Poems, Thoughts and Essays

H. Paul LeBlanc III

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# Poems, Thoughts and Essays

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Firstword

The poems, thoughts and essays in this collection were written primarily when I was in college as an undergraduate student between the years of 1984 and 1988. They represent the thoughts of a young man in a very growthful time in his life, in my life.

The poetry, as well as the short prose pieces: “A Quiet, Busy Place,” “To Be An Insect,” and “A Pacifist Manifesto” break significantly in terms of mood from the poetry compiled in Troubles of Teenage Years. Many of the themes are similar from the two collections, but the environment was quite different. The change in environment may have affected most greatly the tenor of the works represented in this collection.

For example, “Random Notes” demonstrates some thoughts regarding nonviolence and justice which follow nicely from “A Pacifist Manifesto.” The short essay “A Diary of Thoughts” and the “Autobiography” show a concentration on personal development. Although this tendency existed during the high school years, the types of self-reflexive messages differ. In the “Autobiography,” an interpretation of the teenage years appears, as well as a projection of where life events have lead up to the time of the writing of the “Autobiography.”

During the undergraduate years, I began writing letters to the editor. The first of these letters, Abortion” was co-authored with Kathy Tarver and was a reaction to a number of letters on the issue. Other letters and several editorials were written for the St. Mary’s University school newspaper, The Rattler. The editorial "Exercise Caution When Exercising Censorship" was originally written as a class paper. As such the complete essay has been included in this collection as well as the editorial. The other editorials were individual essays written specifically for the Rattler audience.

Two research papers written during high school are also included: “Nuclear Energy: An Alternative Energy Source?,” and “I Wondered Lonely As A Cloud,’ The Poetry of William Wordsworth.” These two papers were included because they fit the theme of this collection much more clearly than the previous volume. The collection is completed with twenty essays/research papers written as an undergraduate. These essays demonstrate a progression in thought and communicative ability.
Warm, Orange, Silent

Wind blows warm, orange, silent
   Upon a sea of unknowing
And though I see the shadows
   I know not where they turn

Coldness grows upon one's skin
   Soon, soon to melt away
From that warm, orange wind
   That upon the hilltops burn

Yesterday, yesterday
   Upon the hilltops burning
Breathed the fire from within
   Upon a sea of unknowing

Which way did he go
   The fire demon, guardian of this world
Who preys upon the souls
   Of the children from the sea

And he cannot hear the sunshine
   That beams on his face without eyes
But though the rhythm beats slow
   The soul he cannot be
Frame 37

The magnetic forms across the plates leaving an indelible mark
And we are fields mysteries, as you would be infinitely intelligible
leaving our indelible mark upon others

And so it was determined to leave that mark in a rather undetermined way rather free, as it were

An example:
high school alienation after school motorcycle races when blowing through hair feel of despair feel of fear feel of imminent death freedom of not caring less freedom real freedom is lonely when you're in high school

So what do we do opt for freedom opt for grace opt for alienation save face

Leaving an indelible mark does it fade or does it perdure we are the magnet the field, as it were leaving an indelible mark
Innocence

A country lane
Vultures circling overhead
An innocent animal
Lost its life on a roadside
And thoughtless
We crush the life
Out of each other
Before Feather

Blue Sky
Feather floating downward
Taken by a gentle breeze, touching softly
Each warm heart beaming with streaks of light
And I gaze upon it
As has millions before me
A wonderment
This feather floating downward
But what is it?
This feather floating downward
Seen by millions before me
A pleasing, soothing, soft thing
That burns my eyes
A sensation never felt before
By millions before me

And my mind races back
To an earlier time, a distant place
One I had forgotten
Why hadn't I remembered?
That this feather burns me

Removed from this writing desk
This chair, this room
I am standing in a void
A great void
No other soul passing emptiness, vast emptiness
I must move, get away
But a fastness holds me
Sharp, jagged, pointed rocks
Press against my skin
Press against my skin
My very soul
Sharp, jagged, pointed rocks
of words
words of hatred and despair
Before feather
I grabbed a rock of my own
A rock of destruction
To lash out at those holding me in
Turned in toward myself
Prepared to end it then
But . . . the feather left me
I never had the nerve
To bring an end
My Friend

My friend,
   come visit me, for I am lonely
My friend,
   come see me, for my children don't come
I am a prisoner, abandoned and unloved
   I live in a dark room, a small cell

My friend,
   come visit me, for no one comes often
My friend,
   come see me, I long for your presence
My house is small, don't be afraid
   the door is always open, and welcomes anyone who cares

Come to me
I see you
in a prison cell
in a nursing home
in a garbage can (an alley way)
under a bridge
I see you
with no fingers or arms
in a far away land
in my back yard
I see you
we all do

But because we close our eyes
We don't hear your cries
A Christmas Wish

This is the season we wait
    in joyful anticipation for
the coming of our Lord.

As the astrologers were beckoned
    by the appearance of a star,
Let us follow the light that
    calls us closer to Him.

And multitudes of angels praised Him
    singing and sharing their joy
with the shepherds in the fields.

So may we rejoice in His coming.

With humility, Mary and Joseph
    welcomed Him into the world.
Let us also welcome Him,
    not only on this feast
but always.
Out the Window

As I look out the window
I see a cold gray cloud . . .

It takes me infinitely into the past
To a lonely far away land
The land is cold an empty like a desert or a sea
It is covered with white flakes that burn your hand
To the touch
It is covered with white flakes that burn your eyes
To the sight
It is covered with white flakes that burn your lungs
To the breath
It is beautiful but it is haunting
A first instant
It is a pleasing fragrance
It is cool and relaxing
It grabs your soul
Must escape
You run and you run but the wind blows the white flakes
Into your face
You wipe away the opaque cases that form over your eyes
But they remain
You cannot feel your hands
They have numbed to the marrow
They have disappeared
You are falling and you cannot catch yourself
You are falling, falling
Falling only to land upon a cold, white surface
Burning, burning your skin
Suddenly the wind picks up the white flakes
And the white flakes surround you, cover you
And you cannot move
Frozen in this solid wasteland
You remain in this white, solid wasteland forever.

As I look out the window
I see a cold, gray cloud
But I do not want to ride it anymore
Because I know it eternally encases me
In a far away land.

How many have I traveled so far.
Snow Trees

Blue sky, white line, red rock,
Deep stream, cool breeze,
Snow trees.

Blue sky, bent light, infinite sight
In and out we sow with threads of injustice
Beyond the grips of human reason.
I don’t know why

White lines across the page left unread
Red rock so impenetrable that upon it bleeds
The life blood of another.

Deep stream that embeds the fruit of all humanity:
Waste

Cool breeze that blows upon my face.
In the Public View

I gotta be careful what I do
'Cause everybody knows I'm in public view
I was flying back down through Missouri way
When a policeman stopped me and he made me pay
I was in my bad Mercedes coming from the Windy City
But by the way I was moving you'd a thought I was driving Indy
Well, I play for the Spurs and everybody likes me
'Cause I'm a model citizen as I'm sure you can see
So I gotta be careful what I do
'Cause everybody knows I'm in public view

(Dedicated to the San Antonio Spur with a bad driving record.)
A Quiet, Busy Place

One day as I was walking through the woods I came upon a small stream. A large pine tree, which had fallen because the soil that supported its roots and stood the tree upright had eroded away, laid across the stream. The quiet, serenity of the moment lured me to perch comfortably upon the throne of the great yellow pine. The bark of the tree was worn away slightly as if someone had sat there before me, but I couldn’t tell. It seemed no one had been this way in a while suggesting a virginity of this spot as if the worn spot of the bark had grown naturally. No one had been here at all.

The soft fragrance of the pine filled the air with a realm of happiness inaccessible in a busy city, but this place seemed a city of its own. The sound of the wind and the rippling stream filled my ears with a song of gaiety and dancing. I felt my feet move involuntarily. It was a cool autumn day, but I could not resist. I bent over and grabbed my shoe, pulling it off with all the intensity of the moment. The sock came off next, then the other shoe and sock.

The water was so cool. I almost drew my feet back out of the water, but it was not there to harm me, just to soothe me and soften the callouses that had formed walking the streets with no real purpose. I kicked and splashed, and I stopped. It was not right. I could not come in as a stranger, an invader, and disturb the quiet serenity of this city.

As I looked down to the pool where my feet had begun to make waves, I noticed a small village of water creatures who scurried about in the disturbance. I retreated. The creatures were busy building their homes, searching for lovers, protecting their families. But they never left their pool. Their lives were simple.

And I thought of my family.

Then the crickets started chirping, it would be dark soon. I had not prepared for the night, I had not planned on staying in the woods. I could not leave. I was restrained by the crickets, and the water creatures, the rippling stream, the cool breeze, and the great pine. I could not fight it.

I walked down the bank of the stream to find a soft spot. I found a spot between two birch trees. I gathered some fresh dry leaves to make a bed to keep me warm. I finished the gathering of leaves just in time to find a subtle sunset.

The sunset was glorious. The colors: the purples, the blues, the oranges and reds. Behind the reds, the browns, the yellows and greens of autumn. It was simply inspiring, breathtaking. A cool breeze blew over my body, but a warm coal glowed inside. The warm glow rocked me to sleep between the two birches as if I were tucked away in a womb. I was safe.

Then the sky turned green and the trees blue. Frightened, I rose and ran to the stream and the pool and the great yellow pine. The stream did not ripple; it was stagnant. It was deep; it was a deep, opaque red. I wrestled to wake up. I shut my eyes from the scene and wrestled to wake up.

The sun rose that morning, and the birds were singing. The two birch trees were gone and I was naked. And the birds kept right on singing.
To Be An Insect

We are limited, as humans, by our minds. We are the only intelligent life on the planet, we believe. Nothing is greater than us.

We see the stars, we dream. We see motions in life, but not the greatest of motions. We are limited by our minds, by our experiences. We can imagine powerful, gargantuan creatures in a distant galaxy that dissect human flesh with granite crucibles, sucking through straws the very life blood of our existence. We can imagine mighty machines created by other machines that have the capacity to build great cities of green vapor, and feel pain. We can imagine tiny creatures that live in our skin and cultivate great forests, and suffer great famine at the hands of great blades that cut down their shade at the first signs of the great light. We can imagine subatomic particles that are created out of nothing when we decide to examine them, and escape into oblivion when we have nothing to do with them. Abstractions and more abstractions.

And what of the insects, whose universes are perceived so much differently than ours. We are sluggish, slothful creatures. Superior in our own minds and perceptions to what.

The insect sees. The insect travels in a googolplex of directions at tremendous speed. The insect sees. Only in minute corridors do we see. Blind to possible directions, we only see one way. We cannot comprehend or do not want to try to conceive of the insect's universe.

When we imagine great creatures, an insect sees them. The insect sees them clawing with great stone monoliths with sharp edges. The insect sees them crushing existence, gnawing the insect's substance between weapons of ultimate destruction. The insect sees impenetrable surfaces in the distance which turn up, mutilate and rape the world which has fed, maintained, and created his whole being.

How slow and dumb, and unimaginative we are. How we miss the ripplings in the pool; how we miss the music in the wind; how we misunderstand and misinterpret the delicate balance; how we miss alternate universes.
A Pacifist Manifesto

One night I saw a movie entitled "Red Dawn." The Soviets landed on U. S. soil: W.W. III. One son looked across a fence at his father who was being held captive, just as the Jews were during the holocaust. He told his son, "I love you." Then he said, "Son, avenge me."

I hear those words, but in my mind I imagine my father behind that fence as I gaze in while gripping the chain and barbed-wire fence. He looks into my eyes and says, "Son remember, 'love your enemies: pray for those who persecute you.' Luke 6:27-28"

One night several years back, my mother and I went to the neighborhood drug store to get some things. As we pulled into the parking lot, I noticed several police cars in front of the store entrance. I admit I was a little curious. We walked to the entrance just as two officers were escorting forcibly a young man about my age out the door. He was yelling something. I was not paying that much attention. He came up to my mother, just as I was grabbing her arm, and he looked at her. Then my mother said, "He is so young." And I retorted, "Well he must have done something wrong obviously." Then I noticed my mother crying, but I did not understand why.

I read an article in my Sunday paper a few weeks back; it was a letter written by the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize recipient Mairead Corrigan Maguire. This letter was addressed to her young son Luke. And as many sons, he will not understand her tears at times. Will we ever know or understand her love.

However, a statement Ms. Maguire made took root: "It will take all of your courage to walk unarmed and refuse to hate and kill, in a world which insists you must have enemies and be prepared to kill." And I think of the most recent news: "Libya plans terrorist attacks on U. S. soil." And I think of my mothers tears; and I think of the Crucified Christ's words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

I wake up in the morning to get ready for school. I take all of these experiences and remember them in my heart, just as Mary did. I share my experiences with others, and I am told I am a coward. The next day the service comes looking for a few good men.

I am seated in the interrogation room being picked apart like vultures on carrion. "What do you mean you will not fight for your country."

"Blest are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God," I respond.

"This country gave you freedom, boy," the eagle stamps angrily.

"Blest are those who show mercy, for mercy shall be theirs," I return.

And the eagle spreads its wings, "You are a coward, and a traitor to your home land! You do not deserve to be treated like a citizen or a human for that matter; take him away!"

The next morning I wake up in a cold, dark cell. Rats are nibbling on my shoestrings and licking my sores, just like poor Lazarus. My joy is fulfilled however; I prayed as a young seminarian that the Lord would send me a ministry to the most
needy and abandoned people. The Lord has answered my prayer. He wants me as His instrument and tool to proclaim His mercy and compassion, and His salvation to the condemned of men. "Jesus loves you!" But alas, I am like a voice in the desert. Even the most abandoned and alienated will not listen to a coward.

"But I am not a coward, don't you understand!" We are God's creation. I could never intentionally injure another. You must love your neighbors. We should not follow the example of Cain who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother.1

John 3:12 "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that eternal life abides in no murderer's heart."1 John 3:15

Maybe the light does shine in darkness, for in the most despairing places of all, death row, was a man who listened. "Remember my son, Jesus gave eternal life to the thief crucified beside Him."

And that mercy endures as for the adulterous woman, whom in her eyes, for all practical purposes, was being condemned to death by stoning by the whole world she knew. This prostitute, who probably knew no world outside her country was being condemned to death by the whole village. But Jesus had love and compassion; he did not condemn her. Who are we to throw stones, we are all sinners. Who are we to execute that man on death row, we are all sinners. Who are we to hold a gun to the head of an enemy, we are ourselves enemies.

And they called me a coward. A mother and her seven sons were tortured, torn limb by limb, because they would not disobey the God of their fathers for the civil authorities.2 Maccabees 7 Am I a coward for making God a priority over my country? Am I a coward for making God a priority over my own life? Who is a greater coward? I, or a young woman who is afraid of how her life might turn out, so she destroys the child within her womb. That child was capable, even at that stage for proclaiming the compassion, mercy and goodness of God. After all, the child of Elizabeth leaped for joy in her womb at the announcement of the coming of the Lord.

And I finally understood my mother's tears.

Am I a coward for allowing my country to be overrun when I have the chance to proclaim God's word to my enemies who might attempt making a martyr out of me? Am I a coward for turning the other cheek, when I am just doing what God asks of me? For even when my Lord was betrayed into the hands of evil men, and one of his faithful tried to save Him with a sword, He said, "Put down your sword; he who lives by the sword, dies by the sword."Matthew 26:52

"For he who saves his life shall lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will save it."Mark 9:35

And I finally understood my mother's tears.

Adolfo Perez Esquivel, 1980 Nobel Peace Prize recipient: "For me, the just war does not exist. There are just causes, but no war is just." (From National Catholic Reporter, March 7, 1986).
Random Notes

1. We should not trust spontaneously: build it carefully, slowly, and with great skill.

2. Genesis: "Alas, you are bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."
   Adam saw himself in Eve; before, he only saw the animals. This is similar to our
   relationship with God. We have to first know ourselves before we can know God.
   We have to be able to see God within ourselves and others.

3. It seems that in our modern times more and more reality is opened up to us. We
   see things now that we never dreamed of seeing a hundred years ago. Yet this
   new knowledge, this truth has not brought us closer together: it has torn us apart
   from one another. Not that truth is bad, but we only allow ourselves to see
   certain truths. We limit ourselves. We do it to ourselves, and what it does to us
   alienates us. We are inauthentic, living in inauthentic times. Instead of building
   up life, we are destroying it by forming camps of us and them.

4. What is a point (not a description or an example but a definition)? It is not a
   physical reality. Points do not exist extended in space, they are infinitely small.
   To say a point is a physical reality, one would also have to say that a certain
   number of them could fill a certain volume. Yet this cannot be. A point being an
   example of simple extension could be divided and divided again infinitely. If
   points are infinitely small, then they do not exist at all physically. By definition, if
   a reality is not physical, then it is spiritual. Yet to be spiritual, a point would have
   to exist independent of the mind if it is to exist as a real entity. It does not exist
   as a real entity; rather, it exists as an ideal entity. That is, it exists only in the
   mind, as a definition of the concept of singularity. Therefore, we know points
   only by virtue of their definition.

5. All injustice is a form of oppression. We need to live, change, as opposed to
   remaining static. It would be humanly impossible to realize our ideals, yet to
   cease to strive for those ideals would be to become cynical, apathetic,
   pessimistic. To undo injustice, we shall not strive to better ourselves at the
   expense of others, but rather better ourselves for the benefit of others.

6. Freedom cannot not be defined as: do what you want. But in certain societies,
   choosing to be free can render one very lonely.

7. Violence, physical or nonphysical, does not bring social change. Violence brings
   dissension, disunity, and alienation. For instance, aggression of the oppressed
   may destroy the ideals of justice: the oppressors are justified in their oppression,
   they believe, when the oppressed turn violent. If the oppressed are innocent,
   change comes in the understanding.
Two of my favorite subjects are music and philosophy. Music is very personal for me. It takes on a character that is more than esthetic. It is holistic. The meaning of music for me is difficult to define in a visual way. Notes, and scales, although the written language of music, seem to be detached and impersonal, as does the drawing of musical instruments. I want to get to the message. Within the realm of philosophy, music is very formal, mathematical, precise. I wish to promote or illustrate the subjective, emotive, mystical, or existentialist side.

Another subject of interest to me is nature, organic or scenic. I usually capture this interest through photography. But as with illustrating music, nature has a certain rhythm which cannot be captured through photography.

When I was in high school I owned a motorcycle which I used to ride on warm afternoons in the countryside. It was difficult to explain to my parents the somewhat mystical experience of riding motorcycles. I hesitate to use the word freedom because it is vastly misunderstood, but there was a type of immediacy when riding a bike. I did not feel enclosed, hampered. Yet, I had control over my direction. The machine and I were one: when I leaned it followed and curved in perfect arcs. And, like nature, music, and philosophy the experience cannot be represented in its true nature by drawing a motorcycle.

The difficulty seems to be with the objects. Objects or illustrations of objects do not seem to get across the message or meaning of an experience. There must be a way to represent meaning, for meaning exists in our mind, and we express it with language. Not every word conjures up an image of an object. For this reason I do not like to put an object in a picture with a backdrop. The picture has to be an integrated whole, a unity.

I was going to attempt a study in value based on two photographs I had taken. I think the scenes that the pictures represent are beautiful. However, a photograph or painting of that scene does not express the joy that I feel inside when I come face to face with that beauty. What I would like to represent is the joy associated with the scene. I am not yet sure how to get to that level.
Autobiography

My full legal name is Hanson Paul LeBlanc III, but I usually go by Paul. I am twenty three years old and was born in Donaldsonville, Louisiana in 1964, just three blocks from the Mississippi River and four blocks from Bayou Lafourche. The physician was my great uncle Percy LeBlanc, brother of my Paw-Paw. My parents are Dr. H. Paul LeBlanc, Jr. and Loretta Lovett LeBlanc, both of South Louisiana. My dad was born in Donaldsonville in 1937, and my mom was born in Baton Rouge in 1938. I have four older sisters and two younger brothers. My oldest sister, Stephanie Louise, is twenty-nine years old and divorced. My next sister, Leslie Yvette is twenty-seven, is also divorced and has three children: Kevin Daniel, age ten, Rachel Amanda, age eight, and Matthew, age four. Kevin is my godchild. My third sister, Diane Marie, is twenty-six and is married to John Hanley. They have one child named Alicia who is one year old. My fourth sister, Cecilia Renee, is twenty-five, is married to Neil Stone, and has two children: Angie Lynn, age five, and Nicole, age one. My brother, Jean-Claude, is nineteen. And, my youngest brother, Jacques Yves, just made eighteen. All of us, with the exception of my sister Renee (who was born in North Carolina), were born in South Louisiana.

Our family is close in many ways. It is probably due to the struggles and growth we went through. We first lived, that is by the time I was born, in Baton Rouge. We belonged to St. Alphonsus Parish in Greenwell Springs, and I was baptized there by Fr. Joe Greenwell. We did not live there long; we moved to New Roads before I was one year old. That was a fairly happy time for me, and I can remember doing lots of things with my family, such as fishing on the pier together, having fish fries and crawfish boils and watermelon fights. We also went places together as a family. We took vacations together to the Smokey Mountains. And when I was six years old, the whole family went down to Guatemala for three months in the Summer. Dad wanted to do missionary work, as a dentist. That is the first religious motivation I can remember my parents having. I am sure there were others before, but I was probably too young to remember. I have fond and very vivid memories of Guatemala; however, after we returned, I was still in the first grade. For some reason my teachers and parents agreed that it was necessary to do so. Being born in December made my age awkward. Since then I have never failed or reached an "F" grade on a course, with the exception of a withdrawal from a course at L. S. U.

Before the sixth grade, I cannot remember having any specific role in my family other than being the oldest boy. Dad used to call me his number one son whenever I was around with his acquaintances or hunting buddies. I remember wishing he would take me hunting with him sometimes. But he later told me that he did not want to bring me because the guys cut up too much in the woods. Despite that I did go in the woods with him quite a few times.

My relationship to my family, before dad went into detox, is sort of hard to describe. I remember having fun together, but I also remember fighting like cats and
dogs. When I was in grade school at St. Alphonsus, there were two years between Renee and I, and four years between Jean-Claude and I. I experienced quite a bit of ridicule and alienation in school from my peers. This was most obvious in grade school. As a consequence, I learned to play by myself. I would mess around in the woods behind my house when I lived in Greenwell Springs. I also remember spending a lot of time at my next door neighbor's house. Our neighbors, Pod and Aunt Dean, were like second parents to me. After I became much older, and we moved away, I came to realize that Pod was a father to me in those years because there was not much interaction between Dad and I.

At some point when I was in grade school, Mom and Dad made a Marriage Encounter weekend. A change occurred in our family at this point because Mom and Dad were learning how to dialogue and teaching us how to also. It might have been more than a fourth grader could take, but I always experienced, or at least believed, myself to be a little more mature than my peers. We started doing things together again, such as go to overnights. I remember going riding around in the countryside on the weekends, all of us kids in the big Ford van. We sang religious, Marriage Encounter songs when we could not find a radio station. Marriage Encounter started getting old, at least for me because Mom and Dad had become executive couple for Louisiana and Mississippi. It seemed good for them, but they were gone often, going across the country to big conventions. We met Fr. Mark during Mom and Dad's Marriage Encounter days. Sometime after that, Mom made her Cursillo retreat. I found out much later that Dad had made his Cursillo retreat back in 1970. That probably had something to do with the decision to do missionary work in Guatemala. At any rate, Dad made retreats to Manresa, I can remember going with Mom to bring Dad down the river to Manresa.

We went to church regularly when I was a kid. I remember being an altarboy in grade school under Fr. Reinhard, and every Tuesday in school the boys had to wear these stupid looking clip-on ties so that we could go to the Novena Mass.

