

THE GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM STUDY GUIDE



"No man or woman born, coward or brave, can shun his destiny." - Homer

ANCIENT GREEKS



THE ANGELICUM ACADEMY
25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

SEMESTER

I

- does through and with language. What does the play reveal about the relationship between men and gods that men were denied in their mindless state?
6. Prometheus and Io are both suffering the anger of the gods. Prometheus has foresight so that he can see what torments lie ahead of Io; Io has been suffering blindly. Could Prometheus have born the suffering inflicted on him if he didn't have foresight?
- a. Is what Prometheus tells Io helpful to her or not? Why or why not?

Homer – The Iliad

8th Century BC

Context:

We know very little about Homer, who was regarded by the Greeks as their first and greatest poet. Evidence of how little we know about him is that no fewer than seven cities claim to have been his birthplace. Homer is thought to have lived between 850 and 750 BC, a contemporary of Hesiod's. We read Theogony and Prometheus Bound first in order to introduce the prevalent mythic worldview of the Ancient Greeks in which Homer wrote. The Trojan War, which is the subject of his poems, took place c. 1250 BC, some 400 years before. A hero, who according to tradition was blind, Homer received the history of the war as part of an oral tradition handed down from one generation to the next. The Iliad is an epic poem, meant to be recited or rather sung aloud. One of the greatest war stories ever told, it is filled with scenes of battle and carnage. From this broad perspective, it is the story of a war between two peoples, the Greeks from the West and the Trojans from the East. But Homer's stated purpose is to sing of one man, Achilles, and the results of his choices, insofar as the poem is about both. Achilles and the war between the two peoples, it gives us a hint of what all epics are about, a founding or a re-founding.



Epics are always about a people in the midst of some battle struggling to overcome something they don't understand or don't see very well. They typically bring into focus two worlds, a cosmic order of the gods and the temporal order of a people. At the center of some battle is an individual who either because of some divinely appointed task or divine burden is the instrument of issuing is a change which makes possible a greater statement between the human and divine orders. The

- There are three ways for men to understand the oracles: *univocally*, that is the words mean exactly what they say and they can never mean anything else; *equivocally*, that is their meaning can shift with changing circumstances; and *analogically*, the words have only one true meaning but they must be viewed analogously in a world of change. Laius and Jocasta understood the oracle about their infant son *univocally*. Is there another way they might have understood it that would have allowed them to trust the gods instead of responding in fear?
- If they had understood it *analogously*, for example, that their son would "murder" his father by supplanting him in the eyes of his people, would their response have been the same? Why don't the oracles speak in clear unambiguous language? The oracle at Delphi did not say, "Oedipus murdered his father and married his mother and he must receive justice." Why is the language of prophecy obscure?
- Consider the image of the city. Does Thebes have a sense of itself as a high and noble city? Does it make allowances for human failure? How does it respond to what is unrighteous in man, sin, cruelty, impiety? How would you compare it to Athens, the city of justice as Athens founded it at the end of *The Eumenides*?
- To what extent does Sophocles use paradox to reveal the deeper meaning of his play? For example, Tiresias is blind but, as a prophet, he sees more clearly than anyone else. Does Oedipus suffering blind him or does it allow him to see?

Reflection Questions

- There is physical blindness and there is spiritual blindness running through the play. Some of the characters (Oedipus, Jocasta, the Chorus, the messenger from Corinth) think they see but do not, others (Tiresias, the old Herdman) see and wish they did not. Discuss the themes of sight and blindness.
- What is the Greek understanding of fate? Is it individual or are people's destinies tied together? Laius, Jocasta, and Oedipus all tried to avoid their fate, but their motives were different. What were they?
- Did the difference matter in the end? Does the fact that they even made the attempt give us any insight into their relationship with the divine order?

Sophocles – Oedipus at Colonus

Context:

The *Oedipus Cycle* is usually read according to the internal chronology of the plays, that is *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus* and *Antigone*. However, there is something to be said for reading them in the order in which they were written because that is the way Sophocles' mind grappled with them. *Antigone* was produced in 441 BC, not as part of a trilogy, but as an individual drama. *Oedipus Rex* was written more than ten years later and produced between 430 and 426 BC. Sophocles' final thoughts on the tragedy produced *Oedipus at Colonus*, and are said to have been written shortly before his death, and the play was performed posthumously in 406 BC. Reading them in the order in which they were written makes it easy to see the maturation of Sophocles' vision over the years, culminating in the play that Aristotle described as Greek tragedy at its best. It also breaks the hold of the literal or univocal spirit of reading, encouraging instead an analogical reading that is not bound to an historical time sequence.

Summary:



Things to think about when reading:

Oedipus, exiled from Thebes and wandering as a blind beggar with only his daughter Antigone to help him, arrives at Colonus, just outside of Athens, where the Oracle has told him he will die. The people of Athens believe he is cursed and want him to leave. Theseus, King of Athens, offers his protection and promises him a proper burial. His older daughter Ismene arrives with news that his two sons are waging civil war over the throne he left. Oedipus is outraged. His brother-in-law, Creon, who had served as regent until his sons came of age, arrives. He has come planning to kidnap Oedipus because an oracle has said that Oedipus' spirit will bless the land where he is buried. Oedipus refuses to go, and Creon takes Antigone and Ismene hostage. Theseus intervenes and rescues both Oedipus and his daughters. His older son Polynices comes from Thebes to ask his father's forgiveness for neglecting him and to plead with Oedipus to help him against his brother Eteocles. Oedipus is enraged at the suggestion and curses both of his sons, praying they will both be killed in the war. Knowing that his death is coming, Oedipus retreats to the Sacred Grove with his daughters and Theseus. He blesses his daughters, entrusting them to Theseus, and then he and Theseus go off to a secluded spot by themselves. From there he is carried away to the gods. The play ends with Antigone and Ismene deciding to return to Thebes to help settle the war between their brothers.

- Identify the structural components of the play:

Opening conflict
Complication
Turning point/Recognition
Denouement/reconciliation

1. Why did Solon repeal Draco's laws (p. 70)?
2. He created an assembly in which all free people, regardless of qualifications, could serve. What was the value of that?
3. He made a law disenfranchising all who stood neutral in matters of action. Why (p. 71)?
4. He legislated one law that forbade dowries and another declaring the sons of unmarried mothers not obliged to care for their fathers in old age. Why (p. 72)?
5. Solon left Athens in the face of impossible obstacles. Ten years later when he returned, he was honored as an advisor. He was eventually forced out of government and returned to writing poetry. What light does his leave-taking throw on Solon and the Athenian democracy he helped create? What does it tell us about him and Athens? Compare this state of affairs with those surrounding Lycurgus and his manner of leaving.

Pericles

Summary:

Plutarch opens his biography of Pericles with a discourse on the necessity of giving time and attention to what is noble and virtuous. It is Pericles' mild temper and virtuous character across a life of public service that makes him a fit subject for study. Born to a family of Athenian soldiers and statesmen, Pericles was a student of Damon, the musician master and Anaxagoras, the philosopher. As a young man, he allied himself with the party of the people and against the aristocracy and its leader, Cimon. Following Cimon's banishment for being a friend of the Spartans, Pericles became the undisputed leader of Athens. He broadened the participation of all citizens in the government, instituting regulations that paid citizens for public duties and decreasing the power of the Areopagus.



