

PROGRAMMA

A Newsletter for Graduates of the Program of Liberal Studies
The University of Notre Dame
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Faculty Editor

Bernd Goehring

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THE VIEW FROM 215

Gretchen Reydam-Schils

March 20, 2012

Students and faculty alike have been blown away by the outburst of spring and the unusually warm weather. It seems that all of a sudden we have been propelled into June, but we also know that this won't last. Confusing yet utterly delightful!

This year's reflections are of a more practical nature. One of the two PLS designated classrooms, 214 O'Shaughnessy, is in dire need of a thorough renovation – the last one dates back to the seventies. Because our classrooms also serve as community space, the renovations entail more than the standard University platform, and thus we will need to come up with some cost sharing. This will be the focus for the allocation of your contributions in the near future, and should you choose to do so, you can earmark them for this purpose.

I would also like to issue a special call for contributions to the Susan M. Clements fund. Some of our other funds have grown quite large, and this one benefits Program students directly and substantially. At the end of last fall, we inaugurated a plaque in Susan's honor, with a list of awardees, and it has joined the others on our wall.

Working on a plan for the classroom has reminded all of us, again, of the tight learning community formed by PLS. Last minute reading happens on the benches in front of our

two classrooms (quick, quick, to get to the last pages, the last paragraphs ...). The discussions start in the corridor before class, and continue to spill over into the PLS office afterwards. Space matters to enhance and facilitate this dynamic, which, arguably, is what makes our Program so attractive for our students.

This fall saw an important break-through both for the humanities and PLS in that, for the first time ever, a 'Fighting Irish' ad was devoted to this topic. The televised ad featured Stephen Fallon as well as PLS major Elizabeth Davis.

At the end of spring, however, we say good-bye to another colleague who has been a pillar of the department for so many years, Walter Nicgorski. The pictures and other material coming in for his scrapbook have been quite amusing. I am relishing the thought of witnessing the look on his face when he gets to see these himself.

But with these transitions also comes an increased sense of responsibility to carry on and nurture the wonderful legacy of this program—and that is a task for which you, our former students, are absolutely indispensable.

Gretchen Reydam-Schils
Chair, Program of Liberal Studies

**ANNOUNCING THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL
PLS/GP SUMMER SYMPOSIUM
JUNE 3-8, 2012**

“MONTAIGNE AND THE QUESTION OF THE SELF”

The annual PLS Alumni Summer Symposium for 2012 will be held from Sunday, June 3 to Friday, June 8. The theme this year is “Montaigne and the Question of the Self.” Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592) is usually considered the first modern essayist (from the French word *essayer* – to make an attempt). “I am myself the matter of my book,” he writes in “To the Reader,” and indeed in his interrogations of philosophical and religious questions, he is continually interrogating himself as well. Montaigne was influenced by virtually every major current of ancient thought, and he, in turn, had an enormous influence on such writers and thinkers as Shakespeare, Descartes, Pascal, Emerson, and Nietzsche. Thus, the theme of this year’s Summer Symposium provides a center that can reach out in many different directions.

There will be two week-long seminars in this year’s Symposium. The first, given by Professor Robert Goulding, will focus on Montaigne’s writings; the second, given by Professor Stephen Fallon, will focus on Shakespeare’s tragedy *Hamlet* – a play that was deeply influenced by Shakespeare’s reading of Montaigne’s “Apology for Raymond Sebonde,” which ties the two seminars together. In addition, the Symposium will feature a number of shorter seminars. Professor Gretchen Reydams-Schils (the current chair of the Program), will give a three-day seminar on the writings of Seneca (an author who had a major impact on Montaigne). Professor Walter Nicgorski will offer a three-day seminar on selected writings of Cicero (another author who had a major impact on Montaigne). Professor Francesca Bordogna (who has happily returned to the Program this year) will give a three-day seminar that focuses on the thinking of William James and Henri Bergson on the mind and the human self. And finally, Professor Julia Marvin will offer a one-day seminar that focuses on the ways in which Geoffrey of Monmouth and Milton in their historical writings raise questions pertaining to national or individual self-definition. (The course descriptions for all of these seminars follow at the end of this message.)

In addition to the regular week-long Summer Symposium, we would like to consider the possibility of scheduling an additional seminar or two during Reunion Weekend, Saturday, June 2-Sunday, June 3. Those interested in attending a seminar on the weekend would have the option of attending the week-long Symposium as well. If there is sufficient interest, Professor Henry Weinfield will lead a two-day (weekend) seminar on Lucretius’ poem *The Way Things Are (De Rerum Natura)*, perhaps in conjunction with the biblical text, Ecclesiastes. The Epicurean Lucretius had a major impact on Montaigne, and Ecclesiastes, one of the later poetical writings in the Hebrew Scriptures, is marked by Epicurean influence. Again, this is a tentative offering and will be given only if there is enough interest on the part of alumni.

I. *Week-long Seminar*

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark—Steve Fallon

Shakespeare (1564-1616) and Montaigne (1533-1592) were contemporaries. In one important way they were completely different: we know next to nothing of Shakespeare’s temperament, opinions, personal and private life; Montaigne tells us almost everything about his. Montaigne prefaces the *Essays* by announcing, “I myself am the subject of my book.” Shakespeare, Keats’

“chameleon poet,” eludes our grasp. Nevertheless, Shakespeare, like Montaigne, has left us a powerful portrait of introspection, in his fictional character Hamlet. It is largely on the strength of this portrait that Shakespeare along with Montaigne has been viewed as an architect of the modern self. We know that Shakespeare read Montaigne, and many scholars argue that he may have read the *Essays* by the time he wrote *Hamlet*. In this seminar running concurrently with a seminar on Montaigne, will inspect introspection in Shakespeare.

Essays of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne—Robert Goulding

I turn my gaze inward, I fix it there and keep it busy. Everyone looks in front of him; as for me, I look inside of me; I have no business but with myself; I continually observe myself, I take stock of myself, I taste myself, I roll about in myself. (“Of Presumption”)

The focus of this seminar will be the *Essays* of Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1533-92). Over the course of a week, we will read widely in this marvelous book that, as Montaigne himself wrote, is “like no other in the world” – a book about himself, that nevertheless embraces within itself a whole world.