As a last item of early childhood: I was involved in some extracurricular activities. In the second grade I played baseball on the Wholesale Specialty team. In the third grade I was a cub scout. And in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades I played football with the St. Alphonsus Hornets. The first year we came in second place. The next two years we were the league champs. We were sure it was because of Fr. Seelos. Frs. Ralph and Reinhard told us to put Fr. Seelos relics in our knee-pads. I was mostly a benchwarmer my whole grade school career, which was a source of much ridicule, but at the end of my sixth grade year I was given the headhunter award, the biggest award, for trying the hardest and playing well when I did get to play.

In 1977, we moved into the city, to St. Gerard Parish, where we went to Redemptorist Junior High and High School. Because of my bad experience overall with my peers in grade school, junior high was like a new beginning for me. Fortunately, the bullies I wanted to get away from went to Central High. But I began my new life by finding new friends. Friendship to me at that point was a rather nebulous concept. I had friends growing up to that point, but for the most part I experienced them as fair-weather friends or vice-versa. I never particularly thought of myself as that shallow; even as a
young kid I had a concept of shallowness. (Once in the third grade, I threatened a bully with a ruined reputation. I do not believe he knew what I was talking about.) Whatever the case was, I never had friends as a kid for very long, with the exception of Pod, but he was not a peer.

At any rate, seventh grade was the first time I ever experienced "knocking around" with friends on the play ground. The relationships were not what I would call intimate, but it was nice just having someone to talk to, even if it was trivial. I also had my first real girlfriend. There was a girl I talked to in grade school, but just over the phone. Donna was the first girl I ever went steady with or even kissed. We went together for about six months. I do not know why we broke up except that we were just tired of each other. (I think she broke up with me.) We went back together again the next year for a little while.

In the seventh grade I was given the nickname "Smiley." I guess I smiled because of my new experience of friendship. It was the first nickname I ever received by my peers, and the first non-derisive one I ever received. I also had friends that lived around me, with whom I did not go to school. I probably got into more trouble with those friends than any previously. There is nothing particularly significant that I can remember about my eight grade year besides the fact that I realized that I was beginning to develop a very individualistic personality about myself. For instance, in a speech class I did a musical pantomime which talked about how a person feels okay about him or herself despite what others say. I suppose because of my experience in grade school, and a similar experience in junior high, of feeling alienated, I had protected myself by developing a positive self-image, maybe even to the point of being somewhat arrogant.

I said I felt junior high was similar to grade school. In fact, all of my school career, up until college, was this way: I never felt accepted by the majority of students. I always felt somewhat marginalized. The people I had to talk to were generally in the same situation. But because we were all dealing with our own trauma and alienation, to this point were not able to deal with each other on an intimate basis. I am speaking in a general way. I realize I cannot speak for others, but I feel, after years of discernment, that this is basically what happened.

Ninth grade was one of my most difficult both at home and at school. This was the year that Dad went into Detox. I also experienced quite a few friends move away geographically and/or metaphorically. My friend, Ronnie, moved to Lacombe to the high school seminary. The others whom I had knocked around with in the seventh grade went to the area public schools. I was feeling rather lonely, and it had gotten to the point by the end of the year that the only person I had talked to about anything personal was Mrs. Renee, the school vice-principal. I had not withdrawn from life; ninth grade was academically satisfying. I was invited and joined the Junior Beta honor club and went to the regional convention. I took fourth place in Algebra I in the regional MAO math tournament. I had a major role in the school play and had the highest G.P.A. I ever achieved through my high school career.

Nevertheless, the family situation was not good. Things had become exceedingly tense. I was very uncomfortable with the new knowledge that Dad was an alcoholic, and
that the whole family was sick. By this time my protective wall was pretty well established. I did not want anyone telling me that I was sick. We had to go to Family Night two or three times a week for the first couple of weeks. Arguments in the family became considerably more vicious. Before sobriety I knew what was what. No matter what the argument was about, Dad was right. Afterward, we found out that always being right was part of the illness. It became a weapon from which we could manipulate. The defensive mechanisms we had learned for the art of survival were now barbs to prick each other's skin. Withdrawal from the family was no longer a position I could afford, for it could be used against me. The new technique involved indifference.

An awful lot of resentment and ill feeling resulted from this particular period in my life. If I entertained any thoughts of suicide, it was not because of a lack of self-worth, but rather because of an intense and profound anger. Perhaps it was a feeling of self-worth and individualization I had used earlier as my defense mechanism that kept me alive.

Although at this time I did not have an avenue open, at least one that I could see at the time, with which to vocalize my rage, I did turn into myself. I had at this time, turned to music as a means to escape the alienation. (Whether this alienation was a product of my own illness was not known to me. I was sure it was caused by outside forces.) I started collecting record albums. Although, if hard pressed, I would have admitted to believing in God, at this point music was my religion. (It retains its importance in my life, perhaps to a lesser degree, to the present.) I also began writing much poetry. I now feel that that was a purpose for all of this, and in having this particular avenue at the time. God allowed me this much to keep me alive. And I honestly believe that if it had not been for the music, I probably would not be alive.

Because of the dynamics and explosiveness of the times, I was having real struggles with the Church. This was the year that I was supposed to be confirmed. At the end of my ninth grade year, I started dating a Baptist girl named Monica. She got an earful of my struggle, and her answer was to have me visit her church. I did this for a couple of months and was not real satisfied, although leaving the church was still an option. Fr. Matt was pastor of St. Gerard at the time. He also got an earful of my gripes. I wanted to know why it was a mortal sin to leave the Church after one was confirmed. If I married a Baptist girl, I might want to join her church. The topic of marriage had come up between Monica and I, probably because I was hoping for a quick way out of my parent's house.

Monica and I broke up, and I got confirmed. I can honestly say it was a free decision. I chose the name Francis (of Assisi) probably because I wanted some peace and tranquillity. I felt I had fought my war but was soon to find out it was not over yet.

I guess to my Mom it seemed that I was feeling rather lonely. Right after my sixteen birthday I got a job at McDonald's. It was a plea to get Monica off my mind. I had decided to spend my money exclusively on stereo equipment. And by next May, I had most of what I needed. When I was not at school or work, I was listening to my stereo. All of my notebooks at school had lyrics scribbled on them. Mom noticed this withdrawal
and suggested I go to Ala-teen meetings. Ala-teen was a teenager group modeled after, and part of, the Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous programs. Reluctantly, I agreed.

By far, the most difficult part of my life was the six or so months I was involved with A.A. and the years it took to unravel all the crap I endured as a part of that program. It was death. It was so manipulative, controlled, un-God oriented, that I confess to still having some unresolved resentments towards the persons involved. I realize that we were all sick, but that program seemed more damaging than the disease of alcoholism itself.

I unwitting got involved with a girl named Rena, who was, for all practical purposes, the leader of the Baton Rouge Chapter of Ala-teen. What she said went, and the next thing I knew I was her boyfriend. I was involved in the program for several months and had even attended two major regional conventions that required overnight stays. Throughout the time I was involved, God was stricken or banished from discussion. In the Twelve steps of A.A., one was to admit that one's life had become unmanageable, and that one was powerless over alcohol. Therefore, one must surrender him or herself to his or her higher power. For some reason, in the Baton Rouge program, one's higher power could be anything except God. The higher power could be A.A., it could be the Twelve Steps, it could even be a door knob. Someone actually chose the door knob as his god. But, Rena would not allow anyone to use the word "god" in a meeting, and what she said went.

I could not share my deepest pains with the group, even though they were constantly being interpreted for me. The group's interpretation of my life was an open book. Once it was exposed, it became the object of cruel ridicule. When I tried to break away, I was followed. I personally believe that the program is addictive. And, the alcoholic or family member of the alcoholic, just moves from one addiction to another without ever recognizing it. There were Ala-teen programs all over the city, but they were all controlled by the same people. And when I showed up for one, word was relayed to Rena. Vicious rumors were circulated about me. It had gotten to the point were I just had to cut all ties.

I tried Al-Anon for awhile, but the generation difference was too much too bear. In that situation it seemed exceedingly hard for both sides to listen to each other. I eventually withdrew altogether from the Alcoholics Anonymous program. I have learned that the problems were just a product of that particular program. The Twelve Steps of A.A. are beautiful and contain much spirituality. But, I believe it has been the case that A.A. has splintered between believers and non-believers and even between denominations, throughout the country.

I recognize that the last several paragraphs sound like I am pinning all the guilt on outside parties. It was a very bad time for me. And although I am probably just as much to blame, for I was very sick myself, I cannot deny that that was how I felt. It was the most painful period of my life.

The next two years were spent trying to get out of the hole I was in (whether it was dug by me or not). A drug and alcohol support group was begun at Redemptorist High School while I was in the eleventh grade. I joined the group out of the strength of
my math teacher Mrs. Cindy, who was also the moderator of the group. The members of the group had permission to miss class, but the membership was kept anonymous from the rest of the school. The group was small, so consequently it was safe. Unfortunately, there was also a girl in that group with whom I got involved. This relationship also turned out to be unhealthy. This girl, Lynne, once told me that she was diagnosed as having a terminal illness. It turned out to be untrue: she wanted me to have pity for her. She wanted an excuse.

I had reached a point to where I had become virtually indifferent to others. It affected my grades and my extracurricular activities. In the ninth grade, I had played football and was involved in clubs. In the tenth grade I was in the Beta Club, Homeroom president, the Spanish Club, and in the Student Government Association. In the eleventh grade I had dropped out of all of the clubs I had been in. I got a job at a Winn-Dixie grocery store. I quit the football team. I had pretty much withdrawn from school.

During spring training for football, when I was in the tenth grade, Johnny died in a car accident. Johnny was a year above me. We were not close friends, but just acquaintances. Johnny was the kind of guy who looked out for everyone and always said hello to everyone. I was at work when news of his accident came. I was so badly shaken by it that I could not work. I almost lost my job at McDonald’s that day. (It was part of the reason I left that job the following week.)

The significance of his death is something I hold to this day. Although we were not friends, there was a special place for him in my heart. I had gone to school with Johnny since grade school. We played on the football team together. He was a very good running back. One day at practice, when I played for the Hornets in grade school, Mike, a bully in my class, was teasing me because I was a benchwarmer. After practice, Johnny came up to me and said, “Don’t worry about him. You might not play much, but you try harder than everybody out here.” That was all he ever said to me. But when he died, what he had said to me just kept running through my mind. It was the kindest thing I can remember a peer saying to me.

A couple of weeks into the season I quit football in order to get a job. Mom and Dad were beginning to have financial difficulties. At that point there was nothing holding me to Redemptorist High except my parent’s will. My best friend at the time, Chris, was going to another school. He and I used to go to New Orleans on the weekend when Mom and Dad were out of town. Chris played drums and fostered my love for jazz. I wanted to go to the school he went to, but I never got the chance.

Getting back to what I was talking about, I finally sought professional help for dealing with the resentments against the groups I had been in. For a couple of months I went to see Mrs. Connie who was a staff psychologist and social worker at the Margaret Dumas mental health clinic. Overall, I would like to say that it was productive. I found that I was able to talk to her, and we worked out a lot of the crap that was still in me from Ala-teen two years prior to this. It also helped me deal with the manipulation that was going on in my relationship with Lynne.
My twelfth grade year was much better than the previous three. At the end of the summer I had bought a Kawasaki motorcycle, and I drove it to school. I really enjoyed riding the motorcycle. I rode it mostly after school and before work out in the countryside to relax myself. Neither Mom or Dad really liked the idea, but I was seventeen years old and about to be eighteen, so they let me have it. I was never able to explain to them why motorcycle riding was so important to me. (It was not until I read Robert M. Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* that I was able to put the experience into words.) I had put almost five-thousand miles on it when I wrecked it after only having it for three months. It was a particularly bad wreck. I am lucky to be walking, much less alive.

This was the year that Karla and I started dating. Karla was the first girl that I asked out before she asked me out. Every girl that I had dated before her asked me out first. Her friends did not want her to go out with me because they thought I was a hoodlum. Karla made my twelfth grade year, not only bearable, but enjoyable. We went to every dance the school held. I went with her to her club functions. My parents and relatives really liked her. She was on a first name basis with my nephews and nieces and even Mr. Tim, my boss.

Karla and I talked about everything. She was my best friend and definitely the person I had been closest to up to that point. We even went to Mass together. Before this I had not been going to Mass. We had arguments, but mostly we made up. And it was the happiest I had been since I lived in New Roads. My grades were much better in the twelfth grade, and as a result I graduated with honors.

The Spring of my twelfth grade year I bought a car. Part of the money came from the insurance settlement after the motorcycle accident. Karla and I used to go riding around in the car all day long. We had an enjoyable summer, and when she went back to school we were still going together. About January of the following year she had a critical life changing event that deeply affected our relationship. The situation was particularly hard on me. I did not know what to think. The incident caused Karla to become very independent. This was hard on me because I had grown accustomed to her dependence. The next few months were very difficult. Karla and I were pretty serious at this point, and I had shopped around for rings. But she decided to break up with me after we had been dating for nearly two years. The break up was very difficult; I cried for a very long time. By the end of the following Summer I had decided to go to L.S.U. after being out of school for a year. I began going to school as a full time student and was planning on getting a degree in Electrical Engineering.

My decision to go into engineering was based on my love for music. I had never learned how to play an instrument, so I thought I might like to design stereo components. I also took two aptitude tests: the armed services ASVAB, and the Children's Laboratory Aptitude testing. Both tests said I would be good in engineering, so that was my motivation.

As a result of my taking the ASVAB, an army recruiter got in touch with me. This happened when I was still in high school. I seriously considered going into the service, and had even gone down to New Orleans to the station to enlist. I was unable to enlist because of a traffic violation, and the possibility of fraudulent enlistment. I took it on faith
that this meant God did not want me to join. After a couple of years to think about it, I realized that the only reason I was considering enlisting was because I was aimless, and I did not know how to pay for my education. My experience has shaped my opinion negatively toward the service in general and recruiting in particular. I feel the recruiter was playing on my naiveté and uncertainty. This feeling was multiplied when a good friend told me that he realized, luckily in time, that he had been lied to by his recruiter.

That fall, 1984, after I had started going to L.S.U., Mom asked me to make a Cursillo retreat. In October of that year I did. It has been one of the most significant moments in my life. I do not know exactly what happened, but it felt like what had been described as a conversion experience. There had always been a religiosity in my house, but I never knew where it had come from. Mom and Dad had been involved in many different church organizations from Cursillo, to Marriage Encounter, to the widows group, to Charismatic renewal, but I never knew where it came from. I had been taught religion lessons and had attended Catholic school all my life, but I never knew where it came from. It was like all of a sudden everything made sense. I had a new understanding that I received in a weekend's time.

After that I started going to Mass several times a week. I became involved with both the Baton Rouge Youth Ultreya and the Christian Awakening movement on campus. And I got involved in St. Gerard's Parish Renewal. I was happy again, although it was a different kind of happiness. It was like an inner joy. I continued working at Winn-Dixie, as I had been doing for over three years. And I also continued in my plan to be an Electrical Engineer. I had started going to summer school and was now in the School of Engineering. I had also been involved in the R.C.I.A. program at Christ the King Chapel.

One afternoon, in the Summer of 1985, I was sitting in my room, and the thought occurred to me, "Why am I doing this? What am I doing to promote the Kingdom?" That was it, plain and simple. I felt the answer deep inside of me. I do not understand how or why it came to me like that. I had thought about the priesthood before, but never seriously, and not at all after I met Karla.

I thought about it for a couple of days before I said anything to anyone. The first person I talked to about it was Dad. I would say that he and Mom were surprised. A few days later I got in touch with Fr. Mark, and things were put in process. By the end of the summer I felt at peace with the decision, and so I went to San Antonio.

It really happened very quickly. The three years that I have been in San Antonio have been very trying, but underneath it all I still feel peaceful in my heart about my decision.

There have been a few significant events that have occurred in my life since my coming to San Antonio. One of the most significant was my friendship with a Franciscan named Miguel. He and I became very close friends in a town where I knew no one except Fr. Mark. It was difficult developing close friendships within my community because that first year there was no one in the community who had similar interests or experiences. Miguel and I shared many of the same values, likes and dislikes, and interests. Miguel eventually graduated from St. Mary's University and went to Rome to
study theology. It was difficult for me when he left as it is difficult for me to maintain relationships over considerable distances. But I still consider Miguel to be a close friend.

Another person who I have become close to is Tina, a woman I know from school. She and I also share similar interests, one of those being a stable, intimate, non-threatening friendship. Throughout my life I have had very few of those. Most of the relationships I had been involved with were unhealthy. I think my blessing has been that I can now recognize, at least somewhat, unhealthy relationships. Tina and I can talk about almost anything, and that has taught me about relationships.

The most developed relationship within the community is between Bro. Henry and myself. Henry and I also share similar interests. We have gone to concerts together and also "knocked around" town together. I am sure he is more disappointed with our relationship than I am because I do not make a lot of time for him. Most of the time I go over to see him is when I have a gripe, or he comes to see me. But I think that I am slowly learning about healthy relationships, and it is getting better.

Reflecting over this autobiography, in a way I do not feel very satisfied. Because of the necessity of its brevity (I have gone over the limit) I feel I have left out many important parts of my life. By far, the most difficult part to write about was the period between the ninth and eleventh grades. Over the past three years, I have made a considerable effort to reconcile myself with persons in my past. My relationships with Mom and Dad and all my brothers and sisters have become much better. My life as a whole I feel has been reflective. I believe I have reached a point in my life where I feel it has all been for a purpose to make me a stronger person. And I am a stronger person.

I believe that no matter where I have been, and no matter how far away I tried to get from God and others, God has always been with me. I believe my struggles are for a purpose, and I am learning and have desire to share that with others.
Dear Editor,

Many times we form our opinions upon our emotions rather than looking at logical arguments and solid facts. Abortion is one such topic people base their opinion emotionally instead of logically. Since abortion can have detrimental effects, we propose a decision abortion be based on logic rather than emotion.

The basic argument on abortion is whether or not the fetus is actually a human being. If the fetus is human, it would follow that it should have the same basic rights as all humans. This includes the right to life.

At the moment of conception the egg and sperm become a zygote; a living, multiplying, growing organism. Within three weeks of development, the organism forms the basic structure of the central nervous system. A heartbeat is felt between three to four weeks of development; the heart is developed by ten weeks. This organism will change into a human being.

It has been shown that a zygote can, within the first stages of human development, mature outside of the mother's womb as in the case of "test-tube" babies. Also, a zygote can be implanted into another female and develop. The zygote does not have to develop within the original mother. This shows that the organism is a separate life.

A tadpole is a larval frog (an immature stage that is different from the adult of the species) and a maggot is a larval fly. But yet, a tadpole is a member of the frog species, and a maggot is a member of the fly species. Therefore, a fetus is a member of the human species or race.

Whether a human is in the form of a zygote, fetus or a fully matured adult, every human has the basic right to life. A woman has the right to control her body. However, a woman should not have the right to control the life of another human being.

With this argument drawing some extreme views isn't it a shame that those who believe abortion is a good thing were not aborted themselves?

We would personally like to thank Pam Holley for her related letter in the March 1, 1985, Reveille.

H. Paul LeBlanc III
J. Kathy Tarver

Published as “Abortion” (Daily Reveille, Vol. 89, No. 87, p. 6; March 15, 1985).
Dear Editor,

To Philosophy majors, minors and other interested persons:  
What is the purpose of attending school? What is the purpose of obtaining a liberal education? If you are interested in philosophy for the purpose of gaining insights into truth, why keep them to yourself?

For Plato, wisdom was sought in the context of dialogue. For those Hegelians, the method of obtaining truth was through the dialectic. We believe there is some truth in that insight. For that reason, some students at St. Mary's have made known their desire to be a part of an informal, philosophic discussion group. We would like to begin this group during the upcoming fall semester.

This is, of course, a new thing at St. Mary's. However, we are confident that there will be much interest in a group of this kind for all persons dedicated to a liberal education.

The three questions in the opening paragraph could be possible topics for discussion. Other possible topics could be: the precedence of essence over existence, or vice versa; the impossibility of that precedence, either way; the question of mystery and its implication on rational thought; modern society and the possibility of change; or the metaphysical implications of a world series in baseball. The range of topics can be limitless, and does not have to be strictly philosophical.

Two people can discuss these topics. However, it is much more effective and meaningful, in a way, when these topics can be discussed within the context of an informal group. Therefore we ask that you consider this proposal. More pertinent and concrete information on this group will be made available at the beginning of the fall semester of 1987. Meanwhile discern which questions have been a source of angst and write them down. They may be answered for you next semester.

Published as “Where’s the Advertising?” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 2, p. 6; October 14, 1987).
Censorship is an issue we must face by virtue of the nature of the free society in which we live. In our society we have been allowed certain freedoms which have been historically held in check by censorship. Censorship was given its status as an issue by the framers of the Constitution, however unintentional that might have been. The First Amendment states as one of our rights as citizens, the practice of free speech. It has been the job of the courts, for the past two-hundred years, to interpret that right.

We have understood the right to free speech to give us certain guarantees. These guarantees help us express reasons against the practice of censorship. One of the most basic reasons against censorship is that free speech allows the free flow of ideas. This lack of constraint on ideas has been helpful in all fields of learning, from creative inventions to the research fields of medicine and science, and to new forms of art. Education, as has been argued, is our country's asset (regardless of whether or not it has reached its full potential). In The Republic, Plato's objection against democracy was that the masses were uneducated. Obviously, people cannot make a good decision about policy if they have no knowledge of the implications. For that reason, education is extremely important in a democratic society. The lack of constraint of censorship thus would seem to be wanted in this kind of society.

An extreme case of censorship can be seen in novels: the only books allowed were those approved by the state. This of course, would be a severe limit on knowledge. Truth itself would be questionable if, as Hegel believed, the truth is found through the dialectic. This would be even more accurate if the central authority was not benevolent.

Yet, there seem to be good arguments in favor of censorship. Censorship can stop the flow of dangerous ideas. This need may be especially acute in regard to national security. It is not in the interest of the central authority, nor of the people themselves, to have certain information handed over to the enemy. This has been the rationale for covert actions or information that is not known to the general public. Surely if the public would have known about certain covert actions, they would have protested. The morality of those actions is not at issue here. We all disagree on how foreign policy should be handled.

Morality is an issue when talking about upbringing of children. Censorship has been used when attempting to keep dangerous ideas from the minds of children. Certain materials are restricted from the use of children. Alcohol, cigarettes, pornographic materials, and many overtly violent or sexual movies are kept from the use of children. This issue is also expounded upon in The Republic. Even some of these materials may be considered offensive to some adults. Consequently, restrictions have been placed on the types of materials available to persons below a specified age. The use of profane language is restricted on radio and television because persons who might be offended have no control over what they hear.
The third, and probably strongest reason for censorship is to protect persons from possible damage to their reputations from statements made about them by others. This is especially true if a statement that was made and was widely believed is actually false. This is the ground for libel and slander cases which are found in civil court.

In the extreme case of non-censorship, people could say whatever they wanted. Although it may be hard for us to believe, there are people in this world with less than honorable intentions. By and large, this is not our experience on a daily basis. Yet, we have all experienced persons who may have, for some reason or another, wanted to ruin our reputation. This motive can be directed against one person, or it can be directed against a whole nation. We can see this occur on the nightly news with one political candidate pitted against another. This method in politics is also used by nations against their adversaries.

In the final analysis, the one who suffers is everyone. The society as a whole would cease to exist if lines of trust among peoples are broken down by simple statements. Kant's principle of duty in ethics seems to dictate that the truth is most important in the survival of a society.

For these reasons, some form of censorships seems quite unavoidable. To refute this, one would have to believe that everyone's intentions were benevolent, and that trust is not broken down by lying or cheating. However, if we are to make the presumption in favor of liberty, it seems we have to exercise extreme caution when promoting censorship.