Things to think about when reading:

His projects to construct public buildings, rebuild the temples that had been destroyed by the Persians, and generally beautify Athens were controversial, but they provided training in a trade and needed employment for many of the common citizens. Elected Archon for an unprecedented fifteen consecutive years, Pericles greatly expanded Athenian power, subjecting many of the islands of the Aegean and many city-states to Athenian rule and establishing colonies as far away as Italy (the historian, Herodotus joined the colony at Thurii, Italy). When Sparta, long the bitter rival of Athens, joined with the Peloponnesians and Boeotians to declare open war, Pericles brought all the country residents of Attica into the city and shut the gates. He planned to avoid war against overwhelming odds on land while using the Athenian navy to destroy his enemies at sea and thus induce peace. Plutarch notes that he might in fact have succeeded had it not been for divine intervention in the form of a plague that devastated the overcrowded city. The people voted him out of office and then tried and fined him for misuse of public moneys. Unable to find another general or statesman to match him, however, they invited him back into public life. But he was beaten down by the loss of his son and his sister to the plague and succumbed to it himself within a few months. Plutarch praises Pericles for having led a "life as pure and unblemished as, in the height of power and place, might well be called Olympian." Solon, like Lycurgus, is also a founder. Consider the founding principles of Athens and the way in which these would produce a very different kind of regime or ethos, a very different kind of people. Compare Solon with Lycurgus, Sparta with Athens. Essential to any founding is the legislation of new laws; recall, for instance, the importance of the laws that Moses gave the Jewish people. Keep in mind the importance of laws for the founding of Athens, their character, their aim or end.

1. Notice the imagery of a physician and a ship's captain; they recur. Consider their importance for understanding Pericles and his circumstances.
2. Be aware of Pericles' efforts to court and appease the people with public funds and various diversions.

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"A man who has the knowledge but lacks the power clearly to express it is no better off than if he never had any ideas at all." - Thucydides

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II

1. When Criton tells Socrates that the ship from Delos is imminent, Socrates responds by describing to Criton a dream he had the night before (44b). The dream recalls a line from Book 9 of the *Iliad* in which Achilles tells the embassy from Agamemnon that he intends to sail for home the next morning and with good weather he will reach "fertile Phthia" (his home) on the third day. What was the dream and what does it mean to Socrates?
2. Criton accuses Socrates of abandoning his own children in his refusal to avoid the death penalty (48c). Is Socrates taken up with philosophy that he is unable to take responsibility for affairs of the world?
3. In one of the arguments that the Laws make against escaping, they claim that by denying the Laws, Socrates would in fact be proving his own guilt. How do the Laws arrive at that statement (53b-c)? Do you agree or disagree with the Laws? Explain your opinion.
4. The Laws deny that they have wronged Socrates or have any responsibility for his conviction and death sentence (54b-c). How can they make this claim when Socrates was tried and convicted according to the Laws of Athens?
5. Socrates' usual approach to a dialogue is to unmask the ignorance of the person with whom he is speaking. In this respect, is the *Crito* different from the other dialogues you have read?
6. If we allow for the significant difference that the Laws of Athens were instituted by men and the Church was instituted by God, is there a parallel that can be drawn between the Laws and the Church?
7. One of the assumptions behind Criton's arguments to Socrates is that it is just to help your friends and harm your enemies. God tells us that "vengeance is mine," and Christ tells us to turn the other cheek. What is Socrates' position on revenge, and how does it compare with the Christian position?

Questions on Language and Form

1. In making his arguments to Criton, Socrates personifies the Laws of Athens. What does he accomplish by personifying the laws, by giving a human voice to something abstract and bodiless? Does Socrates distinguish the Laws of Athens from laws of nature? Justify your answer.

Reflection Questions

1. The men who have sentenced Socrates to death have acted unjustly. The Laws that have sentenced Socrates to death are just. If the Laws are just and the men unjust, but they will the same verdict, is there a contradiction? If there is, how does a just man resolve the contradiction in his own actions?

Plato – *Phaedo*

Context:

The *Phaedo*, like the *Republic*, belongs to the middle period of Plato's work. The setting of the *Phaedo* is the last day of Socrates' life. The religious festival that has delayed his death for a month is now over and friends have gathered for a final conversation with their mentor and friend before he dies. The topic of the conversation is about Socratic wisdom, or lack thereof, related to the way Socrates looks forward to dying. To support the claim that Socrates' attitude toward death is a sign of wisdom, not foolishness, the dialogue includes several arguments for the soul's immortality, a topic Socrates feels very confident of as he prepares to drink the hemlock that will take him from this life into the next.

Summary:

The dialogue opens with a conversation between Euthydemus and Phaedon, a follower of Socrates who had been among the friends with him at his death. Euthydemus has heard about the trial but tells Phaedon he would like a firsthand account of all that took place in Socrates' last conversation and his death.



Phaedon prefaces the start of his account about Socrates' death by describing his own emotional state as an extraordinary, curious blend of pleasure and pain. Because Socrates was going to die that day, he felt no unmixing pleasure in the conversation they had. Yet, at no time did he think of feeling sorry for Socrates because Socrates appeared happy, nobly and fearlessly meeting death. Many of the other people there reported the same sort of emotional state, except Apollodorus, who totally lost emotional control.

Phaedon reports that he and some friends had had the daily practice of visiting Socrates on a daily basis. They would meet at daybreak by the courthouse, not far from the prison. Before seeing Socrates they used to spend some time in



While Socrates places justice in the second category, taking up Thrasymachos' argument as a devil's advocate, Glaucon argues that Socrates has not done justice to Thrasymachos' argument, which Glaucon thinks has more merit to it than Socrates gave to it. Glaucon maintains that, while Socrates might place justice in the second class of noblest goods, most people, the many, would agree with Thrasymachos and place it in the third class of laborious goods because men dislike justice as such and only choose it to avoid having to suffer injustice.

Even though Glaucon disagrees with this popular opinion about justice, he says that this view has been drummed into his ears by Thrasymachos and many others. But he has never heard it adequately refuted. He has never heard anyone commend justice for its own sake, arguing that justice as such is unqualifiedly better than injustice, commending justice for its own sake. He thinks that he will most likely hear this from Socrates. So, he will do everything in his power to praise the unjust life. As he does this he will show Socrates how he wants Socrates to speak when Socrates attacks injustice and praises justice.

Since Socrates finds this proposal agreeable, Glaucon starts his work by explaining the nature and origin of justice according to popular opinion. According to Glaucon, in the popular view justice is a laborious good, a necessary evil, an emotional compromise or social contract, lying between two emotional extremes of human desire: 1) a greatest human good, to be able to hurt other people with impunity and 2) a greatest human evil, to be hurt by other people and to be unable to get revenge. In the popular view, a human being's greatest delight is to hurt other people with impunity. This is happiness. Simultaneously, a human being's greatest dislike is to be hurt by others and to be unable to get revenge. This is misery. Of these two opposing desires, the dislike for being hurt by others coupled with the inability to get revenge (the dislike of misery) is stronger than the emotional attraction to hurt other people with impunity (the desire to be happy).

Justice is an emotional truce between these two extremes, an emotional compromise, or social contract, made in a moment of weakness by a person who has come to the realization that he is not powerful enough to hurt other people with impunity or to be able to get revenge for personal harms suffered from others.

According to Glaucon, understanding the nature of justice in the popular view explains how people popularly understand justice to originate. They consider the origin of justice to be a state of consciousness, a state of mental awareness of personal weakness. A person who never experiences this state has no sense of justice. Hence, in the popular view, considered in itself justice is not desirable, is evil, but considered in relation to a greater evil, it is expected as a necessary, honorable compromise made between two people who have come to a mutual realization of mutual weakness. But they say that if a man were powerful enough, were a real man, he would never enter into such an agreement.

To enable his listeners to perceive most clearly that those who practice justice do so involuntarily because they are not powerful enough to do perfect injustice, Glaucon tells a story about unbridled desire and power to show that, if given the opportunity, both the just and unjust man would behave the same, unjustly, if the opportunity arose to do evil with impunity.