Readings

The translation that we will be using is that of Donald Frame: *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford University Press; ISBN: 0804704864). Please purchase only this version – and please purchase it even if you own another translation! Frame’s translation is at once the most accurate and the most readable of all those in print; and, quite apart from the quality of the translation, it is important that we are all, literally, on the “same page” during seminar. The readings, session by session, will be as follows:

- 1: “To the Reader”; Letter to his father on the death of Etienne de la Boétie (text to be provided); “Of Friendship” (I.28); “That to philosophize is to learn how to die” (I.20) [40 pages]
- 2: “That the taste of good and evil depends in large part on the opinion we have of them” (I.14); “Of Moderation” (I.30); “Of Conscience” (II.5); “Of Cruelty” (II.11) [40 pages]
- 3: “Apology for Raymond Sebond” (II.12) [170 pages]
- 4: “Of Cannibals” (I.31); “Of Repentance” (III.2); “Of Coaches” (III.6) [43 pages]
- 5: “Of Experience” (III.13) [52 pages]

II. Shorter Seminars

“Brainhood” and some of its alternatives: William James and Henri Bergson on the human self and the mind—Francesca Bordogna

In the last two hundred years the sciences of the mind and of the brain have worked to create a conception of the self that many today take for granted: according to that conception we are fundamentally our brains. “Brainhood”, as historian of science Fernando Vidal has termed this notion, shapes how many of us think about ourselves, as well as a range of medical, social, and legal practices. Together with a rival paradigm (the conception according to which “we are our genes”), “brainhood” also determines which kinds of questions one can ask in an inquiry into the nature of the self, the mind, and personal identity. For it suggests that these questions be framed as questions about the brain and be investigated through neuro-imaging techniques. Hence the emergence, as Prof. Vidal has written, of a new constellation of “neuro”-disciplines: neuro-ethics, which seeks to study the neural basis of ethics; neuro-theology, which seeks to identify the neural bases of mystical experiences; neuro-economics, which aims to identify the neural bases of economic behavior; “neuro”-aesthetics, and more.

In this seminar we will examine the attempts made by two prominent early twentieth-century philosophers and psychologists – William James and Henri Bergson – to challenge the “cerebral subject” postulated by the sciences of the mind. They lived at a time when brain and nervous physiology was presented by many investigators as the foundational field for the philosophical and psychological inquiry into human nature. While James and Bergson were fully informed about the most recent developments in the physiological study of the brain, they proposed accounts of the human mind and self, that avoided reducing them to the brain. To what extent can we resort to the tools offered by James and Bergson in order to assess and perhaps respond to the reduction of the self to the brain, which is often implicit in neuro-scientific work and serves as the foundation of the new “neuro-culture”?

Class #1

Fernando Vidal, “Brainhood. Anthropological Figure of Modernity,” *History of the Human Sciences*, 2009, 22, 1: 5-36. (see attached pdf)

Class #2

William James, *Psychology. The Briefer Course*, ch. 3, “The Self”

Class #3

1. William James, *Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1899, 2nd ed.), first objection: pp. 1-30
2. Henri Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, Lecture 2: “The Soul and the Body” (1912)

Giving History a Beginning: Brutus the Trojan, Milton the Historian, and Other Dubious Characters —Julia Marvin

In the mid-twelfth century *History of the Kings of Britain*, Geoffrey of Monmouth gave the British a heroic foundation myth: Brutus the Trojan, a descendant of Aeneas himself, had landed on the island, defeated the giants inhabiting it, and named it “Britannia” after himself. This was still a story to be reckoned with in the seventeenth century, when John Milton was composing his *History of Britain*.

In this session, we will examine Geoffrey’s version of the genesis of British history, Milton’s perspective on what has come to be called the “legendary history of Britain,” and a fourteenth-century variation on the theme that provided a prequel to the Brutus story and made the first human inhabitants of the island not Trojan warriors but a band of murderous princesses. It may be interesting, in relation to some of the other texts for the week, to consider the ideals these origin stories promote, the fears they address or raise, and the ways in which they take up questions of national or individual self-definition.

Seneca De Ira—Gretchen Reydam-Schils

I use this prerogative and daily plead my own cause to myself. When the light has been removed from sight and my spouse has fallen silent, because she is long since familiar with my habit, I examine my entire day, and review my deeds and words. I hide nothing from myself, I omit nothing. For why should I recoil from any of my mistakes...? (Seneca De Ira 3.36.3).

This seminar will be complementary to the week-long session on Montaigne directed by Robert Goulding. Seneca was one of Montaigne’s favorite authors, but also represents a distinctive,

Stoic view. The Stoics of the Roman imperial era and the first two centuries AD in particular focused on the challenge of trying to implement a philosophical ideal in everyday circumstances.

Readings

- 1) *Letter 104*: this reading will set the stage for the key issues we can address
- 2) *Letter 121*: this reading will allow us to develop the theoretical background
- 3) *On the happy life*: this is one of Seneca's fuller essays

The best texts to use are the Loeb volumes (with Latin and English on facing pages). For the first two readings we will need vol. 3 of the *Epistulae Morales* in the Loeb Classical Library 119, published by Harvard University Press (Seneca's letters are a great read, actually, so you may want to consider buying all three volumes of his letters). For the third session we will need vol. 2 of his *Moral Essays*, Loeb Classical Library 254.

Gems of Cicero: A Selection of His Speeches and Essays—Walter Nicgorski

Session I Reading, *Pro Archia Poeta* (In Defense of Archias the Poet), *Pro Sestio* (On Behalf of Sestius), and a few selections likely from *De Oratore* (On the Orator), these selections to be distributed a week before the seminar.

Session II Reading, *De Senectute* (On Old Age).

Session III Reading, *De Amicitia* (On Friendship).

Comment on readings and availability: the readings are brief, especially those for sessions II and III which could be read in the course of the week of seminar. Most of these are widely available here and there on-line. One site that has the English translation of all these readings is <http://oll.libertyfund.org>. With the exception of *Pro Sestio*, book-editions of these works are widely available. Some of you might wish to consider investing in Latin/English Loeb Classical editions of these works (especially for *De Senectute* and *De Amicitia* which are in one Loeb volume, about \$28).