Published as “Exercise Caution When Exercising Censorship” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 7, p. 3; October 28, 1987).
Deterrence, Contributing Factor of Behavior

Deterrence has been defined as a form of behavior modification by the use of a threat of retribution or punishment. By the use of deterrents, a society seeks to curb the frequency of acts of aggression to a vanishing point, or at least to a controllable level. The idea of deterrence is used in arguments for: nuclear weapons buildup, capital punishment, and acts of military reprisal. Yet, the definition, as it stands, involves the assumption of causality.

Causality involves necessity. By defining deterrence as a form of behavior modification, one is making the assumption that behavior is in fact modified by a treat of retribution. This notion, at first glance, seems evident to common sense. Most people do not want to be hurt. Therefore, people will avoid committing acts which will result in punishment. If the definition of deterrence is accurate, involving the assumption of causality, then deterrence would be the prime motivating factor for persons not to commit certain actions that carry threats of extreme punishment. All other factors such as cultural conventions and socialization would be secondary.

There are, however, some difficulties with this notion. The primacy of deterrence as a form of behavior modification over socialization is questionable. Many ideas contribute to our notions of social norms, and right or wrong behavior. One could maintain that the threat of punishment is one of many contributing factors that can, but not necessarily will, modify one's behavior.

In Kohlberg's stages of moral development, the pre-conventional is the first major stage in which persons internalize socializing messages. In this pre-conventional stage, moral value resides in external forces. These external forces, such as the threat of punishment by authority, prompts the individual to avoid punishment by acting in an acceptable manner. This stage is the category in which the notion of deterrence resides.

However, there are two more categories in the process of moral development. The next category is the conventional stage. This stage involves maintaining the status quo. The conventional order is made known to us through our socialization. The third category is the post-conventional stage. This stage involves a transcendence beyond merely what other persons in our social group believe to be right or wrong. A person seeks a conscious decision to conform to shared social standards. Not all persons may reach this stage. Yet, if deterrence was the prime motivating factor not to act in certain ways, one would be in the pre-conventional stage, which denies the other factors of socialization.

Deterrence, therefore, is a contributory factor and not a causal factor. With this thought in mind, the probability that behavior will be modified by threat of retribution is no longer viewed as being one-hundred percent but rather somewhat less. The argument of deterrence is not as strong. And, hopefully we can move on to better ways to solve problems.

Published as “Deterrence, Contributing Factor of Behavior” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 4, p. 6; November 12, 1987).
Experiencing the Power of Music

Music is many things to many people. For some it is simply background noise which holds back the den of silence. For others, it is a way of life, a career. One thing music is not is dead. Music used as a backdrop for other activities seems, at first glance, not to have much power. Yet, there has been many exhortations as to the power which exists in music. Certainly in most cultures, music has its greatest use in rituals and celebrations. And, throughout time, music has accrued its own symbolic language and meaning. What is this symbolic language which gives so much power to music?

There could be no doubt that music captivates and motivates people. This is why it is used in rituals. Some may argue that this is precisely why certain types of music are evil. If language can be used for evil purposes, and music is a type of language, then it should follow that it can be used for evil purposes. Yet, there is a quality about music that makes it different from other forms of languages. Generally, language is a phenomena which is, we think, unique to humans. But there is evidence that forms of "music" is used by lower animals. Certainly whales sing. Some might argue that cetaceans are not a lower form of animals, but that is another matter. The point is that music has a quality that is more fundamental than spoken or written languages of the human variety.

Nevertheless, this quality of music is what embodies its power to captivate and motivate. Given this quality, one may change the relative meaning of certain passages of music by melody, harmony, rhythm, and the context in which it is used. This context may change from type to type of music. That is, presumably, why certain genres of music appeal differently to different people. Opinions being what they are, no one type of music is any better or worse than any other. People probably identify with a type of music that speaks to their experience. The type that does not appeal to one probably does not speak to any experiences a given person has had. One would not be expected to know or understand a form of music that came from a culture not his or her own. Yet, someone who sees music as an art form, and inherently beautiful in itself, would be able to appreciate foreign forms of music even if he or she did not understand its hidden meanings.

However, within the culture or subculture the hidden meanings become real. And, for those who understand those hidden meanings, the music gains a power to captivate and motivate, to describe pain or suffering or joy.

Published as “Experiencing the Power of Music” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 4, p. 3; November 24, 1987).
Dear Editor,

I really appreciate the work the Rattler staff has been doing this semester. And, I can honestly say that I read the Rattler regularly. I have friends and classmates on your staff. I have even been allowed to contribute some of my works to the paper. I also know of the struggles to which your staff has been subjected in the past few weeks. I do not like to throw stones, but this is a matter of personal importance to me.

A few weeks ago I wrote a short editorial that appeared in your last paper. I usually read over my own works to be sure there are not any changes that might affect the argument. And, your editorial staff usually does a good job. However, this time I was shocked to see an editorial judgment that has a major impact on my argument. The second sentence in the second paragraph stated: "This is why certain types of music are evil." I certainly do not believe that statement. As a matter of fact, the actual statement was: "some may argue this is precisely why certain types of music are evil." Please study the difference between these two statements. You will see they say two totally different things.

I would certainly hope my close friends on this campus would know better than to think I would make such a ridiculous statement. But, I do not know what others could think. I know this sort of thing happens; it is not the first time it has happened to me. So I ask you to please consider two things: first, does the editing of a few words alter the argument, and second, have I asked another person's opinion about the importance of certain words in a given statement. I know you at the Rattler do a fine job, and I understand the hard work you all put into it. But please, please be careful not to misrepresent a writer's opinion by altering or deleting important words in a statement. And, please spell my name right.

Published in (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 6, p 2; Dec. 11, 1987).
Wish You Were There

Upon arriving at the Astrodome in Houston, I knew that something special was going to happen. One could sense from the crowd gathered Wednesday night that the band was no ordinary group. The range in ages was incredible, from fifteen to fifty. Veteran rockers were coming to see a band that had not played in the States in seven years, and had not had a major tour in a decade. Yet, the following seemed stronger than ever. Behind the band was a string of sellout dates across two nations.

Pink Floyd is no ordinary band. Coming from the top of England's underground psychedelic movement, this band had been playing for over two decades. Fans from the earlier days were coming to see the group that has achieved legendary status for their shows. There was a level of expectation regarding the light show. However, because of the recent departure of one of the band members, it seemed no one was sure what to expect.

The opening song was "Shine On You Crazy Diamond," a tribute to founding member Syd Barrett from the 1975 album "Wish You Were Here." The first bars were immediately recognized by most of the listeners in the Dome. The second and third songs were from the latest album. Then David Gilmour, lead guitarist and vocalist announced the format of the concert: they will play all new material the first half, have an intermission, then play old favorites the second half. The Floyd went immediately into songs from their recently released album, "A Momentary Lapse of Reason." Every song, with the exception of the opening, was from that album.

Many interesting combinations were used for the light show. Of course, there was the standard circular screen from the "Dark Side of the Moon" shows. However, this screen was also used to show videos which accompanied the newer songs. Laser lights were used, which are very common in many rock shows. Yet, interesting and new combinations, such as waves and cloud formations, were incorporated. Several times the musicians were not visible as the stage lights were turned off in order to accompany the music with videos or light effects.

Lights were not the only effects used. The Floyd brought along their flying pig which was floated to the top of the Dome and exploded at the conclusion of a song. During the song "Run" from the 1973 album "Dark Side of the Moon," a video showed a patient in a runaway hospital bed. At the end, an actual bed, similar to the ones seen on the front cover of their latest album, flew across the Dome on a guidewire and was blown up.

Although the effects were ingenious, it seemed as though the music was emphasized more than what was expected. Anyone who had been following Pink Floyd for some time knew of the extravagant productions of former member Roger Waters. The remaining members of the group seemed to have wanted to keep the image of the early Floyd shows without using Waters' material. That was a tall order that was kept in delicate balance. This seemed particularly true in the second half in which the older songs were played. Interestingly enough, David Gilmour's best guitar playing was on songs from the album "The Wall." Songs from that album
were almost completely written by Roger Waters. Only three songs from that double
album were played. Yet, "Comfortably Numb," the refrain of which was sung by
Gilmour, was his cleanest sounding vocals of the evening.

The second half was mostly songs from the albums: "Dark Side of the Moon,"
"Wish You Were Here" and "The Wall," with one notable exception--the song "One
of These Days" from the album "Meddle." For the encore, Pink Floyd played "One
Slip," the only song from their latest album not played during the first half. They
finished with "Run Like Hell," one of the only three songs from "The Wall" which had
another member of Floyd sharing composing credits with Waters. It seemed to
symbolize resentment towards Waters for considering himself to be Pink Floyd.

The concert was similar to the movie "The Wall" in the sense that if one had
gone to the show without some prior knowledge of Pink Floyd, one would have
missed the subtle messages, such as the one above, presented by the group. But, I
was happy to see the high level of excitement displayed by the audience when
Gilmour came on stage with an acoustic guitar to play the old mellow folksy tune
"Wish You Were Here." I have to admit I sang along also.

Published as “Wish You Were There” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 6, p. 2; December
11, 1987).
The Brain vs. the Mind

Over Christmas vacations or the short interval between the spring semester and the summer semester seems to be the only time I am able to read books purely for enjoyment. This past summer was no exception, so I found myself reading the book *The Brain* by Richard Restak, MD. The book was based on the series on public television. The book was thoroughly enjoyable and insightful. However, I thought it was a curious twist when Restak decided to dabble with metaphysical questions such as: Is the mind independent of the brain?

When I was a child, I could remember believing that heaven was somewhere up in the skies. Certainly the Bible supported this belief with the stories of the prophets and Jesus ascending into the skies. As I got older, the assertion was posited that heaven was in our minds. I thought it quite strange that when I died I would live inside my head. But sooner or later I came to understand that heaven was not a place at all.

So, considering the brain versus mind question, it seems we run into the same types of difficulties. Restak states that through the centuries there has been a dualistic split between the mind and the brain. It seems the lack of understanding about the functions of the brain and its physical nature contributed to the belief that the brain was slave to the mind. This idea came to a sort of flowering with Rene Descartes' conclusion that the brain (physical) was connected to the mind (spiritual) through the pineal gland.

Restak rightly asserts that that idea is foolishness. Yet, he seeks to solve the dilemma by asserting that the brain and the mind are one and the same, there is no distinction between the two, and that the term mind is just a useful metaphor for the functions of the brain. Is that like saying that heaven is just a useful metaphor for afterlife used for the purpose of granting a justification for the pain innocent people suffer on this earth by claiming they will live again after they die? Are we then prepared to accept that suffering is just bad luck, and after we die that's it? I think Shirley MacClaine would scoff at that, and I am not sure if she is even Christian!

The point of this nay saying is that Restak missed the point, and so did Descartes and a pantheon of other thinkers. Consider the analogy of heaven. If heaven is a place, or location, then what part of our physical body goes there? Maybe we will one day arrive and see millions of pineal glands floating around with little wings.

The assumption is that two physical realities cannot exist in the same place and have the same function at the same time. Enlightened, one can see that the difficulty comes when one considers the mind or the soul as something physical. Our limited understanding cannot grasp the reality of something that does not occupy the space/time continuum. In other words, the mind is not physical. There is no dilemma in the mind versus brain question. So unask the question.

Just as good cannot exist without evil and vice versa because they are relative judgments of quality, that is, a relationship is automatically set up by virtue of their definitions, the brain cannot exist without the mind.
There is another book entitled *Life After Life* in which a medical doctor, Moody, examines the claims of patients who have been pronounced clinically dead but come back to life. These patients claim that they could see themselves lying on the bed from a position above the bed, and outside of their bodies. If the mind was simply a metaphor for the functions of the brain, then this experience could not occur. This arises from the belief that when the brain is functionally dead, consciousness ceases. If these are just instances of wishful thinking by the patients that come back, then how does one explain the incredible similarities in the stories of hundreds of patients, stories which have been documented?

The argument is thus that the brain and mind are not the same thing. The brain and the mind are interrelated and interdependent but nonetheless distinct.

Published as “The Brain vs. the Mind” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 7, p. 3; January 20, 1988).
Co-eds Share Similarities in Major Courses

One of the problems of going to a liberal arts university is the large number of core curriculum requirements that one has to take. Of course, there is a little latitude with free electives, but most students fill those courses with subjects relating to the major or minor field of study. Yet, with all these core requirements, there is not very much latitude. This, of course, causes many difficulties and complaints.

The complaints are valid, but the nature of the complaints are not. The problem is not with the core curriculum but with the majors. If one thinks about his/her friends in different majors or all the people one knows in a given major, one will notice some similarities that should be pointed out when deciding upon one's course of study. To this end, I shall examine the various majors based upon the experiences of actual persons I know. The names of these people have been deleted to protect the naive.

Let us first examine Business majors. It seems that business majors must take a Social Philosophy course. The reasoning, I suppose, is that our budding tycoons will one day be in the "real" world, and that they need to be taught what "real" is. Or, maybe the purpose is to prepare them to be responsible citizens in an age of insider trading. All of this seems reasonable and virtuous, but this is antithetical to the nature of the major. We all know Business majors are money motivated. During the time of Plato and Aristotle, these type of people studied Rhetoric, not Philosophy. So send them to the sophists in the English department.

Speaking of the English department, I was in Spanish class the other day being confused by the imperfect perfect tense. I was thinking to myself out loud, what kind of mean son/daughter of a gun does it take to intentionally come up with an imperfect perfect tense. This kind of tense is a carry over from English. English majors do not have such an obvious direction in which to go for their careers as do Business majors. It must be a product of too much angst. Maybe this frustration is caused by the profusion of new slang terms, or maybe it is the overuse of the word "ain't." Whatever the cause, English majors have a sadistic streak in them. They are out to get someone.

Psychology majors, on the other hand, think someone is out to get them. I personally have not met a Psychology major that was not neurotic or paranoid schizophrenic. They hold the assumption that the whole world is crazy, so psychologists want to cure the crazy world before they attack the psychologists. An example of this is the abundance of many new "Mental Health Clinics." Like medical and dental clinics, the goal is quantity. The deranged are put on a conveyor belt of sorts, and the doctors call for the next victim when the previous one has been reduced to a "harmless" state. Psychology majors are also sadists. One student did an experiment on an animal by shocking it with electricity to see if it would react. Similar experiments have been done on people where they were placed in an electric chair and made to believe that they would be shocked for some reason. One person died of fright.
Speaking of changing the world, I have met a few Political Science majors who plan to change the world by becoming "honest" politicians. Need I say more... Sociologists are paid to watch people. To that effect, the administration should pay all those who take time out between classes to watch the maniacs in the quad.

Then there are Biology majors that need to take grammar courses because they cannot write a simple sentence with a subject AND a verb. Also, there are Law students who want to kick undergrads out of the Law library. Doesn't that sound like, "these are my toys and you can't play with them!" It is particularly elitist of them.

Finally there are Education majors who are going into teaching out of resentment. It is an example of the old saying, "They did it too us; let's do it to them." This, of course, is manifested in the highest quarters of the university level with professors who are out to get us. I know, without a shadow of a doubt, that our dear professors get together at the faculty meetings to decide when they are going to give tests so that they can make sure and give the tests all on the same day.

With all this going on, it is no wonder that there are complaints about the core curriculum.

As for me, I am a Philosophy major. I have absolutely no practical use whatsoever. My job is to talk hours on end about nonsensical drivel.

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Filling the Relationship Void

Last week I took a stab at the different majors and the seemingly obvious reasons or motivations for taking them. We know that those motivations are not real. We all have our reasons for studying in the fields that we do. For a lucky few, the field of study is actually very fulfilling and rewarding. But I guess ultimately, we all have the same reasons.

For most, education is just a means to an end. We strive to make good grades in order to be competitive in the job market. Success is the goal to be obtained for the highly motivated, and one reaps the benefits of such effort in the long run, I suppose. Careers are very important, and for some it could even seem the most important goal for which to work. But, closer scrutiny suggests that careers are also just means to an end.

The simplest and most straightforward excuse for work is survival. We work in order to eat. This is so commonsense that we often overlook this explanation. This occurs for a very good reason. We say we work in order to support ourselves and our families. And, many a selfless person would say it is really to support others. Our morale is upkept by those selfless actions.

How is this so? It seems, upon closer self-examination, that this motivation is more central than all the other motivations. It is as if we are all searching for something to fulfill a deep longing. Many struggle with this because it presupposes a lack within ourselves that seems difficult to erase. For some, the lack is manifested by a feeling of loneliness. In a sense, I would suppose this is true of us all. The something we are looking for is a unity with another. It is as if we were built in halves to be united with another in order to make a whole. And, that fraction does not have to be so precise. For some, filling up that gap can only be achieved by unity with a family. For others, that loneliness or void or halfness is filled by developing close friendships.

In order for those relationships to meet the need, or to fill the void, they must reach a certain level. Any level of relationship acts as a filler. However, the less important relationships do not complete us (that is, presumably, why they are less important). In order for us to feel fulfilled there must be a certain level of intimacy. This requires an investment. It requires a radical sharing of our lives with each other in such a way that diminishes the distinctions between us so that we expose the fact that we are only a half.

Close friends or spouses fill that void when we allow for that level of intimacy.

I have a friend that was told by a friend of hers that he was gay. Going on in her mind was the wondering why she was being told this. It was an incredible investment on the friend's part. There was a void in his life that needed to be filled. And, the realization of that need was a question of self-identity. From this example one can see how fragile we really are. We are even more so when we are struggling with a question of self-identity. But, the investment is worth it if it is received well. It helps us to realize who we are and helps to fill the void.
The void that exists in us is not an evil. It is as if it is part of our design that forces us to work together. It has been a simple lack of understanding of this nature which has caused so much suffering. Peoples and governments do not cooperate because we fail to realize in ourselves how basic is this need to be in union with one another.

Without this filling the void, all other goals are meaningless. If we ignore it, we will not be fulfilled and will be constantly in search of something to fulfill us. It has been my own struggle, and it seems true of those I know. And, most of the time it is through our friends that we find this out about ourselves. Thanks Tina.

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Concern over television programming is not new. Arguments over the appropriateness of certain materials for viewing by children have existed for many years. Most of these arguments have addressed the amount of violence or sex, and the use of language. This column is not going to rehash those issues. Instead, I will make a note of the social and political ideologies that are inherent in a few shows which are considered by most to be perfectly suitable for the eyes of our young viewers.

Two old favorite sitcoms that are considered suitable are "The Munsters" and "The Addams Family." I believe few would hold that these shows are too violent or contain explicit sexual conduct or innuendoes. These comedies came out in the sixties before the use of sex and violence on TV became widespread. Both shows portrayed ridiculous episodes in the lives of strange families. The comedy consisted of the strange way that the "Munsters" dealt with the outside world. They were, of course, far enough removed from reality to prevent any objections about prejudice. However, one must remember that these sitcoms came out around the time of the civil rights movement. It seems that the goals of both shows, as a whole, was to make a social statement, albeit implicit, about race relations. I am not stating that this particular social ideology is bad. It is only meant as an example.

Another show that contained much social and political comment, which also came out about the same time, was "Star Trek." This show, however, was not a sitcom, and unlike "The Munsters" and "The Addams Family," "Star Trek" seems to have strove to make different statements on each and almost every episode. In one episode, two races from the same planet were mortal enemies and strove to annihilate each other. The only difference between the two races was that one race had the right side of their faces white and the left side black, whereas, the faces of the other race had the white/black sides reversed. The theme of the show was, of course, race relations with the added complication that both sides had the ability to annihilate each other. This also could have served as comment on the state of the cold war between the superpowers. Without the added comment upon the possible outcome of the cold war, the social comment was identical to that posited by "The Munsters" and "The Addams Family."

In another episode of "Star Trek," an admiral was called to settle a dispute between warring tribes on a distant planet. One tribe was threatening to kill some innocent hostages unless the Federation supplied them with the weapons to avenge the murder of their tribal leader. Giving weapons to one side would hardly be just. The answer was to give both sides equal weapons. One can observe that this ideology is very similar to the political notions which existed during the time of the Vietnam War."

As our notions have changed, so have the "Star Trek" episodes. In a current episode, from the new "Star Trek," the admiral, forty years later, returns to the embattled planet, engaged in forty years of civil war, to correct the wrong he has committed by giving both sides weapons. The admiral had come to the realization,
as well as everyone else, that giving weapons to both sides was not the answer. This is in direct contradiction to the political ideology of the Vietnam War era. It also seems to be in compliance with the current popular attitudes towards the cold war, that is, that no one could survive a nuclear exchange: this idea gives impetus to disarmament talks and implementation. This is also not meant as a condemnation of imprinting social comment into television programming. It is only meant to illustrate the existence and possible impact of such practices.

Regarding the possible impact of the social and political ideologies inherent in television programming, one may argue that such programming is not specifically aimed, especially with "Star Trek," to younger, more impressionable minds. Yet, I maintain that these ideas are in fact picked up by young minds. An objection would be that this is not necessarily bad given the above examples. However, the above examples are not the only shows that exhibit these tendencies. A case in point is the popular cartoon "Smurfs."

At first glance, "Smurfs" seem perfectly harmless. The "Smurfs" do not commit overtly or explicitly violent acts, and sex is not mentioned hardly at all, with the possible exception of the episode on spring fever. Yet, when one begins to examine the possible political statements that are implicit in this cartoon, one can see that this cartoon is not as harmless as one might believe. Upon closer scrutiny, one will see that "Smurf" society is at least socialist and at most communist and totalitarian. Consider that the cute little "smurfs" live in a commune where every "smurf" has his specific job which he is locked into, supposedly by his very nature. This sounds strikingly close to the justification communist regimes use for deciding who digs up rocks and who gathers the wheat. Secondly, "Papa Smurf" has the final word in almost every situation, and this can be likened to totalitarianism.

As if showing the good qualities of communist life was not enough, the creator of the cartoon wishes to show the evil inherent in capitalism. "Gargameil," the evil human wizard, is the epitome of the capitalist. His wish is to capture the lovable, little "Smurfs" and turn them into gold or food. He seeks to do this by inventing clever pieces of advanced technology, such as traps that catch "Smurfs" and turn them into gold. This presentation is similar in an analogous way to, say, stomping on cute, little countries to squeeze out as much profit as is possible. This action is committed every day by multinational corporations.

The point is that some shows, that are considered harmless, could be good or bad, depending on whether you agree with their political or social ideologies. It is no longer a question of whether or not a given show is overtly violent or sexually explicit, but rather, what is the overall message that is trying to be conveyed. And if such messages are, in fact, picked up by youngsters, as well as adults, the question remains where our responsibility lies as a society. To this end, we must consider carefully which messages to convey.

Published as “Things Aren't Always What They Seem” (The Rattler, Vol. 73, No. 11, p. 3; March 23, 1988).
Nuclear Power, is it a new thing? Is it an alternative source of energy for our nation? Can nuclear power light our homes without contaminating our planet for thousands of years to come? Is the efficient new energy source too dangerous, or is it even harmless?

There are many questions concerning the new science of nuclear physics and engineering. Some questions are borne of logical thinking, and some questions are borne of pure speculation. It is a relatively new science. It is full of high energy.

This essay will attempt to answer these questions and more. This essay will discuss nuclear fission and the discovery of it. It will discuss the making of a reactor and the fuel used. It will discuss the waste disposals of the past and planned sites for the future. And lastly, it will discuss the problems to be solved and the benefits of nuclear energy.

