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MENTOR

JOHN ADAMS ACADEMY ACADEMIC JOURNAL

Building a Culture of Greatness

John Adams® ACADEMY

MENTOR™ is the faculty journal of John Adams Academy. The purpose of this journal is to uncover the tenants of John Adams Academy's American Classical Leadership Education® model, especially as it applies to the role of the mentor. Here we hope to explore the alliance between the four pillars of American Classical Leadership Education—the Art of Mentoring, John Adams Academy's Ten Core Values, Classics, and the Liberal Arts, considering how they guide scholars to become servant leaders. As educators and members of an intellectual community that inherit and relate a legacy of truth, wisdom, and beauty, we perceive the abundance in each contribution to the Great Conversation.

We take our name from the complementary sources of the Latin word *mens*, and *mentis* (mind, thought, intention) and the Homeric character Mentor (Μέντωρ), to whom great Odysseus entrusted care of his home and family, and in the guise of whom the goddess Athena gave counsel to the young Telemachus. The former origin recalls our human tradition of sentience, the latter our divine duties of love and loyalty. Taken together, the essence of mentoring is sharing with others the beauty and truth that has fallen to us.

Each issue of *Mentor* invites all John Adams Academy faculty and the larger classical education community to examine how the liberty-based art of mentoring and particular core values, expressed in classic books, histories, artifacts, songs, equations, and theories, guide scholars on their journey to greater light and truth. Whether the themes be humble, aimed for the heart of the youngest child, or rich and complex and intended for the minds of the mature and wise, we welcome your invaluable insights as we seek to better understand what the liberty-based American Classical Leadership Education offers us in our collective journey toward servant leadership.

John Adams Academies are TK-12th Grade, TUITION-FREE public charter schools offering our unique American Classical Leadership Education™ model to all through our in-person campuses in El Dorado Hills, Lincoln, and Roseville, California, as well as our online program.

John Adams Academy is restoring America's heritage by developing servant-leaders who are keepers and defenders of the principles of freedom for which our Founding Fathers pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor. By combining classical education with servant leadership training and core values, John Adams Academy develops scholars who are leaders in their homes, communities, and country. Through classics, mentoring, and modeling, scholars are inspired to prepare for their unique missions and will naturally hunger for oncoming responsibilities and future contributions to society.

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Core Value #9 – Building a Culture of Greatness

(As a contextual preface to the following articles, the editors include this extended definition of the 9th core value as it appears on the official John Adams Academy website).

Integral to the success of the mission of John Adams Academy is the development of great citizens and great souls. To do so, John Adams Academy seeks to build a culture of greatness. Greatness is found in using our virtues, gifts, and talents for others. In the 4th century BC, Aristotle emphasized that nobility, or greatness of soul, was a key moral virtue that each citizen should develop. This moral ideal has been expressed in classics such as great art, great architecture, great music, great literature, and great actions throughout history.

We build a culture of greatness through developing nobility of soul and mind, environment, and conduct. Great works that elevate the soul and expand the mind are carefully chosen and taught in every stage of the curriculum. Our facilities and classrooms are intentionally designed with emphases of space, unity, and beauty to have a positive impact on educational outcomes. Each member of our community is expected to conduct themselves with kindness and respect. Also, scholars participate in cultural and enrichment activities and formal events that cultivate greatness. By these practices, we help develop the citizens of respect, refinement, and service that Aristotle envisioned thousands of years ago. The outcome is a legacy of ordered liberty and freedom.

Building A Culture of Greatness

Dr. Dean Forman

Board President and Co-Founder of John Adams Academy

(This article is adapted from a speech delivered to John Adams Academy staff and faculty).

Core values based on true principles build virtue, character and culture. In building a successful institution, culture is everything. John Adams Academy is an institution of "becoming." The process produces a servant leader. Socrates is noted for the statement, "The unexamined life is not worth living." What do you expect of life? What does life expect of you? What do you live for? Will it sustain and motivate you throughout your life? What would you die for? What do you think about when you don't have to think? What has given you meaning in your life? Are you free? Why or why not? Are you happy? Why or why not? What is your greatest dream? What is the highest goal to which you aspire? Why? Are you becoming who you want to be?

The ancient historian Herodotus suggested that a culture of free citizens are better warriors, since they fight for themselves, their families and property, not for kings, aristocrats, or priests. When asked why they did not come to terms with the Persians a Spartan envoy stated the reason is freedom: "You are knowledgeable about only one half of what is involved; the other half is a blank to you. The reason is that you understand well enough of what slavery is, but freedom you have never experienced, so you do not know if it tastes sweet or not. If you ever did come to experience it, you would advise us to fight for it not with spears only, but with axes too."[1]

[1] Herodotus *The History of Herodotus,* trans. by George Rawlinson (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 1952), 7.135

Culture is the other half of freedom and inspires us to change. We have a statement in our family that we use when any of us continues to get unintended results from our actions. We tell each other, "If you always do what you always did, you'll always get what you always got." This aphorism is simple and true. "Becoming" begins with our freedom to choose. The freedom to develop our special excellence. Stephen Covey put it this way, citing the great Viktor Frankl: "Between stimulus and response is a space and our greatest power—the freedom to choose."[2] This is the freedom to change, which allows us to truly discover self.

I found this stimulus through witnessing widespread cultural decline and reading/studying the ideas of mentors—some in person and others speaking to me from books. My response was to become a liberal artist, and then to establish John Adams Academy. In the words of Robert M. Hutchins, "The aim for liberal education is human excellence, both private and public…. Its object is the excellence of man as man and man as citizen. It regards man as an end, not as a means; and it regards the ends of life and not the means to it. For this reason, it is the education of free men."[3]

Allan Bloom added, "Every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum." Some schooling systems make their moral goal clear to everyone, others are less forthcoming. The moral goal and culture of John Adams Academy is ordered by the Ten Core Values to produce servant leaders who are great citizens, souls and scholars. In this process, as Hutchins taught, "The liberal arts are not merely indispensable; they are unavoidable. Nobody can decide for himself whether he is going to be a human being. The only question open to him is whether he will be an ignorant, undeveloped one, or one who has sought to reach the highest point he is capable of attaining. The question, in short, is whether he will be a poor liberal artist or a good one."[4]

When I started this process, I could relate well to the experience of Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn:

> And I about made up my mind to pray; and see if I couldn't try to quit being the kind of a boy I was, and be better. So I kneeled down. But the words wouldn't come. Why wouldn't they? It warn't no use to try and hide it from Him. Nor from me, neither. I

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[2] Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, (Simon and Schuster, 2020), 77*.

[3] Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), 3.

[4] Ibid., 5.

> knowed very well why they wouldn't come. It was because my heart warn't right; it was because I warn't square; it was because I was playing double.[5]

Despite the career and public service success I had achieved, I knew I didn't have the type of great education I truly wanted. I knew I had to dig deep and work hard for the higher level of learning I desired. When I made this change and began earning a great American classical education, I realized that my real goal was to be a good—even great—liberal artist. The right culture is powerful because it inspires and motivates us to change.

In building John Adams Academy, we were looking for a specific result, a certain type of graduate and culture, as described in our Vision Statement of building servant leaders. We knew that to attain this result repeatedly, the *right kind of culture* is necessary. After a lot of searching, discussing and planning, we focused on a few crucial areas of culture that create the right conditions to foster the desired result. These include the following:

First—A Culture of Scholars

Before beginning our first year at the academy, we gathered all our teachers together for a "Socratic Seminar." During those discussions one of our teachers made the point that we create expectations in the words we use with those we teach. After that conversation we changed the use of "student" to "scholar," and we made it an institutional focus. We realized that the term "student" suggests one who studies out of duty, by assignment or as directed. In contrast, the word "scholar" denotes people who are the stewards and own their education. A "scholar" is one who is inspired and passionate about learning, and who sees learning as a task designed to influence and improve the world.

The word "scholar" has leisure as its root; in Greek it is "*skole*," in Latin "*scola*" and in English "school." This is the sort of academic virtue and leadership leisure that can produce philosophers, poets, prophets, mathematicians, scientists, inventors and statesmen. It is not idleness or indolence, but a choice to learn because of awakened passion for self-education. Scholarship means finding and expressing our virtue, genius and excellence in our work. While completing the assignments given to a "student" is often connected with toil, even drudgery, self-driven learning and teaching really becomes leisure when we choose what

[5] Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* (Barnes and Noble, 2011), 216-217.

occupies our time because we love it! Great learning is a regular feast and celebration of a new discovery, connection or epiphany.

This to me is one of the greatest of opportunities we have in teaching: to help those around us understand that school can and should be leisure, where we come together in a place to think, ponder and discuss great ideas surrounding truth, goodness and beauty. Solutions to the world's problems. Opportunities and ideas that can improve life for so many people. This is invigorating and fun! This is a sharp contrast to the sense of forced duty, rote drudgery and necessity that some associate with school, obtaining a degree or employment. We should all aspire to be scholars!

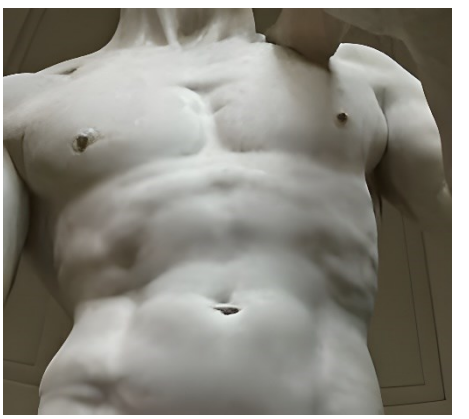
Second—A Culture of Becoming

A few years ago, Linda and I visited the "Accademia" in Florence where Michelangelo's *David* is housed. To find it we had to walk through the Gallery of Slaves where partially completed works of Michelangelo stand as sentinels to the ideal proportioned and balanced man, *David,* which Michelangelo felt we all aspire to become.

There are four perhaps tormented slaves still held captive in the marble from which they are struggling to find their freedom and become who they were meant to be. Each of these unfinished works appeared to be at various stages of mortal, mental and soul struggle as they strive toward a state of perfection. Michelangelo is credited to have said, "I saw the angel [we might read "scholar" or "servant leader"] in the marble and carved until I set him free."

The first of these figures is the *Young Slave*. He is early in his journey and seems burdened by a weary step with his left arm shielding his face. His back is unfinished with perhaps a burden that needs to be lifted. The second is the *Awakening Slave*. The limbs and torso are strong, which captures the difficult struggle to throw off perhaps burdens of the flesh or self-imposed limitations or weaknesses. The third is the *Bearded Slave*, suggesting a mature and healthy man who is perhaps closer to finding freedom and that special excellence or genius he has inside and needs to discover.

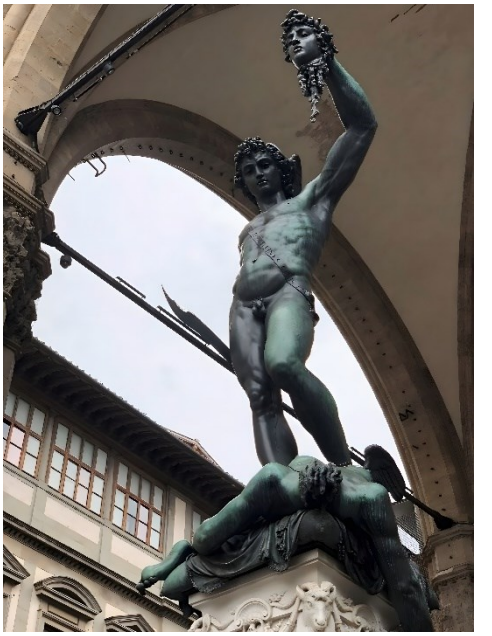
The fourth is the *Atlas*. Perhaps he has found his destiny. He carries a huge stone of weight next to his head on very wide and capable shoulders. The arms and shoulders may be supporting a mental or physical struggle with which we all grapple, or a major world problem that needs to be solved. It may also be that as we battle, we learn to carry the burdens of others. Perhaps another view is that to exit our mortal limitations we feel the weight that impedes our future and what or who we might become. As the master sculptor said, "Every block of stone has a statue inside it, and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it."



As I saw the statues in person and pondered these great works of art, I thought of my own journey and battles of virtue over vice in my pursuit of excellence and becoming a servant leader. This Hall of Slaves was an inspiration and metaphor for me—a call to become who I was meant to be.

My complete, finished and fully developed self is different than that of others because my genius and gifts

are unique to me. I do believe it takes immense and consistent struggle to make the choices suggested in the chips of the chisel and the water as it polishes the marble. It is the work of a lifetime to see, understand and transcend our fears and often self-imposed limitations.



We find our true self, our unique special gift and our best life by using the mirror against Medusa, and, like Perseus, by striking the fatal blow to the old self and eventually becoming the fully finished man or woman in the *David*. This is no easy task. It is many tasks, and many lessons.

As we continued our journey in Florence, we visited other artisans around the city who are still doing unique things such as laying fine pieces of stone to make tables and framed art scenes. We observed experts in the use of leather. One was a man who makes shoes. He carefully measures each person's feet and then crafts the shoes unique to them. Each is a work of art. As we engaged this young cobbler of perhaps 25 years of age in conversation, he lamented how many youth want to go into banking or computers, but few are learning how to create something beautiful by craft or art. Everything in this city—from the food to the surroundings—seemed to be about artistry and allowing unique beauty to be found. The inhabitants lament when seemingly "old things" and methods are thrown away; they mourn any loss of a historical way or knowledge that once served others. During our visit, and after, I kept feeling that Florence is a kindred city to a John Adams Academy education in the liberal arts, and perhaps a metaphor for servant leaders.

Liberal artists move forward the cause of liberty by freeing their own mind, body and soul by internalizing the teachings of the ancients, and then applying this wisdom to the present. We become disciples of truth, beauty and goodness and become servant leaders in order to set the angel in the marble free—in whatever ways our personal life goals and work engage. Once set free, we live to lift and liberate others.

Third—A Culture of Moral Authority

Servant leaders are directed by an inner compass of virtues or core values. In life we are typically given titles like mother, father, teacher, dean, director, trustee, CEO or something similar by someone above us. But position, title, credentials or degrees may be detriments in our path to servant leadership, to natural moral authority. We may believe that a position means we can tell others what to do. We see this in our families or schools where one assumes the role of leader due to age, grade, birth, position or tenure in the pecking order. It is interesting to note that Thomas Jefferson would not allow the University of Virginia to grant degrees while he was rector. He believed degrees were showy or pretentious, and he only wanted students for whom learning was a sufficient motivation.[6]

Contrast such outward credentials to the life of Mother Teresa. In 1994 she was invited, at the age of 83, to the National Prayer Breakfast with an audience of 3,000 that included the president and vice president. She said, "America, once known for generosity to the world, has become selfish. The greatest proof of that selfishness is abortion." She then tied abortion to violence in our cities and families. "If we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill each other? …[A]ny country that accepts abortion is not teaching its people to love, but to use any violence to get what they want."

The audience erupted into a standing ovation. She continued that many people are very, very concerned with the children in India, with the little children in Africa, where quite a few die of hunger, and also about violence in the United States. Abortion, she stated, causes blindness toward the sick, the hungry and the naked and leads to wars because life is so lightly valued and regarded. She delivered this without pounding the lectern or raising her voice.[7] What gave her the power to do this? Answer: Her moral authority came from the life she led serving the poor. "Moral authority is the difference between leadership that works and leadership that endures."[8] Immanuel Kant said, "I am constantly amazed by two things: the starry heavens above and the moral law within."[9]

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[6] Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership* (*Paulist Press*), 178.

[7] See Cal Thomas, Editorial, Tuesday February 15, 1994, *Los Angeles Times Syndicate*.

[8] Greenleaf, 4.

[9] Ibid.