The story is about Gyges the Lydian, a shepherd to the king of Lydia. One day while Gyges was tending his sheep, an earthquake occurred, and a chasm opened the earth. Gyges entered the chasm and saw a large, hollow, brazen horse, with windows in its sides. Inside the window he saw a body of a dead man, appearing bigger than human, wearing only a golden ring on its hand. Gyges went in and took the ring. Then one day, at a monthly meeting of shepherds to report to the king, Gyges discovered that the ring had the magic power of invisibility. When he turned the top of the ring downward, he turned invisible. And when he turned it to its original position, he became visible again. Discovering this power, Gyges managed to get himself appointed a messenger to the king. Eventually he seduced the king's wife, with her help killed the king, and took over the kingdom.

The moral of the story is that if two such rings existed and one were given to a reputedly just person and the other to an unjust person, given the ability to do wrong with absolute impunity both would act identically and would do wrong. Moreover, if a person had the opportunity to have this ring and do wrong with impunity, in the popular mind, the person who did not use the ring to his advantage would be privately considered a miserable fool. Simultaneously, in public, the many would praise the actions of the just man, the one in private they think to be a fool, out of fear of each other that, lacking this power themselves, they might suffer injustice from another.



Glaucon continues that the only way properly to judge the profitability of these two lives is to compare them in their most perfect states, in the lives of the perfectly just and perfectly unjust. To do so, Glaucon says we have to strip the unjust person of any appearance of injustice and the just person of any appearance of any justice.

Having the have the appearance of complete justice, the supremely unjust person would have to have access to the instruments for seeming just while being unjust. He would have to be a politician. Moreover, he must possess all the gifts of seeming. He must have the gift of public speaking and be able to persuade so as to be able to do injustice in the right way and, if caught, be able to talk his way out.

Poetry Selections

2nd Week

Theogony/Prometheus Bound

Poem: The Eagle by Lord Tennyson
He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands, Ringed with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

3rd Week

The Iliad

Poem: To Lucasta Going To The Wars by Richard Lovelace
Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nursery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield,
Yet this inconstancy is such,
As you too shall adore;
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.

4th Week

The Iliad

Poem: Here Dead Lie We by A.E. Housman
Here dead we lie
Because we did not choose
To live and shame the land
From which we sprung.
Life, to be sure,
Is nothing much to lose,
But young men think it is,
And we were young.

5th Week

The Odyssey

Poem: Sea Fever by John Masefield
I must down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking,
I must down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied,
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying,
I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gill's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife,
And all I ask is a merry yam from a laughing fellow-rever
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

6th Week

The Odyssey

Poem: Breathes There The Man... by Sir Walter Scott
Breathes there the man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well,
For him no minstrel raptures swell,
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

Aristotle – Poetics

Context:

Aristotle's *Poetics* is the classic text on Western drama. Written in the fourth century BC, it has influenced the creation and the criticism of tragedy for two thousand years. Likely what we have today was originally notes for lectures, perhaps in the Lyceum, the school in Athens that Aristotle founded in 335 BC. The focus of the *Poetics* is on tragedy, although clear from the beginning is that Aristotle's concern is with all forms of imitation generally and specifically with epic, tragedy, comedy, and lyric. Some evidence exists that he may have written a similar treatise on comedy, but it has not survived. Aristotle approaches tragedy not as a playwright or as a critic, but, as he approaches all subjects, as a realist philosopher.

Summary:

(This summary is not of the whole *Poetics*. It concentrates of Aristotle's explanation of the nature and origin of Greek poetry, the nature of tragedy, which is a chief subject of consideration of the *Poetics*, and the importance of plot in tragedy.)

Aristotle says the subject of the *Poetics* is poetry in general, its species, their powers, the plot structure, and, among other matters, the number and nature of constituent parts necessary for a good poem. He claims that all poetry and music imitate action, that all imitation differs according to means, object, and manner, and that all music and poetry use one or all three of these means of imitation: 1) rhythm, 2) harmony, 3) language. While popular opinion in Aristotle's time tended to identify poets according to the meter in which they composed, Aristotle says that, while Homer and Empedocles compose in the same meter, Homer is a poet and Empedocles is a physicist. Aristotle locates poetry's general origin in two causes: 1) a natural human desire to imitate, and 2) the natural delight that all human beings take in works of imitation. He remarks that one of the greatest advantages that human beings have over all other animals is that we are the most imitative of animals. Indeed, we learn by imitation. Since all human beings naturally delight in, find pleasure, in learning, Aristotle concludes that this delight to learn readily explains our delight in imitation, since imitation is a means of human learning.

More specifically, Aristotle locates the origins of two main divisions of poetry (tragedy and comedy) in imitation of higher and lower kinds of moral action and types of people, to noble and base, or shameful, human actions and human beings. He claims that, in ancient Greece, shameful human actions initially gave rise to forms of ridicule, and noble actions gave rise to hymns and panegyrics, eulogies, and other forms of praise. He reports that we can find many examples of the poetry of ridicule, satire, from Homer onward. He even claims this poetry of invective caused iambic meter to come into existence, invectives in Greek being "iambic." He maintains that some pre-Homeric poets became writers of invective and heroic verse (eventually heroic epics, involving serious matters) against one another. He claims that Homer occupies a unique, transitional, role in the history of Greek poetry because Homer not only stood alone in literary excellence, but he was the



first to transcend the verse of ridicule (baseness) and praise (greatness) and outline the general forms of drama of comedy and tragedy. Aristotle tells his readers that, once forms of tragedy and comedy appeared, because these new modes of composition were grander and more publicly esteemed, those poets who had naturally been drawn to compose in the verse of ridicule, iambic, started to write comedies; while those poets who had been naturally disposed to compose in the verse of praise and honor started to write tragedies instead of epics.

Aristotle maintains that comedy started with phallic songs and tragedy with dithyrambs. After a long series of changes, at the hands of poets like Aeschylus and Sophocles, tragedy matured to its present form in Aristotle's time. Aristotle says that the history of the development of Greek comedy is less well documented. Whatever their origin and history, Aristotle defines comedy as a species of the ugly, ridiculous, of verse about harmless mistakes, not productive of harm to others, that incline us to laugh. He defines tragedy as an imitation of an action that is serious, complete; it is dramatic, not narrative; and it works to effect a purgation of pity and fear, the emotions, which tragedy, by its nature, awakens.



Aristotle claims that tragedy must have six parts: 1) Plot, 2) Character, 3) Diction, 4) Thought, 5) Spectacle, and 6) Song. Plot is the most important; it is the first principle and soul of the tragedy. Character determines men's qualities, but it is by their actions that they are happy or wretched. Drama, therefore, is less a representation of character than of "action." Aristotle says that all tragedy must

1. The first part of the oath is a promise made to his teachers. What does he promise?
2. What does Hippocrates promise not to do?
3. What is the "end" of his oath, and how does that end guide his actions or practices?

Reflection Questions

1. Doctors today take their oath seriously and any doctor found to have broken his oath could be stripped of his license to practice.
2. Consider how dedicated Hippocrates is to his "art." He won't charge people, he cares for them as if they were family. How does his "art" and his dedication to it compare with those of doctors today? What has changed? Consider the way in which Hippocrates sees man as being fully one with nature; he doesn't exist in a vacuum; he is affected by everything around him, air, water, environment, his orientation to the sun.... What is our modern view of man? Is he one with nature? When doctors treat a patient today, do they see him in the context of his whole surroundings?
3. While most of the physiological, anatomical, and pathological teachings of Hippocrates have been replaced by modern medical science, Hippocrates' belief in the importance of ethics in medicine and scientific research is as relevant today as it was in ancient times. What does that say about the nature of ethics?
4. Hippocrates' work indicates that, not only should medicine take into account ethics, so should scientific research in general. However, some people think that science is amoral; that is to say, it is only about knowledge, and ought not be concerned about right or wrong. What would Hippocrates say to that amoral view of science?