Developments of Fission and its Discovery

In 1939, Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassman were conducting experiments in Germany. In one of their experiments, they bombarded uranium with neutrons. They found a presence of barium which they questioned. One of Hahn's colleagues, Lise Meitner, received a letter from Hahn explaining his experiments. Lise Meitner thought that the phenomena might be a product of fission. She was curious about the phenomena. At that time Niehs Bohr was in Washington DC at a conference on theoretical physics. Bohr received a letter from Meitner concerning Hahn's experiments. On January 27, 1939, this concern became a heated discussion at the conference on theoretical physics. Many physicists wanted to know if fission of Uranium could create large-scale liberation of nuclear energy. After that, Niehs Bohr and John Wheeler published an article on the theory of fission in The Physical Review in September 1939. Because of War World II, a security curtain came down, and nothing more on nuclear fission was published.

Robert Oppenheimer was interested in what he had read by Niehs Bohr. He contacted Bohr to discuss the ramifications of his ideas of nuclear fission. Oppenheimer later assisted Einstein and was instrumental in the development of the Atomic bomb. The Atomic bomb is a deadly destructive weapon which releases tremendous energy by the introduction of fission.

It is now important to discuss the process of fission. Fission is simply the splitting of the nucleus of an atom. Tremendous energy is released in the form of heat energy in a fission reaction. Unlike a chemical reaction which is induced by simply mixing two different materials together, a nuclear reaction calls for the nucleus of an atom to be constantly bombarded by neutrons or other such particles. When a nucleus is struck by such particles at a high velocity, it vibrates. The vibration elongates the nucleus and makes it unstable. If the ratio of the large to small axis of the ellipsoid exceeds a certain limit, the nucleus of the atom neatly breaks into two nuclei. These two nuclei can then be split again by other neutrons and so on forming a chain reaction. If the chain reaction goes on uncontrolled, an explosion will occur.
Uranium is a material that is fissionable. It is also the largest of the natural elements according to atomic weight. This allows it to be split into smaller elements. The most available isotope of uranium is $^{238}\text{U}$. It has ninety-two protons and one hundred forty-six neutrons in its nucleus. $^{238}\text{U}$ constitutes 99.3 percent of uranium found naturally. $^{238}\text{U}$ has a large appetite for high velocity neutrons, and it does not split easily. The other 0.7 percent of uranium found naturally is $^{235}\text{U}$. $^{235}\text{U}$ has ninety-two protons and one hundred forty-three neutrons in its nucleus. Because $^{235}\text{U}$ is less stable than $^{238}\text{U}$, it splits more easily. $^{235}\text{U}$ has an appetite for neutrons that move more slowly.

In order for fission to take place, a way had to be found to slow down the velocity of neutrons. Perhaps, if the neutrons were directed through some type of substance that would slow down the velocity of the neutrons, the neutrons would not be swallowed by $^{238}\text{U}$. A moderator was needed.

Two moderators which were found to be effective were carbon or graphite pile and heavy water. Heavy water is water in which the deuterium isotope replaces the hydrogen isotope. Deuterium is, of course, a hydrogen atom that contains a neutron and a proton in the nucleus, rather than just a proton. Moderators slowed down the neutrons and thus slowed down the chain reaction.

The neutrons through the moderator then swallowed by $^{238}\text{U}$ produced surprising results which are explained by this equation:

$$^{92}\text{U}^{238} + _0\text{n}^1 \rightarrow ^{92}\text{U}^{239} + \gamma$$
$$^{92}\text{U}^{239} \rightarrow ^{93}\text{Np}^{239} + \beta^-$$
$$^{93}\text{U}^{239} \rightarrow ^{94}\text{Pu}^{239} + \beta^-$$

In this equation two new elements are produced, neptunium and plutonium. Neptunium is a highly unstable element. It does not break up very easily. It is highly radioactive and it transforms itself easily. Plutonium, on the other hand, is a different story. Plutonium has the same properties as $^{235}\text{U}$, except it breaks up more easily and is easily separated from Uranium.

Later it was found that other particles other than neutrons could be used to induce fission. Particles which can be used to induce fission are:

1) Gamma rays ($\gamma$)
2) Neutrons ($n$)
3) Protons, or nuclei of hydrogen atoms: $^1\text{H}^1$ ($p$)
4) Deuterons, or nuclei of deuterium atoms: $^1\text{H}^2$ ($d$)
5) Tritons, or nuclei of tritium atoms: $^1\text{H}^3$ ($t$)
6) Alpha particles, or $^2\text{He}^4$ nuclei: ($\alpha$)

When slow moving neutrons are attracted by a nucleus, the nucleus may react violently to the attraction. The nucleus is then so excited it must get rid of energy. It may release energy by the emission of particles such as neutrons, or by the emission of electromagnetic quanta called gamma rays. The energy released is
kinetic and produces heat energy. This heat energy is then used in the generating of electricity at a power plant.

The Nuclear Reactor

In a reactor of any sort, two things are needed: fuel, and some type of ignition device. Such is the case in an internal combustion engine: gasoline is the fuel, and spark is the ignition. An internal combustion engine is a form of reactor. In the reactor of a nuclear power plant, uranium is the fuel. The bombardment of neutrons is the ignition.

Uranium is stored in the reactor in the form of rods large enough to allow the fastest neutron produced by U\(^{235}\) fission to escape. The rods are surrounded by heavy water which is used as the moderator to slow down the speed of the neutrons. The moderator slows down the neutrons to thermal velocities, with kinetic energies of a few hundredths of an electron volt.

The uranium rods are then bombarded with neutrons. For every neutron absorbed into the rod and thus producing fission, exactly one neutron escapes to be slowed down by the moderator and again be absorbed to produce fission. Other neutrons escape the first reaction to be absorbed and produce other reactions, and some neutrons escape the reactor altogether. The number of neutrons allowed to diffuse back into the reaction must be controlled. The more neutrons allowed to diffuse back into the uranium the hotter the reactor gets. If the reactor gets too hot, a meltdown may occur. Neutron density, or the number of neutrons allowed to diffuse back into the uranium, is controlled by a neutron absorbing material such as a cadmium rod. The control rod can alter the neutron density and thus the rate of reaction. With the proper amount of control, the reaction will proceed at a constant pace.

A nuclear energy plant generates electricity in the same fashion as any other type of energy plant. The heat energy that is produced by a nuclear reactor heats water to make steam which turns a turbine that generates electricity. In any energy producing plant, a turbine is used to generate electricity. Heat generated by a nuclear reactor is much greater than that produced by a coal or gas burning plant. Also, nuclear energy is much more efficient than the use of fossil fuels. For instance, energy produced by fission of U\(^{235}\) as compared to other fuels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fuel</th>
<th>Calories/pound</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U(^{235})</td>
<td>8,000,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil</td>
<td>4,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal</td>
<td>3,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>1,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNT</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nuclear energy is much more efficient than any other process of producing electrical energy.

As the demand for more energy increases with time and population growth, it has become increasingly apparent that the availability of fossil fuels is diminishing. There is a need for an alternative source of energy. There are many benefits that are causing a turn toward nuclear energy. For example, nuclear energy is very efficient: it does not take much fuel to produce heat energy. Also, breeder plants
can produce more fuel than is consumed. However, with all the benefits of nuclear energy, there are still many problems which must be solved. One such major problem is waste disposal.

Waste Disposal

With the use of materials in the production of energy, there is a byproduct: waste. Waste materials from nuclear power plants are toxic and radioactive and must be handled with extreme care. These waste materials must also be stored in a place where they can do absolutely no harm to nature or mankind. This is the task that must be done in order to insure a safe planet.

Approximately ninety percent of nuclear waste is from the production of weapons. The federal government has disposed of the radioactive material in many states. Through the years many of these disposal sites have unintentionally been found. There are some thirty-one known sites in thirteen states where buildings have been built on top of the site. There are some fifteen known sites of nuclear wastes that threaten public health. The United States government plans to clean up these sites at a cost of billions of dollars to the taxpayer. The government then has to find permanent storage places for the waste. President Reagan wants to increase the nations reliance on nuclear energy, so he has increased funds for nuclear waste cleanup.

Eight states have banned the construction of nuclear power plants until the problem of waste disposal can be solved. At least twenty states have banned the dumping of nuclear wastes. Over fifteen states and two hundred communities have enacted laws regulating the shipment of nuclear wastes. The U. S. Department of Energy has made plans to shut down some nuclear power plants unless the problem can be solved by the mid 1980's.

In the United States, there are four federal nuclear waste reservations:

1) near Richland, Washington
2) near Idaho Falls, Idaho
3) near Aiken, South Carolina
4) near West Valley, New York

President Reagan believes the answer lies in reprocessing nuclear wastes. Reprocessing nuclear wastes produces plutonium, an element used in making atomic warheads. Some critics fear this will allow foreign nations the chance to get plutonium. President Carter, because of this fear, put a flat prohibition on reprocessing nuclear waste.

There are several ways to dispose of radioactive wastes. If we could dispose of wastes by putting it into orbit around the sun, we could be rid of the wastes forever. However, getting the wastes into orbit presents a problem. If the rocket carrying the wastes were to crash on earth, the toxic wastes would be dispersed over a wide area. We could dispose of the waste by burying it under the sediment of the sea, or under the ice cap in Antarctica, or we could risk the chance of a foreign nation stealing plutonium and simply reprocess the waste material.
Conclusion

I believe nuclear energy will be our ultimate alternative. Fossil fuels will soon no longer exist, and it is time we look for an effective, efficient energy source. Nuclear energy has a lot of benefits. It is up to us to overcome its shortcomings.

Disposal of radioactive wastes is the biggest and only problem that hinders the use of nuclear power. I believe we should spend more time and energy in finding creative new ways to cope with the problem of waste disposal.

Bibliography

"I Wondered Lonely As A Cloud":  
*The Poetry of William Wordsworth*

William Wordsworth was a nature lover. He was seen as one of the greatest of all romantics. He is regarded by many modern critics as the Grandfather of the Romantic poets, and he has his place alongside William Shakespeare and John Milton.

William Wordsworth turned a turbulent period in the history of Europe into a time of awareness, hoping that humankind would learn the beautiful simplicities of life. Wordsworth showed us how to see the beauty of nature and the spirit inside of us. He believed that the wisdom of life is found in the spirit of nature. This spirit unites us as individuals with God.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, Cumberlane on April 7, 1770. He was the second son of John Wordsworth in a lower middle class family. When he was eight years old, his mother died. Five years later, his father died. From his home he went to study at Hawksheads Grammar School.

After grammar school, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. He started there in 1787 after his seventeenth year. At St. John's, he developed verse and temperament in poetry. Wordsworth was never fond of formal education, and his education was often interrupted by vacations and walking tours. In the summer of 1790, he and a colleague went on a walking tour of the Swiss, French, and Italian Alps. This tour gave Wordsworth inspirations for "The Prelude" and other poems. He returned to England to St. John's to attain his Bachelor's Degree in January of 1791. After receiving his degree, he went back to France to study the French Revolution. While in France, he fell in love with Anne Vallon. She bore him a child whom he acknowledged and loved dearly even though he did not marry the mother. The child was named Anne Caroline. He left France for personal reasons to return to England. However, the French Revolution left a profound impact on Wordsworth. This impact is evident in "The Prelude" and other poems.

William Wordsworth admired a friend and colleague of his, Coleridge. Wordsworth wrote about Coleridge, "He was most wonderful in the power he possessed of throwing out in profusion grand central truths from which might be evolved the most comprehensive systems."

The two writers spent a year together in Alfoxden. During this time, they expressed and shared ideas. They talked about changing the world through their poetry, not by political or social stands but by human emotions and sincerity, and by an awareness of "the principle of joy in the universe."  

Wordsworth and Coleridge tried collaborating but never succeeded. However, they did decide to publish a collection of lyrical ballads. The majority of the poems in "Lyrical Ballads" were written by Wordsworth. Only a few of Coleridge's poems were used in the publication. Coleridge's single most important contribution was "The Ancient Mariner."

There was a difference in the directions that the two poets were going. Coleridge used romantic characters as a means of conveying his feelings of
universal human interest. However, Wordsworth looked to the novelties of daily life in nature to provide a human interest in the philosophy of life. Because of this difference, a misunderstanding arose between Wordsworth and Coleridge that severed their relationship.

Wordsworth continued his calling to write, and in 1802 he married his childhood friend Mary Hutchinson. He seemed more settled, and in 1813 he was employed as the Distributor of Stamps in Westmorland County. His later years did not prove to be as fruitful or as original as his younger years, but his later works showed a sense of maturity in writing and philosophy. In 1843 he was appointed Poet Laureate. He died April 23, 1850, at Rydel Mount. "A monument to him was erected in Westminster Abbey."³

Wordsworth's first major work was "The Prelude." It was originally planned to be an introduction to a long philosophical poem entitled "The Recluse: Views on Man, on Nature, and on Human Life."⁴ "The Recluse" proved to be a little too ambitious for Wordsworth, so it was never completed. However, "The Prelude" later proved to stand well on its own.

Wordsworth began writing "The Prelude" in 1798, but its completion was interrupted many times. Wordsworth did not contribute much poetry in the year between 1799 and 1803, but the poem was finally completed in 1805.

Wordsworth dedicated the poem to Coleridge, but the work was not published until after Wordsworth's death in 1850. The thirteen books of this work were completed in June 1805. The publication was withheld because the work was personal to Wordsworth. "The Prelude" did not originally have a title, until Mary Wordsworth chose "The Prelude" as its title for publication. Some critics at that time "felt that this work fell short of what Wordsworth was capable of achieving."⁵ "The Prelude" spoke of his relationship with nature. During the years between 1798 and 1805, Wordsworth made many walking tours of the countryside. He spent time in South Wales at a place called Tintern Abbey. He later wrote a poem about Tintern Abbey, but places like Tintern Abbey also influenced other poems.

Book One of "The Prelude" told of his childhood, and how nature around him helped him to grow. "Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up foster'd alike by beauty and by fear"⁶ was one of the opening lines from Book One that set the mood.

Book Two became more of "an active awareness of 'the sentiment of being.'"⁷ Wordsworth realized that he longed for solitude. He spent his time in the outdoors as a child.

"Book Three tells of his first year at St. John's College, Cambridge."⁸ Wordsworth felt a closeness to three famous poets who preceded him at St. John's. These three poets were Chaucer, Milton, and Spenser.

In the sixth book, Wordsworth wrote about his middle years at Cambridge. It was apparent in this book that William Wordsworth was indifferent towards his prescribed course of study. He owed most of his experiences to his summer vacations. His summers were spent in the wilderness and countryside. At this time, he took a walking tour of the Alps in France, Switzerland, and Italy. These tours enriched Wordsworth as a poet.
Wordsworth changed his way of life in Book Seven. During this period in his life, he lived in the bustling city of London. He learned the enjoyment of entertainment within doors. He visited art galleries and theaters. He attended operas and plays. This exposure showed him a new form of life which he never knew.

However, in Book Eight he went back to nature. He showed his love for nature, especially when he wrote "How little they, they and their doings seem, . . . and yet how great!"

He traveled to France where he established residence. Book Nine tells of how he was "won over to the revolutionary cause" by a close companion named Michael Beaupuy. Wordsworth stayed in Paris for awhile, and while he was in Paris, he wrote Book Ten. He felt a hope for France, but the declaration of war on France by England caused him to withdraw into himself.

William Wordsworth kept faith in France in Book Eleven in the words, "That throwing off oppression must be the work as well as the license of liberty." Even though books nine through eleven did not speak of nature, it was evident that nature played a roll in his way of thinking.

In the twelfth book Wordsworth "became an idolator of analytical reason" toward even nature. However, toward the end of the book he changed his "habit of analysis" and again returned to nature. Wordsworth and a colleague climbed Mount Snowdon to see the sun rise. "This majestic scene appeared to Wordsworth to be the perfect image of the poetic mind when actively possessed with creative power." This inspired his ending to the final book of "The Prelude."

"The Prelude" seems to be an autobiographical letter of Wordsworth. However, the poem did not prove how the author lived as much as it showed how he perceived things around him. "The Prelude" is interesting because Wordsworth consistently returned to nature. He proved that there is beauty in the power of wisdom and nature. Although he was not in constant contact with, he needed nature to reach the serenity that set his mind at rest.

In 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge wrote a series of poems known as "Lyrical Ballads." This collection was called that because the stories or ballads were heightened by the emotions they produced. Lyrics are a form of poetry which attempt to communicate feelings or emotions.

Wordsworth wanted to provide an emotion for his poems. He said, "The feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and not the action and situation to the feeling." He hoped his works would reveal the workings of the human heart and mind.

"The Idiot Boy" was one of Wordsworth's favorite poems of the collection. It was about the least likely person to succeed, and his last attempt to succeed at something. However, this poem was greatly criticized because some critics at that time felt it was a little dry of humor.

Another poem in the collection of "Lyrical Ballads" was "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey." Wordsworth wrote this poem as he was traveling back from South Wales. The vacation he took to Tintern Abbey five years before held some fond memories. At Tintern Abbey, he realized the true beauty of nature.
In the poem Wordsworth proved the human need for nature, and nature's way of caring for the spirit of the human heart and mind. The pictorial detail of "Tintern Abbey" is described with unusual care and clearness, but it is not the senses of sight and hearing that are aroused as much as it is the feeling of being there.

"'Lyrical Ballads' appeared anonymously on or about October 1, 1798, without a hint to reveal the presence of more than one author."16 "Lyrical Ballads" was criticized highly because of the use of uninteresting subjects. It was also criticized because it was an experimentation of a new form of poetry. "Lyrical Ballads" was generally disliked by the critics. However, there were a few exceptions to the criticisms. Dr. Blurney wrote that, "the experiments were un worthy as poetry, but he admired the touches of genius and wishes "to see another volume on more elevated subjects in a more cheerful disposition."17 Francis Wrangham believed the poems had high merit. Although "Lyrical Ballads" was greatly criticized, the volume sold well and allowed for a second publication.

The significant difference in the second volume of "Lyrical Ballads" was the preface. In the Preface, Wordsworth tried to explain to critics and readers the purpose of "Lyrical Ballads." Wordsworth tried to experiment with a new language of poetry. Wordsworth believed in Aristotle's feelings toward poetry which were that "its object is truth, not individual and local, but general and operative."18

In the Preface of "Lyrical Ballads" Wordsworth made a "literary declaration of independence and broke completely with neo-classical theory."19 The difference in Wordsworth's way of thinking was that Wordsworth believed in "the ideals of sincerity, democracy, nature worship, and simple natural diction,"20 whereas the norm of the day suggested following a historical form of language and writing.

Wordsworth had his own beliefs on poetry. He said,

The disciplines of analytic thought reflect only a part of human nature; but poetry is a reflection of the whole mind of man. Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science . . . . Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge--it is as immortal as the heart of man.21

"The Excursion" was one of the major works of his middle years. It was originally a second part to "The Recluse." However, this work was not as well done as "The Prelude," and it was declining in Wordsworth's efforts to "reform the reading public."22 This work, however, did show the maturity of Wordsworth's artistic superiority.

"Coleridge predicted that his friend would achieve immortality with his "The Recluse" as the first and finest philosophical poem."23

The poem "I Wondered Lonely As A Cloud" has a beautiful simplicity to it. Wordsworth wrote this poem about a scene along a riverbank that he and his wife once walked along.24 The poem describes most vividly the picture Wordsworth saw. "I Wondered Lonely As A Cloud" shows true beauty in nature.

Wordsworth's works are highly philosophical because they act on the inner thoughts of man. Nature was his way of conveying the spirit of the human heart and
mind. Wordsworth proved that the beauty of nature is something to be compared to the nature of man.

Wordsworth tried to reform his readers into a new way of thinking. He wanted to show the simplicity of nature to his readers. He hoped that through his works he could change the world's outlook. Perhaps, in a way, he did.

Bibliography


Footnotes

1 Noyes, R., p. 43.
2 Ibid.
3 MaGill, F. N., p. 1175.
4 Noyes, R., p. 93.
5 Ibid., p. 94.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., p. 95.
8 Ibid., p. 96.
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14 Ibid., p. 102.
15 Ibid., p. 45.
16 Ibid., p. 68.
Appendix

Wordsworth's principle works were:

Lyrical Ballads, 1798 (with Coleridge)
Lyrical Ballads, 1800 (with Preface)
Poems in Two Volumes, 1807
The Excursion, 1814
The White Doe of Rylestone, 1815
Peter Bell and the Wagoner, 1819
The River Duddon, 1820
Ecclesiastical Sketches, 1822
Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1822
Revisited and Other Poems, 1835
Sonnets, 1838
Poems, Chiefly of Early and Late Years, 1842
Collected Poems, 1849-1850
The Prelude, 1850
St. Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 7 that "The unmarried man is busy with the Lord's affairs, concerned with pleasing the Lord, but the married man is busy with this world's demands and is occupied with pleasing his wife." Throughout history the Catholic Church has held fast to the teaching that priests should not get married.

Today, the reasoning behind this teaching is even more evident. In a fast-paced world it is very hard for an individual to stay on top of things. Most professional careers demand personal sacrifice, and the priesthood is no exception. A priest is called upon to administer sacraments at all hours of the day, and take care of parish duties such as administrating parochial schools, visiting sick parishioners, teaching classes, celebrating the Mass and counseling. All of these different duties demand personal sacrifice.

As a husband, a priest's duties would double because a husband's duties are numerous and demanding. One duty of a married man is that he support his wife and family. Many traditional Catholic families are large. A man who must support a family of nine, for instance, has a very large burden indeed. It would be very difficult to support a large Catholic family on a priest's salary. The extra financial responsibilities of a family would be an additional emotional burden for the priest.

Alongside financial support, a husband's duties include moral and emotional support. After a long day at work, a father must be willing and able to help his children with their homework, take his son's fishing, and watch his daughter's dance rehearsal. A father's nights are filled with long hours at the high school football field and putting up with the baby's temper-tantrums. When he goes to sleep, his mind is filled with dreams of retirement from work and child-rearing. The father wakes from his dreams screaming when he realizes that as soon as he is old enough to retire from child-rearing, his children will be bringing him grandchildren to take care of.

Then there is the fatherly duty of discipline. Whenever a conflict arises, Dad has to straighten it all out. Just imagine what the parishioners might think if they saw a priest spanking his son in the front yard. At this point conflicts that could arise in being both a father and a priest are evident.

Let us imagine what an average day in the life of a married priest might be like. At five o'clock in the morning the married priest wakes up and says his morning prayers. At six o'clock he is ready to start preparing for morning Mass. He puts on his vestments, and at six-thirty he is walking down the center aisle. After Mass, he goes back to the rectory where his wife has his breakfast waiting for him. He gobbles down his breakfast and makes off for work. (A priest who is married must have a second profession to support his family because a priest's salary is generally very low.) While at work, a married priest is on constant call to administer sacraments. At ten o'clock he receives a call: Mrs. Stuart is very ill and needs the Sacrament of Anointing with Oil. He then must explain the situation to his boss, travel fifteen miles, administer the sacrament, and be back in an hour's time. At lunch-break he must celebrate the noon Mass.
The married priest goes back to work for one hour: he must leave work at two o'clock each day to attend to his parish duties. He teaches a history class in the afternoon at the local Catholic high school. After class he must go home to the rectory and take care of the parish administrative work. The parish census work needs to be done, and the deadline is two weeks away.

At three-thirty his six children get home from school. Little Mike wants daddy to throw the baseball with him; Marcie needs some help with her math homework; Dianne and Stephen are fighting over Stephen's stuffed teddy bear, and Johnny needs a ride to band practice.

At six o'clock the married priest must say a Novena. After Novena he goes back to the rectory where supper is waiting for him. After he sits down, fifteen year old Susie asks if he would take her to the movies with a friend named George. After supper, he helps his wife with the dishes, then it is off to see "Friday the Thirteenth, Part Eight" with Susie and George. At the middle of the movie a porter brings him a message that he must perform the Last Rights for a dying parishioner. When he gets back to the cinema, the movie is over. He gives a sigh of relief and is off to find Susie and George. He gets home at ten o'clock and must work on the parish census; however, the computer is down. Happy that the day is finally over, he says his evening prayers. But through it all, he must manage to keep his wife happy.

