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ODYSSEY OF THE WEST IV

A Classic Education through the Great Books

TOWARD ENLIGHTENMENT

COURSE GUIDE

Professor Timothy B. Shutt,
KENYON COLLEGE, *Series Editor*
Featuring Professors Fred E. Baumann
and Thomas F. Madden

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Editor - James Gallagher

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Cover image: Michelangelo's *David* © Photos.com

#UT111 ISBN: 978-1-4281-7631-7

Course Syllabus

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About Your Professors

Photo courtesy of Timothy B. Shutt

TIMOTHY B. SHUTT has taught for more than twenty years at Kenyon College, famed for splendid teaching, literary tradition, and unwavering commitment to the liberal arts. No teacher at Kenyon has ever been more often honored, both by the college and by students, for exceptional skills in the classroom and as a lecturer. His courses in Kenyon's interdisciplinary Integrated Program in Humane Studies and in the Department of English alike have always been heavily oversubscribed, and he lectures on Homer, Plato, Aristotle, the Bible, the Greek historians, Virgil, and Dante every year to a packed house.

Photo courtesy of Thomas F. Madden

THOMAS F. MADDEN is a professor of history and chair of the Department of History at Saint Louis University. His numerous scholarly publications include *The New Concise History of the Crusades* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), *Enrico Dandolo and the Rise of Venice* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), and *The Fourth Crusade: The Conquest of Constantinople* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), coauthored with Donald E. Queller. He is a recognized expert on pre-modern European history, frequently appearing in such venues as the *New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today*, National Public Radio, the Discovery Channel, and the History Channel.

Photo courtesy of Fred E. Baumann

FRED E. BAUMANN came to Kenyon as director of the Public Affairs Conference Center and part-time teacher of political science in 1980, entering the department full-time in 1986. He teaches courses in the history of political philosophy, politics and literature, diplomatic history, and statesmanship as well as PSCI 101-102. The author of *Fraternity and Politics: Choosing One's Brothers*, Baumann is currently working on a book on the status of political humanism. He is an associate editor of the journal *Interpretation* and has served as chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee and as secretary of the faculty. Baumann received the Senior Faculty Trustee Teaching Award and was invited to give the Founders Day talk.

Michelangelo's *David*

Introduction

The Odyssey of the West series continues its grand exploration of the literature, revolutionary theories, and feats of intellectual progress that have shaped—and continue to shape—the modern world. In *Toward Enlightenment*, Professor Timothy B. Shutt of Kenyon College is joined by Professors Thomas F. Madden (Saint Louis University) and Fred E. Baumann (Kenyon College) in an illustrative look at the works and strains of thought that led to the Enlightenment.

With *The Prince*, Machiavelli unleashed a highly controversial guide to life that proposed that everything is warfare. In *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare produced two works of unparalleled genius—each containing the unmistakable blueprint of the Great Bard's hierarchical view of the world. In addition to these immortal works, the esteemed professors examine the art and writings of the Northern and Italian Renaissance, the Reformation, Bacon, Descartes, and two philosophers whose works will be forever linked: Hobbes and Locke.

Lecture 1:
Machiavelli: *The Prince*
(Professor Fred E. Baumann)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince.*

Introduction

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) was a Florentine diplomat who sided with the republic that replaced, and was replaced in turn, by the rule of the Medici family, and who spent his later years in exile writing two great works on politics, *The Prince* and *The Discourses on Livy* (as well as some remarkable comedies). His name still scares some people. He is Old Nick, the devil's representative, Marlowe's Machiavel who, chillingly, announces "I count religion but a childish toy and hold there is no sin but ignorance." Is this reputation deserved or just a product of pre-modern piety and naïveté?

Modern views have generally held the latter. In the nineteenth century, when Italian nationalism crested, he was seen, on the basis of the poetic last chapter of *The Prince,* as an Italian patriot. In the twentieth century, "value-free" social scientists saw him as their forebear, amoral, not immoral. Teaching people to be bad just meant teaching them to be realistic. Later in the century he was seen, not without reason, to be part of the long tradition of classical republicanism that is thought to stretch between the Roman Cato and the *Federalist*. At the same time, the philosopher Leo Strauss warned against getting too sophisticated too fast. The prejudice that Machiavelli was a teacher of evil was, he thought, a good place to start at least. At the same time, Strauss was perhaps the first to take Machiavelli seriously as a philosopher, not just as a political writer, and to trace the origins of modernity to his thought.

What Kind of a Book Is *The Prince*?

Machiavelli was a republican. *The Discourses* are about the Roman republic and republics in general. His most famous book, however, was written, he says, to get a job from the Medici, his long-term opponents, and gives advice to princes on how to conquer others. (It advises, for instance, the annihilation of conquered republics.) Was he serious? Spinoza and Rousseau both thought *The Prince* a satire, a how-not-to book in the guise of a how-to manual. Still, Machiavelli says in both books that everything he knows is in both of them. Also, the putative division between speaking of republics and speaking of principalities breaks down as early as the third chapter of *The Prince*, when Machiavelli invokes the Roman republic. Perhaps there is a common teaching about politics that they share.

On the surface, the book resembles what he seems to advertise as an easy-reading treatise for the busy statesman, with all the topics covered chapter by chapter from kinds of principalities to foreign policy and military affairs to domestic affairs. But the treatise order may also be somewhat deceptive.

What May Really Be Going On

First I will discuss Machiavelli's political teaching, which I think does not really differ much from that of *The Discourses*. Second, there seems to be a deeper philosophic view on which the political teaching is based, and I will address that too.

The surface of the book still shocks, with its praise, for instance, of Hannibal's cruelty and his "other virtues." It was originally even more shocking in view of the genre it is part of. Other "mirrors of princes," like Augustine's or Erasmus's, emphasized the need to be good, to please God. Machiavelli openly teaches badness. Yet even he pointedly leaves the darkest teachings to the second half of the book, postponing what one should say about lying, for example, from chapter three to chapter eighteen. It is not until chapter fifteen that he announces his own "new modes and orders." Yet the book's deep theme is announced in the very first chapter: What is the relation between "virtue" and "fortune"? The entire book presents a case for the possibility of virtue, which here means human beings doing things for their own benefit, and a case against relying on fortune, which means relying on anything or anyone other than "one's own arms."

At the political level, this expresses itself both in the familiar stage-devil themes and in a more restrained and less obvious teaching. In the former category comes the advice always to be ready to fight a war rather than to seek peace, the praise of patently wicked men like Cesare Borgia, the suggestion that hated tyrants and criminals were in essence no different from the most revered founders like Romulus and, yes, Moses. Here too comes the strange combination of loathing and admiration for the Christian church, which, for its own ends, ruins human affairs, but does so brilliantly. In the latter, the less obvious teachings, come the suggestions that there is a natural alliance between the prince and the people against the great and that the prince, however cruel he needs to be to his competitors, should pretty much leave the people alone. One can even begin to wonder if the Prince is being taught to use the people, or being taught ultimately to be used by them.

At the more philosophic level, Machiavelli's "new modes and orders" turn out to be based on a rejection of both the Christian and the ancient view that human beings should try to transcend their own selfish interests. This acceptance of human selfishness leads to the view that "a prince should have no other object . . . but the art of war." What Hobbes and later theorists will describe as the state of nature, of isolated human beings who are always out for themselves, is already stated, without their legalisms, here. This means that, properly understood, human life is radically insecure, to the point of being hellish. Like early modern physics, Machiavelli teaches that motion is the norm, rest the exception, and usually the illusion. It is this insight, no longer salved by revelation's promises, that states the modern philosophical as well as political problem. Hence the discovery that Cesare Borgia, the most wonderfully evil man of his day, wasn't evil enough.

Machiavelli's Project

At the political level, it is the teaching of political rationality, whether in the form of the European "new monarchies," with their civil servants and top-down

rule, or tough republics with citizen armies. (In the end, I think he does prefer republics to monarchies, but at the deepest level they both require "princes," that is, those few clued-in enough to be able to see everything as uncertain and dangerous, that is, as "war.") This project necessarily means an attack on the Church, but also on Christian teachings of goodness. Philosophically, it means the creation of a new world whereby human beings, accepting their own baseness, make an alien and hostile world into a livable place, by their own unaided and undeluded efforts. The "dams and dikes" that Machiavelli invokes to control the power of fortune's floods are echoed at the very end of the Enlightenment by Goethe in *Faust*, where the hero, himself a bad man and a Machiavellian to the day of his death, finally finds happiness in the contemplation of what he thinks is the Dutch building dams and dikes against the North Sea, benefiting mankind by their own unaided efforts. Machiavelli's heirs, like Francis Bacon, perhaps the most important founder of modern science, got the point, and modern science, like modern politics, takes its cue from an obscure sixteenth-century Florentine politician.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How can the origins of modernism be traced to Machiavelli?
2. What is Machiavelli's attitude toward the Christian church?

Suggested Reading

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Trans. Harvey C. Mansfield Jr. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985.

Other Books of Interest

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Essential Writings of Machiavelli*. Trans. Peter Constantine. New York: Modern Library, 2007.

Lecture 2:
Northern Humanism
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is A.G. Dickens's *The Counter-Reformation.*

"Humanism" is a word to conjure within a contemporary context, and on that account it is tempting to interpret the "humanism" of the Renaissance, both in Italy and in Northern Europe, in something close to contemporary terms. But to do so is misleading. At present, "humanism" tends to suggest a focus on human concerns and human values, apart from—if not, indeed, to some degree at least in opposition to—religious values, in opposition, that is to say, to values based in substantial part on the teachings of putatively sacred texts or traditions. "Humanism" in that contemporary context suggests a more or less resolute focus on this-worldly or secular values and interests, and often implies a whole range of associated convictions and attitudes.

The humanism of the Renaissance is quite different. Not entirely different, to be sure—the "humanism" of the present does indeed descend from some aspects of Renaissance humanism. But only from some, and, as it happens, not from those that were most prominent at the time. For in the first instance, the humanism of the Renaissance was focused upon the study of ancient texts, at first overwhelmingly Latin texts, and then Greek texts and even, to some extent, the Hebrew scriptures as well.

Renaissance humanism was likewise devoted to *seeking out* ancient texts, in monastic libraries or archives, or wherever they might be found. And finally, Renaissance humanism was deeply concerned with the process of editing ancient texts. Indeed, though the traditions and processes of textual criticism had significant Byzantine and Alexandrian precedent, contemporary textual criticism stems more or less directly from the work of the Renaissance humanists. And editing ancient texts, it is worth remarking, was for the humanists a considerably more difficult process than might be supposed. They began their work before the rise of printing and worked from manuscripts throughout, and manuscripts differ from printed works in several significant ways. For one, they are all unique, each with its own array of scribal errors, some arising afresh, and some stemming from the prototype, or the manuscript or series of manuscripts giving rise to that from which the scribe copies, and for another, they differ in pagination, so one cannot cite by page number.

In addition to their focus on ancient texts, the humanists were also inclined to direct their attention to different sorts of text than those that had been most cherished in the immediate past. They focused on literature, on rhetoric, on histories and law, in preference to works of theology or philosophy, and one strand of humanist tradition that continues into the present is their focus on the "humanities" and on more or less secular texts. But they were deeply interested in Scripture as well, and one of the monuments of humanist scholarship is their work on the text of the Bible in the original tongues—*koine* Greek and Hebrew—as opposed to the Vulgate Latin that had been standard in the Latin

West for more than a millennium. Above all, though, they loved Latin, and in particular the long-antiquated "classical" Latin of the Augustan age, the Latin of Virgil and Horace and Cicero—and of Cicero above all. Indeed, profound reactionaries that at least in this sense they were, they sought to undo a thousand years of linguistic evolution in Latin in order to bring about a "renaissance"—the term and concept are their own—of the "pure" Latin of the late Republic and early Empire, and thereby began the process of ossification that within a few centuries would finally make of Latin well and truly a "dead" language. For as C.S. Lewis shrewdly observes, the "new learning"—here, and perhaps most often elsewhere—brings with it a "new ignorance" in its train. Outside of the world of science and technology, the cultural world offers very few unmixed gains.

Be that as it may, by an admittedly roundabout route, the rise of humanism in the long run did encourage a new sort of focus on earthly affairs, and in particular, following Cicero and the old Roman model, on legal and political affairs. And by way of its focus on biblical scholarship and on the original biblical texts, humanism contributed, if again rather obliquely, to the coming Reformation.

Our focus here is on Northern humanism, but in this instance, as often elsewhere, it was in Italy that the movement first arose. Francesco Petrarca, or "Petrarch" (1304–1374), not only wrote his celebrated *Rime Sparse* in praise of Laura, he also began, though failed to complete, his *Africa*, a neo-Virgilian epic on Scipio Africanus. And his younger contemporary, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313–1375), wrote not only his *Decameron*, but a learned treatise on the genealogy of the pagan gods and goddesses.

Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) served, in effect, as a resident scholar for the Medici family, who hired tutors to teach him ancient Greek, after which he set to work translating not only the works of Plato, but also those of Plotinus and a variety of neo-Platonic and Hermetic texts. There was, as a matter of fact, something not unlike a Platonic academy in Florence, devoted to the teachings of the master as interpreted by his later neo-Platonic commentators, which seems to have influenced, among others, the painter Botticelli and the brilliant young polymath, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), whose most celebrated work bore the admirably humanistic title of *De dignitate humanis* (*On the Dignity of Humanity* or *Man)*. Julius Caesar Scaliger proved an admirable textual critic, and a bit farther north, Guillaume Budé (1467–1540) produced a Greek grammar, his *Commentarii linguae graecae*, in 1529.

Erasmus

The most influential of the Northern humanists, however, was Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. His most influential early work was his *Adagia* of 1500, a collection of adages or noteworthy sayings culled from a variety of ancient authors, very useful to later writers in search of appropriate—and appropriately classical—sentiments. His *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, in effect, a guide to Christian life, or, metaphorically, to life as "Christian soldier," was likewise influential. In more recent times, though, Erasmus has been most celebrated for his *Encomium Moriae* or *Praise of Folly* (1511). Erasmus had in fact met Sir Thomas More in 1499, when Erasmus was in his early thirties and the

younger More in his early twenties, and they seem very quickly to have recognized in one another kindred spirits. The title of *Praise of Folly* is accordingly a sort of in-joke or pun, since the Latin *Encomium Moriae* can likewise be translated as *Praise of More*. Both scholars seem to have shared a real desire for reform in the realms both of church affairs and of politics. Both were profoundly learned and pious. And both—as, indeed, the title *Praise of Folly* suggests—were at times at least ironists of a subtlety that resists full interpretation. At times, indeed, their meaning is so oblique as to escape detection—or in any case full agreement on the part of later critics. But this, I suspect, is at least in part a function of the times in which they wrote. More, after all, died on the scaffold, and the early Reformation, to put the matter gently, was on neither side particularly receptive to all modes of plain speaking. A little learned obscurity might, in the context, be no bad thing. A word to the wise, after all, is sufficient—for the moment at least to play Erasmus by citing a venerable and appropriate adage.

Erasmus's most valuable work at the time—since, of course, superseded by the advance of biblical scholarship, but very important nonetheless—was Greek New Testament of 1516. The very next year, of course, saw the promulgation of Luther's famous Ninety-five Theses, and many at the time were disappointed that Erasmus, in the end, rejected Luther's innovations. But Erasmus, like More, was finally interested in reform, not what from his vantage point at least came to seem more like revolution. He remained a faithful, if critical, Catholic.