A suggestion on preparation: it is useful but not necessary to read a biography of Cicero before the seminar. I suggest you choose either the recent (2001) one (*Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician*) by Anthony Everit, or Elizabeth Rawson's more scholarly and restrained book, *Cicero: A Portrait* (use, if possible, the second edition which appeared in 1983). Some of you might find it interesting to consult Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* for one of the first biographies of Cicero, found there in Plutarch's comparison of Cicero and Demosthenes, the legendary Greek orator.

In the context of our overall 2012 symposium, I must note that Montaigne was much engaged by Cicero's life and writings; on the whole, he thought Cicero failed to appreciate how ambition was in tension with solitude, and he had no taste for Cicero's orations. However, Cicero's skepticism and his self-reflectiveness evident in his prefaces to his philosophical works and in his letters left their mark on Montaigne.

WHO: PROGRAM FACULTY, ALUMNI/AE, FRIENDS, AND FAMILY
WHAT: ELEVENTH ANNUAL PLS/GP SUMMER SYMPOSIUM
WHEN: JUNE 3-8, 2012
WHERE: NOTRE DAME CAMPUS
WHY: TO SHARE BOOKS, REFLECTIONS, FRIENDSHIP

Housing will be available in an air-conditioned dormitory on campus. The price for a single is \$50 per night. The price for a double is \$38 per person/per night; if coming as a couple, you can select couple for \$76/night.

We need to collect a registration fee to cover costs for the week. The cost will be \$500 for the week, or \$750 for two. We will try to make arrangements for those eager to attend but for whom the registration fee would be an obstacle. After April 30, the rate will increase to \$600 per participant.

If you would like us to reserve a space for you at the 2012 PLS Summer Symposium, please fill out the online registration form on this website. [<http://conferences.nd.edu/> Click the REGISTRATION tab and find the event in the list.] The course is open to alumni/ae as well as friends of the Program, so if you have a friend who would jump at the chance to be involved, feel free to share this information.

ALL SOULS MASS
Alumni Hall Chapel
November 9, 2011
Rev. Nicholas Ayo, C.S.C.

We gather this evening to remember those who have died among us in the Program of Liberal Studies and who we believe are still among us. Our lives are entangled with those we have known, whether in life or in death. The mystery of God made flesh among us is an entanglement with us, and we are entangled with God and each other. In Quantum Physics there is a strange phenomenon called “entanglement,” which has shown that minute particles that have been in a relationship with each other continue somehow to mirror each other’s movement even when separated by great distances. We may not fully understand entanglement in science or in religion, but we know that we are tangled lovers in this world, stepping on each other’s toes as we dance, and sometimes dancing in perfect harmony. My own imagination of Purgatory is our make-up lessons in dancing school, so that we can enter the great dance and get it right at last. That entanglement and that involvement seems to me what Jesus meant when he said he was the Way.

Jesus also said he was the Truth. We know that we live in an “information age.” Everything living and non-living seems to be reducible to information, whether genetic code or bits and bytes that allow text and

omnivorous data, image and sound — whatever. And yet, we are drowning in information. We have more dots than we could possibly handle, unless we are given somehow to connect the dots. That connecting of the dots in the avalanche of information is the pursuit of truth. We need more meaning rather than yet more data.

And finally, Jesus said he was not only the Way (entanglement) the Truth (the connection and the meaning) but also the Life. In the Eucharist we believe we are given the Bread of Life. We believe that life is given to everyone somehow, for the Lord of Life wishes all persons to live and to live forever. The Eucharist we celebrate this evening is a Wonder-Bread, a bread that much like the elfin bread of Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* gives strength to go on with our quest, even if not satisfying our hunger. We say we believe in life after death. Suppose this Bread of Life enables us to pass through death. We do not believe so much in souls without bodies in a life after death. We believe in the resurrection of the body and life everlasting. And in the end, as we recognize in this memorial mass, we remain together and entangled with the Communion of Saints from in the beginning to in the ending.

OPENING CHARGE 2011
On Reading Great Books in a Postmodern Age
September 1, 2011
Thomas Stapleford

Every year, the Opening Charge gives us a chance to reflect on the goals of PLS and the nature of a liberal arts education. Now the faculty, who have had the opportunity to attend these talks for many years, know that Opening Charges often fall into a standard pattern. The lecturer begins by describing a certain challenge to the ideals of a liberal education. This seems relatively innocuous at first, but as the lecturer begins to elucidate the full nature of the threat, the atmosphere becomes more foreboding, and a palpable unease grows among the audience. Then, just when students are about to flee the room in panic, ready to fling themselves on the mercies of Business or Engineering, the lecturer executes a brilliant intellectual maneuver, shatters the forces of self-doubt and skepticism, and sends the audience forth in a crescendo of triumph for another year of reading great books.

So runs the standard narrative. Unfortunately, now that I've told you about it, it's much less likely that it will work! That's especially true when, as you all know, I'm currently serving as the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Program, so if I actually did convince many of you to drop PLS, I'd just be creating more paperwork for myself. Naturally, that's not going to happen.

That said, I'd like you to entertain the possibility that the typical pattern for the Opening Charge might nonetheless be broken this evening. In fact, I can tell you with complete sincerity that it will be broken, because I believe – and I'm going to try to persuade you – that some of the core rationales once used to promote a great books education are no longer viable. So the task we are facing this evening is to see if

we can reconstruct a different framework for understanding the goals of a PLS education. Or perhaps to put it more accurately, I'll try to construct such a framework, and we'll see what you make of it.

But first some context: PLS can rightly claim a lineage that stretches through the classical college curriculum of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before winding its way backwards to the medieval university, and perhaps even to the educational ideals of ancient Greece. Nonetheless, although reading great books has been a central component of liberal education for over a thousand years, the ways in which those books have been studied, the structure of the curriculum in which they were embedded, and the goals behind their inclusion have all shifted substantially. Today, for example, discussion-based seminars seem like the natural and obvious vehicle for a liberal education, but in truth rote memorization and lengthy lectures dominated undergraduate life for many centuries.