Hippocrates – On Ancient Medicine

Context:

On Ancient Medicine is Hippocrates' treatise on the state of his art. He begins by making the point that unlike philosophy or speculation on what goes on above or below us, medicine concerns man and observation is the way to discovery of the causes and cures of illness. Hippocrates then takes up the importance of the diet: what is healthy when one is healthy and what is no longer proper when one becomes ill. He looks at breads and meats and soups and drinks, commenting on when they are appropriate and when not and how to tell. He looks at the amount of food to be taken and cautions against making generalizations about more or less being the best for all cases, pointing out that people are different; each person has a unique constitution. He then turns to the question of adjusting the qualities of hot and cold, moist and dry. He recommends that instead of attempting to do what cannot be done—how does one remove the elements of hot or cold from wheat to be used in bread?—the best remedy is to simply change the diet and see what happens. Paying attention to whether the meat is served cooked or raw or the bread coarse or like cake is a much more useful thing to do. Hippocrates discusses the properties of hot and cold as they affect the body, concluding that the body responds to one by reproducing the opposite in itself without the aid of medicine and suggesting that acid and salty are actually worthy of more consideration for their effect on the body. He asserts that a skilled physician must be a skilled observer and pay attention to the whole man, what he eats and drinks and what his occupations are and how each of these things affects him. He warns against the "common herd of physicians" who jump at every new innovation and who prescribe medicine without a good understanding of what effects they produce. It is not enough, he says, to look at just the causes of illness that are from outside the body; the structures and fluids of the body itself must also be studied.



The hope of praise, the dread of shame,
Can rouse the tortured breast no more;
The wild desire, the guilty flame,
Absorbs each wish it felt before.

But if affection gently thrills
The soul by pain dreams possessed,
The pleasing balm of mortal ills
In love can soothe the aching breast:
If thus thou comest in disguise,
Fair Venus! from thy native heaven,
What heart unfeeling would despise
The sweetest boon the gods have given?

But never from thy golden bow
May I beneath the shaft expire!
Whose creeping venom, sure and slow,
Awaken an all-consuming fire:
Ye racking doubts! ye jealous fears!
With others wage internal war;
Repentance, source of future tears,
From me be ever distant far!

May no distracting thoughts destroy
The holy calm of sacred love!
May all the hours be winged with joy,
Which hover faithful hearts above!
Fair Venus! on thy myrtle shrine
May I with some fond lover sigh,
Whose heart may mingle pure with mine—
With me to live, with me to die!

My native soil! beloved before,
Now dearer as my peaceful home,
Ne'er may I quit thy rocky shore,
A hapless banished wretch to roam!
This very day, this very hour,
May I resign this fleeting breath!
Nor quit my silent humble bower,
A doom to me far worse than death.

Have I not heard the exile's sigh,
And seen the exile's silent tear,
Through distant climes condensed to fly,
A pensive weary wanderer here?
Ah! hapless dame! no sire bewails,
No friend thy wretched fate deplores,
No kindred voice with rapture hails
Thy steps within a stranger's doors.

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Perish the fiend whose iron heart,
To fair affection's truth unknown,
Hides her he fondly loved depart,
Unpitied, helpless, and alone:
Who ne'er unlocks with silver key
The hidden treasures of his soul, —
May such a friend be far from rue,
And ocean's storms between us roll!

Thucydides – Peloponnesian War

At The Time of "The Breaking of Nations"
by Thomas Hardy

Only a man harrowing clods
In a slow, silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half-asleep as they stalk.

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of coach-grass;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties die.

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by,
War's annals will fade into night
Ere their story die.

Thucydides – Peloponnesian War

War Is Kind
by Stephen Crane

Do not weep, maiden, for war is kind.
Because your lover threw wild hands toward the sky
And the afrighted steed ran on alone,
Do not weep.
War is kind.

Horse, booming drums of the regiment,
Little souls who thirst for fight,
These men were born to drill and die,
The unexplained glory flies above them,

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**THE GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM
STUDY GUIDE**



"We know little of the things for which we pray." - Chaucer

MIDDLE AGES



THE ANGELICUM ACADEMY
25TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

SEMESTER

I

**THE GREAT BOOKS PROGRAM
STUDY GUIDE**



"Man are driven by two principal impulses, either by love or by fear." - Machiavelli

MIDDLE AGES



THE ANGELICUM ACADEMY
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II

10. What is the distinction that Thomas makes between the beatitudes and the fruits of the Holy Spirit (1-2, Q. 70, Art. 2)?

Reflection Questions

1. In his examination of Human Law, Thomas makes it clear that Human Law does not and should not prohibit every vice (1-2, Q. 96, Art. 2). Consider and respond to his "I answer that..." and his Replies to the Objections. Do you agree or disagree? What are the implications for the common good? For the individual? For the virtuous man?
2. Thomas says that the precepts of the Natural Law stand in relation to practical matters as the first principles do to demonstrations. What does he mean and what is the first precept of Natural Law?
3. Review Natural Law. Why is it important, and have we come across any examples of it in our readings? Recall the basis of Antigone's opposition to Creon and the laws he invoked against her? Natural Law is man's participation in the Eternal Law while existing in the natural realm. Because it is the same for all men—allowing for distortions, as Thomas says, for corruptions in certain cultures—it makes possible men finding a common ground in their endeavors. A clear example occurs in Sophocles' Antigone when the tragic heroine says,

... I did not believe
your proclamation had such power to enable
one who will someday die to override
God's ordinances, unwritten and secure.
They are not of today and yesterday;
they live forever; none knows when they first were.
These are the laws whose penalties I would not
incur from the gods, through fear of any man's temper (497-503).

Part I: QQs. 75-88 (from the Treatise on Man):

In Questions 75-102, Thomas considers man, a creature of both spiritual and corporeal substance, looking first at his nature and then at his origin. He begins with a consideration of the soul, its essence, its power, and its operation.

Question 75: Beginning with the premise that the soul is defined as the first principle of life in those things that live, Thomas shows that the soul is not a body, but the act of a body. He goes on to prove that the principle of intellectual operation that we call the soul (it is also the intellect or the mind) has an operation *per se* and as only that which subsists in actual, so the soul must therefore be subsistent. Having shown that the human soul is both immaterial and subsistent, he goes on to clarify Aristotle's difference with Plato on the operation of the sensitive soul and thus shows that brute animals do not have a subsistent soul. He affirms that the definition of natural things includes both form and matter and so the soul, which is the form of man, cannot of itself be man. The intellectual soul, which knows things absolutely rather than through the senses, is not composed of matter and form, and as a form to which existence belongs by virtue of itself and so cannot be separated from it, it is incorruptible. And, although angels and men share certain properties—their intellectual nature and eternal happiness as their final end—they have different natural operations of the soul—man knows through the senses and angels know immediately—so they are not of the same species.

Question 76: Here Thomas takes up the questions that pertain to the union of the body and the soul. He begins by asserting again that the intellect (the intellectual soul) is the form of the body, citing both Aristotle and Averroes, and goes on to dismiss the Platonic argument that the soul is united to the body as its motor. He then considers the unity and division of the soul, finding that there is not one soul that is common to all men, that there are not multiple, essentially different souls in one man, and that there is no other substantial form in man besides the intellectual soul. Looking specifically at the union of the soul and body, Thomas finds that the immaterial soul is properly united to a corporeal body; that as it is united to the body as its form, there can be no accidental disposition between them, and that for the same reason it is impossible that the soul be united to the body by means of an intermediary animal body. He closes his consideration of the unity of the body and the soul by finding that the soul, as the form of the body, must be both in the whole and in each part of the whole. He finds also that the whole soul is in each part of the body in its essence but its power is found in different ways in different parts of the body, sight in the eye, hearing in the ear, etc.