St. Thomas More

And so too, of course, Erasmus's friend, St. Thomas More (ca. 1477–1535). More's political career was most distinguished. After studying at Canterbury College, Oxford, he was elected a Member of Parliament while still in his twenties and was appointed Privy Councillor to King Henry VIII in 1517. In 1529, he was appointed Lord Chancellor—a very parlous position under the circumstances, since Henry was seeking a divorce from his wife, Catherine of Aragon, who had given him a daughter, ultimately to become Queen Mary, but no surviving son, and he wished to marry Anne Boleyn, who in the event would give him another daughter, Elizabeth. Such a divorce was, unsurprisingly, a most unappealing prospect to the Hapsburgs, Catherine herself being one among them, and the pope proved reluctant to grant a divorce that would so offend the dynasty which was his mainstay against the Protestant threat. Henry responded at last by declaring himself head of the Church in England—a step that More refused to endorse—and his reluctance at last led to his execution on a charge of treason in 1535, and, ultimately, to his canonization as St. Sir Thomas More in 1935.

More meanwhile wrote *Utopia* in 1516, a puzzling work that established a literary—and sociopolitical—genre that is still very much with us. More, indeed, coined the very term that means, in the first instance, "nowhere," and secondarily and punningly, "goodwhere" or "goodplace." In *Utopia*, More, like Plato in his dialogues, does not speak in his own person, and this is in itself a distancing and ironizing device. But beyond that, it is difficult to tell what positions More advocates in his work. It is clear, at least to most readers, that he is in fact and in all seriousness opposed to the existing English practice of

executing malefactors for theft, and it is almost equally clear that he is opposed to greed and excess. But it is far less clear what we are to make of Utopia itself. It is a pious and strongly patriarchal place as More depicts it, but it is also more or less communistic. More recent readers have seldom found themselves irresistibly attracted by the pious patriarchy, but the communism of More's utopia has drawn admirers and, in some sense, imitators. My own guess, for what it is worth, is that what More hoped we might admire looked a good deal more like the "primitive" church of the Apostles than the People's Republic of North Korea. But the matter remains under dispute and utopias—and "dystopias," anti-utopias—of one sort or another continue to flourish.

Two other figures to mention before we depart: John Colet (1466–1519), educated at Oxford and Dean of St. Paul's, founded St. Paul's School in 1505 and revealed himself, for his time, as a remarkably humane and influential schoolmaster.

And François Rabelais (ca. 1494–ca. 1553), cheerfully, exuberantly, and excessively turned the world of humanism upside down in his *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How is Renaissance humanism different from contemporary humanism?
2. What "in-joke" is expressed by the title of *Encomium Moriae*?

Suggested Reading

Dickens, A.G. *The Counter-Reformation*. New ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979.

Other Books of Interest

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Praise of Folly*. 2nd ed. Trans. Clarence H. Miller. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Lewis, C.S. *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama*. *The Oxford History of English Literature, Vol. III*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.

More, Thomas. "Utopia." *Three Early Modern Utopias*. Ed. Susan Bruce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Lecture 3:
The Northern Renaissance in Art
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Horst de la Croix, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick's *Gardner's Art through the Ages*.

The Northern Renaissance in art, perhaps surprisingly if not paradoxically, stems more directly from the late medieval and Gothic traditions of Northern art than from the works of the early Italian Renaissance. The artists of the Northern Renaissance show the same love of rich color and light, the same love of intricate detail, as their immediate Gothic forebears. What we see here is not so much a revolution as a rich fulfillment of earlier inclinations and tendencies. The pre-training of Northern artists, so to speak, was as miniaturists, as manuscript illuminators, not as masters of fresco, and it shows—not least in their painstaking depiction of ordinary objects.

One of the major cultural divides in Western Europe is that separating those who speak Romance languages and those who speak Germanic languages—the beer-drinkers and the wine-drinkers, if you will. And that linguistic difference correlates, or so I imagine, with a difference in artistic sensibility as well. Romance languages, as any native speaker of a Germanic language who has ever studied one can testify, are in some sense focused upon the verb. In Latin itself, indeed, verbs regularly function as complete sentences in their own right. Germanic languages, by contrast, are focused upon the noun, not so much upon actions as upon things. And this difference in linguistic focus finds a parallel expression, I think, in Northern and Italian art. Northern art is simply more "thing-oriented," in love with textures and surfaces and objects. Italian art, by contrast, focuses more on actions and on all-embracing, atmospheric light and space. The differences are subtle—expressions of tendency, not absolutes. And yet, despite their subtlety, they are long-lasting and, I think, real. And they correlate with a whole array of intellectual polarities and tendencies—empiricism versus rationalism, or things versus structures of relationship, nominalism versus realism. They find expression in the realm of philosophy, and perhaps even of religion as well.

Be that as it may, however, Northern Renaissance art characteristically and quite clearly stands on one side of the divide, even when, as early on, it reflects the so-called "international style" characteristic of the late 1300s and early 1400s and derived, in large part, from Siena. *Les Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, an illuminated Book of Hours completed by the brothers Limbourg—Pol, Hennequin, and Herman—in about 1416 is a splendid example and perhaps the supreme masterpiece of the illuminator's art. Its depiction of the "labors of months," in this case alternating month by month between the pursuits of the nobles and the peasantry, is in one sense deeply traditional. Sculpted labors of the month were a favorite motif in Gothic cathedrals. But the background depictions of landscape in the work seem to owe something to Lorenzetti, while the loving, minute depiction of details of foliage, clothing, and animal life have their own distinctively Northern character. The Limbourg

brothers were slightly later contemporaries of Geoffrey Chaucer, and I know of no better way to gain a sense of what Chaucer's world looked like than to take a look at the *Très Riches Heures*.

Jan van Eyck

The great master of the early Northern Renaissance, and indeed, one of the great masters of all time—by some accounts the most distinguished colorist who ever lived—was Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390–1441). Whether or not, as is sometimes claimed, van Eyck was in the full sense the inventor of oil painting, he certainly perfected the art, making use of techniques that have not been fully traced or recovered to this day. The result was a breathtaking tonality of color, still fresh and vibrant after half a millennium and more.

Perhaps his greatest surviving work is his *Ghent Altarpiece*, otherwise known, on the basis of its central interior panel, as the *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb*. The *Altarpiece*, completed in 1432 for the church of St. Bavo in Ghent, is in some sense a joint production with van Eyck's brother Hubert, who may have designed the original housing. Be that as it may, we are lucky to have the work at all, which was very nearly destroyed during the so-called "iconoclastic frenzy" of 1566 when hardcore Calvinist rioters sought to destroy what they took to be "idolatrous" works.

It is a "polyptych" composed of twenty-odd separate panels, arranged on an outside that can be opened on appropriate occasions to reveal the panels within. It has been argued, and I think persuasively, that such an arrangement in itself parallels or expresses what might be termed an "allegorical" frame of mind, by virtue of which the outside, the surface of things, reveals a deeper, spiritual or sacred reality within. Such a vision of things was deeply characteristic of late medieval Northern culture—and indeed, of Dante as well—and the works of Jan van Eyck seem saturated with just such ideas.

The outside of the *Ghent Altarpiece* focuses upon the Annunciation, the moment of Incarnation, when Gabriel reveals to the Virgin Mary that she is to bear a son. The inside focuses upon the result—God the Father and the angelic host presiding over the triumphant rectification of the fall of Adam and Eve, as the redeemed joyously gather from the four corners of the Earth, apostles, evangelists, prophets and martyrs, confessors and virgins, pilgrims and hermits, judges and knights, all united in worship of the Lamb.

Van Eyck, in short, has set himself the task of painting nothing less than heaven and eternal bliss, and more fully than anyone before or since, he has succeeded. He really does evoke an unearthly sense of joy and calm, at once transcendent and intimately, all but preternaturally detailed.

Hieronymus Bosch

The sensibility of Hieronymus Bosch (ca. 1450–1516) seems, in many respects at least, almost precisely antithetical, and his famous triptych, the so-called *Garden of Earthly Delights*, seems an evocation not of joy and salvation but of damnation and lust.

The left panel shows the birth of Eve and the central panel a phantasmagoria of cavorting naked men and women, birds, fruit, animals, and odd hallucinogenic quasi-vegetable structures whose precise nature baffles description. No

one knows for certain what hidden meanings it may encode, though not because critics haven't done their best. It seems, at first glance at least, to represent a sort of demonically festive triumph of lust, anticipated in Eve, and punished in the genuinely infernal final panel of Hell.

There is, indeed, a consistent demonic side to Northern sensibilities that finds expression not only in Bosch, but in the engravings of Martin Schongauer, most notably his *St. Anthony Tormented by the Demons* (ca. 1480–1490), and indeed at times in the engravings of Albrecht Dürer and the paintings of Pieter Brueghel as well. What makes such visions particularly terrifying is the naturalism that so often surrounds their demonic elements, as if this sort of thing is in some hideous sense a matter of routine.

Matthias Grünewald (Neithardt)

Matthias Neithardt, or as he is more often known, Matthias Grünewald, powerfully evokes a sense both of religious joy and religious dread in his celebrated *Isenheim Altarpiece*, painted for the monastic hospital order of St. Anthony of Isenheim, which evidently served, among others, those afflicted with skin diseases and amputees. The crucifixion panel, central and dominating, not to say overpowering, when the altarpiece is closed, speaks directly and gruesomely to such afflictions. It stands among the most terrifying crucifixions ever painted. Christ is agonized and dead, his skin already gone greenish, and his skin full of suppurating thorn-wounds from his scourging. Inside, however, the Resurrection panel strikes an entirely different note. Grünewald is in his own way a master colorist and the sickly greens of the crucifixion are transmuted into a radiant, supernatural orange, forming a circular nimbus surrounding the upper half of the floating, triumphant risen Christ, his wounds now glowing, his face, almost dissolved in light, at radiant peace, and the stupefied soldiers assigned to guard his tomb lying helpless and inert beneath.

Albrecht Dürer

Generally considered the greatest artist of the Northern Renaissance, and staggeringly prolific, particularly of engravings and woodcuts, is Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg (1471–1528). He twice went to Italy to study, in 1495 and again in 1505–1506, and he, unlike his earlier peers in the North, sought in his own way to assimilate the scientific impulses and self-conscious artistry of the Italian tradition. This gives to his art a range, if not, perhaps, an obsessive power, which his earlier contemporaries lack. He was a master draughtsman, as his woodcuts and, even more so, his engravings reveal. His very best work may well be his engravings *Knight*, *Death*, *and the Devil* and *St. Jerome in his Study*, to which many critics would add his *Melancholia I*. All show a staggering mastery of technique, and the first two particularly make a profound and powerful human statement, suggesting the virtues of the active and contemplative life.

But Dürer was an accomplished painter as well. His watercolors in particular reveal a careful and gloriously dispassionate recording of detail that makes works like his *The Great Piece of Turf*, in one sense little more than a sketch, among his most affecting.

Hans Holbein the Younger

At least equally skilled as a draughtsman, and one of the three or four most accomplished portraitists who ever lived, was Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543). Holbein was recommended by Erasmus to his friend Sir Thomas More and went on to become court painter to Henry VIII. His most celebrated work is perhaps his *The French Ambassadors*, featuring, among other objects of interest, an odd anamorphic skull, easily recognizable as such only from an angle or with visual aids, serving as a *memento mori*. But his simple portraits are perhaps even more noteworthy.

Pieter Brueghel the Elder

We come at last to Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525–1569), whose paintings tend to work in a different register. He is celebrated above all for his depictions of peasant life, at once realistic and pointedly gnomic. That is to say his peasants are peasants, realistically depicted, but often enough, as an undertow, exemplifying behaviors that give to his paintings a satiric or proverbial bite. Among a series of landscapes or quasi-landscapes that he completed while illustrating the seasons of the year is his famous *Hunters in the Snow*, a grimly realistic evocation of a very cold Flanders winter day (a few Alpine crags in the background aside)—a painting often cited by climatologists to exemplify the effects of the so-called “Little Ice Age.” Brueghel lived long enough to see sectarian violence break out in the Netherlands and to see the Spanish response, and some of his later paintings recall, in more realistic guise, the demonic vision of Bosch, this time, though, with the decomposing bodies of presumed miscreants broken on the wheel all too terrifyingly true to life.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What seems to be evoked by Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*?
2. How was Dürer unlike his peers in the North?

Suggested Reading

De la Croix, Horst, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick. *Gardner's Art through the Ages*. 9th ed. New York: Harcourt, 1991.

Other Books of Interest

Mâle, Emile. *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*. Trans. Dora Nussey. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1973.

Philip, Lotte Brand. *The Ghent Altarpiece and the Art of Jan van Eyck*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971.

Lecture 4:
The Italian High Renaissance in Art
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Horst de la Croix, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick's *Gardner's Art through the Ages*.

The Italian High Renaissance in art arose more or less directly from the work achieved by Giotto di Bondone (ca. 1267–1337) and his peers during the *Trecento* and immediately thereafter, and from the outset it revealed a more classicizing and scientific spirit than the works of artists further north.

Filippo Brunelleschi

An early master, trained as goldsmith and a sculptor during the first portion of his career, was Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446), most famous, though, as an architect and engineer, and, in particular, as the designer of the dome of Florence Cathedral—a structure that clearly reveals the influence of the Roman past and stands in sharp stylistic contrast to Gothic cathedrals of northern France and regions nearby. Brunelleschi was also credited with the development of geometric, linear perspective, an achievement, eagerly adopted by subsequent Italian artists, that worked its way northwards far more slowly among artists more interested in detail and texture than the geometric construction of painterly space.

Donato di Niccolò di Betto Bardi (Donatello)

A friend and contemporary of Brunelleschi, likewise a Florentine, was the long-lived sculptor, Donatello (1386–1466). Among his most famous works is a statue originally carved for a niche in the campanile of the Cathedral, a rather eerie prophet figure ordinarily and irreverently termed "*Zuccone*," or "Pumpkin-Head." On one hand he can be interpreted as a lean and fiercely ascetic exemplar of prophetic inspiration. But his toga-like garb, severe bald head, and close-cropped beard might also suggest a grimly Cato-like Roman sage. Either way, "*Zuccone*" departs from existing tradition, and even more so Donatello's *David*, probably his most celebrated work, completed in the early 1430s and the first surviving free-standing nude sculpture since antiquity. It is, in its way, an oddly disturbing work. First of all, it is not entirely clear why David is portrayed as nude—certainly the ancient Hebrews themselves were not much given to public nudity, anything but, in fact. And second, David stands, lips pursed and arms akimbo, with one hip raised—the head of the defeated Goliath below—not as a man, but as an adolescent, almost as a boy just beginning puberty, long locks flowing, coyly wearing a broad-brimmed and garlanded hat or helmet. Despite the sword in David's right hand, there is very little that is martial or warrior-like in the figure—indeed, it comes off as more nearly erotic. But it established a precedent that later artists were to exploit with even greater venturesomeness and fullness.

Tommaso di Ser Giovanni di Mone (Masaccio)

A very different sort of figure was Masaccio (1401–1428), an artist of striking originality and power who accomplished a great deal in his short life and very brief career. He introduced, in particular, several technical innovations that would later become widely adopted by his artistic legatees. Most have to do with atmospherics, with the evocation of space. First of all, Masaccio's paintings suggest a single light source, giving rise to sharply defined highlights and shadows and visually implying that all of the figures and objects depicted inhabit a single, more or less naturalistic space. Second, and perhaps more far-reaching, Masaccio paints with an awareness of the space separating the viewer from the scene depicted, as if the viewer too were enclosed at a determinate place within the visual field. And finally—atmospherics again—Masaccio is aware of what might be called the "blue shift," the tendency of more distant objects to take on an apparently more bluish hue (which is, of course, to name a more or less familiar example, precisely what makes the Blue Ridge blue, and for that matter, pretty much all distant mountains blue at the right time of day). He also paints with a viscerally powerful sense of human drama, as is manifest, for example, in his celebrated *The Expulsion from Eden* (ca. 1425).