We need to teach our children and scholars from a position of moral authority. Moral authority has the capacity to command, inspire and motivate others to want to change and follow. The following are great examples of how moral authority works with a virtuous leader: Jesus Christ (the supreme exemplar, in my opinion), Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Mohammad, the American Founding Fathers, Lincoln, Gandhi, Mother Teresa, etc.

Fourth—A Culture of Vision

A servant leader sees what is needed to improve his or her life, family, community and world, and goes to work to bring about this change. The dictum of Daniel Burnham was, "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood and probably themselves will not be realized."[10] A great vision stirs our hearts and souls to do more, be more and become more.

Many of us are familiar with the story of William Wilberforce, who led the abolishment of slavery in Great Britain—portrayed for modern audiences in the movie *Amazing Grace*. Did you know that a great American did something similar that predated Wilberforce's work? John Woolman, an eighteenth-century Quaker, was such a person. His journal is a literary masterpiece and serves as the second book in the first volume of *The Harvard Classics*. For most modern readers of history, it is hard to believe that Quakers were once slaveholders, but they were—until Woolman came along. After Woolman spent 30 years educating and teaching his fellow Quakers, by 1770 Quakers held no slaves. And, surprisingly for students of Civil War history, they gave up the practice voluntarily. Indeed, Woolman almost singlehandedly rid the Quaker society of slavery.

How did Woolman do it? Physically, he was not a strong man, but he accomplished his mission in journeys up and down the East Coast by foot and horseback searching out and visiting slaveholders. His approach was not to censure people because that typically caused animosity. Instead, he calmly raised questions like, "What does the owning of slaves do to you as a moral person?" and "What kind of institutions are you binding over your children?" He spent his lifetime simply traveling and peacefully talking to his people, discussing the immoralities of slavery. His consistency and dedication worked.

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[10] Ibid., 268.

What might have been the result if there had been 100 John Woolman's or even 10 or 20 traveling the colonies persuading people in a nonjudgmental fashion? Perhaps we would have avoided a devastating Civil War that cost over 600,000 lives, not to mention the numerous attendant social problems and fervor left over from slavery that are present to this day.[11] Leadership by inspirational persuasion is perhaps the most powerful, yet underutilized tool of the ages.

In the book of Zechariah an ancient phrase is used: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit" (Zechariah 4:6). This suggests that even in ancient wisdom the hope was that might and power would give way to the gentle spirit of invitation and love. I don't want you to think I don't support the military when I say this; however, I believe many of the tragedies and wars of our time might have been avoided if we had leaders dedicated to wisdom, who knew how to speak powerfully and write convincingly—such leadership almost always elicits true spirit and power and inspires change.

As human beings, a great vision stirs our hearts and souls to do more, to be more and to become more. These desires are nearly universal, but too many people perish for lack of vision. Learning to look ahead, to envision what might be and what should be—these are skills that we need to teach our youth, skills that are discussed and portrayed at length in the great classics. Servant leaders know how, or learn how, to convey and paint an image that is more powerful than the typical societal promises of mere title, money or position.

The skills of leadership vision are taught best by the classics, and by parents, teachers and mentors who help young people discover these lessons as they read and discuss the classics. One of the great messages about leadership vision is found in Plato's story about "The Cave." and another comes from Washington's inaugural addresses to the young American nation. Joan of Arc's sense of vision in her speeches is moving and inspiring. Lincoln, Churchill and so many others show us how to understand and share vision, and wise teachers help young scholars think and feel the importance of vision as they learn. Leadership vision, and the skills it fosters, is a natural part of the classical culture.

Actions by servant leaders are based on principles such as public and private virtue, natural law, liberty, freedom, life, property, service, love of all people, etc. Such principles have been tested, tried and proven in the furnace of time, and we can learn their wisdom by

[11] Greenleaf, 43-44.

observing both successful and fallen civilizations of the past. As mentioned, a great vision naturally stirs our hearts and souls to do more, be more and become more.

The example of servant leaders effectively conveys and paints an image for people, a model of leadership that is often more powerful than one born of position. Consider one example of this, the story of Nikolai Frederic Severin Grundtvig, the Father of Danish folk high schools. Before Grundtvig, the large bulk of Denmark's population worked in agriculture as peasants, and few of them had any significant level of education. By the early 19th century, reforms were undertaken on behalf of the peasants by some in the upper class, but the peasants themselves had little role or say in what happened. The peasants had little opportunity to better their lot in life.

Grundtvig changed this in 1836 with his essay "*The Danish Four Leaf Clover*" by introducing a new kind of education to the peasant class. "[H]e conceptualized a school, the Folk High School, as a short, intensive residence course for the young adults dealing with the history, poetry and the mythology of the Danish people. He addressed himself to the masses rather than the cultured…. [T]he peasants heard him, and their natural leaders responded to his call to start the Folk High Schools—with their own resources."[12] Grundtvig's words and vision stirred their souls and gave them confidence to work and build these schools. He taught them that education would significantly alter their future. His work reminds me of John Adams Academy's vision of "Restoring America's Heritage."

These Danish schools allowed the peasants to raise themselves up in learning and leadership, and to participate in more active ways in the Danish culture. The schools also stimulated the growth of agricultural schools and building cooperatives. After a disastrous war with Prussia in 1864 and the damage to their main export of corn, the former peasant class, many of them now educated in the folk high schools, felt empowered enough to switch to "butter and bacon."[13] How many of us have heard of the reputation of Danish ham that grew out of this history?

The people endured their trials and the changes to their livelihood, and turned difficulty into opportunity, due in large part to the long-term dedication and leadership of Grundtvig and his personal mission to restore "Danish heritage." The ideas and schools built

[12] Greenleaf, 46.

[13] Greenleaf, 47.

on his vision lifted the spirits of many people, who then raised themselves from the ashes of economic deprivation and world wars.[14] This history shows that the idea of exceptionalism is not just an American concept. Indeed, a deep study of world history makes it clear that exceptionalism is found in many nations and cultures—nearly always flourishing after the contributions and efforts of servant leaders with a great vision.

Fifth—A Culture of Inspiring

Servant leaders have an ability to build coalitions and exhibit broad influence in getting others to follow their path or vision—one action at a time. John Adams is one such example. He took the unusual step of defending a few British soldiers in 1770 after they fired upon a mob of patriots in Boston during the Boston Massacre. We may all remember his use of the phrase "facts are stubborn things." Despite standing up for these men, his patriotism and integrity were never in question. Noah Webster described him by praising his "pure morals," "firm attachment to republican government" and "inflexible integrity and patriotism." He also called Adams "the best-read statesman that the late Revolution called into notice."

Adams knew that "we should always remember that a free constitution of civil government cannot be purchased at too dear a rate, as there was nothing this side of Jerusalem of equal importance to mankind." During the debate on the Declaration of Independence it was Jefferson who stated that Adams "was not graceful nor elegant, nor remarkably fluent," but spoke "with a power of thought and expression that moved us from our seats." Recalling the moment long afterward, Adams would say he had been carried out of himself: "carried out in spirit as enthusiastic preachers sometimes express themselves." As mentioned earlier, Jefferson would ever after refer to Adams as the "Colossus of Independence.[15] Adams traveled overseas for years to establish a banking relationship with the Dutch and then gave all the credit to Washington's victory at Yorktown. He went to France with Jay and Franklin to negotiate the Treaty of Paris that recognized U.S. independence. This crowning achievement as a diplomat was then rewarded by sending him as our top representative to England. He later became the first vice president under George Washington and the second president of the

[14] Ibid., 46-47.

[15] David McCullough, *John Adams,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 125-127.

United States of America. Adams was inspiring as an orator, as a leader and, in our day, as an example to a new generation.

As we face the cultural and national crises of our times, how can we make a difference? The South African writer Laurens van der Post was once asked how Americans could help South Africans. The response: "Cultivate your own garden and its fragrance will be wafted across the ocean to us." What a brilliant response by a servant leader. "Show me. Model what you teach, and let your culture of greatness inspire change in us." Genuine leadership is often a simple matter of inspiring others. This is true of teachers, mentors, administrators, parents and many other leaders. Rufus Jones stated that "we can choose to be bearers of a torch or we can carefully husband a little flame and keep it from going out a little longer."[16]

When the right conditions are in place the servant leader takes his/her inner passion and special excellence to the appropriate personal, family or community venue. The servant leader studies events to see where things are today (realism), and where they should be (idealism), and voluntarily inserts himself to move society toward the ideal (leadership). One of the most effective ways to do this is in education, especially in schools where teachers understand that their main purpose is to inspire young scholars to seek their own education with passion and hard work.

Teachers, parents and other leaders who are themselves becoming scholars by learning, serving and becoming inspire "Building A Culture Of Greatness"; welcome home.

[16] Greenleaf, 255-258.

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Classical Education: The Foundation for a Culture of Greatness

Emmanuel Simon

Geometry Mentor

John Adams Academy—Online

"If you are on the wrong road," says C.S. Lewis, "progress means doing an about-turn and walking to the right road; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man."[1] Is this not what we, advocates of the classical education movement, claim? Building a culture of greatness requires that we look back and understand not only what America's national heritage is, but the preconditions that made her birth possible. Yet understanding our history and restoring classical education are interconnected by so many ties, that we cannot make progress in one without touching upon the other. Our task then is to make progress on this very issue: to understand classical education so that we may understand our own history, and by understanding our own history, we may with greater clarity identify what true classical education is.

The term "classical education," though used ambiguously in our day, has at least three clear sets of assumptions. First, the term assumes a historical form of education, i.e. an education passed down through a tradition. What we call classical education must find its basis in history. Yet history itself is insufficient, for although it may provide a survey of the different educational models held in past generations, it cannot answer whether the different educational models are alternatives or errors that deviate from the true model. It therefore belongs to philosophy, not history, to discern this topic. For this reason, there are two philosophical presuppositions that must be accounted for: one metaphysical, the other

[1] C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2009), 28.

anthropological. The metaphysical assumption is that the truths handed down from classical education are timeless and applicable in every time and age. Hence, this form of education, though ancient, will nevertheless remain new. Since the human person is the very subject matter of any education, and since the truths taught by such an education are unchanging, unperishable, and therefore applicable to every age in history, these truths will always remain relevant for mankind. Whatever classical education is then, it must have its basis in history *while* remaining consistent with the philosophical presuppositions that truth is timeless and that the human person and his or her improvement is its proper subject matter.

Explicitly aware of the assumptions tied to the term "classical education," we may now consider what classical education is. This will be done best by examining how the Medievals, and in particular the Scholastics, divided the arts and sciences. For unlike but thanks to the Ancients, the Scholastics had a developed set of subjects of study. Unlike the Moderns, they provide an adequate account that stands the test of time, as will be shown.

The Medievals understood classical education's curriculum to consist in knowledge entrenched in the arts and the sciences. All arts divide into two kinds: the servile arts, which are meant for the slave or person who attends to the world of work, and the liberal arts, which were studied by those who gazed upon those things that are higher, dignified, and unchanging.[2] The liberal arts exclusively divide into two groups, those that are concerned with words, which are external, called the trivium, and those which are concerned with concepts, which are internally conceived, called the quadrivium.[3]

The trivium consists of three arts: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Providing definitions of these, the Medieval thinker, Hugh of St. Victor writes, "Grammar is the knowledge of how to speak without error; dialectic is clear-sighted argument which separates the true from the false; rhetoric is the discipline of persuading to every suitable thing."[4] This division is not artificial, but is grounded upon the very nature and purposes of speech. This is proven by St. Bonaventure, who writes, "Since there are three reasons why one might express through speech what one has in mind: namely, to reveal one's thought, to move another to greater faith, or to arouse love or hatred in another, it follows that discursive or rational philosophy

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[2] Hugh of St. Victor, *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*. trans. Jerome Taylor. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), Book I, Ch. 1, 46-47.

[3] Cf. Ibid., II.20.75.

[4] Ibid., II.30.82.

has three sub-divisions: grammar, logic, and rhetoric."[5] The division of the trivium is based upon the reasons or purposes of human speech.

Similarly, the quadrivium exclusively divides into four arts: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Like the division of the trivium, the division of the quadrivium is grounded upon reason itself, rather than anything arbitrary. As Nicomachus of Gerasa and St. Albert the Great demonstrate, mathematics divides into continuous quantity, or magnitude, and discontinuous quantity, or multitude. A magnitude is a single quantity that can increase or decrease in size, such as the distance between two points. A multitude is a collection of disconnected or separate objects of the same kind, such as a herd of sheep. Magnitude exclusively divides into magnitude at rest, which we call Geometry, and magnitude in motion, which we call Astronomy. On the other hand, multitude exclusively divides into multitude considered absolutely, which we call Arithmetic, and multitude considered in relation to another, which we call Music.[6]

One closely following the argument may object to this division on the basis that an acceptance of this classical division requires a rejection of modern astronomical advancements. Suppose that the quadrivium divides into absolute multitude (Arithmetic), relative multitude (Music), magnitude at rest (Geometry), and magnitude in motion (Astronomy). Then, Geometry must be the study of magnitude at rest, the magnitude being the earth (Geo). But as modern philosophers and scientists have demonstrated, the earth is in motion.[7] Thus, Geometry cannot adequately be defined as "magnitude at rest." Since Geometry cannot adequately be defined as "magnitude at rest," there seems to be an error in the Ancient and Medieval division of the quadrivium.

> To answer this objection, let us first consider the words of Albert Einstein. No absolute uniform motion exists in classical physics. If two c.s. [i.e. coordinate systems] are moving uniformly, relative to each other, then there is no sense in saying, 'This c.s. is at rest and the other is moving'.....Can we

[5] Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*. trans. Zachary Hayes, OFM. (New York: St. Bonaventure University, 1996), Ch 4, 43.

[6] Cf. Nicomachus of Gerasa, *Introduction to Arithmetic*, trans. Martin Luther D'ooge. (London: Macmillan & Company, 1926), Book I, Ch 3, 186; Albert The Great, *Commentary on Euclid's Elements*. trans. Anthony Lo Bello. (Boston: Brill, 2003), Prologue, 3.

[7] Cf. Nicolaus Copernicus, Johannes Kepler, and Ptolemy, *The Almagest; On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres; Epitome of Copernican Astronomy: IV-V; The Harmonies of the World: V*. vol 15 ed. Mortimer J Adler, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1990), *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres*, Book 1, Ch 11, 529-532; Kepler, *Epitome of Copernican Astronomy*, *On the Position, Order, and Movement of the World*, 852.

> formulate physical laws so that they are valid for all c.s., not only those moving uniformly, but also those moving quite arbitrarily, relative to each other? If this can be done, our difficulties will be over. We shall then be able to apply the laws of nature to any c.s. The struggle, so violent in the early days of science, between the views of Ptolemy and Copernicus would then be quite meaningless. Either c.s. could be used with equal justification. The two sentences, 'the sun is at rest and the earth moves', or 'the sun moves and the earth is at rest', would simply mean two different conventions concerning two different c.s. could we build a real relativistic physics valid in all c.s.; a physics in which there would be no place for absolute, but only for relative, motion? This is indeed possible![8]

Einstein points out that uniform motion is relative, not absolute. Because uniform motion is relative, it requires a frame of reference within a coordinate system. If one considers the sun as the frame of reference in our coordinate system, then one can say, without any absurdity, that the sun is at rest while the other heavenly bodies, including the earth, are in motion. However, it is also possible to take the earth as the frame of reference within a coordinate system. In taking the earth as the frame of reference, then one can say, again without any absurdity, that the earth is at rest while the other heavenly bodies, including the sun, are in motion. Both the Heliocentric and Geocentric models of our solar system can therefore be salvaged, showing that the division of the quadrivium is both logically adequate and scientifically accurate. Hence it is evident that the seven liberal arts are not human inventions that were arbitrarily instituted, and can therefore change across different cultures, times, or points in history. Instead, such arts have their foundation grounded upon the unchanging nature of human speech and reason.