Question 77: Thomas now turns to an examination of the powers of the soul. He begins by demonstrating that the essence of the soul is not its power and that there are several powers of the soul. These several powers are distinguished by both their acts and their objects, and their order is determined by their perfection, by their generation in time, and by their objects (sight, hearing, smell, and so on). He



He goes on to say that the will doesn't seek good for the sake of repose because then, once again, the act of the will would be its own end. He concludes, "it's evident that the operation in which the will reposes ranks before the resting of the will therein. That operation is seeing and in the strong, delighting" (S. 1, 1-2, 4, 2). Other quotes Thomas uses to confirm the importance of seeing for delight include, St. Augustine's, "joy is in the truth" (Conf. x, 23); "This is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God" (Jo. xvii, 3); and Aristotle, "Delight perfects operation as vigor perfects youth" (Nicomachean Ethics, x, 4). Man's rational nature is finally affirmed in the fact that he delights in what he sees. He was meant to see and to love or take delight in the possession of the goodness he desires or the beauty he sees. Each moment of experiencing goodness or seeing beauty is simply a glimpse or promise of a greater joy man was meant to have in possessing ultimate Goodness, in seeing ultimate Beauty itself.

One last point about the fitness of things to their ends as it applies to our nature. "No man," Thomas says, following Aristotle, "can live without pleasure. Therefore a man deprived of the pleasures of the spirit goes over to the pleasures of the flesh" (S. 1, 2-2, 35, 4; *Nicomachean Ethics*, viii, 5, 6; X, 6). The natural beauty found in things and in art is a necessary food for our souls; it feeds our bodies as well because our bodies and souls are essentially linked. Deny our nature, body and soul, its proper delight and it will have its revenge. Man needs things, especially things of beauty, not only the things created by God but those created by man—dance, painting, mime, poetry. We feed our souls through our bodies. If God is man's Creator and Christ's redemptive act is an on-going part of creation, man is most at home when he is creative. By their very nature or form, things of beauty not only help us see. They bring us into contact with being. But this is only true for a philosophy which understands things to contain being.

The essential point is that in Thomas's thinking, the perfection due to the will and emotions is produced by things precisely because of the way they can bring the mind and body together. Thomas's thinking protects the emotions because his insights protect the essential integrity between the senses and the intellect. Because the effect of beauty is delight or pleasure, it produces emotion; but for Thomas, the emotions produced are not those solely associated with the appetitive side of man—even though they are aroused through the senses—they are the ones most associated with the intellect, with the high emotions of the spirit, those that come from learning to see the inner forms of things: joy, love, generosity, honor, hope, faith—those most dependent on seeing.

We cannot underestimate the significance of this experience of beauty for the will. The will is behind all deliberate actions but its uniqueness is that it cannot be perfected by its own motion, only by its particular object: "The perfection and the end of any other faculty is contained in the object of the appetitive faculty, like a particular in a general" (S. 1, 1-2, 11, 1-2). In the case of beauty, what perfects the will is the object seen; hence, one of the things beauty does, says Thomas, is help perfect the will by going straight to the heart: "The beautiful goes straight to the heart: it is a ray of intelligibility reaching into it, calming it and at times bringing tears to the eyes." Beautiful things and good art are crucial, then, because they support the work of the intellect by making the affections rational—and,

Structure of the Summa Theologiae



conversely, by making the intellect loving. In their effects, they affirm the rational over the appetitive, the cognitive above the passions—they help form ordinate emotions. In good art—whether God's or man's—what we have are moments of possible epiphany, brief intimations of Being and, by extension, the Beatific Vision. Let the Puritans scorn or laugh when they will, when art brings tears to the eyes or helps us laugh, especially at the incongruities we experience in our bodies concerning our fallen nature: St. Thomas sees something different. Thomas calls the "joy" (*gaudium*) produced by art one in which the "intellective appetite or will, joy properly so called, comes into communion with angels."

The *Summa Theologiae* is exactly what its name claims, a summary of the whole of theology. While its division into parts lends the *Summa* to being read as a reference work it is important to see that what Thomas has given us is not simply a rational order for dividing the science of theology. He has given us is an exemplar, a means for forming a living habit of wisdom; formulating questions, examining and answering objections, reducing confusion to principles, all in an effort to go to existence, to the Being hidden in things. As a prelude to his formal object of study, God as known through supernatural revelation, he has to first address Sacred Scripture, the means by which God speaks and reveals himself to man. God's revealed word, Scripture, is one way for man to draw close to God, but Thomas is concerned to examine revelation through the use of man's natural reason. His work is everywhere supported by divine revelation; but the focus of his work is on man's experience of ordinary things through his ordinary, natural powers, the first and greatest of which is reason. And so he begins at the beginning.

I. The First Part (*Prima Pars*) deals with God and all that comes forth from Him in accordance with His Divine Intellect (Reason) and Will (Love):

1. Sacred Doctrine (1)
2. The Existence of God (2-26)
3. The Blessed Trinity (27-43)
4. Creation (44-46)
5. The Distinction of things in general (47)
6. The Distinction of Good and Evil (48-49)
7. The Angels (50-64)
8. The Work of Six Days (65-74)
9. Man (75-102)
10. Government of Creatures (103-119)

I-II. The First Part of the Second Part (*Prima Secundae*) deals with man who, created in the likeness and image of God, has both intellect and will:

1. Man's Last End (1-5)
2. Human Acts (6-21)
3. Passions (22-48)
4. Habits in general (49-54)



St. Thomas More – Utopia

Thomas More was born in 1478, the son of Agnes Gouger and John More, a well-established lawyer. His family was not famous, but it was relatively prosperous and had a reputation for honesty. As a boy, he spent two years in the home of Cardinal John Morton (one of the figures appearing in *Utopia*), who was then Chancellor of England. He went on to Oxford and followed his father into law. A devout Catholic, he considered taking Holy Orders but decided that he could best serve God as a layman in the world. In 1505, he married Jane Colt with whom he had four children. She died giving birth to their fourth child and, faced with the raising of four very young children, he married the widow Alice Middleton shortly after. As a young man, he formed what would be a lifelong friendship with Desiderius Erasmus, one of the great Humanist thinkers of the time. He was increasingly involved in the politics of his time, rising to the attention of King Henry VIII by 1515 and helping the King compose some of his early defenses of the Catholic Church. More's political career had all the makings of success and he was appointed Lord Chancellor of England in 1529.

But by that time, Henry had committed himself to taking Anne Boleyn as his wife despite the refusal of the Pope to grant him a divorce from his present wife, Queen Catherine. More resigned the position in 1532, claiming ill health, but everyone, including Henry himself, knew his resignation was the only course he could take to avoid condoning the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn. In 1533 More refused to take the oath supporting the Act of Succession (doing so would have compromised his faith and his allegiance to the Pope), and within a year, the King who had so recently valued him as one of his most trusted advisors had him imprisoned for treason. He was sentenced to the death of a traitor—to be drawn and quartered—but Henry commuted the sentence to beheading and Thomas More was executed in 1535. He was canonized 400 years later by Pope Pius XI.

Contrast:

More was born just as the resurgence of interest in the Greek and Roman classics that marked the Italian Renaissance began to make itself felt in Europe. He became a leader in the humanist movement, an intellectual movement that focused on the dignity of man and the power of human reason. Many humanists, like More and Erasmus, remained deeply committed to the Catholic Church, and their religious convictions led them to the belief that the established feudal system was one in which the wealthy exploited the common people contrary to what Christ had taught. *Utopia*, with all of its criticisms of European style government, and its critique of ecclesiastical corruption, was published in 1516. Not two years later, Martin Luther nailed his theses to the church door in Wittenberg, formalizing the complaints that were giving shape to the Protestant Reformation. Over the next fifteen years, More wrote in defense of the Church and watched as his King gradually withdrew his allegiance to Rome and finally declared himself Supreme Head of the Church in 1531. The King's actions gave formal political sanction to the Reformation. But to More and others like him who were active in the Counter-Reformation, the reformers had failed to understand the infallible character of the

Summary:

Church in its Founder, the sacramental life passed on or made available through His, and the traditions that carried on His work in the life of the Spirit. Such adherence to established tradition would cost More and numerous others their lives.