Sandro Botticelli

One of the most widely beloved of all artists, and author of some of the most beautiful and evocative images ever painted, is Alessandro dei Filipepi, better known as Sandro Botticelli (1444–1510). Botticelli was an associate of the Medicis' Platonic academy, and many of his most celebrated works reflect the academy's characteristic concerns. The Medici Platonists believed in the final concordance of neo-Platonic and Christian teachings—they believed that in contemplating beauty one was, at least in potential, contemplating love and light at last emanating from God himself. Hence, despite appearances to the contrary, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* is, in intention at least, not only a sacred painting, but, in its way, a Christian painting, making use of classical figures and classical symbols to depict the soul's apprehension of divine beauty and love. It is also, of course, an image of surpassing beauty and enduring appeal—I have seen the winsome face and flowing locks of Venus more than once employed in official contexts to symbolize Italy herself, instantly recognizable and charming. For Botticelli's figures and faces, depicted in his inimitably graceful, sharp, flowing line—he is a superb draftsman—and in bright, cheerful, open color, are as distinctive and, for most viewers, as appealing as any ever painted.

The late fifteenth century, though, was not a happy time for Florence, as Charles VIII of France invaded, the Medici for the moment departed, and the dour Dominican, Savonarola, convinced many Florentines that the optimistic Christian neo-paganism that an artist like Botticelli exemplified was in fact an abomination. The grimmer Florence of Machiavelli was not the Florence of a generation before.

Leonardo da Vinci

Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) was born near Florence, the son of a notary—an influential position in the Florence of the time—and a peasant woman, but though Leonardo spent his early years in Florence, training in the studio of Verrocchio, in 1481 he departed to work under the patronage of Ludovico Sforza, the Duke of Florence's great Lombard rival, Milan. Leonardo is, of course, in one sense the most famous artist of all time, the prototypical "Renaissance Man," and his paintings represent only a part of what he achieved. In his brief to Duke Ludovico, for example, Leonardo features his skills as military engineer and architect, even as a hydrologist, in addition to what, from our perspective, would count as more artistic accomplishments, and his achievements as an inventor and as a master of careful scientific observation of, among other things, the human body, have impressed posterity every bit as much as his paintings and frescoes. Leonardo himself considered his scientific or proto-scientific work to be part and parcel of his artistry, two mutually fructifying aspects or modalities of the same central enterprise, and even a cursory glance at his surviving notebooks reveals what he had in mind in thinking so.

In his paintings and preliminary drawings, or "cartoons," Leonardo in one sense follows Masaccio, particularly with regard to his concern for atmospherics or "*chiaroscuro*," literally "lightdark," or the interplay of light and shadow. If Botticelli is a master of clear, sharp line, Leonardo is a master of shading, of forms rounding off softly into darkness. One of the factors that has so fascinated viewers of *La Gioconda* or the *Mona Lisa* (ca. 1503–1505) is precisely the subtlety of Leonardo's modeling, not in the background of the painting, where we might expect atmospherics, but more prominently still La Gioconda's hands and face, in her cheeks and eyelids and the corners of her mouth.

Leonardo's renowned fresco, *The Last Supper*, is not in a condition readily to sustain such close analysis—Leonardo was an innovator in fresco techniques as well as in his mode of depiction, and in this instance the results were unfortunate. But the fresco is celebrated even so for its utter mastery of perspective, for the skill with which Leonardo has arranged and depicted the figures who appear in the scene, and for the human insight that is revealed in his depiction.

Raphael Sanzio

Leonardo was known as a distant and relatively self-contained figure, focused above all on his vast interests and projects. His younger contemporary, Raphael Sanzio (1483–1520), was a man of entirely different character, sweet-tempered, amiable, and personable—all qualities that find expression in the sweetness of his art. Such sweetness, as a matter of fact, is not easy to achieve. The line between the sweet and the hackneyed, cloying, or trite is narrow, and for some viewers at least, Raphael may at times have crossed it. But even for the jaded, not very often. His many Madonnas and his cherubs may have become for us clichéd images. But that is in large part because their very effectiveness has made them popular. It is possible, in a sense, to succeed too well. And no one, I would venture to guess, has found *The School of Athens* (1509–1511), a fresco painted for the papal apartments of Julius II,

over-sweet or cloying. Like Leonardo's *Last Supper*, the *School of Athens* is a masterpiece of interior perspective and design, and is meant, in a sense, to symbolize something close to whole Renaissance enterprise, with Plato and Aristotle depicted dead center—Plato holding a copy of the *Timaeus*, in effect his creation story, and pointing up to the beyond, Aristotle holding a copy of his *Ethics* and pointing forward, a master of this world and the here and now. They are flanked by dozens of other figures, suggesting the whole range of Greek, and by implication, Italian Renaissance thought and enquiry.

Michelangelo Buonarroti

If Leonardo is not the most celebrated artist who ever lived, then the title belongs to Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475–1564)—poet, architect, painter, and, so far as he himself was concerned, above all a sculptor. Michelangelo was, by all accounts, a formidable, irascible figure, a man who didn't suffer fools lightly in a world that evidently seemed to him to show no lack of fools. But his art speaks for itself. Not least his *David* (1501–1504), an early masterpiece that could hardly be more different from the earlier *David* of Donatello. Michelangelo's *David* is likewise an adolescent, but a late adolescent, fully muscled, supple, and ready for action. There are not many universally recognizable figures in the world of art. But Michelangelo's *David* is surely one.

So too at least some of the images from the Sistine Chapel, a vast composition involving dozens of scenes or painted panels and hundreds of figures, focusing on the Creation and Fall and implying the Redemption to come. Michelangelo, so we are told, undertook the project reluctantly at the behest of Pope Julius II, and he clearly learned as he proceeded. The first three central panels are crowded and at least arguably less effective as compositions than the remaining six. But of those six, two have become images very nearly as iconic as that of *David*, the panel devoted to the Creation and Expulsion from the Garden of Eden, and, even more so, the panel devoted to the Creation of Adam, where God reaches out his hand to bestow upon Adam the gift of life and consciousness.

His later *Last Judgment* (1534–1541), on the altar wall of the Sistine Chapel, is altogether grimmer in tone, and at its grimmest, a truly terrifying depiction of the fate of the damned, not least of their horrified recognition of what they have lost and what is to come. Between the painting of the Sistine ceiling and the *Last Judgment* the unity of the Church was broken by the rise of Protestantism and the Catholic response, and some critics have seen a reflection of the ensuing turmoil in Michelangelo's vision. Be that as it may, the *Last Judgment* is a profoundly sobering and monumental work.

Michelangelo spent much of his time during the last years of his long life at work as an architect, and his triumph here is St. Peter's itself, completed after Michelangelo's death.

Giovanni Bellini

When we think of the Italian High Renaissance, we think in the first instance of Florence and Rome, and they did indeed dominate. But not entirely. We have already mentioned the work of Leonardo in and around Milan, and

Venice too had its own traditions during the Renaissance and afterwards. The most influential early figure is an artist whom I have long thought a bit undervalued, Giovanni Bellini (1430–1516), who grew and developed all the way through his long and productive life. He too was, among other things, a most accomplished painter of Madonnas, and a fresh, splendid colorist as well. But the most esteemed of the Venetians was Tiziano Vecelli, better known to us as Titian (1490–1576), who was another master colorist, famed particularly for his rich reds, which are appealingly prominent in his lush *Venus of Urbino*.

The Italian High Renaissance clearly marks one of the cultural high points in the wider Western tradition. So, as a matter of fact, the participants clearly thought at the time. But a high self-valuation, while it may raise a smile, is by no means necessarily incorrect, and here, one might argue, not at all so.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What technical innovations were introduced by Masaccio?
2. How might Raphael be considered too “sweet”?

Suggested Reading

De la Croix, Horst, Richard G. Tansey, and Diane Kirkpatrick. *Gardner’s Art through the Ages*. 9th ed. New York: Harcourt, 1991.

Other Books of Interest

Vasari, Giorgio. *Lives of the Artists*. Trans. George Bull. Vol. 1. New York: Penguin, 1987.

Lecture 5:
The Reformation
(Professor Thomas F. Madden)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Euan Cameron's *The European Reformation.*

The idea of reform was nothing new for the Catholic Church. Indeed, one of the institution's greatest strengths was its ability to adapt, reform, and renew when necessary. Although many people in the fifteenth century advocated reform, they did so within the context of previous reforms. No one envisioned a shattering of Christian unity. However, ultimately, that is what came of the Protestant Reformation. That is because two very new factors played a role in the sixteenth-century reform. First, secular lords had achieved levels of power that dwarfed those of ecclesiastical leaders. Because the Church was an international institution based in Rome, secular powers attempted to bring local bishoprics and ecclesiastics more within their power. Second, the coming of the printing press to Europe dramatically altered the religious and intellectual landscape. Ideas, whether good, bad, or absurd, could cheaply be transmitted across great distances. What had once been local heresies would, as a result, no longer be local. Cheap pamphlets and books also led to an increase in literacy, which would in itself feed the Protestant Reformation.

In 1500, the Church was in need of reform on two related fronts. The first was the problem of clerical corruption. From the pope on down the clergy were increasingly criticized for their wealth, corruption, and arrogance. The second difficulty concerned the indulgence market. Christian belief from the earliest times was that when someone committed a sin, he or she must do penance for that sin after absolution. The penance was called the "temporal penalty." The remission of the temporal penalties of sin was called an "indulgence." By the sixteenth century the popes had decreed that one could obtain indulgences for oneself—as well as others both living and dead.

When Johann Tetzel came to Germany to sell indulgences for the building of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome in 1517, Martin Luther, a professor of theology, posted his *95 Theses*, which were a scholarly call for debate on what he saw as an abuse. The event itself was lackluster. However, the theses were translated and published. Luther became an overnight sensation. His lower class background and his willingness to criticize the powerful clergy made him a favorite of high and low born Germans alike. Seizing the opportunity, Luther continued to write more pamphlets and treatises, keeping three presses busy at all times. Sometime in 1518 Luther was struck by Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith." For him, this was the key. Salvation was by faith alone: *fidem solam.* This one idea would be the keystone for all that came after. During the next few years Luther continued lecturing and writing under the protection of Elector Frederick the Wise. His pamphlets made clear that he was breaking with the Church. He rejected five of the seven sacraments, accepting only baptism and the Eucharist—and he claimed that Christians had misunderstood the latter. He rejected the independence of

the Church, the apostolic succession, the authority of the pope—indeed the whole concept of the Catholic Church as it was then understood. Although the popes generally had patience with professors, Luther's ideas and their widespread acceptance across Germany could not be allowed to continue. In June 1520, Pope Leo X gave Luther sixty days to recant his heresies. Luther responded by burning the pope's letter amid the cheers of his supporters. He then wrote a vitriolic treatise against the pope. On January 13, 1521, Leo excommunicated Martin Luther.

Luther was only the first of the reformers, many of whom began among the professional urban preachers. Huldrych Zwingli was led to many of the same conclusions as Luther. A city preacher in Zurich, he quickly accepted Luther's new ideas and spread them in his sermons. He met with strong opposition, although he worked through the city government to enact his measures, such as the outlawing of the "Hail Mary" in 1520. Zwingli believed that faith sanctifies life, which means that the works of Christians are pleasing to God. He also believed that the Mass was only a remembrance—nothing more, nothing miraculous. In both areas he ran afoul of Luther, who held that works were irrelevant and that the bread and wine of the sacrament became the essence of the Body and Blood of Christ. A pamphlet war—something that would be a staple of the Reformation—raged between Zurich and Wittenberg.

John Calvin, another preacher and reformer, was given control of preaching in Geneva in 1541. He began by having a long list of Catholics—clergy, lawyers, and others—expelled. He then organized reformed churches around what he believed were early Church practices, creating overseers, elders, and a pastor as part of a consistory. The consistory's charge was to govern the church and to enforce the morality of the congregation. The government's job was to enforce the consistory's decisions. Since almost all human activities were considered to be under moral jurisdiction, and since all were required to be members of the church, this gave Calvin and his consistories solid control over the city. By any standard, Calvin's morality was austere. Most surprising was his contention that wine or any alcoholic drink was sinful, something never believed by Christians before Calvin. By 1555, Calvin's theology had crystallized into the doctrine of "double predestination." He believed that human beings cannot earn heaven, since they are or are not predestined to be Elect. But more importantly, he also believed that the Elect could not avoid heaven, no matter their works.

The Reformation had an effect on all of Europe, even those areas that did not adopt these new religious ideas. In England, Henry VIII took advantage of the religious climate to place the church in England directly under his own control. Aside from the enormous amount of money this brought to him, largely as a result of the confiscation of monastic lands, it also allowed him to divorce his wife, Catherine of Aragon, and to marry Anne Boleyn. In countries that remained Catholic, particularly in Spain and Italy, new orders were developed to combat Protestantism. Chief among these was the Society of Jesus or the Jesuits. The Reformation fundamentally changed Europe, leading it into a modern era, yet only after many bloody religious wars and persecutions.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How did a growing literacy feed the Protestant Reformation?
2. What was the doctrine of "double predestination"?

Suggested Reading

Cameron, Euan. *The European Reformation*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1991.

Other Books of Interest

Chadwick, Owen. *The Reformation*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Tracy, James D. *Europe's Reformations, 1450–1650: Doctrine, Politics, and Community*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005.

Lecture 6:
Exploration, the Hapsburg Empire, the Catholic Reformation, and the Golden Age of Spain
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is J.H. Elliott's *Imperial Spain 1469–1716*.

The Hapsburgs and Exploration

The Hapsburg family dominated in central Europe in one sense or another for well more than five hundred years. At its greatest extent, in fact, under the rule of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V (1519–1556), and his immediate successors, his brother Ferdinand I in Austria (1556–1564) and his son Philip II (1556–1598) in Spain, the Hapsburg empire, or empires, were quite literally worldwide—the first upon which it could truly be said that the sun never set. Charles V himself was grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain and likewise of the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian I. The Hapsburgs were, for generations, unusually successful practitioners of the art of dynastic marriage, and as a result of such tactics on the part of his predecessors, Charles ruled not only the ancestral Hapsburg lands in Austria, but also, through the so-called "Burgundian inheritance," the Netherlands, to say nothing of Spain and the vast Spanish possessions in the Americas, and a great deal of land in Italy as well. The Hapsburgs, in fact, continued to rule at least in Austria-Hungary until within living memory at the end of World War I.

As ruler of Spain, Charles V was the beneficiary of the great Iberian voyages of exploration of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, probably the most extensive and historically significant on record, and, I would argue, the true end, if not in some sense a culmination of the Middle Ages. Charles's grandparents, Ferdinand and Isabella, completed the so-called "*reconquista*" of Spain from the Islamic Moors by taking Granada in 1492, and in the same year the Genovese navigator, Christopher Columbus, completed the first of his voyages to the Americas on their behalf. Before his death, he made three more voyages (1493, 1498, and 1502). At first the financial advantages to the European backers of such voyages were inconsequential. But all that changed when Hernán Cortés conquered Mexico following his landing in 1519 and Francisco Pizarro conquered Peru in the 1530s—and even more so from the 1540s onward with the discovery and exploitation of the Cerro de Potosí, in what is now Bolivia, the richest vein of silver ever discovered.

In 1581 Philip II, after some wrangling, ascended likewise to the throne of Portugal, which granted him control not only of Portugal, but of the nearly worldwide network of Portuguese outposts and trading entrepôts that were the legacy of a century and more of Portuguese voyages of exploration. Since the days of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), if not, indeed, before, the Portuguese had been making their way down the west coast of Africa. Perhaps more significantly, they had made their way to the Canaries, the Azores, and ultimately the Cape Verde Islands off the coast, though here

they were by no means alone in their efforts. Mariners had entered, in such waters, seas governed by the easterly trade winds, which would lead later mariners to the Americas. And the easterly winds proved helpful to the Portuguese on other voyages as well. In 1487–1488, Bartolomeu Dias veered far eastward into the South Atlantic and then veered back, toward Africa, only to be stopped near a place that he termed the "Cape of Storms" and we the "Cape of Good Hope." A decade later, in 1497–1498, Vasco da Gama continued around the Cape into the Indian Ocean, where there were already long-established monsoonal trading routes to India and, indeed, beyond. Soon enough the Portuguese had trading connections all the way to what is now Indonesia. They were also determined traders in gold and slaves along the West African coast, and in the course of their outgoing eastward sweeps around the Cape, they had by 1500 discovered what is now Brazil. It was likewise a Portuguese mariner serving on behalf of Castile and Spain who led the first expedition around the world, beginning in 1519 and reaching the Spice Islands at last late in 1521, though Fernão de Magalhães, better known to speakers of English as Magellan, was himself killed in the Philippines. Thus the worldwide scope of the sixteenth-century Hapsburg domains.