It is extremely likely that any man would have a nervous breakdown within a few weeks at this kind of pace. In this light, the practical reasons for the Catholic Church's views are easily seen. A man cannot be divided between the roles of a priest and the roles of a father and husband. Therefore, priests should not get married.
Far away in some obscure star system there is a planet on which lives an intelligent life form. Although this intelligent life form is not the only form of life on this remote and tiny planet, it is a rather unique form of life. For through many eons of time, evolutionary, this particular form of life developed the capacity to reason. In this capacity of reasoning this intelligent form known as the human being has received the gift to perceive objects and imagine spiritual, intangible, and sometimes bizarre realities. The intangible realities have often been a means to explain mysterious phenomena to the human being. And, "it is by such beautiful non-facts (intangible realities) that we fantastic human beings may arrive, in our peculiar way, at the truth.

In a past course, a professor Dr. Robert Westerman (the one who gave the title for this essay) once said, "Every statement, whether true or false, is a partial map of a part of reality." It has been evident, in the majority of stories that we have read, that there were not any interpretations that jumped forth from the story as soon as one opened the book. A prime example of that is the short story "Third Bank of the River." Many interpretations are open to the reader. The title of the story amplifies the fact that a hidden meaning exists within. Any well-functioning, reasoning human being can accept that there are only two banks to any river. Perhaps the "third bank" was the special corner of the universe for the father. Maybe it was the mountaintop from which he viewed the world. Eccentrics and old hermits have a fresh view of the world, perhaps the "third bank" was that for the father.

The "Third Bank of the River" set the criteria for all of the short stories to follow. We, hopefully, as a class realized that there is a whole new way to perceive life. The people who found Esteban in the story "The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World" found a whole new way to view life. This Esteban was a drastic change, a new thing, that revived the lives of those who came in contact with him. They regained hope. They noticed sunsets.

Lisette the "Marmoset" help Mama arrive at a truth about life. Mama had no compassion for those rambunctious monkeys, but coming across Lisette changed her view. Lisette was not rambunctious; Lisette was dying. It could be construed that compassion was lost in "The Censors." Juan had compassion for those lovers whose letters were being censored because he was in a similar situation. However, in an effort to correct the wrongful censoring, he allowed himself to see and be influenced by the other side to such a degree that he lost his compassion.

Victor saw both sides in "The Two Elenas." He saw a young woman who was radical, rebellious, and in a sense, very close-minded to morality. Victor also saw an older woman who was traditional, conservative, and resistant to change. However, Victor remained open to both. The narrator of "The Other Death" also had to remain open to many possibilities surrounding the life of Pedro Damián despite apparent contradictions. An apparent contradiction was presented in "The Night Face Up." The reader questions in his or her mind: was the first life presented the one that was
presently happening, or was the dream actually reality? The character lying on his
back in the story was not even sure which was real and which was fantasy.

In "Continuity of the Parks" the main character was both the narrator and the
reader. The main character was both outside the story and totally engulfed in it.
This objectivity of the character, putting himself outside of the situation, allowed him
to see what was going on in his life in an allegorical way. He was being stabbed in
the back by the divorce from his wife, yet he could see it happening as if he was in
the body of another person.

In the two short stories, "A Clean Well-lighted Room" and "Letter to a Young
Lady in Paris," we see two people with similar problems who handle themselves in
different ways. In the first story, an old man, who is lonely, and who sees the world
passing him by handles himself with dignity and self-respect. Whereas in the
second story, a young man who sees a world passing him by becomes psychotic to
the point of suicide. Two people living in parallel universes perceived life in a
different way.

In very many ways the human mind has de-evolved. It has become afraid of
reasoning and imagination: it is afraid of finding the truth. The variables have
become so numerous that finding an answer has become more difficult. Many would
rather not change; many would rather travel the well trodden path. However,
survival comes only through change and growth. Survival comes through
successive acquisition of truths. And truths are only found when every possible path
is known.
Cultural Relativism?

The society in which we live helps form the paradigm in which we think. This seems to be the case in the tragedy "Oedipus Rex." In this tragedy the social norms of contemporary Greek civilization of the time are called into question. The questioned norms take the form of dichotomies between good and evil, innocence and guilt, or predetermination and freewill. The reader will take sides as to what he or she believes the case to be. However, in my opinion, the answer is not so simple. The dichotomies are all interrelated. Guilt may be determined only in light of the fact that Oedipus was free to act.

Back in ancient Greek times, predetermination was believed to be absolute. The Greek believed that all destiny was fated. In that sense, Oedipus had no control over killing his father and sleeping with his mother. If Oedipus indeed had no control over his actions, then he was not guilty of premeditated patricide and incest. Consequently, Oedipus was not evil in a self-determined way.

Yet Oedipus had a tragic flaw. This flaw could very well have been the downfall of the character. It seems that the intention of Sophocles was to show that people do have some control over their actions; not all actions can be excused by claiming that fate had deemed the action to be. This tragic flaw was Oedipus' bad temperament.

We are not given any information about Oedipus' earlier life. Consequently, we cannot determine what factors contributed to his bad temper. If the bad temper was fated, then to the Greek audience the murder of the traveling band was not the fault of a free act, but was attributed to the destiny of the main character. The incest that was committed between Oedipus and his mother was likewise an innocent act because: Oedipus was not aware that it was his mother, and if Oedipus had known that it was his mother the reader would gather that Oedipus would not have committed the incest because Oedipus was actively trying to avoid the oracle which stated he would act that way.

If it were the attempt of the author to show that all is not so simple, that we do have freewill, then more emphasis would have been given on the actions themselves as opposed to the search for an answer. In the tragedy, Oedipus was obsessed with finding the truth. The truth involved him, though he did not know it at the time. This search for the truth was a strength for Oedipus, for it gained him the kingship of Thebes. Oedipus' obsession for the truth helped him find the answer to the oracle. Yet, this obsession itself can be viewed as a tragic flaw. Had he not had this obsession for the truth he may never have gained the kingship and thus never committed the crime of incest.

To the Greek mind there was no doubt that Oedipus' actions were predetermined. That predetermination resulted in the tragic flaws of bed temper and obsession for the truth. For this reason the gods blessed his burial sight. And, this action of the gods reinforced the conviction in the Greek mind that Oedipus was both innocent and good. Oedipus did not blind himself because of his guilt, but rather because he felt accursed by the gods that such evil should come upon him.
Certainly in our modern times we would not judge a contemporary tragic hero to be fated. We believe too strongly in freedom. But to the Greek fate was a real and absolute force that even the gods could not control. Therefore, Oedipus was neither guilty of premeditated crimes nor evil. He was simply picked at random by fate.
The Orchid:  
The Poetry of Pablo Neruda

Pablo Neruda's poetry is very earthy. The three poems from his book 100 Love Sonnets talk about love, but this love is obtainable because it is from the earth. Neruda's major theme is the reality of love in its virtue of rootedness in a singular ground.

For example, in the first poem, Neruda wants to show the singular direction of love. This singular aspect can be found in the phrase "I have no other star," or in the words "the only light," and "my dove, my globe." He uses many earthy metaphors that describe the object of his love. If he, assuming the poem is his words toward his lover, is describing his lover, he describes her as a "handful of the earth," "its meadows," and describes her planetary nature. Although he uses images of the universe, these images only seek to enhance the notion of his great love for her.

The tone of this first poem is one of praise and adoration: it is his adoration for the object of his love. Therefore, the poem is written in the first person, as is in fact all three of the poems under consideration. Neruda uses mostly metaphors in this first poem when he describes her as the moon, the sun, or the universe. However, there is at least two similes in this poem: the likeness of the streak through the rain, and the "honey in the shade." This poem works as a light praise of his love.

The second poem views love as a mystery, sort of as the multiplication of the universe is to us. However, this poem stays on earth and does not leave. The mystery of loves lies in its darkness and hiddeness and secrecy. This secrecy is not bad. It is the secrecy of the shadow of the soul. Yet, as a shadow is just an image of the real, his love is mysterious. He does not know from whenst it comes.

In the sense of mystery, the tone seems to be one of awe. This awe and wonderment is brought forth in the simile of the never blooming plant or plant with hidden flowers. The wonder arises from the question, "how can a flower which never blooms give such a solid fragrance?" An image I get is one of an orchid hidden away in a deep, dark jungle. The orchid is so dark, so rare, yet so beautiful. Yet the image of the orchid lies close to us. Once we view it, the image stays with us forever.

The third poem is light, not dark. It again speaks of earthy things. This poem describes love as growing like bread rising with yeast, or grain growing in the wind. Not only does love grow as the fire is heated in anticipation of the bake, but the object of his love did grow. The object was the bread which was growing from grain to dough to bread.

This poem is highly metaphorical. The object of the speaker's love, we assume, is a grown woman. The poem alludes to the length of time that the speaker loved this woman. He loved her before she was fully formed or grown. This is brought up by the notion of the grain. After the grain was harvested, it was kneaded into dough which grew likewise, in good time, into the bread he now adores.
Some specific figures of speech in this poem are the metaphors of his love being coal and the woman as being bread. The imagery is very imaginable. I can just smell the bread coming out of the oven. It reminds me of when I was a little boy; we would pass by the bakery on the way downtown. It has a warm smell. This experience was and is very earthbound.

All three poems talk about love as being earthbound. The first talks about love as if it were the earth. The second talks about the beauty of love as the plant that grows from the dark jungles of the earth. And the third talks about love as a bright and warm production or growth of the earth in the form of bread. So, as it is meant to be, love is a common experience, just as the earth is a common birthplace.
Introduction

In beginning a critical analysis of the educational process of Louisiana, I first must come to terms with my own biases. First, I am a Liberal Arts student; my major is philosophy. Education is inherently good in itself, to me, not only as a means of gaining practical and pragmatic knowledge, as any business or engineering student should attest, but as a means of gaining truth, wisdom, and an open understanding.

Second, since I am a summer-term only student, and since I am planning on getting my degree from a Catholic university in Texas, the lack I may see in the Louisiana education system does not directly affect me. Also, since I have become a resident of the state of Texas, my tax money is no longer involved in the state of Louisiana.

However, I was born here and have lived in this state for over twenty years. Therefore, my sensibilities are aroused when I believe the state is moving in the wrong direction, or at least has been, in regards to education.

For these reasons, and perhaps others I cannot see, I realize I hold certain biases. Yet although my view may be somewhat skewed, I hope to show, with considerable insight, that what I believe to be the case, is in fact the case.

The Education System

Through the mass media over the past several weeks we have seen several gubernatorial candidates who seek to reform the state governing program. One concern of our state government which has come under fire is the education system. Candidates are promising radical changes in the governing program which would give top priority to education in Louisiana. If changes are being promised to give education that priority, then obviously it was not given that priority before. The question then becomes, "Why has education in Louisiana not been considered important?"

There are four fundamental factors which contribute to the importance, or lack of importance, of education in Louisiana. If one studies the history of the state, one will see that cultural, economic, social, and political structures affect the amount of priority given to education in this state. Because of these structures our state ranks very low among other states in the area of education. In 1940, Louisiana ranked forty-ninth in illiteracy among all other states. From 1950 through today Louisiana ranks fiftieth. This statistic reflects the value that is placed on education in this state, and that value is a product of cultural, economic, social and political structures.

Louisiana's history is quite unique in the United States. Louisiana was originally a Spanish colony, as opposed to the original thirteen colonies which were Anglo. After the French and Indian wars England took over the region in southeast Canada where many French people settled. The French settlers, known as Acadians, were ruthlessly dispersed and resettled in the thirteen colonies. (Many fled north into Quebec, and other parts of Canada, or west and south into Louisiana territory.) The colonies were Anglo and Protestant, and this combination was hostile
to the French who were Catholic. The Spanish, on the other hand, were not hostile to the French settlers and offered them land grants along the Mississippi, delta, and coastal plain areas. Thus, Louisiana was a haven for the Acadians, especially since it was not an Anglo colony.

These French settlements grew into villages in which farming was the major economic base. Louisiana's greatest resource was its rich soil. This resource was immediately exploited, so Louisiana grew into an agrarian state. Another rich resource was wildlife. From this resource grew the fishing industry.

This economic base fit in nicely with the French and Spanish culture. The French settlers in Acadia were predominately farmers, so it was not a large adjustment when they resettled in Acadiana. (Acadiana is a region of South Louisiana where many Acadians resettled after the dispersion in 1763). Also, farming and fishing made it easy for fathers to hand down their farms to their children. This notion of hereditary careers helped keep Louisiana predominately agrarian until recently.

Because of the Acadians common history, which helped form a solid community, there were, and are, clannish tendencies. Villages grew in certain areas, and everyone in that village grew up knowing everyone else. There was perceived no need to go anywhere. (These tendencies are still the case in towns such as New Roads and Abbeville). For these reasons, it was not important to know about other places. And, since food was grown and harvested locally, everything one needed was found locally. Farming, fishing, and running a local store to sell these items did not require a formal education; thus education was viewed as unimportant.

Not only were clannish tendencies manifested in lifestyle, clannish tendencies were also manifested in voting patterns. Young adults typically voted for the same individuals for whom their parents voted. Also, there was the belief that one should vote for a "man of the people:" someone who is like the people. This was Huey Long's and Edwin Edwards' rhetorical strategy. They were of the people (populist).

The person voted into office was afforded a large power base. Political tendencies were for "one-man rule." The Spanish and French cultures were monarchistic. Consequently, politicians often stayed in charge despite Louisiana's classification as a democratic state. A case in point is the rule of "Judge" Perez in Plaquemines Parish in the early to mid twentieth century. Perez gained so much power he literally controlled the voting booth, not allowing political opponents nor African-Americans to vote. Along with this power came wealth, which points to another tendency in Louisiana: rule of the elite. This wealth is a result of patronage which is a Latin convention.

Looking at this tendency of "one-man rule" one can see parallels between Louisiana and underdeveloped, third-world, Latin-American nations. Louisiana has a literacy rate very similar to many Central and South American countries. One can speculate that the literacy rates are such in these countries for two reasons: (a) too educated a population may present a challenge to the individual in charge because they would be too educated to accept "one-man rule," and (b) too uneducated a
population may create a welfare state which would be unmanageable. The result is a literacy rate that hovers around the fifty percent mark.

Recently there has been a move away from a farming economic base and toward a chemical industrial base. This move began in the 1940's when thirty-five percent of the work force was directly involved in farming, and forty-five percent were involved in the food industry as a whole. Moving to the big city to work in the petrochemical (oil) refineries was viewed as a status move upward. Still many Louisianians remained in the rural areas because of clannish tendencies and values placed more heavily on family than status. Yet others made the move to the big cities with the promise of wealth. Education was not needed for the majority of plant and refinery workers who learned by apprenticeship. And, because petroleum was a growth industry, it did not take relatively long to move up into management positions. Thus income increased in a short period of time.

Because of the high income of some plant workers, there was not much difference in wealth between plant workers and professionals. If one could make just as much money in a shorter amount of time, then why should one become an "educated" professional? Education, therefore, was viewed by many as a waste of time. After all, professionals, doctors and lawyers for example, were public servants working for their clients.

Urbanization increased as this belief in the wealth of the oil industry proliferated. In 1980, sixty-nine percent of the population of Louisiana lived in urban areas. This did not necessitate an increase in literacy as those not employed in the chemical industry got jobs in support functions of service such as merchants, clerks, and construction workers. All of these careers require little formal education. Getting a job in the oil industry or support employment was little more than economic opportunism which seems to have its roots in resentment for our economic deprivation relative to the North. If the North gained status by becoming industrialized, then it seemed to Louisianians that the state should become industrialized as well.

However, Louisiana placed all its energy into developing an industry which is world market dependent. This created a situation which would allow for bust to occur in the economy. Such a bust would send the unemployment rate up because no other industry, other than fishing and farming, exists in the state. High technology industries require a sound educational system which has not been given priority in this state: this is due to social, cultural, and political structures inherent in the history of the state. Consequently, this has created a situation of economic hard times for the state.

In view of this, one can see that high unemployment is caused, in part, by a high illiteracy rate and lack of value placed on education. Unfortunately, the state's governing body has a history of being conservative and reactionary. When the state is booming, there is no need to allocate money to education because people do not need to be educated in order to make money. When the state is bust, there is no money to allocate to education. The reaction to educate comes too late to do any good because the state is in an economic slump and does not have the economic...
resources necessary to begin education reforms. Out of fifteen southern states, Louisiana allocates the least amount of money per student.\(^3\)

**Conclusion**

Recently, cutting funds to education has been a subject of serious debate in the legislature and on campuses. Those running for public office are promising reform for the education system. But, the problem is deeper than simply reform: the problem infiltrates our value system, and these values have been incorporated historically into our social, cultural, political, and economic structures. It seems the only way to change the education system in Louisiana is to change our values and attitudes about education. This can begin with legislation, without loopholes, for an exemplary and effective education system. However, there must be a higher motivating factor.

Motivation can be accomplished by somehow attracting high-technology industry which requires formal education (a catch 22). Louisiana’s chances of getting a federally subsidized superconducting supercollider are quite good based on multitudinous factors. This would be a boon to research facilities on our campuses which would increase the influx of new industry and further the motivation for education. Furthermore, motivation can be accomplished by voting for educated politicians who support education, for a change.

**Footnotes**

\(^2\) Indeed, education in most agrarian societies is a time consuming endeavor. School calendars are typically centered around a growing season or agrarian calendar, with summers free to work in the fields.
The Bay Of Pigs:
A Fiasco Resulting from Groupthink?

The Bay of Pigs incident was a military and political disaster which occurred on April 17, 1961 on the swampy shores of the Bahia de Cochinas (bay of Pigs) in the Matanzas region of Cuba. The Bay of Pigs was an invasion planned by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and allowed by the Kennedy Administration. The purpose of the invasion was to topple the Castro regime in Cuba. However, through the ill-planning of the CIA, and the faulty assumptions of the administration, the invasion was a complete failure both militarily and politically.

Richard M. Nixon came up with the idea for the invasion. However, the engineers of the invasions were the leaders of the CIA, Allen Dulles and Richard Bissell. Members of the President’s core group for the decision making were: Dean Rusk, Robert McNamara, Robert Kennedy, McGeorge Bundy, and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. All of these people were considered intelligent and well qualified for the administration; each of them were also well respected by the other members of the group.

Although those involved in the fiasco were considered intelligent, there were six wrong assumptions that were considered viable by the members of the core group. These assumptions were: (a) the United States involvement can be kept a secret, (b) Cuba does not have an effective air force, (c) the Cuban exiles to be used for the invasion will fight without support from the United States, (d) Castro has a weak army, (e) the invasion by Cuban exiles will touch off a civil war, and (f) if the invasion fails, the Cuban exiles can retreat to guerrilla strongholds in the Escambray Mountains.

Based on information that was attainable at that time from other intelligence sources, including underlings at the CIA, all of those assumptions could have been proven wrong. For example, the invasion plan leaked out to the press one week before the actual invasion, Cuban pilots were trained in Czechoslovakia to fly Soviet built fighter jets, the Cuban exiles had revolted against their officers during training for the invasion, Castro had 200,000 troops, ninety-five percent of those living in Cuba at that time liked the Castro regime, and finally the Cuban exiles could not retreat to the mountains because it was geographically impossible in the context of the invasion. These six examples show the faultiness of the assumptions. These facts were indeed attainable, and at least some of these facts were known by members of the core group.

Obviously, something or someone prohibited this information from making a difference in the decision-making and subsequent outcome of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Four factors were attributed by the administration after-the-fact to be causes of the resulting fiasco. These factors were: (a) the political maneuvers of the CIA to get their objectives across, (b) the new administration was straddled with the complexities of the old administration, (c) the secrecy necessary for effectiveness was unobtainable, and (d) threats to personal reputation. However, this explanation does not seem totally adequate to account for the fact that the administration was
unwilling to study, except in some instances, all consequences involved in the
invasion plan. The known information showed a greater risk than the core group
was willing to accept.

From this conjecture, it seems that groupthink must have occurred. Several
symptoms of groupthink seem to have taken place. The first of these symptoms is
the illusion of invulnerability. Statement by Robert Kennedy suggest that the core
group was very optimistic and had unlimited confidence. This unlimited confidence
allowed them to take greater risks, such as the risk of invading a country with only
1,400 troops when that country had 200,000 troops.

Another symptom is that of the illusion of unanimity. When a group reaches a
unanimous decision the members are likely to believe the case must be true. This
unanimous decision will have the added influence of suppressing personal doubts
of certain individuals within the group. However, the suppression of doubts may be
caused by the threat of being forced out of the group. Schlesinger had doubts but
remained silent because he felt he would be viewed as only a nuisance and that
any statement he made would not change the course already in motion.

President Kennedy's charisma did not foster criticism from members of the
core group. The group members would not admit to being actively manipulated by
the President. However, it is apparent through evidence posited in Janis' book that
the President's men did not want to go against him.

The symptoms of groupthink existed for Kennedy's core group including
Dulles and Bissell. Of course, Dulles and Bissell went along with the plan because
they developed it. If the core group had not participated in groupthink, and had
instead followed their true inclinations apparent in their doubt, then the fiasco could
have possibly not happened. If the members were as intelligent as they promised to
be, perhaps they would have studied all the facts and not made the faulty
assumptions that they made. History could have been different, and the world's
opinion of the United States could have been better.

Reference

Janis, I. L. (1983). Groupthink: Psychological studies of policy decisions and
Bill 506 proposes to prevent the sale in the United States of digital recording equipment without a copy guard system. A similar bill, which did not pass last session, allowed for a thirty-five percent tariff on equipment without the electronic lockout circuitry. Obviously, this sort of tariff would have made the manufacturers of this equipment more cautious in introducing their wares on the American market. As you may know, agreements have been made with other western hemisphere countries, especially those in Central and South America, to comply with our current copyright statutes. The European Economic Community (EEC) has likewise created laws within their own systems to benefit our Copyright laws.

What I propose is that the U. S. House of Representatives drop from the docket Bill 506 on the grounds that it infringes upon the rights of the consumer, in violation of the not-for-profit exemption clause of 17 U. S. Code §110. It also violates the limited right of the copyright owner which allows the said owner exclusive rights to the primary sale of the copyrighted material 17 U. S. C. §106 (3), but allows the consumer of that material the right to dispose of that material whether by sale or any other means, 17 U. S. C. §109 (a).

The not-for-profit exemption clause of 17 U. S. C. §110 allows for private use as well as these public uses: (a) the performance or display of a work by an instructor in a face-to-face educational situation, (b) the performance or display of a work for educational purposes for persons with disabilities, or other persons who are unable to attend a regular classroom setting, or government personnel, (c) the performance or display of a work for religious purposes within the context of a religious service or institution, or (d) the performance or display of a work without any direct or indirect commercial advantage, which is not for private financial gain, provided that any charges be turned over for royalties to the owner of the copyrighted material.

For these legal reasons I propose the dismissal of Bill 506. However, there are other considerations, such as the probability the majority of consumers copy such material for private use. Such copying occurs for reasons of convenience. For instance, recorded material comes in many different formats such as phonograph records, audio and video cassette tapes, and compact disks. A consumer may buy one format of a recorded work, such as a phonograph record or compact disk, and for reasons of convenience opt to record onto a cassette tape for the purpose of listening to the work in his or her car. This scenario falls under the not-for-profit exemption clause. It is therefore a simple task, provided the individual has the equipment, to make multiple copies of the original. Bill 506 would prevent the consumer from making copies of recorded material he or she has already purchased.

The purpose of this legislation is to cut down on the amount of illegal recording, pirating, which is for profit. This illegal pirating will be compounded by the introduction of this new format of digital tape, which is what this bill is attempting to
prevent. Digital tape will make pirating much easier, or so it is believed. However, the manufacturers of recording equipment had already produced and introduced equipment that will not allow for direct digital copying. This is enough of a precaution against increasing copyright infringement.

