figure gets what he deserves—but they are inimical to friendship. In the absence of prudence, *gnōmē*, and equity, there is little in the way of true political life.[56] Tragedies are about political individuals who fail to see and to act politically by seeking divine simplicity.[57]

Aristotle then ranks the sorts of tragic stories according to beauty. The most beautiful stories are the ones involving tremendous suffering due to a kind of strict justice, whether the character is on the receiving end of it or doling it out. This kind of strict justice seems to be either the cause of, or the effect of, misfortune and *hamartia*. The most beautiful tragedies display the unraveling of political life through the lack of equity and gnōmē. The second most beautiful stories are those that are complex, involving both moving from faring well to faring badly and faring badly to faring well. The only example Aristotle provides is the *Odyssey*. This more complex movement appears to some as the most beautiful, but Aristotle claims that this is due to the weakness of the spectators. The *Odyssey* is apparently Homer's "weaker" and "less beautiful" poem. It is Homer playing to the gallery.

The weak audience who prefers complex stories like the *Odyssey* rather than the simpler beauty of Euripides wishes to see its prayers poetically represented.[58] It prays that its life may be comic and not tragic. How so? Aristotle states that the pleasure of the *Odyssey* is as much a comic pleasure as it is tragic. As tragedies show those who are dear to one another suffering at each other's hands, so comedies show the greatest enemies becoming friends.[59] The example Aristotle uses is Orestes becoming friends with Aegisthus rather than murdering him. While this would suggest that the relation of Orestes to Aegisthus is of the utmost importance, Orestes is not punished because of what he did to Aegisthus. The horror of Orestes is his murdering his mother. To escape the tragic suffering of the *Oresteia*, Orestes would have to reconcile himself with his mother. Reconciliation would require *sungnōmē* and equity rather than doling out what is deserved.

The contrast of the *Odyssey* to the *Oresteia* is pregnant with suggestion, as the *Odyssey* contains several references to Aegisthus, Clytemnestra, and Orestes. Perhaps Homer wished to keep his reader aware of an alternative epilogue to the Trojan War. If Orestes became friends with Aegisthus, his story would be comic rather than tragic. But the *Odyssey* ends in bloodshed as well; Odysseus kills the suitors in Ithaca attempting to seduce Penelope and usurp the throne of Ithaca just as Orestes kills Aegisthus. In each case, the successful or would-be homewreckers get a murderous comeuppance. The difference must lie with the women. The *Odyssey* is a poem of double movement in that misfortune comes to the suitors, but fortune to Odysseus and Penelope. The comedy of the *Odyssey* is in the restoration of husband to his wife, father to his son, and king to his kingdom rather than tragic infidelity, murder, matricide, and tyranny. If the "weak" *Odyssey* were like the *Agamemnon*, Penelope would murder Odysseus to become a tyrant herself. Honoring human weakness, Homer instead shows the possibility of comic political life. Comic political life depends on Penelope's virtue, her choosing to not live as Clytemnestra. Penelope, in her astonishing prudence (*periphron*), maintains the friendship of husband and wife, Ithaca and its king. Clytemnestra violated that friendship and undermined the regime.[60] The audience prays for the wisdom of Penelope and the comedy it makes possible.[61]

If tragedy lacks equity and prudence, it also shows the consequences of unreflective moralism. The complicated, double ending of the *Odyssey* shows the possibility of prudence, even if it is uglier than the simple beauty of tragedy.[62] Where tragedy is simple (and thus in a way repeats the tragic error of its own subject matter),[63] comedy's uglier truth shows that human beings, avoiding a simplistic justice in favor of a more complicated but correct equity, act more humanly. Equity, *gnōmē*, and prudence, the virtues that show the defect of law and simple categories of justice, depend on an awareness of the imperfection, and weakness, of human life. Accepting this imperfection and weakness allows for the politics that we pray for.

CONCLUSION

The *Poetics* defends the goodness and truth of poetry in a way similar to Aristotle's conception of political life. Human life does not correspond to the logical universals identified by Socrates in the *Republic*. Human life and action display a stubborn diversity that causes the logical universals to fail, just as the categories of comedy and tragedy, narration and drama, or even the lawful and the unlawful can fail in the face of human particularity. Just as we err when we order our politics according to universals divorced from

the complexity of human life, so also we err when we reduce justice to law, our categories of justice. Indeed, this error is a tragic error, for tragedy, in Aristotle's telling, is a representation of human action that does not make room for correcting the law or rule of justice; there is nothing outside of the law, no reason to correct it. It is no surprise, then, that tragedy moves according to necessity. For this reason, equity and prudence, the virtues that allow us to see the limitation of law and allow us to choose the good, cannot be tragic. Rather, like Penelope's wisdom, they are the stuff of comedy.

NOTES

1. Martha Husain, *Ontology and the Art of Tragedy: An Approach to Aristotle's Poetics* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), pp. 22–23; S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and the Fine Arts* (New York: Dover Publications, 1951), pp. 113–115; John Jones, *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 15.

2. See Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy and Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Carnes Lord, *Education and Culture in the Political Thought of Aristotle* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982); Michael Davis, *The Poetry of Philosophy* (South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 1999). Most interpretations of the *Poetics* do not seem to go beyond observing that Aristotle may take poetry more seriously than Socrates does. Eliot Bartky argues that Aristotle's defense of poetics is a criticism of Plato's writing, and in fact a defense of philosophy. See Eliot Bartky, "Plato and the Politics of Aristotle's *Poetics*," *Review of Politics* Vol. 54, No. 4 (Autumn, 1992): 589–619. I agree with Bartky that the *Poetics* is a defense of philosophy, but in defending philosophy, Aristotle also defends politics and, of course, poetry itself.