But vast domains tend to breed vast problems, and so most emphatically here. The Hapsburgs were staunch defenders of Catholicism, by no means least among them his "Most Catholic Majesty" Philip II, who really did feel himself to be divinely called as a defender of the faith. And the faith was under threat—as a matter of fact on several fronts.

In 1453, under the leadership of Mehmed II, the Ottoman Turks had succeeded in conquering Byzantium, or Constantinople itself, and thereby put an end to the Eastern Roman Empire, more than twelve hundred years after the emperor Constantine had first settled his capital there. The Ottomans, in fact, continued their expansion for several centuries, making of Constantinople the effective heart of the Islamic world, and taking control not only of the Byzantine empire, but of Egypt and much of North Africa, of the near East and most of Arabia, of Mesopotamia, of the Crimea and most of the Balkans as well. Belgrade fell in 1521, and after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, the Turks pressed on to what is now central Hungary. In 1529, under Suleiman I, the Magnificent (and again in 1683), they came very close to capturing the Hapsburg seat and stronghold of Vienna.

They expanded by sea as well as by land. The island of Rhodes, with its splendid harbor, defended by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, had fallen to the forces of Suleiman I in 1522. Charles V reestablished the Knights on Malta in 1530, but in 1565 Malta too was besieged by the Ottomans, who took the fortress of St. Elmo, but after a ferocious siege proved ultimately unable to take Valletta itself. In August 1571, however, the Ottomans gained control of Cyprus, and the Ottoman advance in the Mediterranean was not more or less authoritatively thwarted until the Battle of Lepanto, fought in October 1571 at the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth in Greece, where the combined forces of Spain, Venice, Genoa, and the Papacy proved victorious under the command of Don John of Austria, the half-brother of Philip of Spain.

Almost as bothersome to the Hapsburgs as the Muslim Ottomans were the Protestants in their own domains. Martin Luther had posted his famous 95 Theses in 1517, and had been excommunicated in 1521. At least in part to

keep his hands free to meet the Ottoman threat, however, Charles V had at least early on sought to negotiate with the dissidents, and from the 1540s had encouraged the work of the Council of Trent, which sought to rectify ecclesiastical abuses from within the Church. Theological differences, though, proved intractable, and he at last resorted to military measures.

To complicate matters further, the Hapsburgs confronted the ongoing threat of Valois France, which understandably was not happy to find itself more or less surrounded by Hapsburg domains.

Confronted with this array of difficulties, Charles V at last abdicated, leaving his Austrian inheritance to his brother, Ferdinand I, as noted above, and his Spanish inheritance, including not only Spain, but his American and Italian domains, and the Netherlands as well, to his son, Philip II, who soon enough faced a recalcitrant series of problems of his own. The French and the Ottomans aside, his problems with the Dutch proved particularly challenging, a problem all the more pressing since the Spanish Netherlands, in effect both the modern Netherlands and Belgium, were the most prosperous portion of his empire. Tax revenues there were indispensable to his chronically cash-strapped domains, and from the late 1560s, the Netherlands, or the Protestants among them, were in revolt. The Netherlands War of Independence ultimately lasted for eighty years, and in the meantime involved sporadic conflict with England as well. It was in large part to put a stop to more or less covert English aid to the Netherlands—and a good deal more straightforward English depredations against Spanish colonies and shipping—that Philip II dispatched the Armada in 1588.

Despite all these difficulties, though, Spanish culture flourished during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as never before or since—it was for Spain the *Siglo de Oro*. In part it was indeed the gold and silver, the wide domains and the rich mines. In part it was the galleons and galleys and the splendid Spanish infantry, for generations the best in Europe. But these in turn seem to have fostered a cultural self-confidence with its own Iberian flavor, fierce and pious, resilient and tough. The Spanish really believed, in the celebrated words of a conquistador, that they were working for God and for profit. For this the Spanish paid a price. Self-confident, dominant cultures arouse in their rivals hatred and envy for which there is no real cure save defeat and decline. So it was with Rome and Athens, so it was with France and England, and so it remains today. The Spanish were roundly hated, not only in the Americas, but in England, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. But they made their mark even so.

Not least, of course, in what, depending upon one's perspective can be termed either the "Counter-Reformation" or the "Catholic Reformation." Figures like St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, and, above all, St. Ignatius Loyola stand high to this day in the hagiography of Catholicism, and the Society of Jesus—the Jesuits—founded by Loyola in 1534, became the very cutting edge of the Counter-Reformation.

But the period was the great age of Spanish literature as well, featuring dramatists like Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and above all, of course, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547–1616), author of *El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha*, known in English as *Don Quixote*,

and by any standard one of the greatest and most influential—and most astonishingly multifaceted—novels ever written.

The art of painting likewise flourished in Spain. A relatively early master was Domeniko Theotokopoulos, born in Crete and trained in Venice. He worked from 1577 in Toledo and is better known to us as "The Greek," or in Spanish as "*El Greco*." The paintings of José de Ribera (1591–1652) and Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664) alike bespeak a powerful spirituality, but most accomplished of all, indeed, one of the most distinguished painters of all time is Diego Valázques (1599–1660), as a rule more secular in his choice of subjects.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How did the Protestants prove bothersome to the Hapsburgs?
2. What contributed to the flourishing of Spanish culture in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries?

Suggested Reading

Elliott, J.H. *Imperial Spain 1469–1716*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Other Books of Interest

Capponi, Niccolò. *Victory of the West: The Great Christian-Muslim Clash at the Battle of Lepanto*. Cambridge: Da Capo, 2006.

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Fernández-Armesto, Felipe. *Pathfinders: A Global History of Exploration*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006.

Howarth, David. *The Voyage of the Armada: The Spanish Story*. New York: Penguin, 1981.

Mattingly, Garrett. *The Armada*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959.

Parker, Geoffrey. *The Dutch Revolt*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1985.

Lecture 7:
The Wars of Religion and Montaigne
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Michel de Montaigne's *The Complete Essays* (translated by M.A. Screech).

"I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." So says Jesus, in Matthew 10:34. And in the so-called "Wars of Religion" the prophecy was terrifyingly fulfilled. The Protestant Reformation, beginning with Luther in 1517, in fact led to a series of wars between Catholics and Protestants—and in some instances, between Protestants and other Protestants of differing convictions and principles—which lasted for well more than a century, until the conclusion of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, and indeed, in some places, well beyond. The wars in question proved unusually vicious and destructive precisely because of their religious character—precisely because, that is to say, they were fought, and fought on all sides, on God's behalf, in service to the highest and most sacred values of which the participants could conceive, and against the forces of error and darkness, against near-demonic wickedness finding expression in human guise.

Wars fought for political advantage or to preserve the "balance of power," wars fought for commercial gain, or even wars fought more or less straightforwardly in hopes of plunder and conquest, are not generally fought *a l'outrance*, to the bitter end, without hope of mercy or compromise. The ends sought are finite, and once they are achieved—or proved impossible—the war stops. Such wars really are, as Clausewitz has it, politics pursued "by other means." Even the ideological conflicts of the century just past, mind-numbingly horrific as they were, proved no more remorseless and costly than the religious wars of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, and if they were just as bloody and ruthless, with whole classes and groups targeted for death and destruction, they were less designedly terrible and cruel. For the wicked must suffer for their wickedness, and know why they are suffering. Or so the righteous warriors of the fifteenth and sixteenth century most often thought. Simple extinction was not enough.

As a result, and on all sides, religious persecution was pretty much as horrific, painful, protracted, and public as it could be made. Not to persecute was to tolerate evil, to tolerate spiritual toxins that would damn anyone who accepted them, to tolerate the killing not just of bodies, but of souls. Persecution, on such a view, was not just a necessity, but a virtue, not just a virtue, but a sacred duty for Protestants and Catholics alike. It was a grim and grimly righteous time.

Until very recently the prospect of widespread religious warfare and violence seemed an unseemly and unpleasant matter long buried safely in the past, and the convictions of religious persecutors and religious warriors seemed, from a secular Western context at least, entirely antiquated and almost quaint. But we have come to know better what such times might look like.

Critics and historians have often suggested that the most important factor contributing to the relative secularism of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century was the rise of science, which purportedly displaced "religious obscurantism," "priestcraft," and "superstition," to use the language of anti-clericalism, with sweet reason, planetary mechanics, and the experimental method. The early history of modern science, though, and of the response to early modern science—which we will attend to in a subsequent lecture—does not fully support such a claim. Instead, what seems most strongly to have motivated the first generation or two of Enlightenment thinkers was their reaction to four or five generations of unremitting religious violence. It is, no doubt, an oversimplification to suggest their attitude was, more or less, if fierce religious conviction leads inevitably to irresolvable violence, then perhaps the solution to the problem is to abandon religious conviction, or, if not that, to abandon the sort of religious conviction that requires ongoing persecution to secure its hegemony and integrity.

In any event, even before the Reformation began, heretics had been persecuted, and on the whole more so as the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance proceeded. And the first decades after Luther's break with Catholicism saw uprisings and unrest in Germany that were put down with notable and quite literally "exemplary" brutality in hopes of quelling any wished-for repetition. It didn't work.

The first full-scale breakout of post-Reformation religious warfare, however, took place in France. Henry II died in 1559, and three of his sons in succession ascended to the throne, Francis II in 1559, Charles IX in 1560, and Henry III in 1589. Throughout much of this period, the power behind the throne was Catherine de Medici, daughter herself of Lorenzo de Medici, wife of Henry II, and mother of the three kings who followed (and mother likewise of Margaret of Valois, the first wife of Henry IV, who succeeded to the throne in 1589). France was divided, though, meanwhile, by strife between factions, one led by the ardently Catholic house of Guise, the other led by the house of Bourbon, led in its turn, for much of the period, by Henry of Navarre, who ultimately became Henry IV, and who, early on at least, was Protestant and sympathetic to the Calvinist or Huguenot faction in France, whose greatest strength lay in the west and southwest. Henry IV, in the end, at least nominally converted to Catholicism to ease his accession to the throne (famously suggesting, in explanation, that "Paris is worth a mass"), but he remained a friend to Protestants, promulgating in 1598 the Edict of Nantes, which granted toleration to Protestants in France until it was revoked in 1685 by Louis XIV. Religious warfare continued, however, through the 1620s, reaching a sort of culmination in the notorious St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre beginning on August 24, 1572, ironically enough on the occasion of Henry of Navarre's marriage to Margaret of Valois, when many prominent Huguenots were in Paris—and thus available for massacre.

Religious warfare in the Netherlands was, if anything, more costly and more protracted. It began, in a sense, in 1566 when aggressive Dutch Protestant groups embarked upon a campaign of "iconoclasm," ridding churches of what they took to be blasphemous, "Popish" accretions—images, altarpieces,

stained-glass windows, and the like. The unrest continued until 1567, when Philip II, King of Spain and Hapsburg ruler of the Netherlands, found it necessary to send the Duke of Alva north with Spanish troops to quell the uprising. This led, in its turn, to what, depending upon one's perspective, can be termed the Dutch "revolt" or the Dutch "war of independence," an interminable and very costly conflict that continued in more or less active form until 1609, and was not resolved once and for all until the Treaty of Münster in 1648.

The English, who had undergone their own Reformation of sorts under the auspices of Henry VIII, were by the time of Elizabeth I, committedly, if relatively moderately, Protestant as well, and Elizabeth chose to fight a covert war of sorts against the Spanish both at sea and in the Netherlands. This, in its turn, prompted the sailing of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

But all of these conflicts pale in terms of sustained brutality and costliness in comparison to the Thirty Years' War, which devastated, and in some regions, more or less depopulated, what is now Germany for a generation and more. The war began in 1618 when the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor, the Hapsburg Ferdinand II, drove Frederick V, Elector of the Palatinate, from Bohemia, in effect, the modern Czech Republic. In 1629, he promulgated the so-called "Edict of Restitution," which sought to recover for Catholicism lands lost to Protestantism in Germany, and the Lutheran King Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden intervened. It was not until 1648 that the conflict was finally resolved.

And even then religious conflicts continued. The English Civil War, 1642–1651 (though one can tweak the dates a bit around the edges), was in terms of casualties as a percent of population the most costly in English history. This is, to me at least, a bit surprising. The costs of the Great War, and the Battle of the Somme in particular, to Britain are more or less common currency. And yet Cromwell's war was even more costly. From one perspective this was a war between Parliamentarians, or "Roundheads," and Royalists, between Cromwell and the rest, and the Stuart King, Charles I, was executed at last in 1649. But in another sense, this too was a religious conflict, not, this time, between Protestants and Catholics, but rather, between relatively moderate Episcopalian Protestants and more radical "Puritan" Protestants. And here too the stakes were high. "Traitors" routinely died on the scaffold, hung, drawn, and quartered.

Even after Cromwell's death and the restoration of Charles II in 1660, violence at least sporadically continued in Britain. Charles's brother, James II, was deposed in 1688 by William of Orange, and the last Jacobite rebellion in favor of the Stuarts took place as late as 1745. It too was suppressed with "exemplary" brutality.

The history of such grim doings in mind, it is a kind of relief to turn to the writings of Michel Eyquem, Seigneur de Montaigne (1533–1592). Montaigne was a Gascon, on one side the descendent of *conversos*, or of Jews who at least putatively converted to Christianity rather than be expelled from Spain. He was raised speaking Latin as his mother tongue and had an intimate knowledge of the classics, particularly, and unsurprisingly, the Latin classics. He came from a prominent family and indeed served as mayor of Bourdeaux, but by preference he remained on his estate at Montaigne, reading and writ-

ing. His complete *Essays* number well more than twelve hundred pages in the most recent Penguin edition, and yet they are, in a way, oddly humble and profoundly personal compositions. The term "essay" itself suggests a certain lightness and provisionality; an essay is, in a sense, an attempt, a sort of "first take," if you will. And indeed, Montaigne frequently and freely revised.

In recent times perhaps the most celebrated of his essays is his *On the Cannibals,* in which he reflects upon an encounter with some natives of South America transported to France, who were indeed, on their own account of the matter, cannibals. Montaigne, though, finds a great deal to admire in them. He begins his essay with a reference to Pyrrhus, the third- and fourth-century BCE Greek king of Epirus whose battles with the Romans gave rise to the expression "Pyrrhic victory," meaning a victory so costly it might as well have been a defeat. Montaigne begins as follows: "When King Pyrrhus crossed into Italy, after noting the excellent formation of the army which the Romans had sent ahead towards him he said, 'I do not know what kind of Barbarians these are' (for the Greeks called all foreigners Barbarians) 'but there is nothing barbarous about the ordering of the army which I can see!'"

Montaigne makes the point a bit more abstractly later in the essay: "every man calls barbarous anything he is not accustomed to; it is indeed the case that we have no other criterion of truth or right-reason than the example and form of the opinions and customs of our own country." The name for such a position is, of course, "relativism," and it is, I would venture, quite possible to take such a position too far. It may be that we ourselves are at times inclined to do so, and Montaigne's own judgment of "the cannibals" to some degree disavows his own stated judgment, for the "criterion of truth or right-reason" in accordance with which he admires them is certainly in no very obvious or direct way based on "the opinions and customs" of his "own country." Be that as it may, though, what we see here is something new. In an age of violent and relentless persecution, Montaigne is prepared to admire not just differing fellow-Christians, not just Jews or Muslims, but pagans and cannibals, whom he claims to find, all told, no less touched by virtue than ourselves and, indeed, in many ways our superiors. On one hand this verges toward a kind of moral skepticism, which in Montaigne's place and time at least was unlikely to find many followers. But on the other, it argues for a sort of tolerance that the generations to follow would tend to find more and more appealing. Montaigne represents a new perspective, not just in his detachment and his humanity, but in the "inward turn" of his thought, and in all such respects he was in many senses a precursor of things to come.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Where did the first full-scale breakout of post-Reformation religious warfare take place?
2. How did Montaigne express a "relativistic" viewpoint in *On the Cannibals*?