We can date the emergence of the modern great books seminar to 1919, the year John Erskine launched "General Honours," a two-course sequence at Columbia University featuring student-driven discussion of great books drawn from a common reading list.¹ It was a novel proposal in light of the typical approach to undergraduate education, and not surprisingly, Erskine found the Columbia faculty less than enthusiastic. But his persistence eventually exhausted the opposition. "Worn out by futile talk," he later recalled, the curricular committee gave

¹ My history of Great Books programs is drawn from the sources given in the bibliographic essay at the end of this paper.

in, granting permission “in a tone which seemed to say, ‘And my God have mercy on your soul!’”²

The reticence of Columbia’s faculty paled in comparison to the epic struggle that erupted at the University of Chicago in the 1930s when its new president, Robert M. Hutchins, then all of thirty years old, sought to use Erskine’s course as a model for restructuring the entire undergraduate curriculum at Chicago. The arguments over Hutchins’ proposed reforms engulfed campus life during the early 1930s, spilling over from faculty meetings to lecture halls, packed public debates, and seemingly endless editorials in the student newspaper. Over the ensuing two decades of heated debate, the Chicago faculty blocked or repealed most of the proposed curricular changes, leaving behind a Core Curriculum that bore only a passing resemblance to Hutchins’ original vision. However, the Chicago experience led to the founding of great books programs across the United States, including at St. John’s College in Annapolis and here at Notre Dame, and to a broader effort to popularize the reading of great books as part of adult education – more about that later.

Just as at Chicago, the arrival of a great books program at Notre Dame became a source of controversy, though now the fears were of a different sort. In 1559 Pope Paul IV had established the Index of Prohibited Books as part of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and over the next several centuries, numerous stalwarts of future great books programs spent at least some time on the list: Copernicus, Kepler, Bacon, Montaigne, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Pascal, Flaubert, Rousseau, Hobbes, Locke, Machiavelli, Mill, Swift, and of course Galileo.³ (So much for Seminar IV, huh?)

² John Erskine, *My Life as a Teacher*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1948), 168.
³ Jesús Martínez de Bujanda, Marcella Richter, and Université de Sherbrooke. Centre d’études

Many of these authors remained on the list into the twentieth century,⁴ and thus it’s not surprising that when Notre Dame’s President John J. Cavanaugh sought to establish a great books program in 1950, opponents criticized the inclusion of so much heretical and morally dubious literature. At that time, the Notre Dame library kept many of the Program’s core texts locked behind a metal grille, and until the abolition of the Index in 1966 all students in the Program had to obtain special permission from the university president in order to do their seminar reading.

If reading great books was radical in the 1950s, by the 1980s the pendulum had swung in the opposite direction. Faculty will likely remember the 1980s debates over Stanford’s required course on “Western Culture,” which was criticized for its exclusive focus on great texts written by white, largely European, males. The conflict made national news in 1987 when Rev. Jesse Jackson led Stanford students on a protest march through campus chanting “Hey, hey, ho, ho, Western Culture’s got to go!”⁵ Predictably, the march provoked a conservative backlash and became an iconic moment for arguments about the value of studying the traditional Western canon in a pluralistic society.

Despite these challenges, great books programs have persisted, even thrived. Some opposition has withered in the face of a changing intellectual climate: the Index of Prohibited Books, thankfully, is unlikely to

de la Renaissance, *Index librorum prohibitorum: 1600-1966* (Librairie Droz, 2002).

⁴ Those lasting into the twentieth century included Bacon, Montaigne, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Pascal, Flaubert, Rouseeau, Hobbes, Locke, and Mill. In some cases (e.g. Kant) only certain works were prohibited; in others (e.g. Hobbes) the entire corpus was placed on the list.

⁵ Richard Bernstein, “In Dispute on Bias, Stanford is Likely to Alter Western Culture Program,” *New York Times*, 19 January 1988.

be revived. In other cases, to borrow Aristotelian terminology, the critiques have struck the accidents of great books programs without harming their substance. Whatever the merits of the Stanford protests, for example, much of the controversy could ultimately be understood as a debate about what should count as a great book, a longstanding topic that goes back to the first explicit attempts to compile lists of “great” books at the end of the nineteenth century. Meanwhile, the very longevity of great books programs has blunted the most common critique, namely that reading great books is impractical. PLS alone has a sixty-year track record that has produced an extraordinary group of alumni working in nearly every field, including areas well outside the humanities such as computer science, finance, marketing, investment banking, medicine, and physics.

As we embark on a new year in PLS, therefore, we can take a certain comfort in this history. Still we should not be misled. As I noted earlier, great books programs based on student-driven discussion of classic texts are a comparatively new phenomenon, really emerging only in the twentieth century. Over a longer time period, the history of liberal education reveals major changes in pedagogy and curricula; why should we assume that great books seminars form a stable end point?

Perhaps we shouldn’t. There have, after all, been major changes in intellectual life over the last century. Indeed, it’s my conviction that the view of human reason—the view of cognition and rationality—that guided the Great Books movement in the mid-twentieth century differs substantially from the view that now pervades the contemporary university. The question we face, therefore, is whether this shift is one of those major ruptures that demands a fundamental reconceptualization of a liberal education, including how and why one reads great books, or if it will join the ranks of those

critiques which miss their mark, skim the surface, or fall harmlessly to the wayside.

The intellectual shift that I have in mind is the rise of postmodernism, especially in philosophy and what we call hermeneutics—i.e., the theory and practice of interpretation. Now I realize “hermeneutics” is a terrible word to be using at 7:30 on a Thursday evening. But bear with me – sometimes arcane words are actually useful. “Postmodernism” poses additional problems, having been both overused and ill-defined. Indeed, if this were an academic essay, I would have to hedge it with so many footnotes and qualifications that I would hesitate to mention postmodernism at all. But we can be more informal tonight. So, for roughly the next thirty minutes, when you hear “postmodernism” you can think of the following two interrelated claims.

First, postmodernists view interpretation as an act performed on a text. It is not something constructed by the text on its own; interpretation always comes from outside. Whenever we encounter a text we must necessarily view it through some kind of hermeneutical lens: a set of formal or informal rules that tell us how to read the text, how to make sense of it, weigh evidence, resolve potential tensions, and so forth. These rules will constrain the meaning of the text to some degree. However, different hermeneutical lenses—different modes of interpretation, if you will—may produce distinct, even conflicting, meanings. For example, consider the many ways in which we can read Scripture. During the patristic period, Christians developed a mode of Scriptural interpretation in which any Biblical passage could be read on four levels, by examining its historical sense, its moral sense, its allegorical sense, and its anagogical sense. Today, by contrast, Biblical scholars treat the Scriptures the way they would treat any other historical texts, as documents whose meaning can only be

understood in a rich web of other contextual evidence. Or again, consider the ancient practice of *lectio divina*, the prayerful meditation on Scripture, which provides an entirely different way of engaging the Bible. These different modes of interpretation can lead to distinct, potentially conflicting, meanings – just think of the very different ways that Christians have interpreted the flood story in Genesis, for example, or the creation account. The crucial point, though, is that Scripture itself cannot dictate how it will be read. The choice of interpretive modes comes from outside, from the readers and the particular communities or traditions in which they are embedded. As a result, texts cannot control their own meaning, and conflicting interpretations are inevitable, even predictable.