Now, the liberal arts are not the end-all-be-all to education. Rather, they are the gateway to the higher philosophical sciences. This is proven both by the very nature of what it is to be an art (τέχνη), as well as by the testimonies of the philosophers themselves. All arts are necessarily directed towards another end. But whatever is directed towards another is not itself sufficient. Thus, the Liberal Arts must be directed to something else, which the ancients called philosophy. It is for this reason that Plato calls these arts "preludes" to philosophy, saying, "Don't you know that all these subjects are merely preludes to the song itself that

[8] Albert Einstein, *The Evolution of Physics: From Early Concepts to Relativity and Quanta*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 223-224.

must be learned?"[9] Similarly, the Roman Orator Cicero writes, "No man can be an orator possessed of every praiseworthy accomplishment, unless he has attained the knowledge of everything important, and of all liberal arts."[10] Likewise, Nicomachus of Gerasa adds, "It is clear that these studies are like ladders and bridges that carry our minds from things apprehended by sense and opinion to those comprehended by the mind and understanding."[11] Again, Hugh of St. Victor writes, "For these, one might say, constitute the best instruments, the best rudiments, by which the way is prepared for the mind's complete knowledge of philosophic truth. Therefore, they are called by the name trivium and quadrivium, because by them, as by certain ways, a quick mind enters into the secret places of wisdom."[12] Thus, both reason and authority prove that the liberal arts are necessary prerequisites to the attainment of wisdom, an attainment pursued through philosophy.

The philosophical sciences naturally divide into two groups, speculative and practical. Whereas speculative philosophy strives for the contemplation of truth, practical or moral philosophy considers the regulation of morals.[13] Speculative philosophy further divides into rational philosophy, which considers the *ordering of the mind* through reflecting upon one's own thinking, and natural philosophy, which considers the *ordering of things* that human reasons considers but does not create.[14]

Moral philosophy divides into three sciences: individual ethics, domestic ethics, and politics.[15] Explicating the subject matter of these, St. Thomas writes, "The first of these, which is called individual ethics, considers an individual's operations as ordered to an end. The second, called domestic ethics, considers the operations of the domestic group. The third, called political science, considers the operations of the civic group."[16] Of these three,

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[9] Plato, *The Dialogues of Plato; The Seventh Letter*. vol. 6 ed. Mortimer J. Adler. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), *Republic*, Book VII, 531d.

[10] Cicero, *De Inventione*, *De Optimo Genere Oratorum, Topica*, trans. H. M. Hubbell, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1949), VI. 20.

[11] Nicomachus of Gerasa, *Introduction to Arithmetic*, Book I, Ch 3, 186.

[12] Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon*, Book III, Ch 3, 87.

[13] Cf. Ibid. I.11.59.

[14] Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. C.I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), Book I, Lecture 1.

[15] Cf. Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, Ch 4, 43.

[16] Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, Book I, Lecture 1

the greatest and most architectonic science belongs to political philosophy. As Aristotle notes, "This ordains what sciences ought to be instituted in cities, and which of them ought to be learnt by the several individuals, and to what extent…. The end of this science will comprehend in itself the ends of the other practical sciences; so that this will be human good itself. For though the good of an individual and a city is the same, yet to obtain and preserve the good of a city, appears to be something greater and more perfect."[17]

The first division of speculative philosophy, rational philosophy, divides into the trivium, i.e. Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric.[18] Now though we've already covered the division of the trivium, it is worth pointing out the distinction between the trivium considered as arts and as sciences. Considered as arts, the trivium are directed to the perfection of the intellect through adequate speech, right thinking, and the proper use of the available means of persuasion. But when understood synonymously with rational philosophy, they are pursued for the sake of scientific (i.e. true and certain) knowledge itself. With this, we may proceed to the division of natural philosophy.

The other division of speculative philosophy, natural philosophy, divides into three subsects: physics, mathematics, and metaphysics.[19] Expounding on the subject matter of these sciences, St. Bonaventure writes, "So it is that *physics* treats of the generation and corruption of things according to natural powers and seminal principles; *mathematics* considers abstract forms in terms of their intelligible causes; *metaphysics* is concerned with the knowledge of all beings according to their ideal causes, tracing them back to the one first principle from which they proceeded."[20] The highest of these three sciences is Metaphysics, for it is through Metaphysics that one comes to know the highest principle(s) of things. But as attested to by Aristotle, "Men do not think they know a thing until they have grasped the 'why' of it (which is to grasp its primary cause.)"[21] Hence, it is through Metaphysics that one attains the highest and loftiest knowledge of the causes available to the natural powers of human reason.

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[17] Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle,* vol. 8 ed. Mortimer J. Adler. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book I, Ch 2, 1094b 1-12.

[18] Cf. Bonaventure, *On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, Ch 4, 43.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Aristotle, *The Works of Aristotle,* vol. 7 ed. Mortimer J. Adler. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), *Physics*, Book II, Ch 3, 194b 18-20.

Again, an objection may be raised. It seems that the division of the philosophical sciences, with Metaphysics as the highest, ultimately ignores Kant's epistemological critique of Metaphysics. For, the pre-Kantian world failed to consider the possibility and knowability of Metaphysics in the first place. Given that time and space are not sensed, they are necessary mental categories for the very possibility of *a posteriori* or sense experience. All experience therefore presupposes an imposition of our own mental act. But the Metaphysician attempts to know being-in-itself, outside of any mental categories of experience, which is impossible. Therefore, pre-Kantian Metaphysics is impossible, and thus, the Ancient and Scholastic articulation of Metaphysics as a possible subject of study is a mere dogmatic assumption.

To answer this objection, one should distinguish between the Modern and Pre-Modern understanding of Metaphysics. Early Modern Metaphysics, as articulated by rationalists like Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz, was best defined as a synthetic *a priori* science, (i.e. a body of knowledge that combines ideas not founded from sense experience), as noted by Kant.[22] This is because such philosophers held the view that man is born with innate ideas, and denied the peripatetic axiom, "Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses."[23] Descartes thus writes, "Even the philosophers in the Schools [i.e. the Scholastics] hold it as a maxim that there is nothing in the understanding which has not first of all been in the senses, in which there is certainly no doubt that the ideas of God and of the soul have never been."[24]

But the Scholastics did not view Metaphysics as a synthetic *a priori* science. Instead, they seemed to understand Metaphysics as analytic *a posteriori*, i.e. a science that is acquired through the consideration of the unchanging nature of sensible things. The Scholastics held that things have essences, or an unchanging whatness, and that at least some essences are knowable. For example, human beings have an essence, i.e. a genus and a specific difference,

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[22] Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*. trans. James W. Ellington. (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 2001), Preamble, 20.

[23] Thomas Aquinas, *Questions Disputatae de Veritate*. trans. Robert W. Mulligan, S.J. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1952), Q. 2. A. 3 Arg 19.

[24] Francis Bacon, René Descartes, and Benedict de Spinoza, *Advancement of Learning; Novum Organum; New Atlantis; Rules for the Direction of the Mind; Discourse on the Method; Meditations on First Philosophy; Objections against the Meditations and Replies; The Geometry; Ethics*. vol 28. ed. Mortimer J. Adler. 2nd ed. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica,1990), Descartes, *Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting the Reason*, Part IV, 277.

which indicates the species. The genus of human is animal, the specific difference that separates him from all the other animals is rational. Thus, the essence of man is rational animal. This is not a mere conceptual definition in the mind, but an ontologically real definition that extramentally distinguishes man from the other animals. The modern objection against Metaphysics does not therefore stand, as it uses the same word, "Metaphysics." but fails to distinguish the different meanings held between the Ancients and Medievals on the one hand, and the Moderns on the other.

But though Metaphysics is considered to be the highest of the philosophical sciences, the Medievals, and in particular the Scholastics, understood that philosophy could not be an end in itself, pointing to the need for Theology. This is proven, not by way of mere subjective experience, but through the outcry of philosophy itself. As Aristotle states, "All men by nature desire to know….It is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize."[25] But this desire cannot be completely satisfied. For consider the words of Aquinas,

> The intellect attains perfection in so far as it knows the essence of a thing. If therefore an intellect knows the essence of some effect in which it is not possible to know the essence of the cause, that is, to know of the cause "what it is," that intellect cannot be said to reach that cause absolutely, although it may be able to gather from the effect the knowledge that the cause is. Consequently, when man knows an effect, and knows that it has a cause, there naturally remains in man the desire to know about that cause, 'what it is.' And this desire is one of wonder, and causes inquiry….If therefore the human intellect, knowing the essence of some created effect, knows no more of God than that He is, the perfection of that intellect does not yet reach absolutely the First Cause, but there remains in it the natural desire to seek the cause. And so it is not yet perfectly happy. Consequently, for perfect happiness the intellect needs to reach the very Essence of the First Cause. And thus it will have its perfection through union with God as with that object in which alone man's happiness consists.[26]

Aquinas demonstrates why it is that man's natural desire to know cannot be satiated. First, and in agreement with Aristotle, the intellect desires to know the essence or whatness of things, and that it is perfected insofar as it knows essences.[27] Secondly, if man fails to know

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[25] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book I, Ch 1, 980a1; Book I, Ch 2, 982b12.

[26] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*. vol. 17, ed. Mortimer J. Adler. 2nd Ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1990), I-II, Q 3. A 8. Resp.

[27] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, III, 6, 430b27.

the essence of a cause, man naturally wonders about that cause. But man through natural means fails to know the essence of God, the cause of all beings. This is proven by the fact that man's natural knowledge of God is attained through created effects.[28] Thus, because man's intellect is perfected insofar as it attains knowledge of a thing's essence, and because man can only know *that* God exists, and not *what* God is, man through the natural light of reason continues to wonder and inquire about God. Consequently, in order for man to be made happy, his intellect must attain the essence of God, which is unachievable through his own means. Therefore, and on the grounds of the philosophers alone, philosophy cannot attain its own end; its reach exceeding its grasp. This is why St. Bonaventure writes: "Since happiness is nothing other than the enjoyment of the highest good, and since the highest good is above us, we cannot find happiness without rising above ourselves, not by a bodily ascent, but by an ascent of the heart. But we cannot be elevated above ourselves unless a superior power lift us up."[29] Attaining happiness through philosophy requires that we transcend ourselves, which is impossible. All who desire happiness are thus left at an existential crossroad: faith or nihilism.

As the body travels from place to place, so the human heart travels by its affections. What shall we love then; those things of this world that pass away? But in loving such things, we too will perish. For Nietzsche prophesied well of our generation. "We are strangers to ourselves—we ourselves to ourselves; for this there is reason enough. We have never sought for ourselves, —how, then, could it happen, that someday we should find ourselves? Rightly has it been said: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'"[30] Our love must therefore be directed to something higher, noble, and unperishing. It is for this reason that we ought to dedicate our lives pursuing wisdom through the classical arts and sciences *as understood by the Medieval Scholastics*. For though such subjects are truly useless, it is not because they are beneath the dignity of what is useful, but rather, because they transcend it.[31] In short then, the classical arts and sciences unify the heart and mind, making us as human

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[28] Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Q 12. A 12, Resp to Obj 2.

[29] Bonaventure, *Mystical Opuscula*, vol 1. trans. Jose de Vinck. (Paterson, New Jersey: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960), *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, Ch 1, Sec. 1, 9.

[30] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*. trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale. (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), Preface, I, 15.

[31] Cf. Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P., *The Sense of Mystery: Clarity and Obscurity in the Intellectual Life*. trans Matthew K. Minerd. (Steubenville, Ohio: Emmaus Academic Press, 2017), 24.

beings free to do the very things that we are destined to do: to know things, and to love the very things we know.

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The Dangers of Democracy: Our Culture's Greatest Threat

"We must all be alike. Not everyone born free and equal, as the Constitution says, but everyone *made* equal. Each man the image of every other; then all are happy, for there are no mountains to make them cower, to judge themselves against."
~Ray Bradbury[1]

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Culture is crucial. Whether speaking of a family, school, business, or nation—culture determines the quality of life within each institution and the happiness or misery of the individuals in it. But what exactly is culture? And how much control do we have over it? In response to the first question, British scholar and philosopher Sir Roger Scruton is attributed saying, "culture is simply that which we collectively love." For what we love we value, and what we value we place at the center of our lives and build our world around. With this definition of culture, it follows that the answer to the second question is we have as much control over culture as we have over what we love, and what we love is a matter of cultivation and choice.

So, if one were to observe John Adams Academy, what would a person conclude about our culture? As a school, we hope our love of great books would be apparent, based on the portion of our budget we choose to spend on them and how much time each day we spend reading them. We hope an observer would see our love of great ideas, based on the hours of colloquium we choose to have each week discussing them and the reams of paper we use writing about them. And we hope it is obvious to any who visit that we love the great men and women of history, whose lives we choose to study and strive to emulate. We hope our love of great books, great ideas, and great people of history is evident at John Adams Academy, and we commit ourselves to building such a culture of greatness when we recite

[1] Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451,* (Simon Shuster: New York, 2013), 55.

our core values. But we also recognize we face powerful competing cultures we are simultaneously submerged in with social media and peer groups that vie for our love. Such cultural forces include video games that are more interesting (or at least more addictive) than reading a good book, TikTok videos and text messages that substitute for real conversation, and a pervasive materialistic worldview that insists a person's car or watch or phone are more important than pondering what it means to live a good life. At times it feels as if we were the ancient Israelites returning from Babylon to Jerusalem, who, attempting to rebuild their cultural capital, were forced to work with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other to fight off the neighboring cultures that did not want them to rebuild.

While there are many countercultures that thwart our efforts of building a culture of greatness, there is one force that surprisingly poses the greatest threat—surprising, because it lies at the heart of what most of us think it means to be an American—and that threat is the democratic spirit. But what, one may ask, is so dangerous about the democratic spirit and how does it hinder us in building a culture of greatness? Is not the democratic spirit, defined as a love for equality and liberty, the very thing that has unleashed our innate human potential and empowered us to build the greatest nation in the world? The answer to this reasonable objection is, yes, the democratic spirit has led to our current prosperity and greatness, but it also threatens to end it, for there is a dark side to democracy that our modern progressive view is blind to because we have divorced ourselves from the philosophical and political history that precedes it.

By exploring the history of democracy based on the work of Plato, Alexis de Tocqueville, and C.S. Lewis, we find that the democratic spirit indeed can be and often is antithetical to a culture of greatness because it encourages the vice of envy under the guise of equality, which, if allowed to dominate, forces equality in all aspects of life by tearing down the few great people rather than working to raise everyone up to their level. Furthermore, democracy's love of liberty often digresses from the positive sense of self-determination and willful virtue to self-indulgence and willful vice. If we would build a culture of greatness, we must not prize the democratic values of equality and liberty too highly but balance them by placing equal emphasis on the aristocratic values of wisdom and virtue. For if we do not check the natural democratic sensibilities with these more aristocratic ones, we will lose the best of both worlds and be tyrannized by our passions and the institutions that allow us to indulge in our vice.

Democracy in Plato's Republic

In his dialogue *The Republic*, Plato claims the most just, and therefore the greatest cultures will always be aristocratic in nature because they value wisdom and virtue, which are the hallmarks of a well ordered and happy soul. Democratic cultures, in contrast, will have a type of justice in "dispensing a certain equality to equals and unequals alike" and allowing all people the freedom to pursue their desires, but because democracies fail to recognize a hierarchy of values and quality of souls they will never attain the height of justice and greatness.[2] Plato, therefore, prefers aristocratic cultures and warns that democratic cultures lead to tyranny.