Suggested Reading

De Montaigne, Michel. *The Complete Essays*. Trans. M.A. Screech. New York: Penguin, 2003.

Other Books of Interest

Davies, R. Trevor. *The Golden Century of Spain 1501–1621*. New York: Harper, 1961.

Dickens, A.G. *The Counter-Reformation*. New ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1979.

Elliott, J.H. *Imperial Spain 1469–1716*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

Howarth, David. *The Voyage of the Armada: The Spanish Story*. New York: Penguin, 1981.

Mattingly, Garrett. *The Armada*. Boston: Houghton, 1959.

Parker, Geoffrey. *The Dutch Revolt*. Rev. ed. New York: Penguin, 1985.

Lecture 8:
Shakespeare: *King Lear*
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Lear* (edited by Russell Fraser).

William Shakespeare is, of course, and by a wide margin, the most celebrated and esteemed literary figure ever to have written in English, and, indeed, by many reckonings, in any other language as well. That being the case, it may be rather a surprise to learn that he seems not to have thought of himself, at least primarily, as an artist in the sense that, say, Dante and Petrarch clearly did, or, still less, in the sense that a later and acutely self-conscious artistic figure like James Joyce did. If Shakespeare had any desire "to reforge the conscience" of his "race," he was quiet about it. His primary desire in writing his plays appears to have been simply to make money, and in that he succeeded well enough to retire at about age fifty and return home a prosperous man. A contemporary parallel, as I suggest to my students, might be a highly successful movie producer, certainly not someone writing beautifully wrought and all but totally unread poems and stories for prestigious small magazines. Shakespeare was popular and meant to be popular. His business depended on it.

He was born, or in any case, christened at Stratford-on-Avon in Warwickshire in 1564, eldest of six surviving children of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden. The elder Shakespeare was a glover and at least early on, relatively prosperous. The Arden family stood a bit higher in the social hierarchy, and Shakespeare grew up in the equivalent of a comfortably middle-class household. At age eighteen, Shakespeare married the twenty-six-year old Anne Hathaway, who six months later gave birth to their first child, whom they named Susanna. Three years later, Anne bore twins, who came to bear the perhaps unlikely names of Hamnet (not Hamlet) and Judith.

And then, for seven years, Shakespeare simply drops out of the picture so far as surviving records are concerned, to reemerge in London in 1592, already writing plays and getting a bit of notoriety for it. By 1594 he was connected with the Lord Chamberlain's Men, of which he ultimately became part-owner. The company did well enough to build the Globe Theatre in 1599—in Southwark, a seamy suburb, just across the Thames from London and hence out of London's jurisdiction, which was home, in addition to theaters, to bear-baiting pits, brothels, and taverns, a sort of pre-Las Vegas edge-of-the-legal entertainment complex. In 1603, after the accession of James I, Shakespeare's company became the King's Men, and by about 1611, Shakespeare began, albeit gradually, to retire, spending more and more time back home in Stratford, though still willing to lend a fellow playwright a hand if needed at times and working on a few collaborative projects.

There are, of course, those who doubt that "the Stratford man," as they call him, was in fact the author of Shakespeare's plays, and contrarians have proposed a variety of candidates over the years. Shakespeare's prominence has

attracted conspiracy theorists, in short, and they have proved ingenious, if finally, to me at least, and to the overwhelming majority of scholars, unpersuasive in arguing their case. William Shakespeare is, in fact, William Shakespeare, unprepossessing Stratford background and all.

King Lear is generally considered to stand among the very greatest of Shakespeare's plays, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* ordinarily esteemed as its only real rivals as the greatest of all. *King Lear* seems first to have been produced some time between 1603 and 1606, when Shakespeare stood at the height of his powers, and in order to assess the play thematically, it will be helpful to begin at what might appear a surprising place—the list of "*Dramatis personae*" that appears at the beginning of each of Shakespeare's plays enumerating the characters involved. Contemporary lists ordinarily arrange characters in the order in which they appear or, less frequently, in an order reflecting the size and importance of the various parts. Shakespeare's lists are quite different. They follow the social hierarchy, kings at the top, then nobles, then commoners, and then—and only then—women, even royal women. And this arrangement reveals something fundamental to Shakespeare's plays and to the worldview to which they gave voice—Shakespeare's belief in hierarchy and his age's belief in hierarchy, in what has been termed "the great chain of being."

At the top of the hierarchy stands God himself, with the vast and intricately ordered array of angels next. Then human beings, then animals, then plants, and then inanimate matter in all of its varied guises. The governing notion is that each level in the hierarchy enjoys fuller expression of being, and, by implication, of life and consciousness, than the levels below. Stones are. Plants live. Animals live and feel. People live, feel, and with varying degrees of precision, think and reason. Angels, disembodied minds, live without suffering death, feel, know by virtue of radiant, instantaneous intuition. And so it goes. Human beings are "the crown of creation," not because they stand on top, which they most emphatically do not, but rather because they uniquely bridge the gap between the material and spiritual worlds—are little "microcosms," or "mini-universes," within the "macrocosm," or big universe.

There are, in addition to the great chain of being itself, a vast array of subhierarchies arranged within it. We still have no trouble remembering which was "the king of beasts," or of "birds." We still, in some sense, think of gold as the "noblest" metal and diamonds as the "noblest" of stones.

And Shakespeare's era had little doubt—and those at the top of the hierarchy even less—that the existing social order reflected the ontological divine order, that kings, nobles, and commoners, and indeed, men and women, are fitted into the social order not by convention or as a result of oppression, but, in fact, by divine will. This is, needless to say, a profoundly uncongenial view of things to most contemporary thinkers, and all the more so the further to the left one finds oneself on the political spectrum.

Correlated with the privileges of one's position, though, came an array of responsibilities as well, based in large part upon an internal hierarchy within the mind or soul. Human beings had bodies, of course, and also had the sort of desire for life, nutrition, growth and reproduction that seemed to characterize planets. Hence, a "vegetable" soul. Humans also shared, among other things, simple awareness and a wish and capacity to defend themselves with

animals. Hence, an “animal” soul. But above all, on this view of things, humans had been endowed with reason and with an eternal soul, whose responsibility it was to govern one’s appetites and inclinations in accordance with one’s divinely granted apprehension of what was good. Some folks did well at this, others, clearly, less well. To follow reason was to fulfill one’s human potential, to give way to the promptings of the passions, when inappropriate, was to fall in the hierarchy, to become more like an animal, and to suffer accordingly.

All of which leads us to what might be termed the fundamental Shakespearean plot. Someone gives way to wayward desire, unreasonably violating the order within—in service of lust or ambition, in service of indolence or greed, no matter—and performs an act that violates the hierarchy without, in the wider world, by killing a king, by deposing a duke, simply by abdicating, or whatever. And then the hierarchy restores itself, more often than not destroying those who violated it in the first place, and sometimes a series of more or less innocent bystanders as well.

When I was little, I used to have an inflatable clown punching-bag (I rather doubt they make such things anymore in our more pacific age). The clown was weighted in such a way that however hard you chose to punch to him, he always swung back and righted himself—sometimes hitting you if you weren’t quick enough to get out of the way. That is what the universal hierarchy, the great chain of being, in Shakespeare is like. You can disturb it, but at your cost and not for long.

And so in *King Lear*. Lear’s opening decision to abdicate does not seem from our perspective a very serious dereliction of duty. (The wisdom or unwisdom of his “declare-your-love-for-me” contest is an entirely different matter.) But for Shakespeare it is. It is God who chooses kings. And Lear’s rending of the fabric of order, unsurprisingly, leads to chaos, and to chaos on all sorts of levels, until order at last reasserts itself. Thus the plot in outline. The details, though, are a good deal more disturbing than the seemingly beneficent process of maintaining cosmic equilibrium might suggest.

For one thing, *Lear* includes a parallel plot by which the Earl of Gloucester comes to prefer his wicked bastard son, Edmund, over his virtuous legitimate son, Edgar, not by virtue of the more or less simple folly and petulance, which persuade Lear to favor his wicked and unashamedly hypocritical older daughters, Goneril and Regan, over his virtuous youngest daughter, Cordelia, but rather because of careful and calculated villainy on the part of Edmund, his bastard son. The suggestion is that the result is the same—moral blindness is moral blindness, whatever the occasion giving rise to it.

But beyond that—and this is a major reason for *Lear*’s power—the resolution of the plot finally fails to defuse and to rectify the profoundly subversive and disturbing power of the imagery Shakespeare has evoked. He, in effect, raises demonic and anarchic energies that the resolution of the plot leaves frighteningly unanswered. At the end of the play we do not exactly return to the *status quo ante*. There has, in fact, been a net loss. There has, to put the matter another way, been incursion of nothingness into the world of *Lear*; in a sense, the great chain of being has been diminished by its antithesis, and in the world of Shakespeare, as in the world of Augustine, nothingness in some sense *is* evil, to the extent that evil can be said to have being at all.

It is not just, or even primarily, the plot. The imagery, in *Lear* as so often in Shakespeare, takes on a life of its own—that is part of what makes Shakespeare the superlative writer that he is. And the imagery in *Lear* is terrifying—nothingness, chaos, madness and folly, pain and suffering, even, and quite literally, demonic intervention.

One keynote is sounded almost at once. Lear asks his most beloved daughter, Cordelia, what she can propose in answer to the effusive professions of love offered by her sisters in hopes of gaining a richer inheritance. Cordelia replies, “Nothing, my lord.” Lear is non-plussed and answers, “Nothing?” Cordelia replies again, “Nothing.” And Lear replies, “Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.” To which Cordelia, “I love your Majesty / according to my bond, no more no less.” Which sets off the array of fireworks which it takes the rest of the play to resolve. But right from the outset Shakespeare invites us to contemplate not only what might lie behind the words of hypocrisy—in a crucial sense, nothing—but something far more disturbing, a world governed, in effect, by nothing, where greed and cruelty and desire have utterly uninterrupted sway.

And so the play continues pretty much throughout. We have neither time nor space to trace out the ways in which Shakespeare systematically thwarts our optimistic expectations in *Lear*, nor the way in which the language of the play tirelessly evokes a world of madness and darkness. But even the most cursory reading of the play itself will reveal as much.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How did Shakespeare's view of his role as artist differ from that of Dante or Petrarch?
2. What is the context of the view that humans bridge the gap between the material and spiritual worlds?

Suggested Reading

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Rev. ed. Ed. Russell Fraser. Signet Classics. New York: Penguin, 1989.

Other Books of Interest

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004.

Lecture 9:
Shakespeare: *The Tempest*
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (edited by Peter Holland).

The Tempest is generally considered to be Shakespeare's last play, though he evidently collaborated on or assisted with several others later on, and it is likewise, and I think rightly, generally considered to stand among his very best. *The Tempest* was evidently performed as early as November 1611, and was again performed during the wedding celebrations for the marriage of King James' daughter, Elizabeth, to the Elector Palatinate during the winter of 1612–1613, a contingency that might seem suggestive in seeking to determine the tone of contemporary responses to the play.

The Tempest is in many respects a very different sort of play than a tragedy like *King Lear*. It is generally categorized as a "tragicomedy," or more often, as a "romance," and as such it has affinities with another then-contemporary genre called the "masque," an elaborate sort of stage production in some ways reminiscent of contemporary musicals with elaborate costumes, and lots of music and dance. Masques were relatively high-end entertainment, often presented in more or less command performances at court (as was, indeed, *The Tempest* itself), and *The Tempest* too is full of music and pageantry and dancing. Sometimes in masques the audience was invited to participate in dances with the performers, momentarily dissolving the boundaries between them and the two worlds that they represented, and including, at least symbolically, the spectators themselves in the actions and scenes depicted in the masque. As it happens, some such impulse seems to be at work in *The Tempest* as well. For on one major level at least, *The Tempest* seems to be a sort of "anti-tragedy," a play about how to recover from tragedy, and that is a theme in which, on the face of it, pretty much any audience might wish to participate, symbolically or otherwise.

Before proceeding further, though, we need to look at a rather different interpretation of *The Tempest* that addresses different concerns and which focuses on different sorts of energies, a theme, which taken as the keynote of the play, I consider seriously misleading, but which, even so, for a variety of reasons, attained a prominence amounting to domination among late-twentieth-century critics. This reading focuses on the character of Caliban, the semi-monstrous (how monstrous is, indeed, a central issue) original inhabitant of the isle that Prospero, the play's central character, comes to dominate. The fundamental notion dominating this reading is the idea that Caliban in some sense represents native Americans and that the play is accordingly an evocation of English colonial enterprise and, not to put too fine a point on it, of English, or in any case, European colonial oppression. Hence, by implication, even before English colonialism was well launched, Shakespeare had been conditioned, consciously or not, by the forces that gave rise to colonialism and spoke out against it, so to speak, in advance.

There is, in fact, more to support such a reading than might at first glance be supposed. There are echoes in the play of Montaigne's essay *On Cannibals*, and as has been frequently pointed out, the name "Caliban" is close to an anagram of "Cannibal." Shakespeare also mentions the "still-vexed Bermoothes" (1.2.229), in effect, the "always stormy Bermudas," responding, evidently, to a pair of reports stemming from an English voyage to Virginia that encountered a hurricane and was shipwrecked in Bermuda, the *True Repertory of the Wracke*, by William Strachey (1610), and the *Discovery of the Barmudas*, by Sylvester Jourdain (1610). And indeed, the Virginia colony at Jamestown, while hardly thriving, had been established in 1607, and there were plenty of deliciously appalling accounts available of the horrible things other people—most notably the wicked and Catholic Spanish, fierce long-time enemies of the English—had been up to in the Indies. So far so good.

Such a reading, though, downplays, if not ignores, a good many countervailing factors. First, Prospero's island is quite clearly nowhere near the Americas. It is situated in the Mediterranean, on the sea-route between Italy and Tunis—which is, as Shakespeare tells us quite explicitly, built very near the ruins of the ancient city of Carthage. If Shakespeare refers obliquely to the Americas, he refers clearly and unmistakably to the *Aeneid*, a mythologized account, to be sure, of the origins of the Roman empire, but not in any immediate sense a contemporary colonialist or anti-colonialist reference. The *Aeneid* chronicles, among other things, the origins of the hostility between Rome and Carthage, which found fatal expression (for Carthage at least) in the Punic Wars. Shakespeare instead chronicles a marriage between the relevant Italian and African noble families, implying, however obliquely, an end to strife, not a beginning. Perfectly appropriate fare, it might be noted, for a royal wedding celebration.

Beyond that, and more disturbingly, Caliban, though he has many lovely lines—among the loveliest Shakespeare ever wrote—is portrayed as the son of a witch, perhaps fathered by a human, perhaps not, as speechless until tutored by Prospero, and as a would-be rapist and murderer. These last two may well be justifiable, from at least some perspectives, because of his deposition by Prospero, but Shakespeare quite clearly was a believer in hierarchy, and in any human hierarchy it is clear that from Shakespeare's perspective Caliban belongs nowhere near the top. That may well be objectionable from a contemporary perspective. Many have found it so. But that is Shakespeare.

It is tempting to read an author as highly esteemed as Shakespeare as if he more or less uniformly supported one's own most cherished ideas. Only the Bible, I would venture, offers a greater temptation in this regard. But to read in that way, however ingeniously, is to look into the mirror, not the text.