Second, postmodernists argue that our irreconcilable conflicts over how to interpret texts are but a limited case of a more fundamental problem: irreconcilable conflicts over different ideas about reason itself, different ideas about what counts as a “rational” inference, judgment, or behavior – and why. Frequently our ideas about reason are linked in a systematic way, as one might find explicitly in the work of certain philosophers such as Aristotle, Bacon, or Descartes. (Think of Descartes’ *Discourse on Method*, for example.) Thus it is appropriate to talk about systems of rationality, as in the Aristotelian system, the Cartesian system, and so forth.

Postmodernists argue that there are multiple systems of rationality, multiple and competing ways of defining what counts as proper reasoning. But here’s the problem: If there are multiple definitions of reason, how can we make a “rational” choice between them? What we are debating is the very nature of reason itself. A strong postmodernist will argue that there is no way out of this dilemma: any choice between competing systems of rationality must necessarily be arbitrary, or at least not

determined by reason but by biography, culture, etc.

When I stated before that postmodernism pervades the contemporary university, I didn’t mean, of course, that all faculty accept these two claims. Indeed, I will add my own caveats later. But these critiques have proven so powerful that they have altered the very framework for philosophical discussion of knowledge and rationality. Today, every serious scholar in the humanities and much of the social sciences must grapple with postmodern analysis. For that reason, though not all academics are postmodernists, we nonetheless live in a postmodern age.

Despite the dominance of postmodernism, though, few academics have given serious thought as to how postmodernism ought to affect the structure and objectives of a university education. Of those who have, only the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has turned that analysis into an important critique of great books programs. Conveniently, as many of you probably know, MacIntyre is a leading Catholic philosopher and an emeritus professor in the philosophy department here at Notre Dame. That makes his critique even more salient for us, I think, since it comes from within the family, so to speak. With that in mind, for the remainder of my talk I’m going to focus on MacIntyre’s assessment of contemporary higher education in light of postmodernism and its relevance for Great Books programs.⁶ MacIntyre largely accepts the two major claims of postmodernism outlined earlier

⁶ My discussion of MacIntyre is based on the following two books, especially the first (which contains the critique of Great Books programs): Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose justice? Which rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

with one important modification. Indeed, for MacIntyre, contemporary moral and ethical discussion is almost a living demonstration of the truth of postmodernism. Moral philosophers repeatedly debate certain problems or issues, but their discussion is ultimately fruitless because it founders on fundamental conflicts about the proper basis for moral reasoning, including the relevant principles, evidence, and forms of inquiry. Moral philosophy thus embodies conflicts between systems of rationality which, as we stated earlier, cannot be resolved by appealing to a fictitious neutral standard of reason since it's the nature of reason itself that is under debate.

MacIntyre is not a relativist, though. First, it's possible for a system of rationality to fail on its own terms, to encounter fatal internal contradictions or prove unable to account for certain phenomena and thereby to collapse of its own accord. Furthermore, such a collapse may be hastened if a rival system can offer satisfactory solutions to these dilemmas and even (from its own standpoint) explain why the original system must necessarily fail at just these very points. Ultimately, systems of rationality aim to explain and bring order to the world; those systems that demonstrate robust and far-reaching explanatory power are thus able to triumph over their rivals, though such a triumph may be long in coming and necessarily only provisional.

In MacIntyre's view, this is precisely the kind of transformation that occurred when Aristotle's earth-centered cosmos was supplanted by a Newtonian universe in which the planets revolved around the sun, held in orbit by gravity. A committed Aristotelian would have been unconvinced by Newton's account of planetary motion, or at least unconvinced insofar as he remained an *Aristotelian*. Newton's famous book, *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, approached the natural world in a manner foreign to Aristotle's own

procedure, ignored many of Aristotle's most salient questions, and created new problems (such as the cause of gravitational force) that had not previously existed. However, Aristotelian cosmology had been under increasing strain and driven into repeated ad hoc modifications, whereas Newton provided a coherent explanation that suggested a whole range of further applications. It should be no surprise, then, that Newton's work seemed attractive. But the promise of Newtonian cosmology could only be pursued by leaving Aristotle behind, for Newton supplied more than just a few isolated propositions about the motions of bodies; he developed new concepts of time, space, and matter plus a systematic way of studying the natural world with its own objectives, principles, methods, and guidelines for weighing evidence—in short, a new system of rationality. (Seniors may remember that Newton's *Principia* actually contains a section titled "Rules for Philosophizing.") What we can see in this episode, therefore, is the demise of one system of rationality and the rise of another.

Now there are two important points to keep in mind here. First, one can only compare entire systems of rationality, not just isolated propositions or ideas. It's impossible to debate whether an earth-centered cosmos is more "rational" than a sun-centered cosmos in the absence of a shared set of rules that define what constitutes reason. Or again, a Kantian might challenge Hume's account of free will, but the critique will have little effect on a committed Humean because the two share quite different conceptions of the proper approach to philosophical and moral reasoning. Instead, the Kantian system must be pitted against the Humean system as a whole. This general principle about philosophical arguments suggests that we should focus our intellectual efforts on articulating and expanding systems of rationality, testing their limits and pressing them continually against new challenges. For that reason, MacIntyre prefers to talk

about “traditions” of rationality rather than what I have called “systems,” because tradition implies a dynamic change over time in which a given form of rationality is elaborated, modified, and developed.