The classical roots of *Utopia* can be found in Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politics*, but More brought a new Christian spirit to the genre—aopian literature—in which the ideal society is presented as a real, albeit fictional, society. A Christian faith in a perfect afterworld gives rise to a heightened awareness of discrepancies between this world and the next. More took his awareness of these discrepancies, the buried hypocrisies and disorders they reveal, and gave them satiric treatment in his story. An influential work since its first publication, it is represented in the 20th century in such "dystopian" works as Huxley's *Brave New World* and Orwell's 1984.

A letter from Thomas More to Peter Giles serves as a *Preface to Book I*. In it he apologizes for the delay in writing up the conversations the two of them had with Rafael Hythloday and expresses some ambivalence about publishing it at all. He closes by asking Giles to check on a point of fact and to ask Hythloday for his approval of the work.

Book I opens with a description of More's presence in Arzewerp on a diplomatic mission for King Henry VIII, his acquaintance with Peter Giles, and his introduction to Raphael Hythloday, a world traveler who had been on three voyages with Amerigo Vesputi and had then continued on his own. Following their introduction, Hythloday accompanies More and Giles to More's house, where they sit down and discuss the questions they raise concerning the countries he has visited. After some time, Giles expresses his amazement that Hythloday has never entered the diplomatic service of some king. Hythloday replies that he has no interest, and when both More and Giles press him, he responds with his low opinion of kings and their counselors. He goes on to recall an evening he once spent with John Cardinal Morton—at the time the Lord Chancellor of England—discussing the prevalence, causes, and punishment of thieves in England. Hythloday took exception to capital punishment being applied to theft and offered as an alternative the method used by the Polylerites. A fellow visitor, a lawyer, thought the proposal entirely unworkable in England and received general agreement from the others present until the Cardinal expressed the opinion that the idea had merit, at which point everyone began praising what they had just dismissed.

Giles and More are still not convinced that Hythloday should not be a king's counselor and so Hythloday constructs a hypothetical meeting of the advisors to the King of France at which the King himself presides. The subject of the council meeting is how the King should proceed in adding Naples and Venice and several other countries to his realm. The advice of the various counselors is presented and when it is Hythloday's turn, he advises the King to leave Italy and the other countries alone because just ruling France is enough for any man to take on. More agrees that the advice would fall on deaf ears. Hythloday follows this example



Desiderius Erasmus – In Praise of Folly

In Rotterdam, Holland, 1466, Desiderius Erasmus was born out of wedlock to the daughter of a physician and a man who later entered the priesthood. Information about his childhood is sparse, but we know he was provided with a good education in monastic schools, an education that was continued by his guardians after he was orphaned as a young boy. He joined the Augustinians and was ordained a priest and took the monastic vows in 1492. He studied briefly at the University of Paris and held a position as professor of divinity at Cambridge where he taught Greek. It was while he was at Cambridge that he met and formed lifelong friendships with the leaders of the humanist movement in England, Thomas More, William Grocynthe, John Colet, and Thomas Linacre. He lived three years in Italy, leaving after he had turned down a good position on the papal staff. His time in Rome had given him a perspective on the clergy that influenced his thinking and writing for the rest of his life. He abhorred the corruption that he saw in the Church and was a strong advocate for the availability of the scripture to everyone. He applied for and received a papal dispensation from his monastic vows, allowing him to live in the world.

Well known throughout Europe as one of the foremost interpreters of the ideas of the Italian Renaissance, Erasmus was inevitably drawn into the controversies that attended the birth of the Reformation, but he put considerable effort into maintaining the neutrality he felt was essential if he were to be able to accomplish both the religious and educational reforms he advocated. He respected Luther, some of whose ideas reflected his own, but disagreed fundamentally with both his doctrine on free will and his insistence that reform could not take place from within the Church. His own sharp criticisms of the Church caused many Catholics to see him aligned with the new Protestants. However, he remained a committed Catholic throughout his life, finally relinquishing his neutrality to take Luther on formally and publicly on the issue of free will. His belief that scripture should be available to everyone and his attacks on corruption in the Church have occasionally earned him the title "the father of the Reformation," yet this is the same scholar and theologian whose works formed the basis of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius. He was a prolific writer, and in addition to his works, some 1500 of his letters have survived. Erasmus died in Basel, Switzerland in 1536.

In Praise of Folly was written in one week and published in 1509, at a time when the humanist movement was widely critical of the medieval church. Pope Leo X was amused by it, but the satire of religious practices and the attack on the clergy shocked many at the time. Prior to its republication in 1511, Erasmus edited it and added the final section in praise of "the folly of the Cross." Written in the style of Lucian, it was dedicated to Thomas More, a longtime friend and fellow humanist with whom he had recently completed a translation of Lucian. It took the art of

Summary:

nature to a new level. Erasmus never considered it an important work, but twenty-five years later, it had gone through more than forty Latin editions and been translated into English, French, and German.

In Praise of Folly is prefaced with a letter from Erasmus to his friend Thomas More, in which he dedicates "this little declaration." Folly then steps forward to speak for herself and declares her purpose, to deliver a eulogy to herself. She names her parents as the god Phobos and the nymph Youth and her childhood nurses as Ignorance and Drunkenness. She identifies her attendants and claims to be responsible for the act of procreation for both man and the gods, even Jupiter himself. She claims that she is the source of what ever good there is in life, that the happiness of childhood is attributable to her (because children are considered the opposite of wise—that is, foolish), she claims the happiness of old age as well because she is responsible for "the second childhood" of men when they return to the thoughtless freedom of childhood. And finally, she claims the same for the gods—why else is Cupid "ever a boy"—and goes on to cite the foolishness of the gods when they are enjoying their nectar.

Hesitant to provoke the gods, however, she returns to the foolishness of man by describing Jupiter's playful passion and reason in man in a ratio of five to one. Man immediately made things worse by asking Folly into his council chambers. Her first advice to man is to take women to himself—she is a foolish creature but she softens his harshness—and thus she creates the first and chief pleasure of life. She goes on to describe some of the other pleasures of life—drinking, eating, gambling, partying—all of which she presides over. She claims to be responsible for binding all of human relations together, asserting that without her no one could tolerate a relationship with anyone else, and she claims to be the impulse behind all great military campaigns. She scoffs at the "nuclear" philosophers and laughs at the story that put a stop to the intended revolt of the Roman people when "wise men" could not reach them. She debunks various philosophic theories and points to Odysseus as the most "wretched" of the epic heroes, blaming his anguish on his close association with Pallas Athena, goddess of wisdom. She points out the privileged position of the Fool—who alone among the king's counselors can be trusted to tell the truth, albeit couched in wit.

She goes on to mock madmen, hunters, gamblers, the superstitious, those who plan their own funerals, those who pride themselves on their ancestry, and those whose self-love deludes them into thinking themselves talented artists. She gleefully describes the sport that human frailty provides for the gods. She takes on teachers (particularly the grammarians), poets, writers, lawyers, and scientists.