The Tempest begins, in effect, in the aftermath of the tragedy, in the aftermath of an assault on the hierarchy that is in fact at least seemingly paralleled by the tempest with which the play opens and which gives the play its name (and which, in its turn, parallels the tempest that for analogous reasons opens the *Aeneid*). Prospero has been Duke of Milan, and has set the action in motion by devoting himself excessively to his studies, thereby stinting upon his responsibilities as a ruler. This opens the door to his unscrupulous brother Antonio, who negotiates a *coup d'état* in his own favor, powered by Neapolitan muscle, promising obeisance to King Alonzo of Naples in recom-

pense. Prospero is popular enough with the Milanese that rather than executing him, Antonio decides to set him adrift with his toddler daughter—you have to take care of the heirs, however young, if you want the new dynasty to last—in the happy expectation that wind and wave will do his work for him. They don't. Prospero and his daughter arrive at an island where twelve odd years later his magic arts enable him not only to recognize that a wedding fleet bearing his enemies is passing homeward bound from Tunis, but to ensure that, once he raises a tempest, the relevant ship is grounded on his isle, all hands miraculously saved.

Once on the land, the principals seek to reenact the tragedy. While Alonzo is asleep, Prospero's brother, Antonio, seeks to persuade the brother of the King of Naples to follow his own lead in more or less fratricidal ambition. Alonzo's son Ferdinand is seemingly drowned, Alonzo's brother is thus the new heir, and "three inches of steel" will grant him the throne.

Meanwhile, Caliban encounters Trinculo and Stephano, a jester and a butler, and persuades them to attempt to murder Prospero and take over the island on their own behalf. Prospero is able, though, to thwart all of these plots, and at the end has all of his enemies at his mercy. And decides to spare them.

> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to th'quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance. They being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. (5.1.25–30)

He, in short, confirms the order within himself and regenerates the order without. And all the more so since he has in the meantime provided the opportunity for the undrowned Ferdinand, heir to the kingdom of Naples, and his own daughter, Miranda, heir to Milan, to fall in love. The play ends with a wedding in prospect. Milan, early on, has been subjected to Naples in crime—it ends, albeit offstage and in the future, subjected to Naples by dynastic marriage. Again, all most appropriate for a royal wedding celebration.

As the "honest old councillor," Gonzalo, puts it:

> Was Milan thrust from Milan that his issue
> Should become kings of Naples? O, rejoice
> Beyond a common joy, and set it down
> With gold on lasting pillars; in one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,
> And Ferdinand her brother found a wife
> Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom
> In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves
> When no man was his own. (5.1.205–13).

The language here is apocalyptic, and, I think, quite designedly so. The fortunate outcome of the play seems meant on at least one level to recall the providential guidance of the world itself. As Prospero brings about the tempest to restore and regenerate things in ways that those involved in the tempest at the

time have no way of knowing, so too, by implication, divine providence arranges things for our good in ways that we will come to understand, if at all, only beyond the grave.

But there is another level at work as well. *The Tempest* is Shakespeare's last full play, and many have read it quite literally as his last word, as his farewell to the stage and his art. As Prospero arranges the tempest, as divine providence governs the world, so Shakespeare makes worlds with his art—with, indeed, *The Tempest* itself. The play in fact concludes with an epilogue, spoken by Prospero, that seemingly conflates the role of Prospero within the play and Shakespeare in writing it. Prospero asks that the audience

> Release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands (9–10)

and concludes with the moving request

> As you from crimes would pardoned be
> Let your indulgence set me free. (19–20)

And with that, as best we can tell, he retired to Stratford.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How is *The Tempest* different than *King Lear*?
2. What is there to support a reading that *The Tempest* is about colonialism?

Suggested Reading

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed. Peter Holland. New York: Penguin, 1999.

Other Books of Interest

Lucy, Margaret, and William Jaggard. *Shakespeare and the Supernatural: A Brief Study of Folklore, Superstition, and Witchcraft in* Macbeth, Midsummer Night's Dream *and* The Tempest. Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2006.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. Ed. Northrup Frye. New York: Penguin, 1970.

Lecture 10:
Bacon and Descartes
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Readings for this lecture are Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (edited by Susan Bruce) and René Descartes's *Discourse and Method* and *Meditations* (translated by Laurence J. Lafleur).

We address Sir Francis Bacon and René Descartes here together because they were both influential and were both—in very different ways and to profoundly varying degrees—contributors to the rise of our own modern, scientific view of things, Descartes as a major contributor in his own right, Bacon much more as a publicist, but both important even so.

Bacon

Sir Francis Bacon is significant as an empiricist and as a publicist for scientific experimentation. A kind of hard-headed, minimalist empiricism has been, as a matter of fact, a perennial tendency in English thought, characteristic, in various ways,
of Ockham, Hobbes, and Hume as much as of Bacon, but Bacon exemplified the disposition as thoroughly and tirelessly
as anyone.

Bacon was born in London and went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1573, later moving to Gray's Inn to study the law, becoming a barrister in 1582 and a Member of Parliament at age twenty, the year before. His political career prospered, especially during the reign of James I, when in 1618 he became Lord Chancellor. Shortly thereafter, though, accused of taking bribes in 1621, he lost the position, and he spent the rest of his life more or less in retirement.

His *New Atlantis*, a Utopia of sorts, was published the year after his death, in 1627, and it is noteworthy in particular for its portrayal of what Bacon calls "Salomon's House," a sort of combination of ruling cabal and Royal Society before the event that dominates the imaginary land which Bacon depicts and which seems to represent Bacon's views as to what science might be able to achieve. He describes "Salomon's House" or the "College of the Six Days Work" in the following terms: "The End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things; and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible" (177), and he gives us a good many examples of the sort of goals he has in mind, among them "The prolongation of life," "The restitution of youth in some degree," "The curing of diseases counted incurable," "The mitigation of pain," "The increasing of strength and activity," "The altering of complexions, and fatness and leanness," "The altering of statures," and "The increasing and exalting of the intellectual parts." Most of these have since Bacon's time to some degree at least been accomplished, and all remain research goals of interest. Others have proved more difficult to achieve, like "Making of new species" and "Transplanting of one species in to another." And with regard to others we have succeeded perhaps too well, as in the case of "Instruments of destruc-

tion, as of war and poison." In any case, his own firsthand contributions to scientific progress were relatively insignificant, Bacon's vision of "the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire" proved, if not prescient, surprisingly accurate. In that sense, at least, in the process of whetting the desire for progress, he was indeed influential.

Descartes

René Descartes is generally considered the founder of modern philosophy, and he was, I would argue, even more significant as a mathematician, one of the very greatest who ever lived. His philosophical ideas, as a matter of fact, follow more or less directly from his mathematical investigations. Descartes's great mathematical achievement was the invention of analytic geometry, and it might not, at first glance, be apparent why analytic geometry is so important. For roughly two thousand years by Descartes's time arithmetic and geometry had reigned as the queens of the mathematical sciences, arithmetic concerned, of course, with numbers, geometry concerned with space. The difficulty was that there was no readily accessible way to translate geometric insights into numerical form or numerical terms, nor was there a readily accessible way to perform the converse operations, moving from the numerical to spatial realm. That is what analytical geometry accomplished—in effect, the unification of two heretofore more or less separate realms of mathematical inquiry that could, after Descartes, be treated in interchangeable terms.

The development of analytical geometry, in its turn, opened the way to the rigorous analysis of motion in numerical terms, and within a generation or so both Sir Isaac Newton and Gottfried Leibniz had independently developed calculus. This development in turn made possible Newton's analysis of celestial motion—it was, indeed, for just that reason that he devised it—which led at last to Newton's great work, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, "The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy" (1686). The *Principia* was, quite simply, the most influential scientific work ever published, not only because of its convincing, verifiable, and rigorous analysis of celestial motion, but also because it came to mark a new conception of what a scientific explanation was—a new conception, indeed, of what knowledge was. And more or less ever since scientists in all fields have sought the closest possible approach to the *Principia* in their own realms in terms of mathematical precision and predictive power.

Descartes's own philosophical ideas were powerfully influenced by his mathematical investigations, as the following passages from his *Discourse on Method* (1637) make abundantly clear. He dryly writes of his early philosophical studies that "philosophy teaches us to talk with an appearance of truth about things and to make ourselves admired by the less learned" (542.6). He found himself, by contrast, "especially pleased with mathematics, because of the certainty and self-evidence of its proofs" (543.7), which led him to a further speculation: those "long chains of reasoning, so simple and easy, which enabled the geometricians to reach the most difficult demonstrations . . . made me wonder whether all things knowable to men might not fall into a similar logical sequence. If so, we need only refrain from accepting as true that which is not true, and carefully follow the order necessary to deduce each one from the others, and there cannot be any

propositions so abstruse that we cannot prove them, or so recondite that we cannot discover them" (550.19).

Which raises the issue, though, of how we know what is true when we encounter it. Descartes's answer here is subtle. He writes that "I judged that I could accept as a general rule that the things which we conceive very clearly and [very] distinctly are always true" (559.33), but clear and distinct ideas in and of themselves are not a sufficient answer and Descartes knows it. Descartes's Jesuit education had acquainted him with St. Augustine, and Descartes in a sense follows Augustine here. Plato accounted for our capacity to recognize truth to our cognitive access to the world of forms, and Augustine modifies that Platonic conception. For Augustine we have access to the forms in the guise of divine ideas or *rationes seminales*, in accordance with which God made the world. Hence, our "truth detector," if you will, is access to the divine mind itself, and hence our intuitions are trustworthy. The position of Descartes is in most respects functionally equivalent to that of Plato or Augustine, but he justifies it differently, or in a sense, he fails to justify it and just accepts it. In his "Third Meditation," he writes, "I could not doubt in any way what the light of nature made me see to be true. . . . And there is no way in which this could be doubted, because I have no other faculty or power to distinguish the true from the false which could teach me that what this light of nature shows as true is not so, and in which I could trust as much as in the light of nature itself" (38.30). This is very shrewd indeed, and I think correct. We cannot doubt our capacity to perceive truth because the only capacity that could lead us to doubt it is the capacity to perceive truth. There is nowhere else to go, and in practice, careful as we may wish to be, we have no other option. You can't go to the head store and get another head. In this sense, knowledge begins in faith and reason begins in faith—faith in the cognitive process itself.

In any case, Descartes's next step is to embark upon a systematic course of doubt to see what, if anything, might constitute reliable knowledge. And famously, or notoriously, he soon arrives at the following formulation: "I soon notice that while I . . . wished to think everything false, it was necessarily true that I who thought so was something. Since this truth, *I think, therefore I am, or exist*, was so firm and assured . . ., I judged that I could safely accept it as the first principle of the philosophy I was seeking" (*Discourse* 558.32).

This is the origin of the much-excoriated "Cartesian dualism" between mind and matter that so bedevils contemporary critics. But in some sense, annoying as it may be, Descartes is surely right. You can't eat thoughts. Consciousness may well arise from material processes—presumably so it does—but it is not itself the same thing as those processes. You might say, and indeed it has been said, that the brain is the bionic computer whose program or output is consciousness and thoughts, but that still doesn't make them the same thing. Another, more annoying conclusion follows. Mind is in some sense primary. We only know about matter because of mind. It may well be that we only have mind because we have the right kind of matter—but even that we couldn't know without mind. Hence, at least in my view, much though many theorists have yearned that they might, bone-headed materialist theories won't fly, and even less bone-headed, even quite sophisticated materialist theories, work at all only by tacitly making exceptions or

modifications to their central defining contention that in some profound sense matter is all that there is. But that contention has, in any event, very seldom recommended itself to mathematicians.

Descartes is generally considered a rationalist, working by means of thought from what "must be true" to observation and the observed world—as, once again, mathematicians characteristically do. Bacon, by contrast, was, at least by self-advertisement, an empiricist so extreme that he sometimes seems to imply that observations and experiments will form themselves into true theories with no corruptive incursion of thought on the part of anyone. And sometimes these impulses, rationalist and empiricist, or theoretical and experimental, are taken to be antitheses, as indeed, in some sense they are. But only in some sense, and real-live science, of course, depends upon both, working correlatively in an ongoing feedback loop of theory, observation, and experiment, and then refined theory, or in some cases, rejected theory, and more observation and experiment, *ad infinitum*, or in any case, *ad perfectionem*. Both impulses are necessary.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How does Bacon describe “Salomon’s House”?
2. What was made possible by the development of analytical geometry?

Suggested Reading

Bacon, Francis. “New Atlantis.” *Three Early Modern Utopias*. Ed. Susan Bruce. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Descartes, René. *Discourse and Method* and *Meditations*. Trans. Laurence J. Lafleur. New York: Macmillan, 1960.

Other Books of Interest

Watson, Richard. *Cogito, Ergo Sum: The Life of René Descartes*. Boston: David R. Godine, 2007.

Zagorin, Perez. *Francis Bacon*. New ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Lecture 11:
The Scientific Revolution
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Salomon Bochner's *The Role of Mathematics in the Rise of Science.*

It is virtually impossible to overemphasize the cultural importance of the Scientific Revolution. Not since the Ionic Greeks first undertook the project of systematic rationality has there been an intellectual transformation of comparable sweep and power. The term "science," stemming from the Latin "*scire*," "to know," has since ancient times been employed to designate what we regard as our "hardest," most trustworthy mode of knowledge. And the relative "hardness" of the sciences, as we currently conceive them, reflects precisely such perceptions. The "hardest," most reliable and trustworthy of the sciences, on our cultural view of things, is mathematics, followed by physics, by chemistry, by biochemistry, by biology, and then by a whole array of what we term the less precise and less reliable "social sciences"—economics, psychology, sociology, political science, and, by some reckonings at least, history. As we go down the "hardness" scale, data-sets get fuzzier and fuzzier and the subject matter gets less and less susceptible to the verification by falsifiable experiment and susceptibility to mathematical modeling and analysis that are essentially what we mean by "science."

To the Middle Ages, by contrast, theology was the "queen of the sciences," the logic being that since God was the author of all things, then in studying God and God's relations with the created world, you were studying the final source of things, the fundamental reality upon which all that was depended. Philosophy and in particular metaphysics stood second, for analogous reasons—it was in such enquiries that you studied things in their most essential nature. Needless to say, as a culture we think otherwise, in many instances very close to precisely otherwise. And the literary studies so dear to the humanists, the full panoply of what we term the "humanities," are deemed by many to have no real cognitive content at all. If you want to emote and strike poses and talk winningly about very little, then become an English major. If you want to know something, be tough-minded, be an engineer. So we are inclined to think, and generations of parents have advised their children accordingly, well aware of how society's valuation of various possible courses of study translates into dollars and cents. "What are you going *to do* with an art history major (for heaven's sake—what could you be thinking)?" Or some such.

That state of mind, which is all but absolutely all-pervasive, even among those who don't much like it, is the result of the Scientific Revolution. And science gained the high ground for a reason. Science works. And science progresses. This last points to another major effect of the Scientific Revolution, our belief in general cultural progress. Apocalyptic fears of one sort or another aside, our default assumption is that things are getting better, that we, as a culture, if not necessarily as individuals, are wiser and better

than our ancestors, who did all sorts of dreadful things. They were imperialists, sexists, racists, torturers, and fanatics; they were heedless exploiters of the environment and, where they were stronger, of indigenous cultures; they tolerated, even celebrated, immense social inequities and unabashedly hierarchical, hereditary modes of government, and they believed all sorts of nonsense. Thank heaven—or thank ourselves—we have long since said goodbye to all that save in the most regressive circles.

For most Western history, however, the default assumption in this regard was precisely contrary to our own. The general assumption was that things have gotten worse and are still trailing downward. Once we lived in paradise; there was once a golden age, and we are not the people our parents or our grandparents were. And in truth, it is not easy to discern any unilateral or unambiguous human progress in any area save the natural sciences, technology, and medicine. That is where the idea of progress came from—because in those realms, and in those realms more or less alone—progress has been indisputable and acknowledged on all sides. The idea of progress in a more thoroughgoing sense rises with and to a very substantial degree as a result of progress in science and technology. Only *after* you have the "dark Satanic mills" does the notion of a workers' paradise of equity and social justice arrive. In the event, it took about two generations.