The Republic begins with Plato's main character Socrates seeking a definition of justice. He is concerned with justice because, upon asking the wealthy and esteemed old man Cephalus what "the greatest good that you have enjoyed from possessing great wealth" is, Socrates learns that material comforts of wealth are not so important at the end of life as is the consciousness that one has lived "a just and holy life."[3] Recognizing Cephalus as a great man worthy of emulation, and not presuming to know what it means to live a just and holy life, Socrates sets out to define it. After eliminating several inadequate definitions of the term, such as "speaking the truth and giving back what one takes",[4] "doing good to friends and harm to enemies",[5] and "the advantage of the established ruling body",[6] Plato settles on "justice being virtue and wisdom and injustice both vice and lack of learning."[7] But to define one abstract term by two equally esoteric ones complicates the matter rather than simplifies it. To better understand justice as both virtue and wisdom, Socrates imagines what it would take to become the most perfectly just, virtuous, and wise man.

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[2] Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 2016), book VIII, section 558c.

[3] Ibid., I.331a.

[4] Ibid., I.331d.

[5] Ibid., I.332d.

[6] Ibid., I.339a.

[7] Ibid., I.350d.

The perfect man, Socrates imagines, would "not wish to seem, but rather to be, good."[8] And to be good, rather than seem good in all circumstances requires a man who can subordinate the ignoble parts of his nature to those parts that are more noble.[9] According to Socrates, the human soul has three parts: The first and highest part is the mind or "the calculating part" which is man's rationality that leads to wisdom, forethought, and morality.[10] The second is "the spirited part", or that which wills and feels strongly and is to be obedient to and allied with the calculating part.[11] The third part is "the desiring—which is surely most of the soul in each and by nature most insatiable" and irrational, and must be subjected to the other two parts.[12]

Plato's Tripartite Soul		
Mind	The Calculating	Rational
Chest	The Spirited	Irrational
Stomach	The Desiring	

Such a man will be virtuous because he has subjected his animalistic desires and spirited will that comprise the lower and middle parts of his soul to the highest calculating part that is able to discern what is just, virtuous, and wise. The calculating part does not tyrannize the other parts, as each has its purpose in man's existence; but rather they work together under the calculating part's leadership to achieve a happy life. The perfect man then is one who has a properly ordered soul, and "doesn't let each part in him…meddle with each other, but really sets his own house in good order and rules himself; he arranges himself, becomes his own friend, and harmonizes the three parts".[13] Such a man, Socrates argues, would be a philosopher and a king by nature, having placed wisdom and virtue as the highest governing principles in his life and mastered his will and desires. And the happiest political state would be the one where such philosopher kings rule.[14]

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[8] Plato, I.361b.

[9] Ibid., IV.430c.

[10] Ibid., IV.441e.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., IV.442a-b.

[13] Plato, IV.443d.

[14] Ibid., IV.473d-e.

Monarchy, therefore, is Socrates' ideal state. However, because a true philosopher would not be content to rule but would seek to philosophize or keep "company with the divine" as Socrates puts it, it would be best to have an aristocracy of such men to rule together or take turns ruling.[15] Such men, Socrates admits, would be understandably rare and would need to undergo a particular education to become philosopher kings, but the culture that would value, invest in, and allow such men to rule would, in his mind, be the most just and happiest. Thus, the aristocratic rule of philosopher kings is Socrates' ideal state.

After sketching out this ideal state, Socrates considers what less ideal states might entail and what their cultural values would be. In so doing, he lays out a hierarchy of five distinct forms of government and their accompanying cultural values. He places monarchy and its close cousin aristocracy at the top, which value wisdom and virtue;[16] timocracy below them, which values victory and honor;[17] oligarchy below that, which values peace and wealth;[18] democracy near the bottom, which values equality and liberty;[19] and tyranny at the bottom, which values slavery and vice.[20]

Government Form	Corresponding Cultural Value
Monarchy & Aristocracy	Wisdom & Virtue
Timocracy	Victory & Honor
Oligarchy	Peace & Wealth
Democracy	Equality & Liberty
Tyranny	Slavery & Vice

While each of these lower forms of government, except for tyranny, have important and praiseworthy cultural values, the reason Socrates considers them less ideal forms is because they are not aimed at the highest goods of wisdom and virtue. Each form of government has its legitimate or stable states, but each predictably digress to the lower form based on a corruption of its original values.

[15] Ibid., VI.500d.

[16] Ibid., VIII.544e.

[17] Ibid., VIII.545b, and 548c-549c.

[18] Ibid., VIII.547a, and 550c-551b.

[19] Ibid., VIII.557a-d.

[20] Ibid., VIII.562a-c.

Upon viewing Socrates' hierarchy of governmental forms, modern people predictably bristle at the thought that he would rank democracy just above tyranny. But Socrates has his reasons, and they are worth examining. First, he argues that democracy is the result of a corrupted oligarchy or rule of wealth. He explains that when the rich are in power and unwisely begin to seek their advantage at the expense of the poor, the poor will justly revolt—"this is the establishment of democracy, whether it comes into being by arms or by the others' withdrawing due to fear."[21] Because of the economic tyranny experienced under the corrupted oligarchy, the people will want to set up a society so as to "organize [their] life in it privately just as it pleases [them]."[22] The result being a culture that values the ability "to do whatever one wants" and that allows for "all sorts of human beings [to] come to be", making it "the fairest of the regimes" for its variety of individuals.[23] Because they value individual freedom so highly, they will necessarily value equality, which prevents the tyranny of one individual freely ordering his life to infringe on another's ability to order his life differently. Thus, democracy "would be…a sweet regime, without rulers and many-colored, dispensing a certain equality to equals and unequals alike."[24] This life, defined by one's freedom to live as one pleases and equality of value on any given life is the stable democratic culture, and most modern people would recognize this as a good, perhaps even optimal way to live. However, Socrates goes on to point out to the modern democratic person the inherent problem in such a state and where it predictably leads.

In such a state, where people can do what they want without an imposed hierarchy of value regarding how best to order their lives, all actions become morally relative, neither better nor worse than another. As a result, people tend to give themselves up to their most gratifying desires, feelings, or thoughts. In Plato's terms, their souls become disordered as no preference is given to the calculating part to rule over their spirited or desiring parts. If he becomes fully infected by this idea of freedom and equality, the democratic man "doesn't admit true speech…that there are some pleasures belonging to fine and good desires and some belonging to bad desires, and that the ones must be practiced and honored and the others checked and enslaved. Rather, he shakes his head at all this and says that all are alike

[21] Plato, VIII.557a.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Plato, VIII.557c.

and must be honored on an equal basis."[25] With this attitude, democratic people return the vices of "insolence, anarchy, wastefulness, and shamelessness from exile, in a blaze of light, crowned and accompanied by numerous chorus, extolling and flattering them by calling insolence good education; anarchy, freedom; wastefulness, magnificence; and shamelessness, courage."[26] Thus, "greediness for what democracy defines as good [equality and liberty] also dissolves it", predictably ending in tyranny, as each individual is ruled by his or her passions until a strong armed ruler is the only one that can manage such disordered souls.

According to Plato, tyranny, or the rule of vice and slavery, is the fate of a democratic people who place equality and liberty as their highest cultural values. It is for this reason he prefers aristocracy over democracy, for aristocracy values wisdom and virtue, which are the characteristics of a just person who has a properly ordered soul. However, because Plato's ideal society is theoretical rather than historical, it is important to see how well his theory maps on to reality. To check his theory, we must measure it against the most successful and long-lasting democratic culture in history—The United States of America.

Democracy in America

After reading Plato's assessment of aristocracy and democracy, the skeptical reader may wonder how Plato's theory could be right given that the United States of America, arguably the most culturally democratic nation in the world, has lasted nearly 250 years without digressing into the tyranny Plato predicted. To address this fair critique, we will consider ways the founders of the United States organized the government to mitigate the tyrannical tendencies of democracy and how it played out in the first hundred years of its history based on our founding documents and observations of Alexis de Tocqueville in his classic political treatise *Democracy in America.*

First, it is important to establish America's fundamental democratic nature. In its founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, the democratic values of equality and liberty are clearly set forth as fundamental to American culture. In its most famous opening lines, the Declaration of Independence states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created *equal*, that they are endowed by their

[25] Ibid., VIII.561c.

[26] Ibid., VIII.560e.

Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, *Liberty* and the pursuit of Happiness."[27] With this opening statement, Thomas Jefferson and the other founders jeopardized their lives, fortunes and sacred honor for this document as an unapologetic declaration of democracy. They had had enough of abusive monarchies and aristocracies and were ready to dispense with all forms, shows, and customs of the old regime in favor of something more democratic. Eleven years later they produced their new democratic constitution, which begins by invoking the value of equality with its famous opening line "We the People," and declares its purpose to be to "secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity."[28] So whatever Plato might say about democracy, we must take the American founders at their word that they were committed to the values of equality and liberty when they conceived this nation. The question then becomes, was equality and liberty all they were committed to?

It was necessary perhaps, in conducting a successful political and cultural revolution, for the American founders to lead with the values that set them apart from the previous regime. But for all their rhetorical bravado in favor of democracy and its cultural values, the founders were not ignorant of the sins that easily beset a democratic people. They had read Plato's *Republic* and knew the turbulent history of democracy in the old world. So, in establishing a new government with explicit democratic values, they built into it implicit monarchical, aristocratic, timocratic and oligarchic values that were less heralded but just as essential to its purpose. For they, like Plato, cared about establishing justice in this more perfect union, creating a hybrid government that sought to incorporate the best virtues of each political form while at once checking their vices. Upon careful study of the U.S. Constitution, one realizes that we do not have a democratic government but rather a federal democratic republic that distributes power vertically and horizontally among different levels and branches of government.

Time and space do not permit a careful exploration of all the ways the founders embedded the cultural values of Plato's other forms of government into our constitution, but here are a few examples to demonstrate the point. In Article I, the legislative power is

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[27] Continental Congress, Declaration of Independence, in *Government and Economics Document Book,* (John Adams Academy, 2020), 52. (Added emphasis on "equality" and "Liberty").

[28] Continental Congress, Constitution of the United States, *Government and Economics Document Book,* (John Adams Academy, 2020), 56.

divided into a bicameral legislature with a house of representatives and a senate. Representatives are elected directly by the people of their respective states and are proportional to the population of each state. The house of representatives is the most democratic part of the U.S. government, but even then, it is not direct democracy but republican in nature as the people elect representatives rather than participate in making the laws themselves. Furthermore, the house is checked in its democratic zeal by the senate, whose members were not originally elected directly by the people but by state legislatures and are not proportional to state populations but all equal with two senators per state. The senate, as originally conceived, represented the aristocratic interests of the nation, which, in turn, was checked by the house of representatives with its democratic interests. Then we have the executive branch of the government in Article II that was originally designed to harness the efficiency of a king while restraining all his excesses, allowing him broad powers in times of war and limited scope to pass laws independent of the legislature. These examples, and many others, suggest that the architects of our constitution were conscientious not to give us a pure democracy, but a complex hybridized form even Plato failed to imagine.

But how has this explicitly democratic, implicitly monarchic, aristocratic, timocratic, and oligarchic form of government played out? Well, based on its nearly 250-year history, it has played out quite well overall. The stability of our nation does not prove Plato was wrong, rather it is a testament to the genius of our founders who recognized the wisdom in Plato's insights and constructed a new form of government that reflected them. Furthermore, the troubling digressions our nation has experienced into the tyrannies Plato warns show that we are not immune to corruption in spite of our well-formed constitution. Alexis de Tocqueville, a French aristocrat who spent several years living and traveling in America in the early 1800s, endeavored to capture the effect democracy and its values of equality and liberty had on American culture and politics in its first hundred years. And while much of his commentary is laudatory and encouraging of American democracy, he does not spare us dire diagnoses of the democratic spirit in early America, nor does he qualify Plato's ultimate prediction of where we are headed if we value equality and liberty above all else.

The primary cultural value Tocqueville was concerned about leading to tyranny in early America was not liberty but equality. He thought the religious culture in America had sufficiently educated the people to know "there is a liberty of corrupt nature…to do what they list…impatient of all restraint", and "a civil, a moral, and a federal liberty" to do "that

only which is just and good".[29] And Tocqueville observed that Americans, by and large, lived by the latter definition of liberty. However, "freedom is not the principal and continuous object of their desire" he argues, "what they love with an eternal love is equality…and they would sooner consent to perish than to lose it."[30] Tocqueville does not think this love of equality is all bad, for "there is in fact a manly and legitimate passion for equality that incites men to want all to be strong and esteemed…elevat[ing] the small to the rank of the great".[31] This is the great and necessary idea of equality that inspires us to believe we all have the makings of greatness in us. But, as Tocqueville rightly observed, "one also encounters a depraved taste for equality in the human heart that brings the weak to want to draw the strong to their level and that reduces men to preferring equality in servitude to inequality in freedom." Thus the primary corrupting tendency of "democratic institutions [is to] develop the sentiment of envy in the human heart to a very high degree", distorting the soul with the desire to tear the greatness of wisdom and virtue down to the mediocre level of the masses, rather than admire and aspire to it.[32] Envy is not inevitable, but it is easier than virtue and is the more likely course the majority will take.

While envy is perhaps the most dangerous vice democratic people are susceptible to, "one must recognize that equality…suggests to men [other] very dangerous instincts" as "it tends to isolate them from one another and to bring each of them to be occupied with himself alone."[33] Equality breeds individualism—a trait Americans pride themselves on. It is a "reflective and peaceable sentiment that disposes each citizen to isolate himself from the mass of those like him and to withdraw to one side with his family and friends" creating "a little society for his own use."[34] But Tocqueville argues that "individualism proceeds from an erroneous judgment" and will, if taken to its logical conclusion, "dr[y] up…the source of public virtues…and will finally be absorbed in selfishness."[35] A purely selfish and

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[29] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 200), 42.

[30] Ibid., 52.

[31] Tocqueville, 52.

[32] Ibid., 189.

[33] Ibid., 419.

[34] Ibid., 482.

[35] Ibid., 482-483.

individualistic society would of course destroy our nation, for there would be no conception of good beyond our immediate desires or of a community beyond the limited scope of our immediate friends and family. But this is not all. Democracy also "opens [our] souls excessively to the love of material enjoyments," due to its tendency to view all pursuits and ways of life equally, allowing the most demanding of our desires to dominate our pursuits.[36] This materialism then "disposes men to believe that all is nothing but matter" and to seek out "these enjoyments with an insane ardor" while ignoring the immaterial goods of the soul.[37]

Based on these vices of envy, selfishness, and materialism, Tocqueville predicts a different kind of tyranny for the American people if they indulge their love for equality at all costs. He says, "if despotism came to be established [in America]…it would be more extensive and milder [than past tyrannies], and it would degrade men without tormenting them."[38] This new despotism, he imagines, would look like "an innumerable crowd of like and equal men who revolve on themselves without repose, procuring the small vulgar pleasures with which they fill their souls. Each of them withdrawn and apart, is like a stranger to the destiny of all the others…he is beside them, but he does not see them; he touches them and does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone."[39] And yet, somewhat paradoxically, the force of public opinion on the individual in this state would be so great as to "extinguish the intellectual freedom…so that the human spirit, having broken all the shackles that classes or men formerly imposed on it, would be tightly chained to the general will of the greatest number."[40] And "so it is that every day it renders the employment of free will less useful and more rare…[e]quality [having] prepared men for all these things."[41] This type of despotism, he argues,

> does not break wills, but it softens them, bends them, and directs them; it rarely forces one to act, but it constantly opposes itself to one's acting; it does not destroy, it prevents things from being born; it does not tyrannize, it hinders, compromises, enervates, extinguishes, dazes, and finally reduces each nation to being nothing more

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[36] Ibid., 419.

[37] Tocqueville, 519.

[38] Ibid., 662.