Second, rival systems or traditions of rationality can only be evaluated by those who are, so to speak, bi-lingual—those who have been able to enter into both traditions and understand them from the inside. A Hegelian who criticizes Aquinas’s system of rationality on Hegelian terms is doomed to failure, for Aquinas would have rejected Hegel’s principles of reason. Instead, the partisan of Hegel must be able to enter into Aquinas’s system, discover where it fails by its own standards, and then explain this very weakness from a Hegelian perspective. The ideal intellectual in this model must therefore be adept at two very different tasks: he or she must be deeply trained in a particular tradition yet also able to set that training aside and enter as a novice into a rival tradition, grasping its own particular modes of reasoning and seeing the world through its standpoint.

So how does the contemporary university fare at producing such intellectuals? Quite poorly, in MacIntyre’s estimation. Though universities are filled with partisans of competing traditions of rationality and though we live in a postmodern age where such rivalry should be seen as inevitable, the university itself is structured along very different lines. Rather than being grouped by intellectual tradition, teaching and research are organized by a mixture of topic or method: history, chemistry, biology, philosophy, theology, literature, psychology, and so forth. The effect is something like an encyclopedia: You want to learn about physics, go to that department; about sociology, come over here. The analogy between the university and an encyclopedia is appropriate in MacIntyre’s mind, for the structure of the contemporary university reflects what he calls the Encyclopedic

tradition of rationality, named for its paradigmatic work, the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published from 1875 – 1889.

In contrast to the postmodern view of intellectual life, in which the world is full of competing systems of rationality, the Encyclopedic tradition presupposes a single, universal form of human reason. In this perspective, all error and intellectual conflict arise from ignorance of fact or from prejudice that taints the mind and hence hinders reason. The goal of intellectual inquiry is therefore to purge the mind of prejudice and gather empirical facts. Thus the underlying sentiment behind the naïve infatuation with interdisciplinary research that sometimes affects the modern university, i.e., the unspoken hope that if we only could gather enough people who knew enough facts and were free of ideological bias all problems would fade in the blazing light of unbound Reason.

The Encyclopedic viewpoint governs the institutional organization of the university but also its system for evaluating scholarship and training students, all of which are structured by subject matter. Students and faculty alike are herded into departments which are formally treated as though they have a unified rational framework. In practice, of course, things look much different: many, perhaps most, faculty would contest the Encyclopedic view of reason, and a student who selects of series of randomly chosen courses across the university is bound to encounter conflicting systems of rationality, even within, maybe especially within, a single department. There is thus a deep incoherence in the modern university between its intellectual content—what faculty write and students learn in specific courses—and its institutional structure.

MacIntyre proposes to sweep all that away: Faculty would be organized by their

respective traditions of rationality, forming institutional units or perhaps even separate universities. One can imagine a department of Thomistic studies, for example, staffed by faculty working in the tradition of Thomas Aquinas. Students would enter as apprentices within a given tradition, learning its particular skills, habits, principles, and modes of reasoning. Simultaneously, they would begin to explore other traditions in a structured way so as to grasp the challenges they pose and their weaknesses. In MacIntyre's terms, the university would become an "arena of conflict" in which rival traditions "con[duct] their own systematic enquiries while at the same time engaging in systematic controversy."⁷

Such is the ideal of intellectual life in a postmodern age. Unfortunately, from MacIntyre's perspective, great books programs fail to meet this ideal; indeed, they replicate the flaws of the contemporary university itself by failing to make a particular tradition of rationality the explicit bedrock of their pedagogy. It's worth quoting him at length here:

It is not of course that [classic] texts are not important reading for anyone with pretensions to education. It is rather that there are systematically different and incompatible ways of reading and appropriating such texts and that until the problems of how they are to be read have received an answer, such lists do not rise to the status of a concrete proposal. Or to make the same point in another way: proponents of this type of Great Books curriculum often defend it as a way of restoring to us and our students what they speak of as *our* cultural tradition; but we are in fact the inheritors, if that is the right word, of a number of rival and incompatible traditions and there is

no way of either selecting a list of books to be read or advancing a determinate account of how they are to be read, interpreted, and elucidated which does not involve taking a partisan stand in the conflict of traditions.⁸

Great Books programs do not overtly align themselves with any specific form of rationality, and that seems especially true for Great Books seminars wherein students drive the discussions and faculty adopt a more indirect role. But from MacIntyre's perspective, and indeed from the postmodern perspective, any list of books, and any way of reading and studying those books, necessarily immerses one in a particular form of rationality. Indeed, the denial of any need to identify with a particular intellectual tradition seems to place one in the same stance as the contemporary university, i.e., as an adherent to the Encyclopedic belief in a singular, universal form of reason.

Is MacIntyre correct? Do Great Books seminars belong to the Encyclopedic tradition, the tradition which, like Aristotelian cosmology, seems to be crumbling in the face of inherent tensions and the sheer persistence of "rival and incompatible" traditions of rationality, in other words, in the face of the hallmarks of the postmodern age?

We can answer that question in part—though only in part—by looking at the symbolic climax to the Great Books movement of the twentieth century: the publication of the fifty-four volumes of *The Great Books of the Western World* in 1952. Even as Robert Hutchins and his ally, Mortimer Adler, were battling the University of Chicago faculty over their undergraduate curriculum in the 1930s and 1940s, they were convinced that discussions of great books should spread outside

⁷ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 231, 232.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 228.

university classrooms. But that goal required a readily-available collection of classic texts, many of which were out of print. Their solution was to package the books as a set that was eventually published, ironically enough, by Encyclopedia Britannica. (Score one for MacIntyre.)

Having constructed this enormous collection, Hutchins and Adler were faced with the very problem MacIntyre identified: How should people go about reading it? “The Editors decided against any prefaces or explanatory apparatus;” rather, “the books should speak for themselves, and the reader...decide for himself.”⁹ Still, that left the practical problem of how to begin. Reading straight through would make a certain sense, since the set had been arranged partly by temporal sequence. Things started off with a bang with Homer’s *Illiad* and the *Odyssey*. But the next volume moved to Greek drama—Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes—and not just select plays but the entire corpus of each author’s extant work: seven plays from Aeschylus, seven from Sophocles, a whopping nineteen from Euripides, and eleven from Aristophanes, comprising over 640 pages of tiny double-column print. Not exactly a promising beginning, even for a lover of the classics.