3. It would be imprudent to take Socrates's criticisms of poetry at face value. See Timothy W. Burns, "Philosophy and Poetry: A New Look at on Old Quarrel," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 109, No. 2 (May, 2015): 326–338.

4. Plato, *Republic*, 606d.

5. Ibid., 377b–394a.

6. See Mary Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), pp. 75–77; Burns, 334.

7. Ralph McInerny argues that one purpose of poetry is making contemplation available to more than just the philosophers. While I agree with his point, I suggest that even the philosopher cannot ignore poetry. Ralph McInery, "Some Reflections on Aristotle and Elitism," *Review of Metaphysics* Vol. 61, No. 3 (Mar., 2008): 489–502.

8. It is worth noting that the description of philosophy in the *Republic* does not match the deeds of Socrates in the same dialogue. See Mary P Nichols, "The Republic's Two Alternatives: Philosopher-Kings and Socrates," *Political Theory* Vol. 12, No. 2 (May, 1984): 252–274.

9. Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Seth Benardete and Michael Davis (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2002), 1447a8–15.
10. Aristotle, 1448a5.
11. Davis, *The Poetry of Philosophy*, p. 20.
12. Davis, *The Poetry of Philosophy*, pp. 20–23.
13. 1448b40.
14. Cf. Plato, *Republic*, 398a; *Symposium*, 223b–d.
15. 1453a30–40, 1459b1–15.
16. Translating *eidos*. The ambiguity of *eidos* allows us to think of either how we speak of poetry, or poetry itself.
17. For example, where is Socrates in the city according to speech? Nichols, "The Republic's Two Alternatives."
18. 1448b8–10.
19. Translating *charein* at 1448b8.
20. *Syllogizesthai*, from which we syllogize or "gather together."
21. Owen Barfield, *Poetic Diction* (London: Faber and Faber, 1953 [1928]), pp. 170–175. Barfield observes that the poet, like the true lover, observes the smallest detail of the beloved.
22. Aristotle's tends to present Socrates as seeking the definition. Hence, "what is the good as such?" See *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1096a13; *Metaphysics*, 1078b18–29. Practical thinking, for Aristotle, must ask "what is my good?" or "what is our good?"
23. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 982b15–25.
24. *Poetics*, 1451b5–8.
25. *Spoudaioteron*.
26. Aristotle draws attention to Alcibiades in making his argument. The poetic Alcibiades would perhaps tell us more about the kind of man Alcibiades truly was than the historic Alcibiades. A kind of philosophic knowledge is possible through poetry—the character of the tyrant as such, where history may show the untyrannical parts of the tyrannical man.
27. 1452a15; Cf. McInerny, 501–502.
28. 1449b28.
29. Aristotle, *Physics*, 199b15–25.
30. 1449b.
31. 1450a17.
32. 1450a35.
33. 1451a30–35.
34. Cf. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 264C.
35. Dennis Quinn, *Iris Exiled* (Lanham: University of America Press, 2002), p. 51.
36. *Hamartia*. See Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *Greek Tragedy and Political Philosophy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 174–176.
37. 1452a15–40.
38. 1453a1–10.
39. *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1155a20.

40. Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 382. Nussbaum argues that the tragic error is a species of unjust action, one that does not come from the vice of injustice, but some "going wrong." Elizabeth Belfiore argues, however, that *hamartia* is specifically a non-moral error. See Elizabeth Belfiore, *Tragic Pleasures: Aristotle on Plot and Emotion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 168. The relevant passage is *Nicomachean Ethics* 1135b11–26. *Hamartema* there means unjust acts, the actor knows that the act is unjust, but the actor does not deliberate about whether he ought to act. It is thus between the totally nonculpable unjust acts that come from bad luck and blameworthy unjust acts that proceed from unjust character. *Hamartia* then would be a consequence of moral weakness, the inability of reason and deliberation to quell passion. Aristotle singles out anger as a passion that especially suppresses deliberation.

41. Aristotle sometimes seems to use *epieikeis* as a meaning morally good in general, like *agathon* or *spoudaios*. Since, however, Aristotle distinguishes *epieikeis* in this case as the preeminent in virtue and justice, drawing attention to the relation between *epieikeis* and justice more generally, it seems that he has the special virtue of equity in mind. The special virtue of equity can only be understood in light of Aristotle's broader teaching about justice.

42. 1137a35.

43. 1137b.

44. 1137b12–13.

45. 1129b15–20.

46. 1134b20.

47. One of the examples Aristotle uses is the decision of Amphipolis to worship Brasidas as a god.

48. 1134b20.

49. 1137b13–16.

50. 1137b23.

51. Also translated as "judgment."

52. Following the argument of Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community*, 174–176.

53. 1448a17–18.

54. 1453a23.

55. Michael Davis, *The Poetry of Philosophy*, 72.

56. *Politikē* seems to be connected most of all with prudence, and consequently equity and friendship. *Politics*, 1277a15–20.

57. Mary Nichols, *Citizens and Statesmen: A Study of Aristotle's Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1992), pp. 72–81.

58. 1453a33.

59. 1453a39.

60. It is worth noting that Penelope is *periphron*, which might be rendered as "excellently prudent." No one else is consistently identified as such by Homer.

61. Further, as Penelope is virtuous in her capacity to be prudent while remaining faithful to Odysseus, her friendship with her husband could well be a friendship of virtue, a friendship Aristotle says is possible if both man and woman are "equitable." *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1162a25–27.

62. Many of Odysseus's actions when he returns home are not obviously just as he reestablishes his rule. In doing so, he leaves Penelope out of his bloody refounding. See Seth Benardete, *The Bow and the Lyre: A Platonic Reading of the Odyssey* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), p. 124.

63. Davis, 73.

Appendix

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