[39] Ibid., 663.

[40] Ibid., 210.

[41] Ibid., 663.

> than a herd of timid and industrious animals of which the government is the shepherd.[42]

To save the world from such a fate is the reason Tocqueville wrote his book. For he "wished to expose to broad daylight the perils that equality brings to human independence because I firmly believe that these perils are the most formidable as well as the least foreseen of all those that the future holds."[43] It remains our task to consider how his prediction has played out and how to prevent our society's further decline if it is not too late.

Democracy in the Modern World

About one hundred years after Tocqueville published *Democracy in America,* another keen observer and critic of democracy by the name of Clive Staples Lewis began expressing similar concerns. As a British scholar and philosopher writing during the second world war when his country was fighting against the democratically elected dictator Adolf Hitler, Lewis knew just how tyrannical democracy could be. But as a student of history, he also knew how oppressive kings and aristocracies could be without the democratic zeal for equality and liberty. In his efforts to strike a balance between Plato's democratic and aristocratic values, he wrote two essays entitled "Equality" and "Democratic Education" as well as a short speech called "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" written from the perspective of a devil wherein Lewis lays out his views on the matter. He concludes that democracy and its values are not ultimate goods, but unfortunate necessities made essential by our fallen nature, and that if we wish to maintain a stable democracy that does not digress into tyranny, we must pursue "not the education which democrats like, but the education which will preserve democracy," which he views as essentially aristocratic in nature.[44]

In his essay "Equality," Lewis states, "I am a democrat because I believe in the Fall of Man."[45] Most people, he presumes, are democrats for the opposite reason, believing that because common men are "so wise and good that everyone deserve[s] a share in the

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Tocqueville, 672.

[44] C.S. Lewis, "Democratic Education," in *Time and Tide,* XXV (29 April 1944), 369. Accessed March 29, 2024 https://www.tlchrist.info/cs_lewis.htm.

[45] C.S. Lewis, "Equality," in *The Spectator* CLXXI (1943), 8. Accessed January 18, 2024 http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/27th-august-1943/8/equality.

government." But that, he argues, is not true. Democratic nations are not democratic because they discovered the masses were more able rulers, but because they found no individual or group could be trusted with the power. Lewis does not revel in this notion of equality, for it is no great boast to find all people ultimately inadequate to rule. But he sees in it a good or utility that could spell the cure for democracy's tendency to digress into tyranny. Rather than set equality up as an ultimate good, "(like wisdom or happiness) which are good simply in themselves and for their own sakes", Lewis places it in the "same class as medicine, which is good because we are sick."[46] A just, wise, and virtuous person does not need equality, just as a healthy man does not need medicine. There is no "spiritual sustenance" in it and "when equality is treated not as a medicine…but as an ideal, we begin to breed that stunted and envious sort of mind which hates all superiority."[47] As a sick or fallen people, therefore, we should take our medicine and solemnly proclaim the equality of man. But within our souls we should cultivate hierarchy of value, as Plato recommended, for "hierarchy within can alone preserve egalitarianism without."[48]

In order to develop this internal hierarchy while maintaining external equality, Lewis argues we must pursue an education that is decidedly aristocratic in its values. Equality is a necessity of political life, but "it has no place in the world of the mind."[49] Beauty, virtue, and truth are not democratic and are only achieved by those who discipline themselves and make the proper sacrifices to achieve them. To insist on an equality of aesthetics, ethics, and intelligence would be to destroy each of them in turn, for "envy is insatiable" and will reduce all things to the lowest common denominator.[50] Not all intellectual and moral goods are created equal, even if all people are created equal in some fundamental sense. And if no distinction is drawn between goods according to their relation to living a good life, but rather all offered indiscriminately as equals, we will find ourselves in a relativistic world unable to distinguish good from evil, beauty from ugliness, truth from falsehood. An education that will preserve democracy in its most stable form, Lewis argues, "must be, in its own field,

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[46] Lewis, "Equality".

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Lewis, "Democratic Education," 369.

[50] Ibid.

ruthlessly aristocratic [and] shamelessly 'highbrow.'"[51] It must set virtue and wisdom up as its highest aspiration and unapologetically organize its curriculum around them. It must "subordinate the interests of the many to those of the few", allowing the smart and industrious ones to rise as high as they can and the dull or lazy ones to sink as low as they choose.[52] Those not interested in wisdom and virtue, but in honor or wealth or equality may demand courses and majors in their disciplines of interest and schools may be right to provide them; but their education should not be equated to the highest form. Like the three parts of the soul, the other lower forms of education have their essential place in human life, but not the highest place. Democratic societies must recognize this necessity of favoring the education of virtue and wisdom above honor, wealth, and equality, otherwise, their "democracy nor any other State can thrive."[53]

As an educator himself, Lewis witnessed what havoc the democratic impulse could have in education as well as society more broadly. In his devilish speech "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," written as an appendage to his well-known book *Screwtape Letters*, Lewis speculates how the devil might view democracy and use it to accomplish his diabolical purposes. "*Democracy* is the word with which you must lead them by the nose," Screwtape instructs an assembly of devils, for it is by that word they can discredit and finally eliminate "every kind of human excellence—moral, cultural, social, or intellectual."[54] "The basic principle of the new education", Screwtape continues, "is to be that dunces and idlers must not be made to feel inferior to intelligent and industrious pupils. That would be 'undemocratic'" Rather, "examinations must be framed so that nearly all the students get good marks" and "children who are fit to proceed to a higher class may be artificially kept back, because the others would get a *trauma*— Beelzebub, what a useful word!—by being left behind."[55] This diabolical principle of education, Screwtape posits, will effectively abolish education by removing "all incentives to learn and all penalties for not learning",

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[51] Lewis, "Democratic Education," 369.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

[54] C.S. Lewis, "Screwtape Proposes a Toast" in *The Complete C.S. Lewis Signature Classics,* (HarperOne: New York, 2007), 290, 292.

[55] Lewis, "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," 293, 294.

making schools places of "imperturbable conceit and incurable ignorance" rather than the institutions of wisdom and virtue they were intended to be.[56]

Then, once this obsession of equality is established among the people through the education system, they will "do the work that was once done by the most ancient Dictatorships" and tyrannize each other.[57] In ancient tyrannies, a tactic dictators would use to maintain control was to "allow no pre-eminence among [their] subjects. Let[ting] no man live who [was] wiser, or better, or more famous, or even handsomer than the mass."[58] All were to be cut down "to a level; all slaves, all ciphers, all nobodies. All equals." But in modern democracies where the diabolical love of equality reigns, the all-powerful tyrant does not need to cut down the individuals who stand above the masses, the individuals or the masses will do it themselves in the name of equality. Such are the dangers of democracy according to Lewis.

Conclusion

Modern democratic countries are perhaps the most free, prosperous, and egalitarian societies the world has ever seen. However, democracy has its diabolical side as well, which ancient philosophy, modern history, and to some extent our own lived experience can bear witness to. Plato warned of the dangers of democracy in his dialogue *The Republic,* explaining how prizing equality and liberty too highly can lead a people to disorder their souls by pursuing the base desires that are made equal to the nobler sentiments and high ideals of the mind. Plato's theoretical explanation of democracy is further substantiated by Alexis de Tocqueville's observations in his book *Democracy in America,* where he explains the major vices of envy, selfishness, and materialism he saw already at work among Americans. C.S. Lewis confirms these democratic vices were alive and well in the modern era with a particularly pronounced and worrisome presence in education.

The main reason our democratic society has lasted as long as it has without digressing into complete tyranny is arguably because of the mixed governmental form we have that seeks to harness the positive effects of valuing wisdom and virtue, victory and honor, peace

[56] Lewis, "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," 294.

[57] Ibid., 292.

[58] Ibid.

and prosperity, equality and liberty while checking all of their vices. But if we wish to maintain and improve upon what political stability and greatness of culture we still enjoy, we must pursue the type of education a democratic people require rather than the type they prefer. We must pursue the aristocratic education recommended by Plato and Lewis that properly orders the soul. We must subordinate our instinctual desire to the moral sentiments of the soul and reason of the intellect, creating a harmonious union within the human character that can then scale up to the family, community and nation. Only then will we be truly great.

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Slow Down to Go Faster: Learning an Abundance of Time

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Once upon a time there was a Hare, always jumping about, speeding through the minutes. On the other hand, was the old Tortoise, slowly moving through each day. One spring morning, as the Hare was rushing past the Tortoise on her way down the street, she tripped and spilled the armful of bundles she carried. "Oh my! I don't have time for this!" she declared, sighing in frustration. The Tortoise, seeing her predicament, paused, and slowly started to help her gather her belongings.

"I just don't know how you do it!" Hare spoke as if to herself, her words piling on top of each other in quick succession. "You never seem to be rushing like I do and are never carrying so many things. And yet you seem to be happy accomplishing…something? What do you accomplish in such a slow manner, anyways? I barely have time to manage the things I do and there is always more escaping me! I run, run, run, and do it all the fastest I know how, but I always feel somewhat behind, the only solution being to learn how to go faster." The Tortoise wasn't sure if the Hare was asking for an answer, so she stayed quiet. The Hare, with arms reloaded and ready to go said, "Well, thanks for the talk! I've got to run. Maybe I will see you around again sometime," and dashed off.

The Tortoise shook her head and continued on her way. She had a list of things to accomplish as well—of course—for that is the way of all living things. But she would pause at a flowering lilac bush near a fence to breathe in the sweet scent or stop and wave at a friend through a window. She finally reached home, refreshed and ready to start a new task.

One day a few weeks later, as summer began to open the rose bushes, and bees could be seen humming through the air from one flower to another—Hare ran across the Tortoise

and nearly tripped over her in the path. Tortoise had bent down to notice the ants working to carry a large moth they had found toward their underground tunnels. “What are you doing in the middle of the path, blocking the way?” snapped the Hare, frustrated at being held up by yet another set of spilled belongings. “It doesn’t make sense how you manage to do anything when you pause so often to look around. I don’t have time for this!”

Tortoise again helped to pick up the scattered items and smiled a bit at the outburst, unperturbed. “How can you smile?!” said Hare. “Why don’t you try moving a bit faster and accomplish more, then you won’t find my predicament so funny.”

“Oh, I don’t find it funny,” said the Hare. “I was just remembering when I used to try and run around so and saw my old self in you.”

“You!? Run around?! That’s preposterous,” said Hare. “I’ve never seen you rush from one place to another; you seem always to meander and pause and don’t seem to accomplish much of anything.”

“Oh, I was once very busy. I thought my mother Tortoise to be so slow and determined that I would never become like her. So, I filled my life with busyness until I practically collapsed. One day, I was crying to my mother at how overwhelmed I was when she told me, ‘Slow down, dear. You will be able to do more.’ I decided to make it an experiment and have never turned back.”

“That’s impossible!” said the Hare. “You must be lying! There is no possible way to slow down and do more!” For the first time that Tortoise had ever seen, Hare sat down and paused at the thought of such nonsense. “I just don’t believe that going slower could speed up anything! That’s an oxymoron! And I’m a moron for even pausing to consider it.” Tortoise could see that Hare had been put off kilter by this strange thought. Hare also noticed the ants—and scowled, “I’m too busy to sit here like this.” She stood up and started to speed away.

“Wait a moment!” called Tortoise. Tortoise wasn’t one to suddenly speak up about anything, but an idea had been percolating for a long time as she had watched the young Hare run around through the days and had finally taken shape while Hare sat there. “I have a proposition for you.”

Hare paused, and looked back, “If it is something worth doing then I will add it to my list. Please be quick, I have a lot to do.”

"I propose a test. Give us each the same list of projects to accomplish in a specific time and we shall see who is able to finish first."

"HA! That's easy—I would do it all in a quarter of the time as you do. You move so slowly and seem to do so little."

"Well, then it should be an easy competition for you then," said Tortoise. "What do you have to lose?"

"What do I have to win either? It seems a waste of my precious time—little of it as there is anyways."

"Well, what if you choose a list of the tasks you already need to do so it doesn't add to your burden. And the winner gets to have 2 jars of honey from my beekeeper friend Mr. Bear. I've worked with him a few times and I'm sure he'd be willing to donate to our friendly wager."

"Well, if it is already something I would be working on anyways, then it can't hurt to get some free honey in the bargain. Fine, consider it a deal. I will make up a list for you and we will give each other three days to do it all. I want to be fair and give you at least a chance to try and speed up your efforts when you see yourself falling behind."

The two shook hands and Hare sped away. Tortoise took one more look at the honeybee and muttered, "I guess we shall see," with a small smile.

The day arrived for the three-day race to begin and the list of tasks was produced. Hare took off running, knowing that she would need every moment, she fully expected some late-night work in order to do it all. Tortoise took the list and read through it slowly. She looked around and found a notebook where she spent the next hour analyzing the list and writing slowly. Hare passed by her window on one of the errands and shook her head, thinking Tortoise would never catch up.

The next day Tortoise could be seen walking resolutely from one place to another, pausing to show her list of needs to an acquaintance and receiving a helpful hand or someone pointing her in the right direction. Hare scampered back and forth—weaving in and out of places sometimes 2-3 times before finishing a task. At lunch, Hare could be seen quickly snatching a bite of food as she kept working.

Tortoise put down her work and sat on her porch sipping a cup of tea for a few minutes. She thought about a time, long ago, with her friend Bear the beekeeper. She had been so afraid of bees that she popped her head into her shell if she even heard a slight

buzzing sound. One day, when visiting Bear, he had asked if she would like to see one of his hives. “I don’t think I can do that,” she had said. But in her heart, she was curious. After a few minutes of talking it over together and working through her fears, Bear offered Tortoise a large bee-suit and gave her a small smoking canister to hold.

“I will guide you,” he said. “Move slowly, bees feel nervous when you approach the hive too quickly. It upsets the colony. Breath through your fears and follow me.”

They approached the hive at a slow pace, Tortoise focusing hard on the instruction to keep breathing. Bear opened the lid and motioned for her to use the smoker to gently mist the top of the hive. Bees scurried away and Tortoise was overcome with how chaotic everything seemed. Bear said, “Watch here, do you see the two antennae beginning to poke out of that cell? It’s a baby bee being born! See how it takes a moment to gain its bearings and then turns back to clean out its own birth cell before moving on. From the first moment, bees know their purpose and focus on the work at hand.”

Tortoise leaned in, fascinated. She was still nervous, but as her fear receded into wonder, her racing heart slowed down, and she was able to see more details.

Bear chuckled a little as he noticed her inch closer. “I thought you would like this. A slow-moving tortoise such as yourself may find a lot in common with the industrious honeybee!”

“Really? I never thought of bees having anything to do with being slow…”

Bear pointed to a bee swooping in lazy circles around the hive before flying away into the distance. “When most of us look at the bee, it seems to be jumping from one flower to another, with no rhyme or reason. Our idea of busy is so often one where we run from one task to another without pausing to look around and take stock of where we are. When a forager bee first leaves the hive, it will pause to swoop around in circles to identify and determine its location and direction before heading out to search for flowers. What would it be like if every time we leave our home or begin a new task, we were to pause and look around to center ourselves before taking off? And when the honeybee starts collecting nectar, rather than just jumping from one flower to another, it will choose just one kind to seek after and will not use another for the entire day. Even when there are many kinds of flowers around, the honeybee is constant to just one kind at a time. Isn’t that a kind of slowing down? When we focus on seeking one thing rather than just jumping around to whatever is closest?”

"I never thought of it that way," replied Tortoise. "It makes sense. People often look at me and assume that I don't accomplish much, when in reality I have loads to do. I just can't change directions or turn around very easily—what with my shell and all. So, I make sure to know where I am going before I start out or I might take forever to reach there."