Her laughter seems to fade away as she takes up the theologians and the "precious virtues." They continually debate that rob them of the time to even read the Gospels. Her contempt grows as she turns to the monks who are consumed with the petty details of their habits and make a virtue out of illiteracy. She sets aside the clergy briefly as she turns to kings and noblemen, but she soon returns to the nobility of the clergy—popes, cardinals, and bishops—pointing out that if they



Chaucer-Canterbury Tales

The World's Wanderers
by Percy Bysshe Shelley

Tell me, star whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

Tell me, moon, thou pale and grey
Pilgrim, of heav'n homeless way,
In what depth of night or day,
Seekest thou repose now?

Wearied wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

St. Thomas Aquinas

Pange Lingua - Sing, My Tongue
by St. Thomas Aquinas

Pange lingua gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit Gentium.

Nobis datus, nobis nasci
Ex intacta Virgine,
Et in mundo conversatum,
Spargus verbi semini,
Sui moras incolatus
Miris clausit ordinem.

In supremis sacris cenae
Reclumens cum fratribus
Observata lege plene
Cibus in legalibus,

Sing, my tongue,
The mystery of the glorious body,
And of the precious blood,
Shed to save the world,
By the King of the nations,
The fruit of a noble womb.

Given to us, born for us,
From a stainless Virgin,
And having dwelt in the world,
Sowing the seed of the word,
He closed in a wonderful way,
The days of his habitation.

On the night of His last supper,
Reclining with His brothers,
The law having been fully observed
With legal foods,

Cibus turbae duodenae
Se dat suis manibus.

Verbum caro, panem verum
Verbo carere efficit.
Filius sanguis Christi merum,
Et si sensus deficit,
Ad firmandum cor sincerum
Sola fides sufficit.

Tantum ergo Sacramentum
Veneremur cernui:
Et antiquum documentum
Novi cedat ritui:
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.

Genitori, Genitrici
Laus et jubeat, Salus, honor, virtus quoque
Sit et benedictio:
Procedenti ab utroque
Compar sit laudatio.
Amen, Alleluia.

He gives Himself as food with His
Own hands to the twelve.

The Word in Flesh makes true Bread
His Flesh with a word;
Wine becomes the Blood of Christ,
And if sense is deficient,
To confirm sincere hearts,
Faith alone suffices.

Then let us prostrate and
Venerate so great a Sacrament,
And let the old law yield
To the new rite;
Let faith stand forward to
Supply the defect of the senses.

To the Begotten and the Begotter,
Be praise and jubilation,
Health, honor, and strength;
And blessing too,
And let equal praise be to Him,
Who proceeds from Both. Amen.

O Salutaris

By St. Thomas Aquinas

O Saving Victim opening wide
The gate of heaven to all below,
Our foes press on from every side;
Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.
To Thy great name be endless praise
Immortal Godhead, One in Three;
Oh, grant us endless length of days,
In our true native land with Thee,
Amen.



William Shakespeare – The Merchant of Venice

Context

The Merchant of Venice is a comedy which begins with a problem threatening disaster and death to a major character and ends with marriage – in this case three – and with every difficulty resolved. But there remains at the center of this drama a nearly insolvable puzzle. The Elsinburghs would have had no difficulty with this comedy. Jews were often cast as villains and clowns and the forced conversion at the end which might strike a modern audience as a cruel punishment would have seemed to them a Christian mercy that saved Shylock's soul. Like most of Shakespeare's dramas, there are complications inherent in the characters that other playwrights would have drawn in black and white; this is particularly true of Shylock, who is sometimes comical, sometimes vicious, and sometimes clearly wronged. While he is wronged, it is by characters that are at least as complex as he is. It is one of Shakespeare's gifts to his audience that he does not create stock figures but characters with depth and hidden dark spots and who evolve responses that change over the course of the play and even over time as sensibilities change with periods. It is, however, important that we not allow the raw nerve of anti-Semitism, as it is perceived by our post-Nazi sensibility, to obscure the deeper elements of the play. Shakespeare is not guilty of Hitler's persecution of the Jews and we should not judge him as if he were. In any case, the play is not primarily about Shylock but about the spiritual conversion of several of the characters, more notably Bassanio, who discovers that the most important thing is not detaching the flesh of another but the giving of our own flesh for another. It is not about Shylock's demand that another's life should be sacrificed to satisfy the demands of an ill-perceived "justice" but, on the contrary, it is about sacrificing our own lives to satisfy the just demands of a "merciful" God. It is the play on the mystical qualities of mercy and justice that animates the action.

Like most of Shakespeare's dramas, this one draws on a variety of sources for plot pieces – the casket scene, the pound of flesh, the ring story. The settings are the two cities of Venice and Belmont. Venice is a commercial republic; it is the source and paradigm of modern western capitalism. It is a city in which law and freedom are essential to its character, a city of risk and adventure and excitement, one given to the body and material well-being, but it is also a city associated with sterility and where families don't stay together. Belmont, in contrast, is the city of art and manners, harmony and order, the music of the spheres. In Belmont love and marriage flourish. All of Shakespeare's plays set in the past reveal some aspect of modernity albeit indirectly; here, however, Shakespeare is direct. Venice is an image of ourselves today.

The play opens with Antonio, a successful merchant of Venice and a Christian, talking with friends about his unexplained melancholy. His two friends, Salerio and Solanio, offer reasons for his sadness, but they reveal more about their own preoccupations than about Antonio. The two depict as Bassanio, a young friend

for whom Antonio feels a special affection, ardent and confident in Antonio that he is in debt and in need of money to woo Portia, a wealthy heiress of the city of Belmont. Antonio has invested all his money in trading ships but often to stand as guarantee for Bassanio to secure a loan from one of Venice's moneylenders.

The worst shells to Belmont where Portia and Nerissa, her lady-in-waiting, discuss how the will of her late father has created conditions which making living in the house, the point of virtue between two extremes, especially dying. By her father's will she is forced to submit herself to a lottery made up of three caskets, one gold, one silver, and one lead, and to marry the man who happens to choose the one containing her image. No one can win Portia who doesn't enter the lottery, and to do so is a risk, a venture: to choose correctly is to win Portia's hand, to choose incorrectly is not only to lose her but to forfeit the possibility of marriage with anybody else afterwards. Together the two women review the most recent suitors and their responses to each of them. As they prepare to bid them farewell, Nerissa recalls a young Venetian scholar and soldier worthy of justice, a man named Bassanio, who had visited before Portia's father died. Portia remembers him as well, and her repeated "yeses" (1.1.86) suggest with more than just a passing interest.

Back in Venice, Bassanio discusses terms of a loan with Shylock, a Jewish moneylender who harbors a grudge against Antonio for sparing him as a Jew and for lending money at no interest. The animosity between the merchant and lender is unguarded. Antonio makes no apology for his past contempt and no promise to restrain it in the future, but Shylock agrees to lend Bassanio the three thousand ducats anyway if Antonio will put up "a merry" collateral: a pound of his own flesh. Antonio agrees over Bassanio's objections. Meanwhile, Shylock's servant, Launcelot, makes up his mind to leave Shylock and serve in Bassanio's house. As Launcelot leaves, Shylock's daughter, Jessica, gives him a letter to deliver to Bassanio's guest, Lorenzo. On reading the letter, Lorenzo reveals to his friend Gratiano that he and Jessica will elope that night under cover of a storm. The winds shift unexpectedly and Bassanio, with Gratiano attending him, sets for Belmont to take his chances with the lottery and woo Portia.