Recognizing the need for an alternate approach, Hutchins and Adler provided a reading plan that walked the reader through all fifty-four volumes in a more varied sequence that mixed genres and chronology. Yet this too was daunting, requiring ten years to complete, and held no clear promise of catching the reader’s interest or providing a logical framework for study. It was at this point that Adler conceived a grand plan to create a guide to the Great Books. It would be like an index, only better. More than a

⁹ Robert M. Hutchins, *The Great Conversation*, The Great Books of the Western World, vol. 1 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 85, xxv.

mere collection of terms or phrases, it would be a synthetic guide to the topics that wove their way through what Hutchins and Adler called the Great Conversation. It would be...the Syntopicon.

To create the Syntopicon, Adler distilled the Western canon into 102 Great Ideas, ranging from Angel to World by way of Dialectic, Happiness, Oligarchy, and Temperance. Each of the Great Ideas was further subdivided into topics and subtopics: Thus under “Wisdom,” one could discover the nature of Wisdom, its relationship to virtue and happiness, the steps to wisdom, and the praise of folly, as well as more specific subtopics.¹⁰ Each entry in the Syntopicon opened with an introductory essay that, as Hutchins explained in typical Encyclopedic fashion, “argues no case and presents no point of view.”¹¹ That was followed by an extensive list of references categorized by topic and subtopic. In this way, the editors explained, “the *Syntopicon* helps the reader to begin reading *in* the great books on any subject or subjects in which he is interested, and to follow one idea or one theme through the books from beginning to end.”¹² Thus those wishing to learn about “foreign policy,” for example, could be directed to the appropriate pages of Hegel, the Federalist Papers, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Plato, Herodotus, Augustine, Aristophanes, Deuteronomy, Virgil, assorted Shakespearean plays, and *Moby Dick*, among many others.¹³

It’s hard to overstate how bizarre the Syntopicon can seem at times today. Undoubtedly there’s value in a topical index

¹⁰ Mortimer J. Adler and William Gorman, eds., *The Great Ideas: A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World*, vol. I, Great Books of the Western World, vol. 2 (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1952), 1109.

¹¹ Hutchins, *Great Conversation*, xxv.

¹² *Ibid.*, 86.

¹³ Adler and Gorman, *Great Ideas: A Syntopicon*, I:660.

to classic texts. Yet it seems almost incredible that one could use a single, detailed philosophical framework (for that is what the Syntopicon supplies) to organize almost three thousand years of intellectual history without gross distortion. But that's clearly what Adler intended: in contrast to the postmodern view of intellectual history as clashing systems of rationality, Adler declared that the Syntopicon "reveals the unity and continuity of the western tradition."¹⁴ High theory aside, the Syntopicon seems to run into problems even on a pragmatic level. It's hard to believe, for example, that anyone would want to read well over one hundred references on the "force of the passions," or that one would gain much of substance by comparing short extracts from St. Paul's first letter to Timothy, Aristotle's *History of Animals*, Kant's *General Introduction to the Metaphysic of Morals*, and Chaucer's *Manciple's Tale*.¹⁵

Indeed, the Syntopicon is so ripe for satire, that it would be easy to dismiss it as just a peculiar cultural relic. But that would be a disservice both to us and to the past, for there's no question that Hutchins and Adler took the project extremely seriously. The Syntopicon required an enormous amount of work: originally slated to take two years and \$60,000, the project eventually employed 120 staff members and cost almost one million dollars.¹⁶ Adler hoped that the Syntopicon would "take its place beside the dictionary and the encyclopedia in a triad of fundamental reference works."¹⁷ Likewise, Hutchins predicted that "when the history of the intellectual life of this century is written, the *Syntopicon* will be regarded as one of the landmarks in it."¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid., I:xii.

¹⁵ Ibid., I:429.

¹⁶ Alex Beam, *A Great Idea at the Time: The Rise, Fall, and Curious Afterlife of the Great Books* (New York: Public Affairs, 2008), 91.

¹⁷ Ibid., I:xii.

¹⁸ Hutchins, *Great Conversation*, xxvi.

Such statements seem ridiculous today, when few people have even heard of the Syntopicon, but that only indicates the vast intellectual chasm that separates our postmodern age from the view that guided Hutchins and Adler, namely the Encyclopedic tradition. In the framework of the Syntopicon, great books are great because they contain the Great Ideas. These Ideas are discrete units that can be plucked from the books and compared in isolation much as one might pluck wooden blocks from a set of bins and line them up on a table. One can, in this view, assess Aquinas's ideas about just laws by reading a few relevant passages from the *Summa* without worrying about the larger system of Thomistic thought or the particular tradition of reason and argumentation in which the *Summa* was embedded. Great Books seminars offer a neutral proving ground in which the Great Ideas may be pitted against one another, leading to their refinement or abandonment even while sharpening the intellects of participants. Intellectual history itself was one grand Great Books seminar – the Great Conversation, as Hutchins and Adler called it – and the Syntopicon was intended to be a neutral summary of its progress. The Syntopicon, "indicates where we are," Hutchins explained, "where the agreements and disagreements lie; where the problems are; where the work has to be done."¹⁹ It's no coincidence that the editors of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* understood their project in very similar terms. In Adler's description, an encyclopedia was the "basic reference work in the sphere of fact" while the Syntopicon would become the "basic reference work in the sphere of ideas."²⁰

In a postmodern age, unfortunately, a view of Great Books programs as neutral debating

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Adler and Gorman, *Great Ideas: A Syntopicon*, I:xiii.

clubs for the Great Ideas is no longer viable. But is this the only way of understanding PLS, or even the Great Books movement as a whole?

Consider the PLS curriculum. In Philosophical Inquiry, for example, students do more than confront a series of discrete arguments about God, cognition, and the world; rather, they encounter fundamentally different ways of doing philosophy, including different modes of reasoning, argumentation, analysis, interpretation, and habits of mind and life. Likewise, in the Bible tutorial students grapple with different, and often competing, hermeneutical approaches. Similar experiences characterize students' immersion in political theory, history, ethics, science, music, theology, literature, and so forth. Moreover, because PLS courses build upon one another, students can begin to synthesize material across disciplinary boundaries. Thus an initial exposure to Aquinas's treatment of God in Philosophical Inquiry forms the foundation for reading more of the *Summa* in Seminar III, for exploring Aquinas's efforts to integrate natural philosophy and Scriptural interpretation in Scientific Inquiry, and for grasping his theory of cognition in *Metaphysics & Epistemology*. As students progress through the curriculum, therefore, they repeatedly encounter different systems of rationality that come to be recognized as such – i.e., as conflicting and competing ways of reading texts, ordering experiences, and defining reason itself.