"Look in the hive again. At first glance it seems chaotic. But as you watch and pay attention, the chaos takes shape into ordered action and as you watch longer, your eyes start to see beyond the seemingly frantic movement to something different. You will begin to see some bees welcoming back the foragers, antennae touching and taking time to pass the nectar on to be utilized by the workers within the hive. Another forager starts to dance to show the way to a good nectar source and a large group stand back and watch and listen to hear the news and learn the directions. There are nurse bees and clean up bees, guard bees and wax building bees. Each bee has a purpose, and they focus their efforts, never altering their task at hand, working together but individually; taking time to connect and to share with each other their discoveries. They aren't frantic, they have purpose. And when we slow down long enough to observe them, we see that their movements don't waste any energy. They toil together without rushing. Of course, there are thousands of them, so they are crowded and climbing over one another, but they are not just running around. Just look at the quality and beauty and symmetry of each individual cell—there is no wasted space and no wasted energy. The bee will never rush through the job in a sloppy way."

Tortoise stood and watched as Bear slowly lifted out each frame, checking for signs of a healthy colony. He looked for eggs, larvae, capped brood, pollen, and honey. Finally, he paused and said, "There she is. That's the queen. Would you like to see her?"

Tortoise nodded and leaned in. She saw a bee larger than the others—surrounded by tiny attendants. The queen moved purposefully from one cell to another, checking to see if it was in good order for an egg. Tortoise found herself feeling a sense of awe for the tiny matron of so many thousands of bees.

"Talk about an amazing creature. Do you want to know one of the things that fascinates me most about the queen?"

Bear slowly put the frame with the queen back in the hive, so he didn't disrupt her any longer. He spoke as he replaced each frame, moving slowly and gently so that the bees could move out of the way and avoid being crushed or injured. "Every single worker bee in this hive could have become a queen—there is no difference between the egg of the queen or

the worker. The only difference is that when the workers want to make a new queen—they prepare a larger cell for the larva to grow and feed her only on royal jelly. All the other larvae get just bee bread."

"That's it?"

"Yes. Crazy isn't it? How what we put into ourselves can change our outcome so dramatically?" Bear finished and put the lid on the hive. Tortoise realized that she hadn't been aware of the time passing with so much to notice and see. She moved away slowly with Bear towards his back porch. He helped her take off the bee suit.

Tortoise sat with bear and chewed a piece of honeycomb he offered. After a few minutes, she pondered aloud, "I'm going to be thinking for a long time about what you showed me. I wonder if even I don't understand what it means to slow down enough to connect with others…with myself…"

As Tortoise finished her cup of tea, she smiled at the memory and decided to call Bear to see if he would drop off those two jars of honey for the winner. She took one more deep breath before getting up and checking her notes for her next objective.

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After two and a half days of dashing up and down, back and forth, and staying up late, Hare was nearly finished and was exhausted. She looked out the window and saw the Tortoise walking by—as always with measured step—and figured that there was no possible way for Tortoise to finish in time. With only a little more to do, the Hare allowed herself a rare moment to briefly put her head down on the table. "I'll just give myself 15 minutes… just 15 minutes for a quick nap," she thought. "It won't put me too far behind and I will be able to finish far sooner than Tortoise, I'm sure." With that, she fell fast asleep—dreaming of golden jars of honey. Nearly 2 hours later, she heard a light knocking at the door and jumped up, startled. "Oh my! What have I done? How could I sleep that long?" she wondered. The knock on the door repeated and Hare ran to open it, rubbing her eyes quickly to look more awake. To her surprise, she saw the Tortoise standing there holding two jars of honey. "Oh! Have you given up?" she asked. "I have just a little more to finish up—you are welcome to come in and wait for me as I work."

Tortoise smiled and said, "I would be happy to come in and wait. I'm all through and would love to sit and visit for a while."

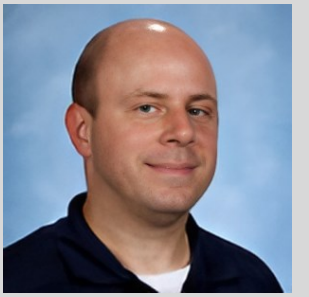
Hare's jaw dropped. She sat down and just started to cry. "I'm so tired, I've been running and running and running. How did you do it?"

Tortoise was silent for a long time. "Slow down to go faster." Hare sniffled and took a long breath. Tortoise smiled and offered Hare one of the jars of honey.

"One must practice slowly, then more slowly, and finally slowly."

~Saint-Saens

Nature and Nurture: Abolishing a False Dichotomy



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Psychologists have attempted for quite some time to determine just how much of human nature is hereditary and how much is a result of the effects of our environment. Some philosophers, such as John Locke, have advocated the view that humans are essentially a blank slate at birth, and every ability they possess in life is acquired through training, education, and interaction with their surroundings (including other people). Others have put forward the notion that each individual has innate faculties and inborn levels of those faculties, and thus their later abilities are basically fixed from the time of their birth. In modern times, researchers have even conducted studies using pairs of identical twins separated at birth in order to discern more clearly the influences of nature and nurture. Leaving aside for a moment the questions raised by such studies, (How large of a sample size is that likely to be, exactly? How did they find the pairs of twins in the first place? Etc.), the effort may in the end prove to be not only fruitless, but even meaningless. According to the twelfth century scholar John of Salisbury, nature and nurture may be so closely intertwined as to be really inseparable: whatever natural abilities one has must be developed, and whatever abilities one develops must be inherent in her or his nature.

John makes his argument for the necessary cooperation of these two forces in his "defense of the verbal and logical arts," *The Metalogicon*. At the beginning of his book, he asserts that nature set mankind apart from her other creations "by the privilege of reason,

and… the faculty of speech."[1] These faculties, reason and speech, belong to humanity as part of their nature: no one needs to implant the ability to learn to speak or to think into a child's brain, for the ability is already there at birth. However, those abilities also do not develop properly without proper training and experiences, though some claim that they do. Cornificius, the fellow teacher against whom John writes his *Metalogicon*, believes that ability in speaking and/or reasoning come to individuals as gifts, whether or not those individuals strive to intentionally develop them. John summarizes his teaching thus: "Work and diligence are superfluous where nature has spontaneously and gratuitously bestowed eloquence, whereas they are futile and silly where she has refused to grant it."[2] This could well have been spoken by any number of young people in modern American schools (and indeed has), rather than a philosophy professor from the Middle Ages. Perhaps modern American school teachers can benefit from studying John's answer to this assertion, thereby being able to answer their students' echoes of it.

John of Salisbury first answers the claims of Cornificius with characteristic sarcasm: if linguistic ability comes as a gift, then "[w]hy, therefore, oh most learned Cornificians, do you not understand all languages?"[3] Having amusingly pointed out the glaring flaw in his opponent's argument, he begins to construct his own. Nature is, he says, "a certain genitive force, implanted in all things" by which they receive their initial qualities and abilities.[4] Although this "nature" is the original or generative force in all things, "just as it can be canceled or hindered by defects, so it can, on the other hand, be restored or helped by aids."[5] He provides multiple examples of both instances, including someone becoming injured and losing an ability they would otherwise have, such as walking, and Socrates developing self-control to keep in check a natural defect, that of lust.[6] Thus, John of Salisbury demonstrates clearly and effectively that though nature is the seed of the faculties of man, the way that seed grows depends heavily on the care it receives.

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[1] John of Salisbury, *The Metalogicon: A Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logical Arts of the Trivium*, trans. Daniel D. McGarry (Philadelphia, PA: Paul Dry Books, 2009), 9.

[2] John of Salisbury, 24.

[3] Ibid, 28.

[4] Ibid, 28.

[5] Ibid, 29.

[6] Ibid, 29-30.

One of the most important ways to care for the saplings of human capabilities, John continues, is through the faculty of reason. Reason allows individuals to commit to memory those things they observe in the world around them, to think carefully about those memories, and then to make "true and accurate judgment concerning each of these."[7] With proper training, these capacities can be utilized to learn and to teach just about anything else, whereas if they are not trained, learning becomes incredibly difficult. As evidence of this truth, John describes in detail a number of grammatical phenomena, including solecisms, barbarisms, metaplasms, and schemata, each of which require their own specialized knowledge to be used properly (otherwise, they become deformities of speech rather than aids to it).[8] Being able to understand these various aspects of language is vital to the development of knowledge, as so much of what is known is communicated through the spoken and written word. Therefore, as John says, "one must learn to discriminate between what is said literally, what is said figuratively, and what is said incorrectly, if one is ever easily and accurately to comprehend what he reads."[9] Furthermore, both reading and listening ability can be greatly increased through diligent study.[10]

Not only does developing skill in grammar aid in all other studies, including philosophy, by enabling people to communicate more effectively with one another, it may even be necessary for a person to truly become good. [11] John writes, "Scientific knowledge, by the nature of things, must precede the practice and cultivation of virtue, which does not 'run without knowing where it is going,' and does not merely 'beat the air' in its battle against vice. Rather, 'it sees its goal, and the target at which it aims.'"[12] Here he is making the case, and rightly so, that one needs to know what is good and how to attain it if he or she wishes to be virtuous and, in turn, to have a firm grasp on grammar in order to know what is good. Now, someone may object at this point that grammar cannot possibly be a precursor to virtue, as there have been countless righteous but illiterate people throughout the course of history. True, but irrelevant: the grammar of which John writes includes facility with spoken

[7] John of Salisbury, 34.

[8] Ibid., 52-55.

[9] Ibid., 55.

[10] Ibid., 58.

[11] Ibid., 60-63.

[12] Ibid., 64.

language as well as written. Because the vast majority of human communication of scientific knowledge resides in language, grammar is essential for knowledge acquisition. Knowledge, likewise, is essential for living a virtuous life, "[f]or who can embrace or practice something of which he is ignorant?"[13]

Fortunately, John does not merely inform his readers that grammar and knowledge are vital components of a good life; he also tells them how to develop these essential faculties and how to inculcate them in others. He gives the example of his teacher, Bernard of Chartres, who engaged his pupils in the practice of declination. "Each student was daily required to recite part of what he had heard on the previous day. Some would recite more, others less. Each succeeding day thus became the disciple of its predecessor."[14] Repeating the lessons of the previous days, of course, helped his students to remember what they had learned, while making each day "the disciple of its predecessor" helped them to build sequentially upon their prior knowledge. In addition to this, Bernard required daily memorization of some passage of poetry or prose, as any writings worth reading were worth taking the time to understand and appreciate fully.[15] Another daily practice used by Bernard "was to have his disciples compose prose and poetry every day, and exercise their faculties in mutual conferences, for nothing is more useful in introductory training than actually accustom one's students to practice the art they are studying."[16] The daily composition of poetry and prose went a long way to helping his students develop their facility with written language, while the daily conferences did the same for spoken language. Moreover, these conferences "have a salutary influence on practical conduct, provided that charity moderates enthusiasm, and that humility is not lost during progress in learning."[17] That is, Bernard's disciples learned from these exercises (which classical schools today call colloquia) how to better interact with one another personally and intellectually. This benefit was maintained as long as the students demonstrated caring for and humility toward one another.

John of Salisbury, in his *Metalogicon*, effectively refutes his opponent's argument that studying grammar is not important. Having done so, he constructs a solid argument of

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[13] Ibid, 75.

[14] Ibid, 68.

[15] John of Salisbury, 69.

[16] Ibid, 70.

[17] Ibid, 70.

his own that, far from being unnecessary, grammar is actually vital to the development of both knowledge and virtue. Finally, he leaves his readers with several incredibly valuable pieces of advice for exercising their own grammatical abilities and those of others whom they teach. This advice may well be just as relevant today as it was when it was written nearly nine centuries ago. Indeed, it may even be more so.

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Why I Don't "Hate" My Scholars

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I remember listening to my mother-in-law talk about teaching. She taught Home Economics and Special Education scholars for many years in secondary schools. When I asked her about when she would retire as a teacher, she explained, "I am not sure, but I know I want to stop teaching before I start hating my scholars." Her comment was impactful to my inquisitive mind. With over 22 years of education and a doctorate degree, I had seen plenty of teachers who did not like teaching; the feeling oozed from their pores as much as they may have tried to hide it in order to be professional. I have also seen plenty of creative and inspirational teachers along the way, and some of them I absolutely knew cared about me and other scholars too. What is the differentiating mindset between those teachers who love their scholars and those who "hate" their scholars? Below are a couple of lists that answer this question.

Why do I teach?

1. I teach because I have a deep sense that every one of my scholars has an amazing genius budding inside of them full of light, goodness, truth, and the potential to change the world in beautiful and meaningful ways.
2. I teach because I know that without me, they may not discover the greatness within themselves, and that loss is a long term tragedy impacting a few or many thousands of people for generations!
3. I teach because I know each person has a special skill, mindset, mission, or vision that, if nurtured, helps humanity and the natural world change and improve.

4. I teach to help scholars learn to think, read, speak, and write and use these indispensable skills in moving forward the cause of liberty, recognizing and acting upon the good and the loving, reproducing the beautiful, and articulating and disseminating the truth.

What can I assume about my scholars?

1. They don't know how to do nor even imagined or realized the above things yet.
2. They may not have positive hope or a healthy vision of their future and what is possible.
3. They may not be motivated or have a reason to be motivated
4. They don't know how to learn.
5. They may not have seen greatness modeled or the possibilities for goodness and progress.
6. They may not believe in themselves.
7. They may not have a background of excellence.
8. They may not have any support besides me when it comes to learning.
9. Their home life may be chaotic, hurtful, and disorganized.
10. They may not have study skills.
11. They may not have time management skills.
12. They may not have planning skills.
13. Their diets may be such that they have wild fluctuations in their blood sugar that affect their attention and ability to focus.
14. They may have health problems they did not cause but they are suffering with.
15. They may not have much background knowledge about what I will attempt to learn with them, and I need to fill in blank spots.
16. They need help in learning and practicing these things and cannot do it on their own just because I tell them to.

What do I know?

1. My scholars' lives will be better if I help them with any one of the above things.
2. Their lives will be exponentially better if I help them with many of the above things.

3. My curriculum may need to be expanded to include teaching the above things and if I ignore teaching them then I will likely fail a significant percentage of scholars.
4. I should not blame them if they do not perform up to my sometimes arbitrary expectations; they are complicated and I have just not figured out how to teach them yet.
5. It is easy to teach A and B scholars but more challenging to teach C, D, and F scholars…but that I get to teach both sets.
6. It is my job to figure them out and help them move step by step in the right direction, making progress over time.
7. I should never grade my scholars by how poorly they started; I never average my gradebook to determine their grade.
8. It is hard work to do these things.
9. I cannot teach every scholar the same way, and if I am trying to do so, I have probably forgotten how truly different they are from each other.
10. I cannot assess every scholar the same way.
11. If I ever start to dislike a scholar, I need to remind myself of the above ideas.
12. Carefully exposing them to greatness will change their hearts and minds over time.
13. It will not be easy, and some scholars will resist.
14. It is worth the effort I expend.
15. Teaching is hard work, and even though I have prepared lesson plans, there is a ton of creativity that goes into each new class of scholars that will require me to learn, add, subtract, and pivot in yet unknown ways.
16. If I ever stop enjoying this process, it is time to change my professional trajectory so I do not take the place of a great mentor who may positively impact the scholars I may otherwise be teaching.

What is my job?

1. To figure out how to effectively teach all the scholars that through fate or by design have fallen into my universe.
2. To help them learn what to know, what skills to practice, the great ideas, and how to build their character.