In Belmont, Portia receives her latest suitors, the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon. Morocco chooses the gold casket and shortly afterwards Arragon chooses the silver. But neither chooses the correct one, and under terms of the lottery, both must leave never to divulge the outcome of the lottery or to marry. In Venice, Shylock signs over his daughter's flight with a Christian husband and the money she took with her, but he takes comfort in the news that Antonio's ships have foundered and he will be able to collect his bond. Bassanio arrives in Belmont to take his chance with the caskets. Portia urges him to wait before choosing because he must leave immediately if he fails and she would enjoy his company longer if she could. Bassanio cannot take the suspense, and carefully studying the inscription on each casket and pondering the hints Portia gives in the background music she provides, he chooses the lead. He opens the casket and to the delight of both of them finds Portia's picture inside. The two lovers rejoice





Thomas Hobbes - The Leviathan

Thomas Hobbes was born in Malmesbury, England in 1588 to a family of very modest means. Orphaned at a young age, he received an education under the auspices of a wealthy uncle that his family could not have afforded. On graduating from Magdalen College, Oxford in 1608, he took a position as tutor in the home of the Earl of Devonshire, a position that included traveling with the family and access to a large library. He became acquainted with Bacon in the early 1620s, helping him with several Latin translations and finding in him an educated man who shared his distrust of scholasticism. Sometime in the 1620s, Hobbes realized that the reasoning used in geometry—sound definitions and a series of propositions moving with certainty from the self-evident to the complex and seemingly improbable—provided a model for certainty in philosophical thinking as well. At about the same time, he met Galileo and was captivated by the idea of motion as the natural state of matter. In 1640 he introduced the “science” of politics in his *Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*. Hobbes continued to develop his political thinking over the next ten years, publishing and revising it in a work called *De Cive*. A vocal supporter of the English monarchy, he fled to France when the conflict between the king and parliament put his life in jeopardy. He lived there for ten years before he received the amnesty that allowed him to return to England. While Hobbes was in France, he went on to write the *Leviathan*, which was published in 1651. Although it was, as he says at the end, “occasioned by the disorders of the present time” and used to justify the rule of both Cromwell and Charles II, it managed to offend both sides and remained highly controversial. Hobbes himself was accepted by Cromwell and honored by Charles II when he succeeded the throne, but he maintained a much lower political profile for the remaining years of his life. He died in 1678.

Context:

In 1533, in spite of receiving an answer from Pope Clement VII regarding his suit to annul his marriage so he could wed Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII took matters into his own hands and forced an assembly of English clergy to recognize him as head of the English Church. In 1534, Henry gave official political sanction to the Protestant movement by passing the *Act of Supremacy*. This Act made him “supreme head” of the Church of England with “authority to ordain all errors, heresies, and abuses.” Thomas More lost his head for refusing to acknowledge the Act and sign a petition declaring his support for Henry. The Act intensified the gathering religious divisions forming in England. Catholics solidified around their disaffectionment; the Anglican Church was established; and Puritan sects were forming everywhere for the sake of trying to realize a holier kingdom on earth. In the early part of his reign, James I (1603-1625) supported an established episcopal form of church government. He believed the power to appoint bishops ensured his political power, and hence his famous motto, “No bishop, no king.” The Puritans on the other hand saw the bishops as a threat to their reforms and wanted their own and James’ power removed. Charles I (1625-1649) suspended Parliament

when it refused to give taxes in support of his war with France. Presbyterianism was flourishing in Scotland, and the Scots rose up against Charles not only because of the legal and financial policies he was pursuing but because the religious practices he was supporting seemed more in accord with Catholicism, which they believed was heretical, than with the Calvinism they embraced. The Puritans meanwhile controlled Parliament, and resentful of the power that had been growing since Henry passed the *Act of Supremacy*, they refused to give the crown any tax support, killed the first minister, and abolished the prerogative courts whose arbitrary powers had spread since the time of Henry VIII.

Fed up with the growing opposition, Charles decided to take Parliament head on with a show of force of his own. In 1642, he marched into the House of Commons intending to arrest some of its leaders. That act and the events that followed initiated the civil war. Charles was beheaded on January 30, 1649 and England briefly became a Common wealth. Oliver Cromwell, who was a fervent Puritan, became impatient of reform, and sickened at the efforts of legislators to use the changing circumstances to advance their own interests, he marched a strong into Parliament and forced it to retire. The Common wealth was brought to an end almost as quickly as it began. England became a Protectorate with Cromwell having nearly absolute powers as Lord Protector for life. For a time, England became as despotic and arbitrary under its military rule as it had ever been under its kings. The period was one of tremendous intellectual unrest and political instability; people were left in a state of frenzied confusion because of the confusion created by moving secular and religious domains of power. This was the world with which Hobbes was grappling.

But confusion and a thirst for reform weren’t confined to spheres of religion and politics. All ancient traditions were being called into question. Like so many gifted men of his time, Hobbes turned towards science and philosophy for a certainty that the more traditional forms of discourse no longer seemed to offer. Influenced by Bacon, who distrusted classical philosophy and the scholasticism that had supported it, Hobbes claimed that traditional philosophy by its nature was unable to achieve certainty in its conclusions. He advanced his own theories based on the deductive reasoning model of geometric proofs. By beginning with propositions about human nature, society, and government that were self-evident and to which everyone would agree, Hobbes believed that his philosophy, like science, would lead to irrefutable conclusions and thus eliminate the conflicts that had inevitably led to civil unrest and war. Published two years after the beheading of Charles I, *Leviathan* was as controversial as Hobbes had expected it to be. His mechanistic view of the universe led to charges of atheism; the Royalists denounced his denial of the Divine Right of Kings; and the Parliamentarians were outraged that his system required the people to cede their rights to an absolute and perpetual sovereign authority. Philosophy, politics, and the new scientific methods all came together in Hobbes’ theories of the universe in which everything could be reduced to matter and motion with man’s end being nothing more than his own self-preservation. Although he never realized the political reform he had hoped for, Hobbes remains a significant figure in the history of Western thought.



Poetry Selections

Montaigne – Essays My Mind To Me A Kingdom Is

by Edward Dyar

My mind to me a kingdom is;
Such perfect joy therein I find
That it exceeds all other bliss
Which God or nature hath assigned.
Though much I want that most would have,
Yet still my mind forbids to crave.

No princely poet, nor wealthy state,
No lotus to win a victory,
No wily wit to save a state,
No shape to win a loving eye;
To none of these I yield as traitor,
For why? my mind despises them all.

I see that plenty suffers all,
And hardly elsewhere is content felt;
I see that such as are still
Misbegotten doth the more of all.
These get with toil and keep with fear;
Such vain my mind can never bear.

I press to bear no laughter sweet,
I wish no more than may suffice,
I do no more than will I may.
Look, what I want my mind supplies,
Let that I triumph like a king,
My mind content with anything.

I laugh not at another's loss,
Nor grieve not at another's gain;
No worldly wares my mind can lose,
I know that is another's gain.
I fear no foe, nor fawn on friend,
I have no life, nor dread mine end.

My wealth is health and perfect sense,
And conscience clear my chief defense;
I never seek by bribes to please,
Nor by desert to give offence,
Than do I live, thus will I die,
Would all did so well as I.

Cervantes – Don Quixote Much Madness Is Divinest Sense

by Emily Dickinson

Much madness is divinest sense
To a discerning eye,
Much sense the starkest madness.
'T is the majority
In this, as all, prevails,
Assent, and you are sane;
Demur, -- you're straightway dangerous,
And headed with a chain.

Shakespeare – Comedy of Errors or Twelfth Night

from Comedy of Errors

Why, breathing liberty is told of with wit,
There's nothing sterner under heaven's eye
But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky:
The beaver, the fishes, and the winged fowls,
Are their master's subjects and at their controls.
Men, more divine, the masters of all these,
Lords of the wide world and wild watery seas,
Indued with intellectual sense and souls,
Of more prominence than fish and fowls,
Are masters to their females, and their herds;
Then let your will attend on their accords.

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"The only fence against the world is a thorough knowledge of it." - John Locke

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I



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"Faith does not rise to the clouds, spring from the mountains but the mountains from faith." - Thomas Aquinas

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II



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