Witness, for example, worldwide, the prominence of groups who clearly regard much of what we take as *moral* progress—freedom of the press, democracy, tolerance, humane punishment, rights for women, gay rights, and the like—as quite literally demonic. Even such groups as these, though, clearly value science, technology, and medicine. The progress there is beyond dispute.

The process by which these epochal transformations began to take hold is, unsurprisingly, complicated, but a traditional and useful starting point for consideration is the work of René Descartes, of whom, in fact, we have already heard. In the 1630s Descartes undertook a more or less systematic revaluation of the sources of knowledge and effectively recentered the enterprise. Heretofore, theology, metaphysics, and more particularly, ontology, or the philosophical examination of being, had held pride of place. Descartes's systematic doubt, however, persuaded him to focus first on epistemology, the philosophical study of knowing or of the conditions of knowledge. We can know only what is revealed to us by virtue of consciousness, whatever in fact may or may not be out there. Hence, he recenters philosophical enquiry from God as the origin of all that is to the conditions of human cognition. This revaluation helped to focus and to crystallize a whole series of related cultural transformations, some of which had been in progress for generations.

In his deservedly influential, if often misinterpreted, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* and *The Copernican Revolution*, Thomas Kuhn argued for a differentiation between what he called "normal science," which is the investigation of problems arising within established conceptual boundaries, and what he called a **"**paradigm shift,**"** as a result of which the conceptual boundaries that govern a discipline are fundamentally changed. Paradigm shifts are necessarily rare, but they are also the conceptual engine that does most to drive scientific progress, and indeed progress, to the extent that there

is such a thing, in other non-scientific fields. Paradigm shifts change the presuppositions that govern enquiry, and they arise, characteristically, only after a substantial series of discrepant observations within the existing paradigm force a shift. Salient examples are associated with the names of first-rate scientific luminaries like Newton, Darwin, Einstein, Gödel, and Turing, and their insights ordinarily take a generation or two to assimilate. With regards to Gödel and Turing, I don't think we are finished with the process yet, and perhaps with Darwin as well. Be that as it may, prompting a paradigm shift is intellectual achievement of the very highest order, and the late Middle Ages and the early modern era saw three or four of them, which conjointly gave rise to the Scientific Revolution.

First, and most all-embracing—to which, in a sense we have already alluded—the Scientific Revolution marked a gradual but immensely far-reaching shift in what counted as knowledge. There are various ways to characterize this. It was a move away from the spiritual or conceptual to the material and the quantifiable; it was a move away from reliance on authority and revelation (or putative revelation) toward reliance on observation and theory. And perhaps more far-reaching still, it was a move away from the notion that verbal and philosophical concepts, concepts arising from ordinary speech, which is accessible to all, were our most reliable road to knowledge to the notion that no, mathematical concepts, which we do not learn at our mother's knee and which are not accessible to all, are our most reliable mode. Rather to my surprise, I have never in all of my reading seen this shift in perspective accorded what seems to me its due—it had many effects, not least among them to render real knowledge about what is going on at the most profound level as the preserve almost entirely of specialists. Aristotelian metaphysics is not intellectually undemanding, but it is a piece of cake compared to quantum mechanics or string theory. If that is the way things are, then that is the way things are, but such a change in perspective removes the possibility of real understanding from all but a vanishingly small, if still socially sufficient, few.

Likewise important—and correlative—was the shift from ontology to epistemology and, in its way, logic, to which we have already alluded. To Aquinas and Dante, let us recall, we could, at least in principle, rise from the visible world through apprehension of the immanent and transcendent forms of things as "thoughts of God" to the mind of God and the fundamental truth of things, and could rise in very large part through the operation of reason. On this view of things, as suggested in previous lectures, reason and faith finally worked together to reveal the divine reality undergirding both. To William of Ockham (ca. 1290–1348) and others, however, Aquinas's point of view constrained divine freedom. There are no "universals," no immanent or transcendent forms, just individual things that we choose to denominate as this or that. Hence, there is no rational route from world to God. This new point of view had, on the whole, good effects, on investigation of the world, though in a sense by accident. If you wanted to know what was out there, you had to look (on a nominalistic, Ockhamite point of view, in fact, there are problems even here, but in the event they were slow in arising, and the aforementioned good effects by and large held). But such a view likewise implies that religious belief can be held *only* by faith. And hence, in an oversimplification, on to Luther—and on to agnosticism. If you can know only by faith, isn't belief a

form of rational suicide? Ockham evidently didn't think so. Others, like Machiavelli, weren't so faint-hearted.

The most celebrated of the correlated "paradigm shifts" constituting the Scientific Revolution, if not, perhaps, in the final analysis, the most far-reaching, took place in physics and astronomy and, I would argue, above all, in mathematics. Physics first. To Aristotle and to his posterity for the better part of two thousand years, motion necessarily implied a mover. Left to themselves, things basically want to stand still. Hence, to explain the clearly unceasing and regular apparent motion of the heavens, in all its complexity, Aristotle required an "unmoved mover" (unmoved, or unchanged and unchangeable, because to Aristotle changes in the mover would result in changes in the motions he caused, and we do not observe any such changes in heavens). This unmoved mover was, in effect, Aristotle's god, and the fact that Aristotle postulated such a god on rational grounds did much to make plausible the Christian appropriation of both Aristotelian and Platonic philosophy.

Nicholas Oresme hypothesized that once "impetus" had been imparted to a moving object, it had no further need of a mover. And Galileo Galilei took the final step in formulating the notion of inertia. What objects want is not to be still, but to keep doing what they are doing, whatever that might be. Motion, in effect, *could be* "rest," if that was what a moving object was up to at the outset. The implication was that things are the way they are, no "movers," unmoved or otherwise, need apply, which suggested in its turn that another rational road from world to God had been proved illusory.

The most celebrated aspect of the Scientific Revolution was the replacement of the traditional "geocentric" cosmos, with the earth at the center, by a "heliocentric" cosmos, centered on the sun. This was, indeed, a significant readjustment of things, but not in precisely the way that is often suggested. Any reader of Dante can testify that the central position of the earth in the old cosmos did not mean that the earth was accordingly and universally regarded as the best place. Quite the contrary, at least for Dante, and he was by no means alone. It was in many respects the worst place. Thus, from a good many perspectives at least, including that of Copernicus himself (1473–1543), a central position for the brilliant Sun, if not divine, the most obvious and compelling spatio-temporal expression of the divine, made perfect theological sense. Nonetheless, such a view of things departed, at least apparently, from various texts in the Hebrew Bible, and that caused a little trouble. Not that the distinctive merits of the ancient Hebrews included any deep or wide-ranging interest in natural phenomena for their own sake, but the sacred text was the sacred text. And in any event, though conceptually neater, Copernicus's view of heliocentric cosmos did not, in fact, make it significantly easier to calculate the future positions of the planets, or even in any really significant simplification of the mathematical procedures necessary to ascertain where they would appear. For practical purposes, the old geocentric vision of Ptolemy of Alexandria worked as well. That was because both Ptolemy and Copernicus assumed that planets describe circles—the perfect geometrical figure—in their orbits. They don't. And to compensate for the fact that they don't, all sorts of untidy and more or less *ad hoc* complications were necessary to make either system work.

This difficulty was finally resolved by Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), working in large part on the basis of careful, naked-eye observations of planetary positions compiled by Tycho Brahe (1546–1601). Kepler at last, and very reluctantly, determined (since he took a back seat to no one in his love of the mathematically perfect and eternally self-same circle) that the planets revolve, rather than in circles, in ellipses. It was most distressing news—circles are perfect, ellipses are not—but it made the mathematics a whole lot simpler, and more important, the hypothesis, for the first time in millennia, fused the easiest way to calculate and the easiest way to visualize how the planets move. It all made deeply satisfying sense. That was, in all probability, what was really going on out there.

Galileo was so impressed that he suggested "the book of nature" is written "in mathematical characters." And Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727) shortly thereafter effectively proved it in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, published in 1687, and without question the most influential scientific work ever written. Newton's *Principia* so all-encompassingly, so accurately, and so convincingly accounted in mathematical terms for the motions of the planets, that his work became the new paradigm of what a real explanation of something looked like, and ever since scholars in all disciplines have sought with varying degrees of success to match that degree of explanatory and predictive power. No doubt about this. Nothing ever published before had succeeded so completely in explaining what it set out to explain. This was an absolutely world-changing work, and we still live almost entirely in its conceptual shadow.

Before Newton could formulate his great work, though, he needed to formulate the mathematical tools that he needed to bring it to completion—most notably calculus, among other things the rigorous mathematical assessment of acceleration, that is to say, of variations in the speed of motion—and here, before he could do his work, as he himself freely and generously admitted, he had to rely upon the work of predecessors. One among these was Leonardo Fibonacci of Pisa, who early in the 1200s, in his *Liber Abaci*, introduced decimal notation to the West. More important still was René Descartes, who invented analytical geometry, an absolutely essential precursor to calculus and the numerical analysis of motion. This is, I would argue, Descartes's greatest and most impressive achievement, despite his fame as the founder of modern philosophy. For arithmetic and geometry, the study of numbers and the study of space, had been before Descartes separate disciplines before he united them. And until he united them, the Newtonian solution to the problem of planetary motion was, quite simply, impossible (unless, of course, in its absence, Newton had formulated it on his own). Newton was not alone in developing calculus—Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716), severely, and I would maintain, quite unfairly, mocked by Voltaire, came up with a version entirely on his own. But it was Newton who wrote the *Principia* and in so doing changed, thus far for good, what we think of as science.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. How was theology considered the “queen of the sciences”?
2. Why would the idea that the planets described an elliptical, and not a circular, orbit around the sun be disturbing news in the sixteenth century?

Suggested Reading

Bochner, Salomon. *The Role of Mathematics in the Rise of Science*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Other Books of Interest

Berry, Arthur. *A Short History of Astronomy from the Earliest Times through the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Dover, 1961.

Dreyer, J.L.E. *A History of Astronomy from Thales to Kepler*. Rev. 2nd ed. New York: Dover, 1953.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Copernican Revolution: Planetary Astronomy in the Development of Western Thought*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957.

———. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1970.

Lecture 12:
The Dutch Golden Age
(Professor Timothy B. Shutt)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Harold J. Cook's *Matters of Exchange: Commerce, Medicine, and Science in the Dutch Golden Age.*

Even today the Netherlands exert a political and, in particular, a financial power vastly disproportionate to their small size and population. It has been so for half a millennium and longer. During the later Middle Ages, North Italy and the Netherlands, and in particular, Flanders, were already the most prosperous and commercially advanced regions in Europe. The Netherlands, early on at least, specialized above all in wool textiles, but commercial fishing, shipping and trade, and banking and finance made their contributions as well. By about 1600, the Netherlands controlled roughly half of world shipping, and generated total revenues reportedly an order of magnitude or so greater than the silver that each year flowed to the Hapsburg empire from the Americas.

That, indeed, was part of the problem. The very prosperity of the Netherlands made the region particularly important to tax-gatherers in search of revenue, and despite the wealth of the Americas, the Hapsburg empire operated under chronic financial constraint. The Golden Age of the Netherlands accordingly began, perhaps paradoxically, in revolt.

The Hapsburg Spanish Netherlands, to clarify, consisted not only of what we now term the Netherlands, but of what is now Belgium as well, and early on what the Spanish came to call *Las Provincias Obedientes* to the south in what is now Belgium were the more prosperous. Antwerp, indeed, was the financial and commercial capital of the trans-Alpine North. The mid-sixteenth century, though, was a time of profound religious unrest, and though many in the Spanish Netherlands remained faithful to the Catholic Church, there were many as well who found the teachings of Luther and, more particularly, of Calvin convincing and compelling. The Spanish accordingly began to seek out and persecute religious dissidents. In 1566 these disagreements erupted into a fierce burst of hard-line Protestant "iconoclasm"—attacks on monasteries and churches in which offending images on altarpieces, in painting, in sculpture, or in stained glass were destroyed—along other associated sectarian mayhem.

It was a difficult time for the Hapsburgs more generally. The Ottoman Turks were threatening further south, and they were engaged in chronic disputes with Valois France. The unrest in the Netherlands was but one problem among many, albeit in a financially crucial region, and it was not easy to find the troops to quell the incipient revolt. Nevertheless, the troops were found, and in 1567 Don Fernando Alvarez of Toledo, the Duke of Alva, was dispatched up the "Spanish Road" from the Hapsburg domains in Italy to restore order, which he did with such exemplary vigor that he sparked what became a full-scale revolt. As oppression intensified in the south, many Protestant dissidents fled to the north, many, in particular, from Antwerp and Flanders to

the northern seaside provinces of Holland and Zeeland, and in particular, to Holland's leading city of Amsterdam, which began slowly to displace Antwerp as the commercial and financial powerhouse of the North.

More or less full-scale hostilities had begun by 1568, and by 1571, the seven northern "United Provinces"—led, *de facto*, by Amsterdam and Holland—had agreed in the Union of Utrecht to follow a united foreign policy . By 1581 they had explicitly renounced allegiance to King Philip II, but it was not until the Treaty of Münster in 1648 that they gained universal recognition. They had, however, become a major power in their own right long before.

For during the 1590s and decades following both Dutch commercial power and maritime power more or less exponentially took off. As the naval historian Peter Padfield puts it, during this period the United Provinces became in many respects the "harbingers of the modern West: they led the world in intellectual inquiry, the sciences and every significant technology" (80). And it was their financial and commercial strength above all that allowed them to do so. In the words of another scholar, C.R. Boxer, by 1648 "the Dutch were indisputably the greatest trading nation in the world with commercial outposts and fortified 'factories' from Archangel" in Russia "to Recife" in Brazil "and from New Amsterdam to Nagasaki" (29).

Several factors contributed to their dominance. The Dutch made sure that Amsterdam continued to grow at the expense of Antwerp by blockading the Schelde estuary, effectively closing Antwerp to seaborne trade. And they meanwhile launched a series of exceedingly far-reaching commercial ventures of their own. The most impressive of these was probably *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC), the Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, which in astonishingly short order succeeded in muscling aside the Portuguese, who had dominated trade in the area since the days of Vasco da Gama. As one result, much of what is now Indonesia remained under Dutch control until World War Two.

Comparable in influence, if a bit later in foundation, was *West-Indische Compagnie* (WIC), chartered in 1621. The primary *foci* here were slaves and sugar—Portuguese operations in West Africa and Brazil—but the company had other successes, taking Curaçao in the West Indies, and founding Nieuw Amsterdam on the island of Manhattan, later, of course, to become New York. The company's most striking early success, though, took place in Cuba in 1628, when Peit Heyn fulfilled the ambition of generations of privateers by taking the annual Spanish silver fleet.

At least equally important were Dutch innovations in finance. The key here was what the Dutch called the "*rederij*," in effect an incipient joint-stock enterprise in which individual investors bought shares. The Dutch were also innovative in terms of banking and insurance, founding the Exchange Bank of Amsterdam in 1609 and a stock and commodity exchange or "bourse" the year before. All of these innovations allowed the Dutch to raise capital with unprecedented ease, and at unprecedentedly low rates of interest. Royal borrowers, like the Hapsburgs, regularly defaulted. More broad-based public debt instruments on the Dutch model could not afford to. And lenders reacted accordingly.