3. To learn my assigned curriculum and present it in creative and inspiring ways that are meaningful and applicable in the lives of my scholars and that will keep me passionate.
4. To creatively implement my curriculum with necessary additions.
5. To never give up on a scholar, even if I think I have tried my hardest.
6. To find a mentor or other group of teachers or peers to come up with never before thought of solutions.
7. To give my scholars opportunities to perform at high levels of excellence, including outside of my classroom.
8. To help them learn how to serve others.
9. To help them feel and experience sacrifice - giving up one thing for something better.
10. **To unconditionally love them and find a way.**

Even after writing this reflection or essay I am almost compelled to now write about and answer the question, What is their job? What is the scholar's job? But I have stopped myself. My job is My job! It is about me, not them.

Free Will: Mankind's Most Valuable Torment

"For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore,
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."
~Galatians 5:1

Cooper McDaniel

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While unadvisable, one is given the choice to hate God. Yet, if God really does want men to love Him, why should he permit them the contrary? C.S. Lewis states in *Mere Christianity,* "The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him and to each other in an ecstasy of love and delight… and for that they must be free."[1] For God, it is the prospect of choosing vice that makes the choice of virtue honorable. Freedom is mankind's greatest burden but also its greatest blessing. Had men no choice of evil, a great man would be no more than a beast obeying its instinct. Without freedom, real goodness would be but routine labor. It is the very possession of freedom which separates human beings from all other creatures.

In spite of this, many still detest freedom, believing that the evil it creates outweighs the potential good it may sprout. In Fyodor Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*, the deplorable Grand Inquisitor states, "Nothing has been more insufferable for man and for human society than freedom."[2] Because freedom is the genesis of all evil, would not freedom be necessarily evil, too? This pessimistic outlook on the human condition is false because it cynically places the power of

[1] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity,* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 48.

[2] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov,* Translated by Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, (New York: Picador, 2021), 268.

evil above the power of good. While freedom is an invaluable aspect of human nature, it is bizarrely in our nature to forsake it. Dostoevsky writes that "the universal and everlasting anguish of man… [is] namely: before whom shall I bow down? There is no more tormenting care for man as long as he remains free."[3] Though it may seem strange, even Jesus asks humanity to give up their wills to Him for their own benefit.[4]

However, if freedom is good, how can it be right to surrender it? In fact, the soul of man is tainted, and his will is perverted. Yet, despite his own shortcomings, he still desires goodness above all else. In order to satisfy his soul, man must concede his will to God. On the other hand, there are some who believe free will is outright impossible because of God's omniscience; but this is not the case. God desires men to delight in the same goodness which exists in Him. For this hope to bear fruit, allowing mankind the freedom to choose evil was His only option. Free will defines man and is the reason for his ability to delight in goodness; however, it is paradoxically his chief goal to forfeit free will to purify his soul.

Volition of the Featherless Biped

Freedom is no mere invention; it is rooted in each human soul by nature. Free will is the ability to act reasonably regardless of sensory influence. Humanity is endowed with reason, which is the capacity to recognize universal truths and general concepts. However, without the ability to separate the spiritual from the physical, reason is of no use. Free will is the fuel which allows the engine of reason to run its course in the human mind. But each of these parts are futile without a destination. Aristotle claims that mankind's true end is happiness, and that it is only achieved through virtue.[5] Furthermore, he defines virtue as a "characteristic marked by choice," meaning that virtue is only achieved by intentional decision.[6] It is also true that what makes a thing different must also be integral to fulfilling its end. As virtue is essential for the human end, and virtue is only achieved through intentional choice, then necessarily the freedom of choice resides in humanity. St. Thomas

[3] Ibid., 270.

[4] Matthew 16:24 (NRSV).

[5] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* trasn. by Robert C. Bartlett and Susan D. Collins, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), Book I, Ch. vii, 1098a.

[6] Ibid., II.vi.1106b.

Aquinas, a medieval Catholic priest revered for his philosophy, states, "All things contained in a genus are derived from the principle of that genus."[7] In other words, the absolute end of a being is the rule and measure of its characteristics.

For example, if the purpose of a knife is to slice excellently, each attribute of every knife is strictly employed for the purpose of slicing excellently. As man's end is happiness, and it is only through freedom that this end is achieved, then mankind must possess freedom. Man needs freedom to attain happiness just as a knife needs a sharp blade to slice excellently. Just as reason is embedded in the very sinews of each human soul, the freedom to accept its power is embedded also. It is impossible to imagine a human being who does not bear its weight. Viktor Frankl, a Jewish survivor of Nazi Germany's concentration camps, professed, "everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."[8] Though Frankl was starved, beaten, and tortured beyond recognition, he understood that freedom is inseparable from man and outlasts any physical horror. One must kill man to kill freedom.

Understanding the nature of freedom's place in the human soul is likewise necessary to discovering man's true nature. According to Aquinas, the things which are integral parts of human nature are 'powers.' These things are the differences which define a thing's essence. Many, however, argue that freedom is not of this sort, but in fact a 'habit.' Habits are learned characteristics, not a part of mankind's fundamental nature. Aquinas refutes this claim, stating that "free-will is indifferent to good or evil choice: wherefore it is impossible for free-will to be a habit. Therefore it is a power."[9] Thus, freedom has no real sway over human acts in favor of or against moral law, but only makes them a possibility. Investigating further, he claims, "the free-will is defined as the faculty and will of reason."[10] While of different natures, free will and reason make one another possible. It is the function of free will to submit oneself to the power of reason. This is only possible because of mankind's unique composite nature. Yielding one's corporeal desires to his spiritual requirements is freedom in

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[7] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1946), Ia-Iae.Q1.A3.

[8] Victor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning,* Part One Translated by Ilse Lasch, Selected Letters, Speeches, and Essays Translated by Helen Pisano, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014), 62.

[9] Aquinas, Ia.Q83.A2.

[10] Ibid., Ia-Iae.Q1.A1.

its purest sense. While this pure freedom is integral for human fulfillment, it is still true that one has the ability to falsely choose the corporeal over the eternal. The possession of freedom does not require that one use it well.

It is the purpose of free will to allow human beings to become happy by choosing virtue. Of course, not all choices are virtuous, but human beings can only become good through their free choice. Aquinas explains that it is the proper end of a thing which drives its characteristics. He also states that "the act of virtue is nothing else than the good use of free-will."[11] Something used well, or in a good way, is said to be fulfilling the end of the thing. Therefore, the proper end of free will is virtue, making the purpose of both free-will and mankind inseparable in nature.

Now, if virtue is the proper end of mankind and free-will is necessary to become virtuous and therefore happy, how does one choose to become virtuous? The Christian tradition, according to the Bible encourages each person to develop in virtue through a personal relationship with God. The apostle John says that mankind's relationship with God "is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."[12] Christians believe Jesus' ministry on Earth shows that God loves each person equally, whether righteous or vicious, and that He believed all men are worthy of salvation. By sending His only son down to Earth incarnate as a simple carpenter, God presented His hope to lovingly enter the lives of all men. God's wish for humanity to have a willing relationship with Him shows that mankind's end is an individual journey rather than a collective effort. No collaborative endeavor, however impressive, is strong enough to carry a man to his purpose. It is only the personal choice of the individual which can save him.

Shadow of Goodness

The temptation to use our freedom to sin is mankind's greatest obstruction to virtue, happiness and heaven. Aquinas, recognizing man's composite nature, concedes that evil has a dominant hold over the human race: "There is a twofold nature in man, rational nature, and the sensitive nature. And since it is through the operation of his senses that man accomplishes

[11] Ibid.

[12] 1 John 4:10 (NRSV).

acts of reason, hence there are more who follow the inclinations of the sensitive nature."[13] The dichotomy of reason's difficulty and desire's ease has distressed humanity from the beginning of time. Free will holds man's greatest merits in one hand, but his greatest torments in the other. Dostoevsky claims through his Grand Inquisitor that "Nothing has been more insufferable for man and for human society than freedom."[14] It is freedom that has damned humanity. It is the seductive ability to sin, produced by free will, which is the cause of all suffering. Saint Augustine, another medieval Catholic philosopher, said that "it is by the will that we sin,"[15] and Aquinas, further states, "the will lacking the direction of the rule of reason and of the Divine law, and intent on some mutable good, causes the act of sin directly."[16] It is the corruptibility of the will that allows for sin's existence. Since the human will is free, one can act in disregard of reason and goodness.

While freedom actualizes man's grossest atrocities, it is not defined by its corruption. For the second part of Augustine's proposition runs, "it is by the will that we sin, and live righteously."[17] The battle between good and evil has persisted because of free-will for millennia. Though freedom makes evil possible, its potential for real goodness makes it an irreplaceable aspect of human nature. To understand the power of goodness, it is integral to more fully understand its opposite, for "Every form has the nature of good, so every privation, as such, has the nature of evil."[18] The word 'privation' in conjunction with goodness explains that goodness is not just evil's opposite, but its cause as well. In the same way that darkness is merely the absence of light, the nature of evil is but the shadow of goodness. Aquinas admits further, "it is true that evil in no way has any but an accidental cause; and thus is good the cause of evil."[19] Goodness is the animating precondition of all things. Evil is only the corruption or absence of goodness, made possible only by man's free will. Without it, there is no evil.

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[13] Aquinas, Ia-Iae.Q71.A2.ad. 3.

[14] Dostoevsky, 270.

[15] St. Augustine, quoted in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* Ia-Iae.Q74.A1. s. c.

[16] Aquinas, Ia-Iae.Q75.A1.

[17] St. Augustine, quoted in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica,* Ia-Iae.Q74.A1. s. c.

[18] Aquinas, Ia.Q48.A1.ad. 1.

[19] Ibid., Ia.Q49.A1.

Each of God's creations is perfectly good, but it is only man which He allows to be corrupted by freedom. He permits evil to befall man only because the goodness God designs for him is worth every suffering. The good which humanity is allowed to delight in greatly outshines the attempts of cursory bugs and plants. Humanity's spiritual nature connects man directly to the ultimate good. Since freedom allows for this good to be actualized, and goodness is infinitely more powerful than evil, it follows that freedom must naturally be worth the torment. The very truth that goodness overshadows evil entirely makes the possibility of evil worth the holy prospect of good. Freedom, allowing for this goodness, is thus more accurately a beautiful gift rather than a damning curse.

The miseries of evil are too much for some, but those holding on to something real—something good—prove to humanity that the human will is stronger than any chains that may bind him. History and literature both are testaments to the hopeful truth that evil's torments are worth enduring for the sake of some good. In Harriet Beecher-Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the story follows a family of American slaves, split apart by the tyrannical system which has kept them subservient their whole lives. The evangelical Uncle Tom, taken far away from his loved ones, endures beating after beating, yet his ardent heart unshaken by his cruel master's whip. His steadfast faith in God allows him to brush off lashes that tear his flesh for the preservation of his good soul. Speaking to a fellow slave, he states, "Sufferin' an't no reason to make us think the Lord's turned agin us; but jest the contrary, if only we hold on to him, and doesn't give up to sin."[20] Though undergoing brutal torture, Uncle Tom's faith carries his heart past his mortal horrors, focusing on the spiritual rewards ahead. For many, a strong faith in a higher power can conquer any enemy.

However, this expression of faith in the good can be expressed in more ways than the Christian version. For example, one may cling to certain virtues as their guides, rather than strictly a supernatural being. Viktor Frankl's autobiography, *Man's Search for Meaning,* tells the story of how love enabled a Jew during the Holocaust to withstand one of history's deadliest persecutions. In spite of his torture, he relates that "nothing could touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved."[21] With love guarding his heart, Frankl was no less protected than a soldier adorned in titanium garments. Virtue leading the

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[20] Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* (Mineola: Dover Publications Inc., 2005), 206.

[21] Frankl*,* 36.

defense against a barrage of bodily woes, Frankl's soul was spared from immortal wounds. Describing this phenomenon, he explains, "The intensification of inner life helped the prisoner find a refuge from the emptiness, desolation and spiritual poverty of his existence."[22] It is a fixation on the things that are real—the good—in one's life that refocuses humanity from his external torment to his internal salvation. The power of man to prosper in any set of circumstances is not only a testament to the power of good, but further to the power of the human will.

A Peculiar Fascination with Surrender

Though free will is a part of man's nature, it is peculiarly in his nature to give it up. Eternal goodness can be achieved through freedom, and it is chiefly for this reason that its possession is necessary. Yet, it is in man's nature to give up his freedom. The reason for this boils down to one fascinating principle: man's desire for the eternal. Human prosperity is realized only when they surrender their free will. The sinister Grand Inquisitor of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* claims, "the universal and everlasting anguish of man… [is] namely: before whom shall I bow down?"[23] By his claim, he means to damn the very idea of free will, for he believes the physical evil it allows outweighs the eternal good it can produce. But he is mistaken, for goodness does indeed eclipse evil. Though his intentions are misguided, the argument itself is valuable. Human nature is divided into immortal and corporeal parts, yet it is the former that truly distinguishes him from other things.

As man's immortal nature drives his purpose, it is only immortal things that can fulfill his needs. In Plato's *Symposium,* after telling stories of Greek heroes, Socrates deconstructs the true motive for their deeds. It is not power or wealth they desire, but simply to live forever, for "It's immortality [great men] are in love with."[24] This has been the case from the beginning of mankind itself. *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the oldest surviving story known to the modern world, follows a man who endures sorrow and suffering, all for the sake of acquiring immortality. The claim that humanity's purpose is to give up its freedom is substantiated through this very desire for immortality. Plato says it is through man's

[22] Frankl, 37.

[23] Dostoevsky, 270.

[24] Plato, *The Symposium,* Translated by Christopher Gill, (London: Penguin Classics, 1999), 208e.

"undying virtue"[25] that he is able to reach this immortality: "Now that which, first and foremost, is most natural to man, is the love of what is good, and especially love of the Divine Good, and of his neighbor's good,"[26] echoes Aquinas. Mankind's spiritual nature causes him to desire that which is like him. As goodness is the world's universal constant, its acquisition further propels one to share in its eternality. This very concept, combined with the denying of the self, is what many religions, especially Christianity, believe leads to salvation.

The purpose of the Christian life is to spend the afterlife eternally with God in heaven by following His commandments. First and foremost, one must "deny themselves and take up their cross and follow [Christ]."[27] However, if freedom is a natural good for humanity, how can it also be good to surrender it? When it comes to action, freedom is a neutral power; it has equal possibility of being used for good or evil. Yet salvation requires that one choose good over evil. For this reason, some characteristic of humanity must be trained to control its will. It cannot be reason, for reason is the subject of free will, not the other way around. The characteristic is faith. While one only acts on account of his will, one may only will to act if he first has faith in his choice. Aristotle claims that "every action as well as choice, is held to aim at some good."[28] Faith is the belief in something to be good in spite of reason. In fact, Aquinas claims that "reason, is the subject of Faith."[29] To have knowledge, one must presuppose an idea to be possible in the first place. For example, Albert Einstein would never have discovered his theory of general relativity had he not believed it could be true first. To acquire faith, one must substitute his reason and intellect for the sake of goodness.

The Grand Inquisitor uses the unreasonable nature of faith against Jesus and Christianity. Disdainful, he scorns Jesus, "You promised them heavenly bread, but, I repeat again, can it compare with earthly bread in the eyes of the weak, eternally depraved, and eternally ignoble human race?"[30] He reasons that Jesus' spiritual promise of heaven has sounded on deaf ears. To give man release from suffering outright, to come to man as a valiant savior rather than a carpenter, to deliver humanity from evil entirely would have bent

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[25] Plato, 208d.

[26] Aquinas, IIa-IIae.Q34.A5.

[27] Matthew 16:24 NRSV.

[28] Aristotle, I.i.1094a.

[29] Aquinas, Ia-Iae.Q56.A3.