We should create laws which punish the violators, and create freedoms for citizens who are obeying the law. If the majority of consumers are within their rights, then we should not make it more difficult for them to obtain what they have a right to use.
"This above all, to thine own self be true."¹ This quote from William Shakespeare’s Hamlet summarizes the attitude of the Danish philosopher and religious thinker Søren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard is regarded as the "father of existentialism."² His attack upon the absolutist idealism of the Hegelian System and his critique of the blind rationalism is hailed as a victory for the individual.³

His subjectivism arose in a period of moral breakdown and indifference. He felt called by God to redirect the attitudes of the people of his country and world to a more Christian attitude. This line of thought eventually brought him in conflict and confrontation with the established social structure and surprisingly with the Lutheran Church of Denmark. Keirkegaard's writings have had a profound effect on modern philosophy, psychology, and religious thought.

To help us understand these writings, James Collins, in his book The Mind of Kierkegaard, attempts to demonstrate the relevance of Kierkegaard's philosophical thought. It is important to note here that Søren Kierkegaard was more properly a religious thinker than a philosopher; however, many of his ideas must be studied from a philosophical reference point because of the questions he posited regarding the existential validity of the Hegelian System. The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to attempt an explanation of the views of Kierkegaard. I will rely primarily on James Collins interpretation of Kierkegaard.

The major portion of this paper will cover the Kierkegaardian idea of the three spheres of existence: the esthetic, the ethical, and the religious. To help explain these ideas, background information on the philosopher's life will be treated first. Following this will be an exposition of his ideas regarding the three spheres of existence with an additional section on his religious individualism. Finally, a short critique on James Collin's work will close the discussion.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen, Denmark on May 5, 1813. The last of seven children, he was the son of Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard and Anne Sorensdatter Lund. He was a frail and melancholic individual and was raised in a very strong Lutheran tradition that had a powerful influence on him later in life.

He attended the University of Copenhagen and began studies in theology because of his father's strict Lutheran orthodoxy. However, his interests were elsewhere, so he soon changed to philosophy and literature. He was particularly interested in "Plato, the Romantics, Shakespeare, and the latest authorities in philosophy."⁴ After the death of his father in 1838 and the meeting of Regine Olsen, whom he had hoped to marry someday, he resumed the studies in theology. Two years later he received his Master's degree.

Feeling trapped between a vocation to God and the love for Regine, he opted for the religious vocation because he believed he could never share his innermost emotions and melancholy with Regine. He turned to writing, and he published his first work in 1838. His second work was entitled On the Concept of Irony, 1841, and his third was Either/Or, 1843. Either/Or was the first of his esthetic works and was
concerned with the alternatives of "an aesthetic or ethical view of life.” Fear and Trembling, 1843, dealt with the ethical, whereas The Concept of Dread, 1844, was the first indepth work on psychology.

His next move was to attack Hegelianism. At this point he firmly stated his philosophical standpoint as an existentialist in Concluding Unscientific Postscript, 1846. He believed that subjectivity was truth as opposed to Hegel's absolutist system of reality. He felt that by invalidating the System on the subjective level he could begin his work on the true nature of Christianity.

This point brought about the attack on the Church of Denmark. Training in Christianity, 1850, was an attack on the heads of the Danish Church as well as a stern and uncompromising depiction of Christianity. The stress involved in these campaigns contributed to his collapse. He died November 11, 1855. Ironically, in death the Church of Denmark claimed Søren Kierkegaard as its own.

With this background of Kierkegaard's life we can now study his philosophical thought. The period from 1843 marked the beginning of Kierkegaard's serious authorship of a series of books known as the "esthetic works." The chief import of these works was Kierkegaard's reaction against the two major intellectual forces prevalent in Europe: Romanticism and the Hegelian philosophy.

Romanticism was most prevalent in the field of literature, art, and music. It resulted in the emphasis of the passions and emotions. Romanticism also dealt with a return to nature and was perhaps a reaction to classicism and empiricism which seemed closed to the individual.

The Hegelian philosophy, on the other hand, saw the universe as rational. This was almost the opposite of romanticism because it proposed an objective view of reality. Humankind, the universe, nature, and Christianity were put into a box very effectively. It seemed to Kierkegaard that this type of understanding made reality into an absolute system with no room for subjectivity.

With the absolute system of Hegel, the sense of wonder and humility was gone from religion. If religion is that which deals with the mysteries of life and spirituality, and becomes devoid of mysteries, then religion would cease to exist. Therefore, Kierkegaard wanted to show that Christianity could not be put into the Hegelian box.

Kierkegaard attempted to explain human existence by dividing it into three spheres: the esthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Kierkegaard was well versed in Romantic literature, so the esthetic was a good point of departure for him. His first work regarding the esthetic was Either/Or. In this work Kierkegaard posited the esthetic sphere as the sphere of sense experience with its interests in what is beautiful and what is pleasurable.

This esthetic sphere has a strength and a weakness. The strength is that through sense experience we come to know the existence of an external world. Therefore, the esthetic sphere is necessary. However, there seemed to be implicit in many romantic writings that the esthetic was taken to the exclusion of other spheres. Kierkegaard wanted to combat "the tendency to make esthetic interests primary." The reason for this was the "Lutheran notion of the order of grace as being in contrast with the corrupt human nature."
Because the esthetic sphere "ceases to be a genuine mode of existence when it seeks to be self contained,"\(^8\) the other spheres of existence have to be considered. Kierkegaard next considered the ethical sphere.

Kierkegaard's biggest battle in the field of ethics was against the monist Hegelian system of absolute idealism. Many naturalists believed that the same methods applied to the sciences could be used in the field of ethics. If that were possible, there would have been no purpose for a religious interpretation, grace, or supernatural faith. This idealist claim is what Kierkegaard attempted to refute.

One effect of the idealist view is the tendency to base moral standards on present social tendencies. Basing moral standards on these grounds dispenses with God. Another effect is the attempt to explain and justify moral behavior by empirical statistics. This tends to reduce human existence to an objective study. Although Kierkegaard would not accept an exclusivistic esthetic existence, he was not ready for a totally objective ethical existence either.

The subjectivity of the esthetic life was a strength. The task was to combine the subjectivity of the esthetic sphere with the ethical sphere which supplies what is lacking in the esthetic sphere. However, this should not be seen as an end in itself. Kierkegaard believed that the religious motives eluded "the grasp of both the esthetic and the ethical mind."\(^9\)

To understand the ethical sphere, it must be contrasted with the esthetic sphere. In the esthetic sphere, there is no need to make a serious choice. One simply lives by impulse or whim. Whereas the ethical sphere requires that a serious choice be made. People should live by an ethical code. However, the code a person lives by is not as important as the method by which she or he makes that choice. In Kierkegaard's view a "leap of faith" must be made to discover the ethical code upon which the choice will be based.

According to James Collins, Kierkegaard's explanation of the ethical stance at this point seems abstract and ambiguous. Kierkegaard never clearly states his case regarding the ethical sphere. It seems that Kierkegaard wants to show that our ethical code must be grounded on Divine Revelation rather than simply a strict adherence to Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative of treating persons as ends in themselves. The reason for this is that our moral failure is attributed to a "failure to follow commands of conscience too exclusively to defects of practical reason, . . . the inclinations of the passions and the fascinated impotence of the individual before a perilous exercise of freedom."\(^{10}\)

Kierkegaard explains this with the story of Abraham, who listening to God goes against his own nature to sacrifice his son Isaac to God. Thus Kierkegaard uses Abraham's story to show that Kant's categorical imperative cannot answer to the commands of the Divine. This seems to state indirectly that human nature, with an exclusivistic ethical sphere without regard to the Divine, would regress ultimately to esthetic considerations when making an ethical choice. If this is so, then Kierkegaard has legitimate claim to the necessity of God in our lives.

Thus the third sphere of existence is the religious sphere. There does not seem to be a difference between the religious sphere and the ethical sphere in
regards to the moral choice one might make. The difference comes from the commitment one makes in life.

A person who lives in the ethical sphere may commit him or herself to humanity or society. This can lead to inconsistencies due to changes in the social structure. For example, a person may change his or her code of ethics whenever the society changes its ideals. Also, basing one's ethical code on society can lead to despair. This is because a person may never be sure he or she is doing the right thing as long as that person relies on his or her own judgment.

If a person commits him or herself to God, then rather than the despair of doubt that person has the assurance of faith. This person bases truth in "that to which he is passionately committed." This frees Kierkegaard in the sense that he has justification for his belief in subjective truth. Hence, the person who lives in the religious sphere would be the most integrated individual utilizing the strengths of all three spheres.

Once Kierkegaard established his view of reality based on the three spheres of existence, he felt compelled to criticize the contemporary view of Christianity in Denmark. The Church of Denmark had adopted the Hegelian System in its teaching. As was pointed out before, this tended to reduce Christianity to an objective system.

For Kierkegaard Christianity required a conscious decision by each individual. Most Christians at that time had simply been raised in the Church. People attended church out of habit and called themselves Christian without thinking about what it meant to be one. That was then and still is a great insult made upon the Church. The problem, of course, is that the Church of Denmark accepted this without attempting to reform. Kierkegaard, therefore, wanted his contemporaries to reconsider their ideas and make a conscious subjective decision about their religious beliefs.

Kierkegaard did not fully realize the implications of his subjectivism. The position he took could be interpreted as a radical relativism. This can lead in two opposite directions: Theism (Christianity, for Kierkegaard) and Atheism. Kierkegaard seemed to have wanted to make a radical return to early Christianity when disciples chose to be followers of Christ. However, someone can choose subjectively not to accept Christian teaching and thus become a heretic or atheist.

In my opinion, Kierkegaard's intention was good, but choosing subjectively without some regard to objective truth can lead to anarchy and dissension among Christians. Therefore, a person should not stifle the strengths of his or her subjectivism. However, this subjectivism cannot be the sole rule of life. It must be tempered and guided by its conformity to some objective truth. Subjectivity in this sense allows for personal input in choosing a code to live by, while still remaining within the parameters of objective truth.

Regarding James Collins exposition of Kierkegaard's thought, I found the book difficult to understand in several places. I suspect the reason for this is due simply to a lack of knowledge of the Hegelian System on my part. However, James Collins seems to think that Kierkegaard is difficult to understand even for many scholars. For example, it is not clear if modern existentialists have misunderstood
what Kierkegaard meant or if they have chosen only the aspects of his thought that they wanted.

I struggled through passages in this book. Those passages were vague and ambiguous. I continued through the book, and I finally realized that some of the sentences were not sentences at all but fragments. For example, this fragment was found on page 167: "Hence, the folly and disaster of submitting sacred history to the procedures of idealistic philosophy of 'history'." There is no predicate in this fragment. It seems Collins was trying to connect sacred history to procedures and show that this connection was a disaster. My purpose here is not to draw attention to grammatical deficiencies; indeed, my analysis may be faulty. However, faulty sentence patterns are not conducive to understanding complex content.

Despite my criticisms, I believe I have an understanding of Kierkegaard's thought. Basically, what Kierkegaard taught was that there were three spheres of existence: the esthetic, the ethical, and the religious. The esthetic sphere deals with sense experience and our passions. Kierkegaard's "esthetic works were written during the period of his life when he was breaking off the engagement with Regine to dedicate his life to God. In those writings he emphasized the need for subjectivity without remaining exclusively in the first sphere.

His book Fear and Trembling contrasted the esthetic sphere with the ethical. Kierkegaard's point here was to show us that the ethical sphere requires us to make a choice as opposed to the esthetic which requires no effort. This was in contradiction to Hegel's absolutism which reduced all reality, including Christianity, to an objective system.

Kierkegaard's religious sphere was the final sphere of existence which integrated the person. It required a commitment to God, and it created a basis for Kierkegaard's attack on the hypocritical Church of Denmark.

In my opinion, Kierkegaard's main contribution was to balance the tide of extreme ideologies present in Europe at that time. The narrow, esthetic oriented minds of the Romantics and the absolute idealism of the Hegelians was moderated by Kierkegaard's critical mind. He helped us to realize that there is more to reality than what we can see through a telescope or rationalize in our minds. This thought is succinctly stated in this quote from Hamlet to his friend Horatio, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Bibliography


Footnotes

1 Hamlet, I iii Line 78.
3 Heinemann, F. H., p. 34.
4 Collins, J., p. 7.
6 Collins, J., p. 53.
7 Ibid., p. 52.
8 Ibid., p. 64.
9 Ibid., p. 71.
10 Ibid., p. 88.
11 Jones, W. T., p. 224.
13 Hamlet, I v lines 166-167.
Evolutionary Modern Thought

This past summer I took six hours of credit in science. These courses were, of course, part of my core requirement for majoring in philosophy. However, these two courses, geology and biology, were not "drudge" courses that tend to appear in college requirements.

I have always been interested in the sciences. At this point in my life I have actually come to enjoy myself and my education as an honest gathering of truth, despite the few "drudge" courses I have to take.

As a result of these two courses along with previous study and research I have done both in school and on my own, I have come to recognize the intriguing and unifying scientific discoveries made in the past one hundred and fifty years. The unification of these theories has shaped modern thought, at least in my mind, and has reconstructed our view of the past.

The theories I am referring to are, in chronological order: Darwinian evolution, Mendelian genetics, Einstein's theory of relativity, the Big Bang theory, and modern plate tectonic theory. These theories, though in different scientific fields such as biology, chemistry, physics, and geology, are all interdependent.

Before Charles Darwin, the appearance or extinction of a species was a mystery relegated to superstition and fear and given a title of religious law or Divine intervention. Darwin did not come to shake people's faith, as a matter of fact he struggled with this question for two decades before publishing "The Origin of the Species." What Darwin offered to humanity was the view that life was a continuing, creative process. This denied a remote God, and brought forth a God who creates in our daily life through the processes of nature.

Several decades after Darwin's monolithic theory, a monk named Gregor Mendel toyed with the idea that both parents contribute characteristics to their offspring. This was a solidifying notion to Darwin's theory, for it gave grounds to his claim. If, for example, each parent contributes a set of genes to the offspring, then the offspring whose traits are slightly different than his or her parents has evolved into a new and unique being. Our God was truly no longer a remote magician creating some mysterious new creature with otherwise unknown origins. Our God was ultimately the very first genetic scientist who took characteristics of both parents and infused them into a new being. This idea creates a new interpretation of the taking of Adam's rib: the ultimate survival of the fittest.

These "characteristics" manifested themselves in the mind of Albert Einstein who looked to the heavens for a new theory of evolution concerning our physical universe. With Immanuel Kant as his teacher, Einstein created his own Copernican Revolution in the way we understand gravity, acceleration, energy and matter, high-speed travel, and our universe in general. Although he did not write the Big Bang theory, it was ultimately the work of Einstein which led up to its presentation.

The Big Bang theory also sent shock waves through Western religious thought. This theory provided an explanation for the creation of the universe seemingly leaving God out again. What neither the scientists nor philosophers can
figure out is: what came before the universe? If the universe was created by a big bang, then time itself must also have been created. There is no "before" the big bang, relegating the "void" to a status of unknowable. Eternity is infinite, so therefore cannot be measured, and since time is itself a human process of knowing via measure (this happening in so many units of time from this happening), it does not apply to the void "before" the big bang. This saves both the theory and the notion of an omnipotent and creative God.

Somewhat unconnected to these evolutionary ideas of Darwin and Einstein is modern plate tectonics. However, careful observation reveals that this newest theory is indeed revolutionary. Plate tectonic theory suggests that the surface of the Earth itself is in the process of evolution. The markings in the Earth's crust due to earthquakes and volcanism reveal a dozen or so movable plates on the surface of the Earth which have carried the continents to their present position. Careful examination of this idea sheds new light on Darwin's theory of biological evolution. All species of life could have developed easily from one previous form of life because all the continents were at some time connected. An example of this is the marsupials. Most marsupials are found on the continent of Australia. However, a species of marsupials known as the opossum is found in the Americas. Careful study of the geological record shows that the tip of South America and Australia were once connected to each other millions of years ago. This phenomena is known as divergent evolution.

This idea in itself integrates the whole of modern scientific thought. It also finds its way into the philosophical, anthropological, sociological, and religious thought of our time. These five theories bring forth a view of process and change in our lives, our world, and our universe. Whereas pre-modern thought saw life and indeed reality itself as being static, modern thought, with the help of these theories, views life as a process, an evolution.
Pleasure or Pain

I love my Maw-Maw (grandmother) very much. However, I find it very hard to live with her or even talk to her without getting into an argument. We live in two different worlds. It goes somewhat like this: "This modern world has so many more conveniences (technology) than when I was a little girl. We had to sleep on moss mattresses and wash clothes by hand. Now, teenagers have everything they need, but they do not respect their elders. They have sexual relations before they get married. There is divorce and suicide. I do not understand what is wrong with those kids."

These complaints are valid. These complaints also show that there is a difference between the world she grew up in and the world I live in. Those were simpler times. These are more complex times. We now have life-threatening issues we must face that were not issues when my grandmother was growing up. The modern mind has become fragmented and forced to fight against itself. So now we have two roads from which to choose. The fragmented mind may search for integration through new insights of old questions or ask new questions. Or the fragmented mind may refuse the situation and choose to do nothing.

If the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-reformation were the beginnings of humankind's separation from itself, and the Enlightenment was the spur of further separation, then the problems of this separation between faith and reason are coming to a head in the last four decades of the twentieth century. The results of this separation have been an increase in materialism at the expense of the faith-life.

Part of my grandmother's complaint stems from this increased materialism. When she was a child, her family had few material goods. This lack, at this time, had an advantage: a person did not tend to have a fixation on objects, that is, they did not relate to objects. Many teenagers nowadays, however, tend to project themselves in the objects they own. For instance, a teenager may place his or her whole self-worth in a car. In high school, and very often in later life, a person feels he or she must own a certain car or a pair of jeans, in order to fit in a certain social class. To belong to a certain class therefore becomes the goal of the individual.

Prior to this separation brought about in the modern period, the individual's goal was more mysterious and less tangible than entrance into a particular social class. This goal was to reach the afterlife. Perhaps there was some remnant of this goal in my grandmother's time and understanding. However, this goal of reaching the afterlife has rapidly disappeared in our culture. Now society as a whole dictates the ultimate goal as success in this life, materialistically of course.

Materialistic success has always been a goal, it now has greater proportions. For instance, my grandmother lived during the Depression. This brought a greater zeal for hard work. We are now receiving several conflicting messages. Television has shown us that the affluent do not work hard. Materialism is glorified. Yet it does not bring happiness. "Dallas" or "Days of Our Lives" shows us the pain of wealth. Families are torn apart. Resentment becomes normal behavior. Whether this
actually happens to the wealthy is irrelevant. We receive the message that it does. So we are getting conflicting messages. The modern mind is separated against itself.

We can refuse this situation and choose to do nothing. We could make ourselves believe that there really is no separation of the human mind. The alternative would be to return to the virtues of the past. This would be my grandmother’s dream. All youngsters would respect their elders. There would be no suicide or divorce. Life would be simple again, except we no longer know the definitions of those virtues. How can we regain the virtuous life from a present chaotic and fragmented society at war with itself? This seems impossible, for all we have learned has been conflicting messages, paradoxes, and contradictions.

The other choice is to search for an integration of these conflicting messages. Search and change are painful and not very appetizing. However, without search we do not change. And without change from our present situation, we will remain separated from ourselves which can ultimately lead to the destruction of humankind.

To integrate ourselves, we must educate ourselves. This education requires a major recasting of old ideas. How we view success, and how we view faith and reason and their relationship with each other much be approached from a new perspective. The pain of search and change will lead to the pleasure of a new understanding.
Roy Harper once said in one of his songs, "Some people aren't satisfied with less than any universe. Well, I guess I'll have to go along with that 'cause I've got mine." In a sense he is right. We all have our own universes. This concept of personal universes is a metaphor for our subjective understanding of reality.

Our lives are shaped by many outside forces which we cannot control. However, our lives are shaped also by the many personal choices we make in our daily living. These choices are based usually on our experience and our understanding of reality. As a whole, social structures as well as our family and historical background form our understanding of reality and how we believe we should conform to it. More specifically, our ethical systems are born out of the perspectives we possess.

Perspective is how a person views the world around him or her self. "Each of us is a cell of awareness." Although we are separate and unique as individuals, we share in common that awareness. Kant attributed that common awareness, our ability to know, to specific processes of the mind. We understand in terms of causal relationships and time structures. It is yet to be shown that these particular traits are biologically common due to our common evolution. However, Kant's point is clear. If causal relationships and time structures are processes of the mind, then that common awareness would allow us to come to a common understanding about objective realities.

Yet, we experience realities that are not common. This does not reject the existence of objective realities. There must be something more than objective realities. One such reality that we all experience is the growth process. Granted, we experience growth differently, but we all experience it nonetheless. Perhaps this is how Hegel came to the notion of "history as a process." Individual cells grow; our spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical lives grow. Even the universe as we know it grows. History itself goes through a process. History involves individuals who go through processes. Historical events build upon earlier events, and so it goes on intermingled throughout all historical time.

Yet somewhere along this continuum the paths diverged. In relationships with other people we recognize that our own personal histories are not the same as the others' personal histories. We experience different events. These events are minute and only affect a single individual. Some events affect only a small group such as a family, and still other events affect only a particular society. So although we may have some understanding in common, such as the fact that the Earth is spherical, we, as individuals, also have understanding which is not known to anyone else. Personal experience thus plays an enormous role in the formation of our perspectives.

The fact that we have perspectives and rational thought sets us apart from the rest of the animal kingdom. In our lives as rational creatures we feel a need to understand reality and make choices. Since we have the ability to make choices and come to rational conclusions, there must be a differentiation between the
choices. This differentiation becomes qualitative, thus we gain the notion of good and bad. Good is seen as the quality which promotes a growth process, whereas bad is the quality that slows or ceases a growth process.

We experience growth, as stated before, thus growth becomes a necessity. Growth becomes a necessity because we experience death as a lack of growth. Death is a limitation, in the physical sense, and since we have a choice, up to a certain point, we opt not to have a limitation placed on us. Thus we opt for the good, normally.

Our orientation as humans should be to opt for the good. However, growth is never easy. It provides more choices to be made. It would, of course, be easier not to have to make choices. Thus to guide ourselves along in our decision making we develop an ethical system which differentiates, for us, between good and bad so that we do not have to make constantly a new choice in similar circumstances.

We also have a choice in whether our ethical systems will be static or dynamic. As was stated before, some realities are common to all (objective), whereas some realities are particular to the individual (subjective). Are we then to make morality static? Or should morality be dynamic? If reality is both objective and subjective, it would be dangerous to hold morality as either static or dynamic, absolute or relative. There are both subjective and objective truths regarding morality.

For example, most people would hold that stealing is wrong. As children were taught by parents and other authorities that stealing is wrong long before we are able to reason to our own conclusions. We even may have had a strong experience of the consequences of stealing. If, for instance, we stole something, we were punished severely. Also we see robbery on television, and the thieves are caught and put in jail. Perhaps we have experienced theft from the other side. A person saves his or her money which that person has worked long and hard to get. The person has been saving up for a car, and the car, which was just purchased is stolen. That person will feel a real sense of loss. The pain of loss may be seen as inherently bad. Thus through that experience and others, most people come to the conclusion that stealing is wrong.

There are those, however, that may never come to that conclusion. Suppose a person is poor and has no money to buy food. Stealing becomes a means to achieve a good, to eat. To these individuals, stealing may not be an evil.