As a result, Dutch trade and the new Dutch empire expanded accordingly. The Dutch East India Company was designed, of course, to trade with the Moluccas or "Spice Islands," and to that purpose, explored new routes, avoiding regions where the Portuguese dominated. As early as 1611, Hendrik Brouwer took off into uncharted waters, not sailing up east Africa and then to India and beyond, taking advantage of the monsoons, but instead, after rounding the Cape of Good Hope, bearing due eastward on westerlies that dominate the "roaring forties" and only then cutting north for the Strait of Sunda and the Spice Islands. The Dutch founded a major entrepôt in what they called "Batavia," the ancient Roman name for their home region. We call the island Java. They also established a base in Sri Lanka or Ceylon by 1609. Their daring, far southern route to Indonesia encouraged the foundation of another colony at the Cape in 1652, the first stirrings of what would in time become Afrikaaner South Africa. And their far southern voyages, coupled with the difficulty that sailors of the time had in determining longitude, soon enough led to the discovery, if not the settlement, of other lands unknown to Europeans—"Van Dieman's Land," or Tasmania (named after its Dutch discoverer, Abel Tasman), New Zealand, and "New Holland," or Australia, particularly Western Australia, where to this day divers come upon Dutch shipwrecks resulting from unwelcome Dutch encounters with that then-unexplored lee shore.

The Dutch also founded a series of American colonies, Dutch Guiana or Suriname, the Dutch West Indies, for a time Bahia in Brazil. And, of course, perhaps most famously, the New Netherlands in what are now New York and New Jersey, with their colonial capital at New Amsterdam on the southern tip of Manhattan Island.

The United Provinces meanwhile became a polity of a very unusual sort in the European context of the time—a sort of prototype maritime oligarchy, dominated by the merchants, financiers, and traders whose activities ensured the prosperity of the Dutch. The United Provinces were officially Calvinist, but religious warfare and internal strife are notoriously bad for business, and as a matter of financial prudence as much as of conviction, the Netherlands became relatively tolerant, certainly more so by a considerable margin than anywhere else in Europe at the time. There was, and always had been, a large Catholic population, and there were some Mennonites, some Jews, and even, perhaps, a few quiet skeptics as well. Contributing to the relative openness of Netherlandish society was the astonishingly loose federalism that characterized the United Provinces. Most affairs were handled locally, on a province-by-province basis, to the extent even that the maritime provinces maintained separate fleets and admiralties. This last, though, did not prevent the Dutch from becoming a naval power, and under the leadership of their great admirals, Maarten Tromp and Michiel Adriaanszoon De Ruyter, they came to dominate the seas of the mid-seventeenth century, shattering a Spanish fleet at the Downs under the leadership of Tromp, and successfully raiding the British home yards at Chatham in the Thames estuary under De Ruyter.

As a result of this relative freedom and prosperity, the Netherlands became home to something very close to the first *bourgeois* society, run for and dominated by the middle and upper-middle classes. And this state of affairs finds

its reflection in the greatest mode of Dutch artistic expression, the visual arts and, in particular, painting, where the Dutch of the seventeenth century produced masterpieces that equal or surpass any ever painted at any time.

Painters need patronage, and up to the Golden Age of Holland, patronage had, for a millennium or more, in almost all instances come from two sources, the Church and the nobility, or, indeed, royalty. This had its effect on what was painted. Religious works and works celebrating noble deeds and noble patrons unsurprisingly predominated. The Dutch, though, were often painting for *bourgeois* patrons or a *bourgeois* market, and *bourgeois* tastes differed. Thus we find in Dutch painting an efflorescence of still-lifes and landscapes, maritime scenes and paintings of livestock, and, of course, portraits and religious paintings of one sort or another as well. Such artistic concerns were not absolutely unprecedented. Northern artists had long been interested in detail and in the careful depiction of objects and, indeed, of landscapes. But as more or less subsidiary elements within a larger composition. In the Dutch paintings of the seventeenth century such subjects often take over center stage.

Another factor, to some degree at least, working in Dutch painting—or some Dutch painting—is a quietistic focus on the ordinary details of everyday life as in themselves numinous and, however obliquely, revelatory of divine presence. There is, in some Dutch paintings of the time, a sort of quiet beyond quiet, a sort of silent supernatural realism. The master of masters in this mode is Jan Vermeer of Delft (1632–1675), by some accounts the greatest painter who ever lived, whose enclosed, still interiors and very few landscapes reveal a perfection of painterly technique in the evocation of light that has, by general consensus, never been surpassed. Vermeer worked slowly and he died relatively young, but the best of his few paintings that survive stand among the jewels of the museums which house them and on tour draw, to this day, viewers by the thousand—long lines, cold, and rain, no matter.

The works of Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) are very different in character. Rembrandt works, as a rule, with a darker palette, and his deepest interest seems to be not so much light *per se* as the evocation of character. His portraits and his many etchings of biblical scenes stand among his most cherished works, valued particularly for their deep and often rueful human insight.

To focus upon the achievements of such undisputed world masters is not to suggest, however, that they were unique in painting splendid works at the time. The paintings of Jacob van Ruisdael (ca. 1628–1682), of Jan Steen (ca. 1626–1679), of Aelbert Cuyp (1620–1691), to say nothing of the works of Franz Hals (ca. 1580–1666) and Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), suggest something of the richness of the tradition.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What were the major Dutch innovations in context?
2. What is meant by the "quietistic focus" of much Dutch painting?

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Lecture 13:
Thomas Hobbes: *Leviathan*
(Professor Fred E. Baumann)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan.*

Introduction

Thomas Hobbes lived a long life in interesting English times, from 1588, Armada year, to 1679, just before the death of Charles II. Living through most of the seventeenth century, with its civil war that ended in the execution of Charles I, with the "Protectorate" of Cromwell and the restoration of the Stuarts, surely had an influence in making him an unashamed supporter of despotism. That gave him a bad reputation among lovers of liberty, but his generally perceived atheism was worse. Secretary when young to Francis Bacon, correspondent of Descartes and Gassendi, Hobbes was a champion of natural science conceived of in a loudly materialist way. Though one might expect his great book *Leviathan* to be appreciated by the Stuarts, they didn't want to touch it or him with a long stick. He is the philosopher of cowardice par excellence, but oddly was so outspoken that he courted troubles (like condemnation by Parliament) that more prudent writers avoided.

Leviathan

Named after the biblical sea monster created to humble the proud, this is Hobbes's primary contribution to political thought. A lengthy treatise, it has four parts. The first undertakes to derive everything (almost everything it turns out) from physics, from "the accidents of matter," including human ideas, passions, language, and behavior. The second takes humans as they really are, passionate, selfish, cowardly, and vainglorious, shows how a "social contract" might be made among them to end their misery, shows how in real life a valid "social contract" can arise from conquest, and how an effective society requires all the power to be in the hands of the ruler, the sovereign, Leviathan. The third and fourth parts, which I will largely pass over, deal with religion, fitting his theory as best he can into the Christian tradition, and polemicizing against earlier philosophy, both scholastic-Christian and ancient. As with Machiavelli, whom I understand Hobbes to follow to a considerable degree, there is a political teaching and underneath it a more general philosophical understanding.

Mr. Science

Hobbes can lay claim to being the first political *scientist* of the modern kind by starting, not with human beings, but with matter in motion. This is done largely by assertion and the assertions are almost invariably debunking in character. Everything "spiritual" is understood physiologically, like visions or dreams that turn out to be largely digestive in origin. The putatively noble quality of courage turns out to be fear of hurt "with hope of avoiding that Hurt by resistance." Everything turns out to be fear, or, in its absence, boastful-

ness. There is a God, it turns out, but only the "God of the philosophers," that is, the first cause, something one would hardly worship.

Yet Hobbes well understands both that this isn't science but assertion, that is, "scientism," and that human relations cannot ultimately be governed by reductive scientific claims, or even proofs, as he admits at the end of the preface, and in a curious chart in chapter 9. His reductive science functions here, I think, as a political rhetoric, designed to debunk vanity and encourage humility of a certain, non-Christian, kind.

The State of Nature, the Social Contract, and the Problem of Obligation

The famous state of nature, where life is "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish and short," is essentially a mind experiment that echoes Machiavelli's discovery that everything is war. By nature we are profoundly solitary beings, living under no rules, and, as Sartre says later, "hell is other people" (and of course ourselves). Getting out of this requires artifice, more of Machiavelli's "dams and dikes." Hobbes notably describes this hell in (oddly negative) legal terms; we have a "right" to everything because there is no governing natural or religious law. Rights, which used to be the product of a legal system, now, with momentous consequences, become the basis of legality. But for Hobbes, paradoxically, the solution is to get rid of our rights as much as possible. The social contract is thus an agreement among a group of people to hand their rights to a third party, who retains all of his own and can use ours. This is a "reall unitie," Hobbes tells us in chapter seventeen, having made it perfectly clear in chapter sixteen that it is in fact a conventional, artificial, metaphorical unity. But if it (this "reall unitie," this "mortal god") can be made to stick, it brings us the peace, reciprocity, and rewards for good behavior that humans really crave by nature.

But can it stick? Can such an unnatural promise as giving up all our rights to a despot really be maintained? Won't we cheat? Won't we think we have a right to cheat? The problem of obligation is crucial for all social contract theories. Hobbes's answer is, first, that by giving all power to the sovereign, he will have plenty of means to scare thoughts of resistance out of most people. However, Hobbes knows that isn't enough. Hence Hobbesian arguments have constantly to be taught; the people must learn their duties. Here Hobbes relies largely on Machiavelli's trust in the modesty of the desires of the many. As for the Machiavellian genius of crime, while Hobbes tells him overtly that his odds of getting away with usurpation are very low, I think his true answer is that the most successful Machiavellian will do better once he takes over with a Hobbesian legal and institutional rationalization of his seizure of power.

The Democratic Hobbes

Hobbes as a philosopher of democracy? That sounds wrong, but the Stuarts knew what they were doing when they distanced themselves from him. Despotism, yes, they saw, but only on the basis of consent, of a voluntary giving away of rights. Here Machiavelli's project is institutionalized, legalized, made available to semi-competent leaders; the magic is done not by a brilliant prince but by the hocus pocus of consent. It can allow for largely figurehead rulers (like Louis XIII of France, Hobbes's contemporary). It is despotism from the bottom up, and it makes the ruling morality that of cautious,

self-preserving, property-loving people (that is, it replaces aristocratic honor morality with bourgeois morality). It emancipates both rulers and ruled not just from Christian aspirations but from honor as well. The great, boring, administrative state, which Machiavelli distrusted for its deep weakness, holds no terrors for Hobbes. In the European Union or perhaps even the World State as imagined by Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, it has its logical heirs. While the people don't vote, the whole arrangement is designed for their advantage and not that of the great, as long as the people are understood as risk-avoiders, mortgage-holders, lovers of survival, whose deepest passion is fear, and whose advantage is therefore peace and order, at whatever cost in political liberty.

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. Why would it be reasonable to claim that Hobbes was the first modern political scientist?
2. What is Hobbes's solution to the state of nature?

Suggested Reading

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Lecture 14:
John Locke: *Second Treatise on Government*
(Professor Fred E. Baumann)

The Suggested Reading for this lecture is John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government.*

Introduction

If there is one philosopher Americans can rightly think of as their own, it is John Locke, a seventeenth-century Englishman (1632–1704), whose thought underlies both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Famous for his work in epistemology as well, it is his *Second Treatise on Government* we will focus on here. Often taken as a justification of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the *Treatise* is far more than an occasional piece. Where the *First Treatise*, like the second part of *Leviathan*, essentially engages with the religious tradition by demolishing Sir Robert Filmer's theory of divine right of kings, the *Second Treatise* provides Locke's positive teaching on legitimate government.

Locke and Hobbes: Similarities and Differences

Locke follows Hobbes in speaking of a state of nature, in attributing natural rights to human beings, in finding legitimacy in a government derived from a social contract to which free human beings consent. For Locke as for Hobbes, man is radically individual, and political society is artificial. Yet Locke denied having "well read" such a "justly decried" philosopher. Were his differences with Hobbes as great as he allows us to think, or was he careful to avoid being decried himself?

The apparent differences are indeed great. Where Hobbes's state of nature resembles hell, Locke's at first sight seems a rather nice place where people live in peace without a government, and which is ruled by a law of nature that is identical with reason and that everyone is obliged to enforce. Hobbes identifies the state of nature with the state of war; Locke indignantly denies that they are the same. Hobbes seems to mock religion, whereas Locke uses biblical quotations in apparently pious ways and derives our duty not to hurt each other from the claim that God, having made us, owns us. Even today, Locke is a far more comfortable read than Hobbes.

However, at closer view, some of these sharp differences begin to fade. By chapter five we own ourselves and are thrown back entirely on our own resources to survive in a harsh natural world. The difference between the state of war and the state of nature turns out to be entirely conceptual; in reality, Locke admits, "every the least difference" is apt to end in war. Crucially, we discover that in truth the "law of nature" is enforced as little in Locke's state of nature as in Hobbes's, which it quickly begins to resemble.

But there are real differences as well. Locke "easily grants" that the state of nature has "great" "inconveniences," and that it is "very unsafe, very unsecure." But that is no argument for absolute government. True, you can

suppress the great, whom Locke calls the "polecats" and "foxes," but you still have a lion that preys on the people. That is, against Hobbes, Locke will show that you can have legitimate, social contract government that is strong enough to provide order but at the same time can be limited and controlled by the people it serves. Also, it has been argued that where Hobbes's natural man is simply a creature of his self-regarding passions, Locke's natural man has a necessarily moral character so that he is required by his own self-understanding to grant to others the rights he claims himself.

The Political Project

As in Hobbes, natural men pool their rights to form a social contract. But here they only pool some of them, above all the right to "punish" violations of the law. And rights are returned to them in civil and political form to guarantee that they haven't been cheated by the decision to enter society. Also, we do not give our rights to a passing stranger or conqueror as in Hobbes but to each other. And the government that is established must, to be legitimate, have at least some representative element in the legislative. The principle here is radically democratic, but Locke is willing to accept what we would consider pretty minimal representation. Hence the historical tendency of Lockean regimes to move in ever more democratic directions; the principle always eats away at its circumstantial or practical limitations. An executive serves the legislative, in theory, by carrying out its will, but in fact presents an enormous threat to it as always present and always in action. Still, the separation of the two and the constitutional subordination of the executive give hope for maintaining limited government.

The Problem of Obligation

But is not, Hobbes might object, such a government a civil war waiting to happen? The buck seems to stop nowhere and everyone can claim that his opponents are violating the social contract whenever they lose a political battle. Notably, Locke refuses to provide a theoretical answer. Asked "who shall decide?" Locke invariably answers that ultimately there can only be an "appeal to heaven," a euphemism for revolution. Yet while conceding the theoretical issue, Locke has some practical remedies. The first is that the right of revolution actually tends to moderate governments by making them mindful of the limits of sensible rule. The second emerges from Locke's discussion of property.

Property

In a separate chapter, Locke asks how, if God gave the world to all in common, anyone has a right even to the food that keeps him alive. Since we own ourselves, we gain ownership by labor, that is, by taking from nature. Labor, it turns out, accounts for 99.9 percent of all human wealth; in an innovative reading of the Bible, Locke tells us that God gave the world, in fact, to the "industrious and rational," not the "quarrelsome and contentious," and for the sake of human convenience. That is, bourgeois life, here seen as active and acquisitive, gets, if not God's, at least Locke's sanction, and constitutional government is its greatest protection. Yet it is also constitutional government's chief protection, since it takes a lot, a "long train of abuses," to get people with mortgages to riot or revolt.

Conclusion

Like Hobbes, Locke heralds bourgeois life, but here not in its passive and fearful, but in its active and acquisitive form. Machiavelli's prince, legalized and routinized by Hobbes, has now been tamed into a serviceable constitutional government that really makes the world safe for ordinary people to carry on their property-accumulating lives. The question that has burdened liberal societies since Locke is whether this deliberate lowering of the standard from the "ought" to the "is" has gone too far. Has it made us so ignoble that we cannot, in the long run, stand up to those who boast that they prefer an honorable death to an ignoble life? Or even if not, has it degraded human beings from potential heroes and saints into, at best, intelligent consumers?

FOR GREATER UNDERSTANDING

Questions

1. What is the difference between Hobbes's and Locke's state of nature?
2. What is Locke's "appeal to heaven"?

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