[30] Dostoevsky, 269.

more knees and bowed more heads than vaguely promising heaven to those who believed in His authority. Surely, if God had physically fed every belly, fixed every limp, cured every leper, and abolished every evil, all men would surrender everything to Him. For it is true that "Man seeks to bow down before that which is indisputable," and what is more undisputable than the gift of life free of evil? [31] However, this would be no God of love, but a God of deceit. He would trick men into worshiping Him not on account of who He is, but on account of what He gives them. The real God would not be *who,* but *what.* The real God would not be He who saves, but the hand which feeds. Man is commanded: "You shall have no other gods before me."[32] If man's belief in God hinges on what He gives him, he has placed the gift over the giver. Many, however, are unable to sacrifice their mortal pleasures for spiritual lives. These men pridefully place their own reason and understanding over the supernatural power and love of God.

Mankind's salvation is by faith alone; to acquire this faith he must sacrifice his own free will. The apostle Paul says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."[33] Man is unable to save himself, yet by the grace of God, some are chosen to delight in paradise. This choice of God's is made solely on account of one's faith in Him. The power of faith comes in placing spiritual truths above physical ones. It is not that faith in God is unreasonable, but that it requires one to disregard the immediate corporeal world for the spiritual. For Aquinas writes that "the intellect assents to the truth of faith, not as convinced by the reason, but as commanded by the will."[34] He rightfully states that faith is not driven by the intellect, but by free will. Each soul longs for the immortality that God promises and to delight in it one must, to some extent, deny human reason in place of God's word. Interestingly, it is the work of the will to bring about its own forfeiture. The thing which makes humanity human is the very thing which he must give up for salvation. His freedom to sin bars him from paradise, and it is by freeing oneself from freedom that one gains true faith. As Christ calls his followers to "deny himself" and "follow [Him]," he does not intend to strip away their humanity. He hopes his people will cleanse

[31] Dostoevsky, 270.

[32] Exodus 20:3 (NRSV).

[33] Ephesians 2:8 (NRSV).

[34] Aquinas, Ia.Q111.A1.ad. 1.

themselves of sin in his name, transcending the "yoke of slavery"[35] to which man is bound by free will.

No More Than a Trinket

With humanity's nature stated in such paradoxical terms of needing to be free of freedom to gain faith and salvation, there is a major compelling counter argument that must be addressed. First is the claim that if there is a God, it is not possible for humanity to have free will. In this view, it is pure optimism which drives the idea that man has free will, for God alone has the power of choice. Human freedom is no more than whatever God allows him to accomplish. How could there be freedom in a world overseen by an omniscient, omnipotent God? What truly makes mankind unique, in this view, is not freewill but the fact that God chooses some to delight in heaven and some in hell. Man's salvation is not chosen or rejected, but bestowed on some for a reason only God knows. John Calvin, a French theologian during the Protestant Reformation, professed, "All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation."[36] Salvation is not a thing which is earned, but merely given. For this reason, real goodness cannot truly be accomplished by humanity, but only through the grace of God can some individuals delight in it. As salvation is the final purification of the soul, and goodness is how it is purified, man's salvation is wholly out of his own hands.

Furthermore, others may even claim that because God is able to see the future there cannot be room for human freedom, as God's plan for the world is already set in motion. For God, the past, present, and future are no different. C.S. Lewis claims, "He does not 'foresee' you doing things tomorrow; He simply sees you doing them: because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him…He knows your tomorrow's actions…because He is already in tomorrow and can simply watch you…the moment at which you have done it is already 'Now' for Him."[37] God knows every man's actions before they have even been thought of because, to Him, they have already been completed. Not only is the salvation of

[35] Galatians 5:1 (NRSV).

[36] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Edited by John T. McNeill and Translated by Ford Lewis Battles, 2 vols, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 3.21.5.

[37] Lewis, 170.

mankind out of humanity's control, but it seems that even the most menial of tasks are also not of man's own influence. If anything, man has the freedom of a beast.

While it is true that God's omnipotence allows Him to see all possible choices, He leaves it to each individual to choose which path to take. Free will is not infringed upon because it is necessary for mankind's salvation. A man without freedom is no more than a trinket for God to play with. C.S. Lewis reiterates, "A world of automata—of creatures that worked like machines—would hardly be worth creating."[38] God's purpose in creating man was not amusement or curiosity, but love. It is the greatest display of God's love for mankind that he granted them the responsibility of freedom. Just as a loving mother reluctantly allows her children to experience the world untethered by her immediate influence, God has unleashed humanity from Him so that they might choose goodness over their own lives. God hopes, not unlike the caring mother, that His children will come back to Him willingly with open arms, for both He and the mother know that an involuntary embrace is no coming together at all. Freedom is just as important to God as life itself, for it is freedom that truly allows one to live. The life which God allows man is special because he is the only one of His creations God must trust to carry out its end. It is only by satisfying the trust of God that humanity is saved. However, it is not just the big decisions that God leaves to humanity. Lewis preaches, "[God] does not know your action until you have done it: but then the moment at which you have done it is already 'Now' for Him."[39] God sees all possible futures, yet which future becomes reality is completely up to mankind. He has the power to intervene, yet to preserve freedom He watches from afar. Mankind is either completely unchained, or he is bound like a slave.

Conclusion

Man's life is in his own hands. His freedom not only makes him unique but is one of the greatest examples of God's sacrificing love for mankind. God's permission of evil is counterbalanced by his honor of goodness, for it truly is the possibility of evil that makes choosing goodness worthy of praise. Philosophy, history, and literature all point to the truth

[38] Ibid., 48.

[39] Ibid., 170.

that goodness is far greater than evil. Great men endure hideous torture and even death for the mere hope of something good. It is the test of man's character to turn to virtue even where mortality may be lost. This decision is not possible without faith. For one to truly choose goodness above all else, it is the duty of mankind to submit his reason and his freedom to God. Though man is tainted by his desires, it is his chief goal to rise above mortal pleasures in search of immortal goodness. This is not one that is out of his control. Unlike plants or animals, man's ultimate end is not carried out for him, but he must see it done himself.

All too common is the man who goes about his days like a leaf in the wind, heedlessly hoping for the breeze to arrive him at his destination. Or the faithless Christian who, at the first sign of hardship, abandons his immortal post and takes arms to defend what he will inevitably lose. Humanity's first obligation is to preserve and purify that which outlasts death. When man truly realizes the responsibility he has been entrusted with, he will not be so careless with his decisions. He will understand the impossible weight of his soul and the eternal importance his actions have in elevating it. For to be human is to be free, but to be good is to break free from humanity and commune with the divine.

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Liberty and Learning: The Evolution of American Education

A Book Review

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(This book review was originally published by ClassicalEd Review. It is reprinted here with their permission. For the original publication see https://classicaledreview.substack.com/p/liberty-and-learning-the-evolution).

As classical educators in the liberal arts tradition, we think there is a natural link between education and freedom. In Plato's Cave (perhaps the oldest and most well-known educational allegory we have in our Western tradition), the state of ignorance is portrayed as people chained to a cave wall where reality is a dim, flickering shadowland of puppet images. Enlightenment is depicted as the process of breaking free of those chains, recognizing the puppets and puppeteers for the shams they are, and making our way out of the cave into the brightness of the real world. This journey from bondage to freedom, from ignorance to enlightenment, is accomplished through an education suited to our nature—one that addresses and develops the parts of us that make us human, namely: our intellectual reasoning and moral sentiments.

The liberal arts, or the study of language through grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and the study of the natural world through mathematics, geometry, and natural science, are the best ways we have discovered to facilitate our humane development. Thus, the liberal arts become the liberating arts—freeing humans from ignorance and vice by empowering them to think reasonably and act morally.

In his important book *Liberty and Learning*, Dr. Larry Arnn, 12th president of Hillsdale College and stalwart defender of liberal education in America, illustrates this

relationship between education and freedom by telling the story of Hillsdale College within the context of America's political founding and the evolution of its education system. In his book, Arnn argues that America, being founded on principles of freedom and equality of all people, demands an education dedicated to these principles as well. He claims that education is too important to be governed by a centralized power at a state or federal level; that America's founders understood this and gave no constitutional authority over education to the federal government; that the progressive political movement has ignored the constitution and centralized the educational system anyways; and that if we wish to remain free, we must reclaim and decentralize our education system.

Arnn starts his story in 1787 when the United States Congress under the Articles of Confederation passed the Northwest Ordinance. At first this seems an unlikely place to start a history of America's education system—what does a law establishing the legal details regarding the country's westward expansion have to do with learning and liberty anyways? Apparently quite a lot. Article three of the Northwest Ordinance declares that "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall ever be encouraged."[1] This, Arnn argues, is the premise of America's education system, and a noteworthy premise too, as religion and morality are listed alongside knowledge. We think differently about the premise and purpose of education today, Arnn notes, as modern educational legislation focuses more on material concerns of career readiness than the acquisition of knowledge and virtue for their own sakes.[2]

But how will schools be "encouraged" under the Northwest Ordinance? By the systematic gifting of federal lands in developing territories to the local township to finance common schools.[3] This gift of land was not a federal grant to territories with core standards they were expected to meet and graduation quotas to fill. Arnn points out that it was taken for granted that the people would know how to organize themselves to teach their children to be moral and knowledgeable people, and that all they needed was a little encouragement in the

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[1] Larry P. Arnn, *Liberty and Learning: The Evolution of American Education.* (Hillsdale: Hillsdale College Press, 2004.) 2.

[2] Ibid., 6.

[3] Ibid., 3.

form of land that could be sold to finance the schools.[4] It is clear from this substantial gift that the founders believed education to be critical to the development of the country and the preservation of the people's freedom.

At the same time Congress was passing the Northwest Ordinance, Arnn notes that another elected body was ratifying the country's new constitution, a document that had no provision regarding education. At first this seems like an oversight. If the founders thought education was so important to the political regime's success would not they have included a sentence or two in the constitution related to it? But according to Arnn, "The Founders did not seek administrative control of education because the nature of man is, in their view, best able to flourish under a regime of limited government. And if the government is to be limited then the control of even vital things like education must be decentralized".[5] This is the all-important matter for Arnn, that the government be limited in its administration of education if we want to enjoy education's liberating effects.

America's expansion into the northwest territory thrived under the self-governing system in the country's first century, and Hillsdale College, founded in 1844, was one of the liberal arts colleges born of this pioneering era. Unfortunately, in Arnn's view, this decentralized approach to education did not last as progressive educators and politicians began envisioning and promoting a federal department of education in America based on the Prussian model where "government is to stand in the place of parents in regard to the education of children."[6] Without legitimate constitutional authority, Arnn argues that the progressives developed the U.S. Department of Education into what it is today: a bureaucratic behemoth that "obstructs our own efforts to care for our own interest…, denies us practice and experience in government…, [and] thwarts our private efforts to raise our families."[7]

Arnn has good reason to protest, for he and past presidents of Hillsdale College have spent the last 70 years working to safeguard the academic integrity and institutional independence of the college from the encroachments of federal and state governments.

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[4] Arnn, 5.

[5] Ibid., 12.

[6] Ibid. 34.

[7] Ibid., 35.

Thankfully they have largely succeeded, making Hillsdale, Michigan a Mecca for liberal arts educators. Their efforts at the collegiate level have borne fruit on the primary and secondary education levels as well, leading to the Barney Charter School Initiative that has been seeking to wrest partial control of curriculum and pedagogical approach from the state and federal governments and give it back to individual communities and schools.

Some classical educators fear that because classical charter schools are funded by tax dollars their mission is inherently compromised. And while this is a valid concern that each new charter school must perpetually wrestle the local school board and state over, it is a worthy cause considering the tens of thousands of young Americans they introduce to the liberal arts. Classical charter schools may have unique challenges, but Arnn and many others think they also have their place in classical education's mission of liberating as many people as possible from ignorance and vice through a study of the liberal arts.

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Joyful Reality: A Review of Josef Pieper's *In Tune With the World*

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Many people in the world today are suffering from an acute lack of joy. Rates of anxiety and depression, especially among teenagers and young adults, are higher now than they have been in recorded history (that is, history in which such rates have been recorded in a more or less reliable fashion). One teenage girl remarked to her humanities teacher this past month during a discussion about the principle of loving life as presented in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, "I don't really love life at all. It's not very good. There's not much I even enjoy." Tragic as this statement is, it is indicative of an emerging trend in twenty-first century youth: they are finding less and less in life that truly moves and delights them, and (concurrently) more and more that distracts and "amuses" them.

Josef Pieper offers a compelling and timely analysis of this problem in his volume *In Tune with the World: A Theory of Festivity*. In the course of defining festivity as best he can, Pieper quotes St. John Chrysostom: "Festivity is joy, and nothing else."[1] Pieper goes on to explain that, though joy comes in countless forms, the reason for it "is always the same: possessing or receiving what one loves, whether actually in the present, hoped for in the future, or remembered in the past."[2] Though most people might not conceive of it in such beautiful words, this reflection should be self-evident to all: each person experiences joy

[1] Josef Pieper, *In Tune with the World: A Theory of Festivity*, trans. Richard & Clara Winston (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 1999), 22.

[2] Ibid., 23.

when she or he expects, has, or recalls something he or she loves. Thus, as Pieper writes, "Joy is an expression of love."[3]

Stated logically, this truth could be put in the form, "If someone receives something they love, then they experience joy." The inverse should then be, "If someone does not receive something they love, then they do not experience joy." If this statement is true, then were a person to not love anyone or anything in the world, they could not experience joy. This is Pieper's contention: "One who loves nothing and nobody cannot possibly rejoice, no matter how desperately he craves joy. Joy is the response of a lover receiving what he loves."[4] He goes on to explain at least one of the reasons for this state of "unlove," which is a conviction of the meaninglessness of life on Earth, a conviction that potentially more people share today than ever in the history of the world. In such a state, even birthday celebrations become mere sham: according to Pieper, "Anyone who is seriously convinced that…life is not worth living, can no more celebrate the birth of his child than any other birthday."[5]

What then is to be done to combat this growing sense of meaninglessness and "unfestivity?" First of all, as Pieper points out, it is necessary to resort to "ultimate arguments" to deal with such a radical negation of the goodness of existence as is currently being experienced. People, especially the young people of today, must be again convinced that "*everything that is, is good, and it is good to exist*. For man cannot have the experience of receiving what is loved, unless the world and existence as a whole represent something good and therefore beloved to him."[6] This, then, is the task of all those who would seek to overcome the darkness and despair of modern times, especially in the minds and hearts of the youth.

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[3] Pieper, 23.

[4] Ibid., 23.

[5] Ibid., 25.

[6] Ibid., 26.

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Call for Submissions

The Editors of *Mentor* graciously invite all John Adams Academy Board, faculty, and staff to contribute submissions to this journal. As servant-leaders, we appreciate how your actions and words contribute to our academic community; as writers, we admire how you see the good in things beyond our view. Whether your main vantage point is a Kindergarten classroom, an administrative office, or places beyond or between, you have valuable perspectives on the ways our Core Values intersect with the curricula of our Academy.

On a rotating basis, *Mentor* will focus on a particular aspect of our unique American Classical Leadership Education® model. The substance of this volume has explored our 9th Core Value: Building a Culture of Greatness. In the upcoming issue, the theme will be our 10th Core Value: Self-Governance, Personal Responsibility and Accountability.

Contributions to the journal can take many forms, including research essays, book reviews, or creative writing pieces. All submissions should aim simply to explore the 10th Core Value of Self-Governance, Personal Responsibility and Accountability or other themes related to our American Classical Leadership Education® model (ACLE® model).

All proposals are due by January 12th, 2025, and should be emailed as a word document to Ross Garner at ross.garner@johnadamsacademy.org.

Articles: Write an essay of 1000-5000 words regarding some aspect of John Adams Academy's 10th Core Value or theme related to our ACLE model, using classical texts to inform your analysis. Cite and credit all sources according to *Chicago Manual of Style*, including footnotes and bibliography. If citing sources is not your strength, please contact Ross Garner for assistance.

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MENTOR

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