Because there is that possibility that stealing may be seen as good, how does society create a static ethical system? Ethical systems must have some foundation on which choices between good and bad are based, otherwise the system will cease to be meaningful. An example of a foundation on which an ethical system is built is Kant’s categorical imperative. This categorical imperative is stated as: Act only on that maxim through which one can at the same time will that it should become a universal law. In the case of stealing we would say that it is wrong to steal because if someone stole from the poor person who just stole from someone else in order to eat, the original end, to eat, would not be met. Although that poor person may not see an alternative to stealing, that person would see the wrongness of being robbed. That person would feel the pain of loss, and the pain of
not being able to provide food for him or herself. In the same vein, the person would not will that stealing became a universal law. It would seem wrong obviously to steal from someone who is just trying to buy something to eat.

If, however, we see stealing for food as a good because it is animal instinct to survive, we are no longer differentiating ourselves from the rest of the animal kingdom. It has been established that we are not the same as the rest of the animal kingdom because we are rational animals. As rational animals we can make intelligent choices, and we have to differentiate between those choices.

Thus, ethical systems are born out of our personal and collective perspectives of reality. Our personal choices as well as historical events and group decisions shape and form our understanding of reality. We cannot separate ourselves from objective reality in the sense that we exist only as thought that has no effect on our world. All is in the process of growth of our individual as well as our collective lives.

Footnote

1 From "Free Will" by Neil Peart.
If only through my own experience, Heidegger’s definition of time seems to have a bit of truth. We are differentiated from other beings in the sense that we can choose our life-path from a multitude of possibilities. We become who we are as individuals because of the choices we have already made. And we live our daily lives with an understanding that our whole being is interwoven into the future, the "having been," and the present.

I am currently involved in the formation for the religious life. I can look back over the course of events in my life and say that the choices that I have made have led me to this point. For example, I am a sensitive and reflective person. There have been times when those qualities have caused quite a lot of pain. Often, I have wanted to be indifferent to those qualities in order to rid myself of the pain of alienation that is a result of my sensitivity. It seems that the sensitive types get ridiculed a lot in school. I could have possibly chosen to go along with my peers in the trivial and superficial way. Whether or not I could actually choose to go a way opposite my nature is questionable. However, the urge to choose and change did exist for me in a very real way.

Events in one’s life are never so determined that a person can take a quick glance and figure out exactly the path in life that person chose. I did not always want to be a priest. As a matter of fact, before I came to St. Mary's, I was attending Louisiana State University in pursuit of a degree in electrical engineering. And here also, I had made choices that had led up to that possibility. While in the ninth grade, I attended a math tournament. At that tournament, in the opening speech, a University of Southwest Louisiana engineering student talked about how important it was to take all the math one could in high school. I was not considering seriously a career in engineering; however, I chose to take all the math I could in order to keep the possibility open.

Also, at this time I was becoming very involved with music. Being a sensitive and reflective person, music became an escape from the cruelties of my school world. Stereo equipment became my hobby. And, in my senior year I took two different aptitude tests. These tests showed that I could do well in electrical engineering. This seemed to be a way out. I could design stereo equipment and be happy the rest of my life.

The fall of my first semester in college I had a deep conversion experience. This experience led up to my realization that I would not be happy as an engineer. It also allowed for me the possibility of the priesthood. Up until that point I thought I was doing the right thing by pursuing an engineering degree. However, in the Heideggerian sense, that pursuit seemed to be my fallenness.

This fallenness resulted from my opting for the escape from the sensitive and reflective. I was not authentic because I was buying into the "expected possibilities of the they." Those expected possibilities were, "Be a part of the mass movement. Do not be sensitive and reflective and rebellious and alienated." I despised and still despise being alienated. And my way out of that alienation and loneliness I felt from
being ridiculed in high school was to become part of the machine. I was to be a unique part of the machine, but a part nonetheless.

Coming to that realization of not following my true calling, I chose a different path. That choice has led me into the formation for the priesthood. Certainly, I have closed the possibility of having a family and being a "successful" engineer. I have made a choice, and after I take my vows, and in a way even now, that possibility is not viable for me. I have chosen my life-path up to now, and the future holds certain possibilities for me because of that "having been" chosen. Today, I try to live my life with that understanding that my whole being is interwoven with the choices of my past, and the possibilities of my future.
Throughout human religious and philosophical history, we have wrestled with the questions: what is human freedom, and does it really exist? We have struggled with the questions, but yet we through our actions seemed to have made a decision to struggle with the questions.

The ability to ask a question implies intelligence, which involves understanding reality by a conceptualization and by symbolic language which represents that reality. Cultural anthropologists define human beings as symbolic animals. This intelligence allows us to compare one concept of reality with others. In that comparison, we make a judgment as to which one of the conceptualizations is the truth about reality. We then come to the realizations of truth in a heuristic way by checking our concepts against our sense data. This involves critical analysis.

Thus we come to judgments about truth. However, this true knowledge is not sufficient in itself for us to survive as a species or as individuals. We must act upon that knowledge in order to survive. Our contact with reality gives us a rich reservoir of knowledge, and this reservoir provides options in which to act. With differing options, one must make a choice as to what plan of action one should take. That choice implies freedom.

Plato, in developing his ethical theories, as well as his political theories, believed that if one knows the truth one will do good. While it is true that in having true knowledge, one has the potential to make good decisions, knowledge itself does not force one to make a decision nor does it imply that the decision, if one is made, will be for the good.

The decision itself is based upon our inner world of meaning, which in turn is based upon our knowledge. That reservoir of knowledge is the world of which we make meaning. Yet that world of meaning is not static. It is constantly being developed, changed and enriched. For example, when I am a child my experience of fire is that it burns. This, of course, is a simplistic understanding of fire. But as the child grows older new meaning is given to the concrete reality of fire such as it keeps one warm, it cooks one's food, etc. We even develop symbolic or metaphoric meaning of fire such as fire is change. I, therefore, shape my inner world of meaning, and I can also change my inner world of meaning.

The ability to change my inner world of meaning will affect the choices I make regarding that inner world. I can choose the meaning I want to give to an experience. This choice involves the power of self-determination. Self-determination is the power with which one can deliberately plan a course of action or the power to focus his or her attention on the facts and values which determine the choice.

"Knowledge, of itself, does not settle a course of action" (p. 279). The deliberate planning or focusing of attention is an act of the will. In order for the will to act to culminate in action, a deliberate choice must be made. Action itself has as its purpose a goal. We choose to act in a certain way to reach that goal, which has been determined by our world of meaning. Freedom comes in the choice of the
means to obtain that goal. And, since the free act of the will involves our world of meaning, it is a conscious act.

At this point, there must be made a distinction between effective or existential freedom and essential freedom. Existential freedom is the acting out of a choice, or rather, the ability to act upon a choice. Obviously, physical limitations and restraints can be placed around a person's ability to act, not allowing that person to act upon his or her choices. These limitations can be produced by an external force over which the individual has no control. Or, the limitations can be placed on the individual by him or herself.

Essential freedom is what limits existential freedom of the individual by him or herself. Essential freedom is the choice we make inside ourselves by deliberating our world of meaning. Essential freedom is derived from the combination of the second, third and fourth levels of cognitional operations: understanding, judging, and deciding. Existential freedom, therefore, cannot exist without essential freedom.

We have the ability to choose our world of meaning and to will to act in a certain way. Although we may sometimes be unable to act upon that will due to limitations imposed upon us by ourselves, others or the environment, we still have the ability to choose by focusing our attention on certain values or facts. In that sense, freedom does truly exist. This is evident by our internal will and choice.

Reference

Authenticity and Inauthenticity

In order for a person to be conscious he or she must be present to him or herself. When one is absorbed in another, he or she is present to him or herself. This self-presence is what allows one to experience, understand, judge, and to come to a decision. The four levels of cognitional operations take on a new meaning in regards to how we come to develop our values. Because we are self-present, we have the ability to consider the object of our knowledge in reference to ourselves. This creates the existential aspect of the fourth level of deciding.

On the fourth level, we come to decisions in view of our values and our self-determination. Values are deliberated conatively as well as cognitively on the fourth level. In this sense, self-determination is our ability to develop our own values and world of meaning. These values can be vital, social, cultural, personal, or religious. However, it is the prioritizing of these values which is determined by one’s deliberating, both cognitively and conatively.

Yet, simple deciding upon values is not enough for us. We find in our striving that we have a need to transcend ourselves. This self-transcendence permeates all four levels but finds its completeness in the movement through all four levels. It is in this completeness, this self-transcendence that one becomes authentic. Authenticity is the movement toward self-transcendence which is in accord with the four moral imperatives of being alert, being intelligent, seeking the truth, and being responsible in our decisions.

If authenticity is following the moral imperatives, then inauthenticity is the refusal to follow any of the moral imperatives. For example, if one refuses to be alert, then that person is not open to new experiences which will, in turn, allow him or her to be open to understanding, judging, and deciding. Also, if one refuses to be intelligent, then he or she is limiting his or her ability to make a critical judgment. The refusal to be open on any of the levels limits us in a radical way, and hence limits our essential freedom. Therefore, refusal to follow any of the moral imperatives is a misuse of our essential freedom and is therefore an act of inauthenticity.

Inauthentic acts bring about decline in either the individual or the society in which the individual lives. Yet, authentic acts are growth oriented. True progress is allowed by authentic acts. In view of the society in which we live, an individual who seeks authenticity will go beyond him or herself. This self-transcendence is attempted for the good of the society in which the individual lives. Values have progress in mind. Values seek to move toward the human good. A person does not consciously seek what is bad for him or herself. Yet there is the possibility that the value one places on the object of his or her knowing is not aimed toward a human good. Such an instance has come about when one has failed to follow any one of the moral imperatives. Thus inauthenticity can result in the development of a value that is not in accord with the human good.

Authenticity is necessary in achieving the human good. Authenticity involves being alert, being intelligent, seeking the truth, and being responsible. If we misuse
any of the four moral imperatives, then we are misusing our essential freedom and moving toward inauthenticity. We all lie somewhere in the continuum between authenticity and inauthenticity, but the human enterprise is the movement toward the authentic.

References


Learning is a process. When we are new born, we are ignorant. Slowly through time and experience we come to know things about ourselves and the world around us. When we reach a certain age, we know a certain amount of truth, and we can understand the concepts of a great many more. This is actual knowing. However, we could not know anything if we did not first have the potential or ability to know.

I know how to do different activities. For example, I can type up my paper on a word processor. I did not know how to perform this action only three weeks ago. Some learning had to take place in order for me to gain this skill. Yet in order for me to learn I had to have the potential to learn. But, skill learning can be a matter of behavior modification.

A child learns not to touch a hot pot when he or she is burned by it. Careful coaxing by the fearful parents rarely produces results. In a sense this experiential learning by the child is behavior modification. The child is not reasoning in the radical sense of telling him or herself in his or her mind that if he or she touches the pot he or she will be burned. This seems to be the same as the behavior modification of many animals. A family pet, for instance, comes to its masters because it "knows" the masters, or family members, will not harm it. One would be hard pressed, indeed, to attempt to prove a dog's reasoning power. However, such is not the case with a child. The child staying away from the hot pot due to his or her experience of being burned may be the result of behavior modification, yet that modification may be the first step toward reasoning.

There is quite a difference between an adult's ability to reason and a child's ability. A child first learns that if he or she touches the hot pot he or she will get burned. The next step in his or her development will be not to touch the pot because mommy and daddy will punish him or her. Slowly this progresses to a more comprehensive understanding of the whole situation. Thus learning is a process.

Interestingly, this process of learning has led us to understand animal learning. Whereas a dog's learning is a matter of familiarity with the family, the languages of the cetacean family, and in particular the dolphins, seem to involve a more complex form of learning. Indeed, the language of the dolphins is so complex that the implications are that dolphins may have a rudimentary form of reasoning in which they develop a world of meaning. If that is the case, then they should be able to communicate meanings to each other.

The form which our world of meaning takes place is language. As adult humans, we know in our minds that we have actual knowledge because we can communicate our world of meaning to others. Performance on tests is a graphic example of that ability to reason. In particular, tests which require the person to give informed opinions as opposed to regurgitating memorized formulas point out that we do reason. Consequently, knowing is both ability and actuality.

In order to know we first must have the potential to learn. Lower animals and even children provide examples of behavior modification which is a form of knowing.
Yet children progress in understanding which brings about the possibility of more knowledge of a different sort, until one day they are able to express ideas on paper.
Theory Versus Common Sense

Throughout the history of Western thought, up until the beginning of this century, knowledge had always included, in some form, the common sense realm of meaning. This is not to say that there was not any theorizing, but that theorizing was grounded in a reality that could be visualized. It seems that many of us, people in general, assumed that knowledge began with sense perception of some sort. From a general observation, we developed hypotheses, which in turn developed into theories. The constituent statements within a theory were testable, or able to be shown within an experiment; if not at the time due to the lack of appropriate apparatus, they were testable in the foreseeable future. This is not the case with twentieth century physics. Some modern theories are not only untestable but paradoxical and contradictory.

Consider Pythagorean and Euclidean hypotheses. The hypotheses developed by these schools of thought are imaginable, in the sense that they can be visualized with the mind’s eye. Experimentation in mathematics is done by the use of symbols that are used to represent mathematical concepts. These symbols can be both pictured in the mind and drawn on a piece of paper, or something of the mere facsimile. Take for instance a geometric figure such as a square. It has a particular definition in math which is a geometric figure which is constituted by four straight, perpendicular lines (in Euclidean terms) which are equal in length. A visual example of a square can be given, not only in one person’s mind, but on paper for all to see. This demonstrates that the theoretical knowledge of this type of mathematics is somewhat within the realm of common sense.

Science, of course, moves on and becomes more complex. Take for instance Newtonian theory, such as the idea of gravity. The math is unfortunately too complicated for the common person to comprehend, yet the consequences of that math are visible to most anyone. In our world of experience we understand what it means to fall. If you suspend an object in midair and then release the object (remove the force which is suspending the object), the object will fall to the earth. This will always happen unless there is some other force greater than gravity that is acting upon the object either seen or unseen. This force could be a stream of air blowing the object up. The point is that a force is suspending the object. Without any force suspending the object it will fall.

These examples have shown that scientific theory, up to a certain point, is able to be visualized even by a common person who has no formal scientific training. A child understands that objects fall even before he can communicate and thus tell us what Newton meant. Also, that same child can play with blocks and understand the difference between a square and a circle without giving us a formal definition. As the child grows older, he or she or anyone can give examples of Platonic forms or essences such as justice or beauty even though we cannot visualize the forms themselves. What seems to be difficult, if not altogether impossible, for even scientists to visualize are the objects of twentieth century physics.
In twentieth century physics scientists have theorized the existence of particles that have contradictory qualities. For instance, light is an observable reality which has the properties of particles, known as photons, and waves. Both are models for observable qualities of light. However, these two qualities cannot be observed simultaneously, and these two qualities are quite contradictory. To add another complication to our description, light is a form of electromagnetism. This fact establishes that light is a field which is observable with special instruments designed to measure electromagnetism. If the scientist cannot understand how a reality which we recognize everyday can have three contradictory properties simultaneously, then how can a common person? The modern scientific theory regarding light is outside the realm of common sense meaning.

We, the thinkers of the twentieth century, are widening the division between the realm of theory and the realm of common sense. This is not to say that the knowledge gained without common sense is untrue. It is a new form of knowledge. Theory, as it was known, did include common sense. Certainly, we still see apples falling out of trees and conclude that it is the force of gravity that causes the apple to fall. Our knowledge does not seek to discount common sense. But as our ideals of knowledge change, so does our understanding. Not all truth has to be immediately understandable, nor does it have to be visualized. But it helps to be able to visualize what we know.
Throughout human history we have developed new ideas, progressed technologically, and moved forward in our quest for meaning. Our knowledge has progressed, or so it seems. Yet, in our philosophical quest we have found a theory of knowledge described in a way that is inconsistent with our reason or our experience.

One of the very first theories of knowledge was given to us by Plato. Plato's forms were the ultimate knowables, that is they were the most real. The everyday objects we came into contact with were just shadows of the form and thus not real. Although Plato's theory did grasp the insight that we could know things by their whatnesses or their perduring substances, his theory is inconsistent with our experience.

Another example of a theory of knowledge which is inconsistent with our experience is Hume's empiricism. Hume held that all knowledge is sense knowledge, and that there is no proof for the existence of reality outside our minds of substantial whatnesses. Sense experience was a matter of perception, and there are two forms of perception: sense impression or sensations, and ideas. Ideas for Hume were simply secondhand copies of sense impressions.

Hume accounted for complex ideas by stating that complex ideas were combinations of much simpler ideas in new and unique ways. Take for instance the mythical creature of a unicorn. This mythical creature can be traced back to three basic ideas. The first idea was the image of a horse. Horses are things of which we have sense impressions. Then a single horn is added on. We have sense impressions of horns. Thirdly, we have the magical component. Magic was simply a term used to describe something we do not understand as in this instance, the existence of a unicorn.

We have other ideas such as the idea of a car in our mind. When we think of a car, we think of it as an integrated whole. However, cars did not exist throughout all of eternity. They were invented just one hundred years ago. We had no prior experience of cars before this time. Cars were developed through our ability to combine simple ideas together to produce the more complex idea of the automobile. We had sense experience of the wheel. We had sense experience of the carriage. We had sense experience of the ability of heat energy to produce motion. All we had to do was find a way to combine these ideas to produce a complex idea from which we could develop the automobile.

The difficulty in Hume's theory was how to account for the ability to combine simple ideas into a complex idea. This adding or combining of ideas is a product of our ability to realize relationships between things and between ourselves. This realization of relationships is what we call understanding. To a man living one thousand years ago the idea of a car, although a very simple or crude example, would have been an invalid or untrue idea, according to Hume. Because understanding goes beyond sense experience, we can explain the human ability to create the idea before the actual thing exists. A case in point is Leonardo da Vinci's
drawings of a helicopter, although somewhat crude. These drawings were produced long before Orville and Wilbur Wright were ever born. Interestingly, airplanes got off the ground decades before helicopters were ever invented.

This possibility, indeed this actuality, seems contradictory to Hume’s theory of knowledge. If all knowledge is sense knowledge, then how do we come to grasp the relationships between things and ourselves and thus come to understand? Understanding goes beyond sense experience and ties together our impressions into new interesting wholes. It is through these new discoveries and even creations of relationships that we progress.

Any theory of knowledge must take into account this ability to discover and create new relationships. This ability allows us to make real our ideas and dreams. As Peter Gabriel observes in his song Mercy Street for Anne Sexton: "All of the buildings, all of the cars, were once just a dream in somebody’s head."
Censorship

Censorship is an issue we must face by virtue of the nature of the free society in which we live. In our society we have been allowed certain freedoms which have been historically held in check by censorship. Censorship was given its status as an issue by the framers of the Constitution, however unintentional that might have been. The First Amendment states as one of our rights as citizens, the practice of free speech. This amendment states that Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press. And, the job of the courts, for the past two-hundred years, has been to interpret that right.

We have understood the right to free speech to give us certain guarantees, such as allowing citizens to express opinions against the government without the fear of repression. These guarantees help us express reasons against the practice of censorship. One of the most basic reasons against censorship is that censorship is a positive external constraint or obstacle preventing one from expressing ideas, thus negating the aforementioned guarantee. Free speech allows the free flow of ideas. This lack of constraint on ideas has been helpful in all fields of learning, from creative inventions to the research fields of medicine and science, and to new forms of art.

Education, as has been argued, is our country's asset (regardless of whether or not it has reached its full potential). In The Republic, Plato's objection against democracy was that the masses were uneducated. Obviously, people cannot make a good decision about policy if they have no knowledge of the implications. For example, when I was in high school, I was unaware of certain events that occurred in the recent past of the United States. Such atrocities as the Attica Prison Massacre, the Watts Riots, the declaration of martial law in Detroit and the subsequent arrival of the marines who were pulled out of duty in Vietnam to bring order to a riotous Detroit, and the Kent State incident, for some reason were not made known to us in our history or current events classes. It is as if the authorities of the educational system thought the information would warp our young minds and prevent us, the students, from developing a good attitude about our country. Yet, it seems that when we became old enough to vote that lack of knowledge about the nation's recent past could have gravely affected our ability to make a good choice about what policies should be adopted. It seems our nation was reluctant to admit its mistakes and so censored the material from the high school textbooks. For that reason, education is extremely important in a democratic society. The lack of constraint of censorship thus would seem to be wanted in this kind of society.

An extreme case of censorship can be seen in novels such as George Orwell's 1984 and Ayn Rand's Anthem. In both cases, the only books allowed were those approved by the state. This of course, would be a severe limit on the exchange of ideas. Knowledge of one's own history would be questionable. Truth itself would be questionable if, as Hegel believed, the truth is found through the dialectic, through the exchange and discussion and synthesis of opposing ideas. This would be even more accurate if the central authority was not benevolent. One
only has to read the newspaper to see that in countries with repressive regimes, the history books are the first to be altered. (The Soviet Union has done this.) And, we are doomed to relive our past mistakes if we do not remember the painful consequences of our past actions. Thus, this argument concludes that censorship should not be used.

Yet, there seems to be good arguments in favor of censorship. Censorship can stop the flow of dangerous ideas. This conception involves the idea that certain types of information can cause harm. To prove the point one merely has to show that it is possible to cause harm by the use or misuse of information. Harm caused by actions related to communication can be of three types: harm to the state from the actions of the individual, this involves espionage, treason, inciting riots or violent rebellion; harm to the unsuspecting individual from materials deemed by the individual or others to be offensive, such as pornography; and harm to the individual by the actions of another, this involves libel cases, spreading of rumors, or plagiarism and copyright infringement.

The first type of harm can be illustrated by the following example: the need for censorship may be especially acute in regard to national security. It is not in the interest of the central authority, nor of the people themselves, to have certain information handed over to the enemy. This has been the rationale behind covert actions or information that is not known to the general public. Surely if the public would have known about certain covert actions, such as the murder of thousands of Chilean civilians by CIA backed guerrillas, they would have protested. This protesting can adversely affect national security by allowing the nation to be vulnerable to outside forces in such times of civil strife. The analogy is thus: a body is vulnerable to deadly diseases when its immunities are lowered by fatigue. Spain declared neutrality in World War II because of civil war. One could certainly state that such covert actions or insurrections are immoral. However, the morality of those actions is not at issue here. We all disagree on how foreign policy should be handled.

Morality is an issue when talking about upbringing of children. Censorship has been used when attempting to keep dangerous ideas from the minds of children. That seemed to be the rationale in the aforementioned case of the high school. Certain materials are restricted from the use of children. Alcohol, cigarettes, pornographic materials, and many overtly violent or sexual movies are kept from the use of children, as well as information which might contribute to disillusionment. This issue is also expounded upon in *The Republic*. Plato believed that fiction which described a less than idealized picture of the gods such as that of Homer or the Tragedians of Periclean Age should not be read to children because children are naive and impressionable. Yet, even some of these materials may be considered offensive to some adults. Consequently, restrictions have been placed on the types of materials available to persons below a specified age.

This issue of age specification has been attacked as a type of discrimination. It seems unjust to some who may be mature enough before the age of eighteen to distinguish bad material from good material, or the value placed on materials in a moral perspective. Although it may be true that there is injustice involved in
arbitrarily assigning an age limit on certain materials, setting an age limit is the only practical way to enforce such a paternalistic law. The point is that the level of voluntariness should progress as a person gets older because of the time necessary to properly socialize a person. Yet, there are instances where an individual has reached a stage of discernment but is still subjected to information he or she deems offensive because it is pushed on him or her from the outside. The level of voluntariness is irrelevant due to the circumstances. For this reason, the use of profane language is restricted on radio and television because persons who might be offended have no control over what they hear.

The third, and probably strongest reason for censorship is to protect persons from possible damage to their reputations from statement made about them by others. This is especially true if a statement that was made and was widely believed is actually false. This harms the person by invading on the interest of wanting a good reputation. Therefore, this is the ground for Libel cases which are found in civil court.

In the extreme case of non-censorship, people could say whatever they wanted. Although it may be hard for us to believe, there are people in this world with less than honorable intentions. By and large, this is not our experience on a daily basis. Yet, we have all experienced persons who may have, for some reason or another, wanted to ruin our reputation. This motive can be directed against one person, or it can be directed against a whole nation. We can see this occur on the nightly news with one political candidate pitted against another. This method in politics is also used by nations against their adversaries.

In the final analysis, the ones who suffer are everyone. The society as a whole would cease to exist if lines of trust among peoples are broken down by simple statements. Kant’s principle of duty in ethics seems to dictate that the truth is most important in the survival of a society. If, for example, most people believed that lying is acceptable, then society could not build lines of trust, and the society would disintegrate due to the fact that persons would start to disassociate.

For these reasons, some form of censorship seems quite unavoidable. To refute this, one would have to believe that everyone’s intentions were benevolent, and that trust is not broken down by lying or cheating. Yet, in accepting censorship as possibly inevitable, is it possible that we could run into the types of circumstances described in 1984 or Anthem. It seems that if we are to make the presumption in favor of liberty, it seems we have to exercise extreme caution when exercising censorship. But, the assertion that the use of censorship would pave the way for an Orwellian nightmare is a fallacy of the slippery slope kind. The first and third kinds of harm caused by information exchange are real possibilities which must be safeguarded against in a democracy. The first form of censorship should only be used in the face of imminent or obvious future danger. The third type should be used more readily only when not to do so would contribute to the harm of an individual. Lastly, the second form of censorship should only be used under two determinants: the relative voluntariness of the individual which for practical purposes of enforcement will have to be determined by age, and the relative value of certain materials judged by the community as a whole or by the proper
representatives of the community such as the Supreme Court. However, materials involving the history of the nation should not be, under the circumstances, withheld from the ranks of students.
Reincarnation

The hope for an eternal life, one without pain or suffering, is widespread among almost all theists. Immortality is sought for various reasons: to offer hope for innocent persons who suffer, to justify or give ultimate purpose to virtuous acts, to reward or punish which was "linked to the notion of gradual purification" or to escape the power of death. The idea of immortality was most likely reinforced by observations of the cyclical processes of nature such as the changing of the seasons. For many religions the notion of the cyclical process is very strong.

In Hinduism, the notion of cyclical process is inherent in the doctrine of reincarnation or transmigration of the soul. Hindus believe that souls go through a cycle of rebirths, known as samsara, until they reach moksha, or self-identity with the all, Brahman. Samsara is a purification or process of reaching perfection. The soul is therefore reincarnated into a new body, after death, until the soul reaches a point of harmony with the all.

When a child is born into Hindu society, that child is born into a certain caste. Caste pertains to a social stratification in which "ranks are based on ancestries, family ties, and occupations." This stratification may have originally been based on racial distinctions. The term for caste in the Sanskrit language means color.

There are four main classifications of caste. The highest caste is the Brahmin or the priestly class. The second caste is the class of nobility called the Ksatriyas who were required to protect the people. The third caste, called the Vaisyas, were the commoners, who traded, tended herds, and farmed. The lowest caste, the untouchables, also known as the Sudras, were relegated to the unclean occupations such as street cleaning. Considering the racial differences, it is interesting to note that the top three castes claim Aryan descent, whereas the untouchables were of non-Aryan descent.

Social interaction, including marriages, the sharing of meals, and the sharing of occupations do not occur across caste lines. Worship rituals are also differentiated between castes. These distinctions are brought to full understatement by the prohibition of the study of the Vedas for the untouchables. This lowest caste is only allowed to hear the recitation of various epics and myths. In modern times, due to the influx of new peoples of different ethnic background into the subcontinent of India, the caste system has been divided into literally thousands of subcastes.

The caste system is inherent from the oldest periods and is allegorically implied in the Purusa hymn of the Rig-Veda. Thus the social stratification was justified by the religion. The relative position of an individual was rationalized, by the sacred text, as a result of the actions of past lives. Thus, someone of low caste was in his or her position in a predetermined way, that is, predetermined by one's own misdeeds. This idea was ultimately incorporated into the Hindu religion as the doctrine of Karma.

Karma is the "doctrine of cosmic and personal cause and effect by which one's thoughts and deeds determine what happens to one, whether good or bad, including one's future rebirths." In other words, Karma is action. This action can
either be a cause of a further action (effect), or it can be the effect of a previous action. In the cyclical perspective of Hinduism, this cause and effect relationship has existed always. There is no beginning and only a rare chance for an end. The chance for an end will be discussed later.

On a cosmic level, Karma is thought of as a sort of energy. Only when this energy comes to total harmony, through rest, will the cycle of rebirths, known as Samsara, be ended. Each individual has the capacity to contribute positively to the harmony of the universe by living according to one’s duty. Duty, also known as Dharma, is socially dictated according to caste. If an individual performs his or her duty, there will be a net gain in positive, good, Karma which will contribute to the harmony of the universe. If, on the other hand, an individual commits misdeeds, those actions will contribute to chaos to the universe. One’s punishment may be to be reborn into a lower caste in a future life.

An analogy of cosmic Karma would be such: let us suppose that the universe is like a pond. Misdeeds would be like disturbing the integrity of the pond by casting stones. Each stone cast creates ripples: the more stones cast then the more ripples. When many stones are cast, the pond becomes chaotic. It takes much time to settle again. If no stones are cast the pond will reach a state of rest (harmony) more quickly.

This coming to rest on an individual basis is an emancipation. However, this harmony is not an individualized occurrence. This end, spiritual liberation, is reached by fully realizing that one’s being is identical with Brahman, the universal. This point of spiritual liberation or emancipation is known as Moksha. The Buddhist term given to this experience is Nirvana or enlightenment. Moksha is the experience by which one can break out of the cycle of rebirths. "Moksha is a state of perfect bliss experienced in Brahman realization and the full blossoming of one’s own existence; for man’s [sic] true nature consists in belonging to God as his body."4 At the cessation of Samsara, the soul sheds all matter. Matter was needed only to expend the Karma force.

An Upanishadic thinker, Madva, taught that "there are four aspects of release: Samipya, closeness and intimacy with the Divine; Sarupya, similarity of nature with the Divine; Salokya, co-existence with the Divine in the heavens; and Sayujya, communion with the Divine through entrance into the self-identification with his body of bliss."5 However, this liberation is only achieved by worthy, superior persons or gods. Ordinary persons continue through Samsara, while lower persons or demons suffer in hell.

For the ordinary person, there are three paths to liberation. The first is the path of Dharma, or Karma-marga. The second is Jnana-marga, or the path of knowledge. The third path is Bhakti-marga, or the path of devotion to a personal god.

The path of Dharma, the way of action, is the path taken by the majority of Hindus. It requires that one do his or her duty by performing good acts and living a virtuous life as defined by one’s social status. For instance, a person of the lowest caste would be virtuous by serving all others, by cleaning the streets or whatever job was his or hers without complaining, and by not becoming too ambitious in the
religious sphere such as reading the sacred text. According to the Bhagavad-Gita: "Do the prescribed works. Action is higher than nonaction. Even the maintenance of the body is not possible for the man of nonaction." By doing right action one contributes to the harmony of the universe, as stated before. This is again announced in the Bhagavad-Gita: "These worlds will then come to an end, if I do not perform my work. I shall become the author of confusion and destruction of all men."

It is hoped that by doing one's work tirelessly and without complaint, one may be an example to all others. By not doing one's work, one is also an example to others. It is this nonvirtuousness which contributes to chaos and destruction. By works, one hopes to disengage oneself from the desires of this world. One becomes selfless and becomes unified with the all. In this way one is liberated. Therefore it is believed that through the path of Dharma one will be reborn into a higher position until reaching the position of the Brahmin priests, at which point one can be engaged in a different path. For many Hindus, the hope is to get to a higher position, not necessarily to transcend physical life.

The path of Dharma may be said to be walked down by students and householders, whereas the path of knowledge is taken by hermits. This is not strictly true, for practitioners of yoga must first be students of their masters. However, the path of knowledge is for "persons who are by their nature philosophical." For these persons the path to oneness with god is through true knowledge. "He who knows that works do not pollute him and that he has no attachment to works is not bound by them." Yet, also according to the Bhagavad-Gita: "one out of such a thousand who try, knows me as I am." Therefore, the path of knowledge is not for all, for it requires great concentration.

The path of knowledge uses many different techniques to attain its goal. Two of the most common and well known are yoga and meditation techniques. "Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of the mind-stuff (citta)." The mid-stuff is defined as those ideas which contribute to a mistaken identity of the self. So, the goal of the meditation is to identify one's self with the all, and thus strip one's self of the nonessentials. In this sense, the path of knowledge is similar to the path of works in that it seeks to become selfless.

In some translations, there is a fourth path called the path of psychological experiment. However, upon inspection, this fourth path is similar to the path of knowledge in that it seeks to know about the self in relation to the all. This fourth path, called the raji yoga or royal way, involves experimenting on the mind as well as the body. This experimentation takes "the form of practicing certain prescribed mental exercises and observing the effects of these on one's spiritual condition." Unlike the path of knowledge, these exercises do not require the practitioner to consider any particular dogma.

These exercises are based on the Hindu concept of the four layers of man. The four layers are, briefly: the body; the conscious personality; the realm of individual subconscious; and finally, being itself, a subconscious interlink to all of reality. This fourth layer is distinctive to the Hindu philosophy. It is this fourth layer that the yogi attempts to gain knowledge of by spiritual exercises. Implied by all...
mental meditations is the idea that man is all and gains Moksha, spiritual liberation, by coming to that liberation. However, this idea is not one of selflessness but rather one of total denial.

Selflessness is also the goal of the path of devotion to a personal god. This devotion is seen as a love for the god and is manifested by a total dedication of all gifts as an offering to the god. Hindu gods are supra-personal, infinite, transcendent, and incomprehensible. Likewise the gods in their fullness are neither male or female. For this reason it is very difficult for one to personalize a god. So, the Bhakta will key on a certain aspect of the god and pay homage to that aspect. A shrine may be erected in one's house, and the Bhakta will bring flowers, fruit or incense to a statuette which in some way symbolizes the deity or aspect of the deity. The Bhakta then hopes, by one's prayer, "to cause the divinity to descend into the statuette." An interpretation of these devotions posits that salvation is merited. This interpretation is based on the Gita which states that god lifts "such people whose mind is fixed on me [god] from the ocean of the world of death." This interpretation is held by some Hindus, but not all.

Whatever the case may be, the path of devotion (Bhakti), as well as the path of knowledge (Jnana), is viewed as a short cut to salvation as compared to the path of good works (Dharma). According to the Bhagavad-Gita: "Knowledge is superior to practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of all actions is superior to meditation, and superior to renunciation is the peace that follows." This salvation, or liberation, is not always sought by all, as is the case with Hindus who only wish to get to a higher social position. Yet, this liberation is the basis for moral teaching. The search for immortality can justify or give ultimate purpose to virtuous acts. This hope is then incorporated into social teaching and ultimately into religious teaching. Therefore in Hindu teaching, what one ought to do to achieve true happiness is determined by the doctrine of Moksha.

The process by which one achieves liberation has been defined. However, how the soul of a person, who has died, transmigrates into a new incarnation, into a new body, is not well defined. Hindus believe that a soul is separate from the body, and that when a person dies, his or her soul goes to heaven for a short period of time while it awaits another body. This soul is not an individual entity, which would explain one's inability to recount past lives, but is rather a fluctuation in Karmic energy. The Karmic energy needs a body to be expended. If the person has achieved a state of rest or harmony, then there is no need for his or her soul to be reincarnated. That soul has reached spiritual liberation. The reincarnation is thus a means to expend any residual Karmic energy until a state of harmony has been reached. Reincarnations will continue until all Karmic energy has come to a point of rest.

The doctrine of reincarnation is therefore a strong testament to the need of virtuous living. It gives credence to teachings about how one should act, as well as states a justification for Hindu social institutions.
Bibliography


Footnotes

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2 DeBlij, H. J., p. 443.
3 Ellwood, R. S., Jr., p. 107.
4 Rayan, S., pp. 113-122.
5 Ibid. pp. 116-117.
6 Raju, P. T., p. 52.
7 Ibid. p. 52.
8 Smith, H., p. 36.
9 Raju, P. T., p. 53.
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Immortality

Introduction

It seems a self-evident truth that there exists a universal fear of death. Death is mysterious. We cannot have empirical knowledge of what exists beyond the grave. It seems that no one can return to tell us what death is like, or whether we survive death in another realm unknown to us. Death seems an inevitable limit, and so we consequently fear it.

Fear is an uncomfortable emotion. We seek to escape this fear by inventing ideas in our minds regarding the permanence of death. This has been a task for thousands of years in various cultures, and it has been the function of the various religions to decipher the mysteries of death in a way that allows the occurrence of death to be less fearful.

Immortality of a soul, or life-force, has had enduring appeal to many seeking salvation from the finality of death. To be sure, there have been and are many variations to the interpretation of the notion of immortality. For instance, in the Hindu religion, immortality is understood in terms of reincarnation. Hindus believe that the soul goes through a cycle of rebirths, for the purpose of purification, until one reaches perfection. This perfection is a harmony with the all. For the Hindu, at this level of transcendence, there is no personal salvation, but rather a sort of dispersion of karmic energy.

In the Christian tradition, immortality of the soul involves a personal salvation. The Catholic position can be considered by many as extreme. The Catholic theology of immortality involves the resurrection of the body, therefore retaining the personal identity of the individual.

Many religions have developed their own unique ideas concerning life after death. Anthropological findings have revealed ancient civilizations that had rituals which suggest a belief in the afterlife. Such widespread beliefs in so many different cultures, create an intriguing question: Is there life after death?

I shall examine the historical and philosophical development of the idea of the immortality of the soul. I will, afterward, contribute some reflections from a Catholic perspective on the issue at hand.

Development of the Western Notion of Immortality

As mentioned above, many ancient religions had rituals surrounding death which may have alluded to a belief in the afterlife. In ancient Egypt, for example, burial preparations were quite elaborate. Burials often included food and treasures which the dead could have with them, presumably in another world. The ancient Israelites believed that "the dead lived in a realm called Sheol for a time and then gradually faded into nothingness."\(^1\) "However, in most religions it was assumed that with death, life essentially came to an end."\(^2\)

Zoroastrianism may be the first religion, believed to have begun around 700 B.C.E., to have developed a theology of immortality. In this religion, the soul journeys from the body, after a period of time after death in which it meditates upon one's deeds, to a place of judgment. If the person has committed more evil deeds
than good, that soul goes to hell. If the opposite is true about the person's deeds, then that soul goes to paradise. In Zoroastrianism, the time of punishment is not eternal. Rather, time will come to an end, evil will be destroyed, and a new world without pain or death will be created for all.

The location and time period for the development of Zoroastrianism gives evidence to the assertion that these ideas indeed influenced Jewish and, consequently, Christian thought on the subject of immortality. The Babylonian Captivity occurred at a time when the eschatology of Zoroaster had been developed. It has been noted that certain changes in the theology of Judaism did occur between preexilic and postexilic times. The notion of a personified evil, Satan, does not occur until the biblical writings after the exile. By the time of the common era, the notion of Satan had been widely accepted.

It is interesting to note that similar ideas about the immortality of the soul, minus the personages of Satan and the archangels, were beginning in Ionian civilization. Anaximenes, of the Miletus school, conceived of the air as being the "stuff of life." This stuff of life "is imprisoned in the body of each animal or human and forms its soul." This idea of a soul was later incorporated into the thought of Pythagoras and his school. The Pythagoreans believed in the immortality of the soul. However, the Pythagorean conception of immortality involved the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. This doctrine holds that the soul progresses through a series of incarnations until, through purification, it may rid itself of the mortal body and become pure spirit.

It is interesting that a parallel exists between the Pythagorean belief in the transmigration of souls and the Hindu belief. Hopfe seems to suggest that the Aryan kinsmen of Zoroaster started to consider the doctrine of transmigration, which later developed into the Hindu doctrine of reincarnation, as a result of the Zoroastrian theology. However, this idea seems highly conjectural given the time frame involved. The Aryans first invaded the Indus valley around 1500 B.C.E. There is a considerable gap in time between that invasion and the development of the eschatology of Zoroastrianism. Yet, if there was trade between the two regions, influence regarding the notion of immortality could have gone either way. Whether there existed a medium, such as trade, which brought these ideas to Southern Italy in the time of Pythagoras is similarly problematic. But, it remains interesting that such parallels which existed between the thoughts of the two distinct cultures could, in fact, develop.

Returning to the Greek culture, the beliefs of Pythagoreans regarding the soul seemed to have been shared by the Orphics. It is, perhaps, from this foundation that Plato understood and interpreted the notions of the forms and the consequential belief in the immortality of the soul. Plato define the soul as that which exists prior to and after the dissolution of the body. The soul was that which survived after death. The soul was a transcendent form, and the psyche was that "bridge between the earth-bound human mind and the transcendent world of ideas." Plato reaffirmed the truth of the Pythagorean religious doctrine that the soul belongs in essence to the eternal world and not to the transitory.
Plato goes on to define the nature of the soul's immortality in Book Ten of *The Republic*, and also in the *Phaedo*, where he suggests that a person who has had a virtuous, philosophical life will have personal immortality, and the soul of the unvirtuous person would be re-embodied until it reached a virtuous state. Plato achieved the immortality of the soul by the great distinction between the body and the soul. (This dualism is developed again later in Descartes.) For Aristotle, there were no forms of the type that Plato described. Forms did not exist as entities onto themselves. There was more of an organic link between the body and the soul. Consequently, Aristotle held that "only the supra-personal intellect was immortal."6

The human soul was differentiated from the animal soul in that the human soul had reason, rational desire, or free will. This difference, however, does not seem to save the soul from dissolution along with the body at the time of death. Aristotle was very ambiguous about this point. Such a position seems to deny the possibility of personal immortality. The issue of personal identity is misplaced in this theory.

A few centuries later, in Palestine, the idea of personal immortality would be addressed in the formation of a new religious movement. With the coming of Christianity, personal immortality obtained a new foothold. The resurrection miracles of Jesus: the raising of the widow's son in Luke 7, the raising of Lazarus in John 11, and Jesus' own resurrection, contributed to the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. This belief does not carry with it the difficulties of the Platonic duality. And, it also answered the problems raised by Aristotle in regard to personal identity and immortality.

St. Paul talks about the resurrection of the dead in the fourth chapter of the first letter to the Thessalonians. In this letter, Paul expresses the belief that the dead will rise and be joined with the living at the time of the second coming. This notion compares to the Zoroastrian notion of the end of time, and the coming of the new world without evil. The Parousia, as believed by many at the time, was thought to be coming within the first Christian generation. This is apparent, not so obviously, in the writings of the book of Revelation.

St. Augustine, a few centuries after the first Christian generation, sought intellectual justification for the theology of immortality. He was drawn by the Platonic forms. However, Augustine seemed most interested in proving the immortality of the soul from the faculty of grasping the truth. The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is considered a mystery of revelation. And, by virtue of its revelation, this doctrine cannot be obtained merely by human reason alone. Augustine and the later scholastics dealt with this doctrine within the realm of Christian theology.

St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Fifth Lateran Council gave the hylemorphism of Aristotle a Platonic interpretation. Yet, this was still within the realm of Christian theology. Not until the time of Leibniz and Hume, the Enlightenment period, did the question about immortality come up in strictly philosophic circles. "The Enlightenment showed itself rather skeptical and hostile to the notion of immortality."7 Hume, when questioned, stated on his deathbed that immortality was non-sense. Immanuel Kant was greatly influenced by the skepticism of Hume. He did not believe that the traditional proofs worked and therefore sought to prove the
doctrine of immortality on the basis of ethical and practical grounds. He concluded that "the moral order of the world demanded that man's destiny should correspond with his virtues."  

Soren Kierkegaard stated in Concluding Unscientific Postscript, that the question of immortality is not a scholarly question but rather a matter of faith. The modern philosophical quest on the topic of immortality seems to be a restating of the problems laid down by the early philosophers. It seems, however, that the most difficult problem for the notion of immortality is the question of identity. 

Modern biological knowledge, in particular neuroscience, suggests that thought is governed by chemical responses to stimuli. In Aristotelian thought, the rational desires were part of the human soul which distinguished humans from lower animals. New evidences suggests that the distinction is simply a product of human evolution. Materialists consequently hold that there is no distinction between the mind and the brain. Yet this interpretation begs the question: Where does the ability to will to create unique responses to situations arise? Also, how do we account for mystical experiences, and the so-called afterlife experiences of the clinically dead as described by Dr. Raymond Moody?

The recent debate on the subject tries to take into account new scientific evidence. The debate divides into three sides between the materialist monist who do not believe in the immortality of the soul, the dualists, represented by the Platonic notion, and the monist or Christian view in the western tradition. The three views have been demonstrated above. I wish to elaborate on the Christian view.

Choosing Immortality

There seems, in my mind, some truth to Kierkegaard's contention that immortality and personal salvation is a matter of faith. Salvation, from this world to the next, seems to be a matter of choice. We, ourselves, choose immortality.

One product of the Protestant Reformation is the Calvinist notion of Predestination. This notion states that salvation is the choice of God, and that God knows, before we are born, whether we are saved or damned. In that sense, there is nothing that an individual can do to change his or her lot. All one can do is have the correct faith, which usually means a Calvinist interpretation, and hope that one is in the right camp. This belief is still very much alive in some Protestant camps.

In a very small way, the notion that God knows beforehand whether we will be saved or damned, seems congruent with the definition of God's omniscience. However, God's knowing of our ultimate end does not necessarily demand a lack of ability on our part to affect our ultimate end. St. Paul, in his letters, talks about predestination. He states that God predestined us to be his adopted children and to share in the lot of the saints. In this way, it could be interpreted to mean that God predestined us to be saved, out of his unlimited love for us, but it is us who choose not to partake in that salvation. This view allows for free will upon the part of the individual. By a person's love for others in this life, one will be judged worthy of a share in the kingdom.

This idea goes back to the original Zoroastrian notion of free will and ultimate end. It does not conflict with God's omniscience if God knows in advance what choices we will make. Kant's argument that the moral order demands that there be
some reward for virtuousness is appealing. The burden of choice is placed upon our shoulders, although God, presumably, is the author who makes the choice possible.

All of the above demands a belief in both God and immortality. It may be the case that neither exists. Yet, if neither exists, perhaps there would be no ultimate meaning and also no ultimate reason for choosing one action above another, for example, loving one another. If Kant was right in stating that our morality should be based on our human duty to one another, we would only have to do the minimum to live a virtuous life. But, what would be the purpose of such a virtuous life if there were no reward, even if that reward were our own happiness? Such, it seems, was the melancholy of Job.

A belief in a saving God, gives ultimate purpose to our morality. Without such belief, we may fall into a pragmatic morality which seeks to serve our own purpose. However, such a morality brings with it problems. It cannot distinguish what is good for ourselves and what is good for us in the context of all, that is, the ultimate good. The latter seems, in the long run, much more appealing.

Conclusion

The topic of immortality has been a discussion for many centuries. It seems to be a means to justify the suffering of the innocent, yet immortality also seems to be bound to the human quest to escape death or the fear of death. Whether meaning or escape, the notion of immortality involves a very deep human quest. Its meaning has developed systems of theology in many religions from primitive to modern. The beginnings for a systematic program for the Western notion of immortality may have been in northern Iran around 700 B.C.E. However, it has great meaning for people even today.

Bibliography


Footnotes

1  Hopfe, L. M., p. 176.
2  Ibid.
4  Ibid., p. 94.
5  Ibid., p. 95.
6  Splett, J., p. 688.
7  Ibid.
8  Ibid.