At this point, it might be tempting to view PLS as an introductory survey of traditions of rationality designed to permit its graduates to make an informed choice between rivals. But that view is too naïve, for the breadth of PLS means that the grounding in any given set of traditions is not sufficiently deep to permit the kind of extensive comparison envisioned by

MacIntyre. Is there then another way of understanding the Program's goals?

Consider the Great Books seminar. Typically, the first encounter with any great book is disconcerting. At times, as with Aeschylus or Julian of Norwich, it's the shock of a culture or genre of writing that may be very different from our own. In other cases, such as Kant or Nietzsche, the complexity of the work or its unfamiliar mode of analysis may overwhelm us. Or again, as with Freud or Machiavelli, perhaps we find the author's claims unnerving. As we delve further into the work and discuss it among ourselves, however, it begins to shed its alien nature. We start to see the underlying logic, grasp its internal rules, assumptions, and expectations, and sketch the outlines of a worldview very different from our own.

What I am describing of course is the process of entering into a rival tradition of rationality and coming to understand it from the inside. Though MacIntyre emphasizes the conflict between traditions, he also recognizes that the model of intellectual life he envisions requires its participants to share a certain set of competencies that enable movement from one tradition to another, that in fact make understanding rival traditions possible. Again, it's worth quoting him at length here:

[A]lthough no text can be read without rival possibilities of interpretation arising, and no text can be taught without some interpretative possibilities being favored over others, it does not follow and it is not true that students cannot be taught to read scrupulously and carefully in order to possess a text in a way which enables them to arrive at independent interpretive judgments, so that they can on occasion protect themselves against too facile an acceptance of—or indeed too facile a rejection of—their teachers'

interpretations. And on the importance of teaching students to read in this way, adherents of rival and conflicting views ought to be able to agree, if only because it is only by means of such reading that rival interpreters are able to identify what it is about which they are in conflict.²¹

I would be hard pressed to imagine a better forum for developing such aptitude than the Great Books seminars, especially when coupled with the guided training of PLS tutorials.

I'm suggesting, therefore, that a core objective of PLS is developing students' abilities to recognize distinct traditions of rationality and come to understand them through the careful reading of key texts. This view of the Program survives MacIntyre's critique and offers a robust pedagogical philosophy even for a postmodern age. But we can say more.

As every PLS student comes to understand, an education in the Program is about more than acquiring a certain set of interpretive skills, since entering into another tradition through reading a great book must necessarily transform one's own self. The process is not unlike travel: When one is immersed in a sufficiently foreign culture, one is always struck immediately by what is different, unfamiliar, and alien. Gradually, we become accustomed to these traits, perhaps seeing their benefits or at least understanding their context. As a result, when we return home, our own culture seems altered: what was once obvious and unremarkable now appears contingent, valuable, or perhaps distressing. No one can enter into a rival intellectual tradition without coming to see one's own tradition in a new light.

To enter a rival tradition, therefore, is to open ourselves to transformation. As such, it requires more than a certain set of technical skills; it demands what Aristotle called a *hexis* (ἕξις), or what the scholastics translated as *habitus*, that is, a combination of practical knowledge and disposition, including intellectual and moral virtues. It requires charity to make sense of what initially seems bizarre and courage to accept vulnerability, to set aside what one "knows" or deeply believes in order to enter fully, if only provisionally, into an alternate way of understanding and thereby to open one's self to potential change. No great book can be read authentically without risk.

This habitus must be present in the students in some raw form for them to even enter the Program, but it is carefully cultivated and shaped through the training that PLS provides. Such is the way we should understand the "liberal" part of the Program of Liberal Studies. In the Encyclopedic view, liberal education freed individuals from prejudice or bias, stripping away belief and cultural tradition in the hope that pure Reason, combined with empirical facts, would produce consensus and intellectual progress. By contrast, in my depiction, reading the great books frees us from the false idol of Reason without abandoning rationality. It does not dissolve intellectual conflict but teaches the combination of humility and insight into ourselves and others which makes genuine intellectual discussion possible and hence genuine intellectual growth.

That point deserves further elaboration. MacIntyre's portrayal of intellectual life in the postmodern age emphasizes conflict: rival traditions warring with one another and separated by fundamental differences. Yet he, too, recognizes that conflict cannot be the whole story, that we must not be "blind...to the importance of those large areas of agreement without which conflict and disagreement themselves would

²¹ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 231-232.

necessarily be sterile.”²² Though the initial reading of a great book produces some kind of shock at the unfamiliar, it would not be a *great* book if it did not also speak deeply to our own lives and experiences in ways that we ultimately find intelligible. To return again to the analogy of travel, though we are struck first by the novel and unfamiliar, the commonalities run more broadly. To read the great books, then, is to develop a solidarity with the past, a true communion that neither elides differences nor overstates them. It is precisely that communion that allows us to truly learn from the past. Postmodern intellectual life is thus about discovering both difference and unity, both of which must be understood clearly in order to gain from encountering a rival tradition.

To this point, we have been speaking of the relationship between readers and books, but of course PLS is not just about reading great books; it’s about reading them together. A moment’s reflection should persuade you that everything I have said about our relationship to great books applies to our relationships with each other in seminar. Just as we encounter the strange and unfamiliar in the great books, so too do we find it in seminar: “You really think *that*?!” Just as we confront rival systems of rationality in the great books, so too do we find them in our discussions, however inchoate. And just as reading the great books properly can create an authentic communion with the past, so too can a proper seminar create an authentic communion among us, despite the real and important differences that remain.

That thought brings us back to Hutchins, Adler, and the Great Books movement of the twentieth century. Though proponents of the Great Books urged reading them in order to encounter the Great Ideas, they also insisted on the value of the movement for building a genuine intellectual community capable of

sustaining a democratic society. It was the need for community that drove the insistence on a common reading list; it was community that necessitated discussing the books, not merely studying them in isolation; and it was the democratic character of that community that led to minimizing the role of faculty in seminars, to insist that there would be no designated authority who offered the one, “right” interpretation. As Hutchins explained in his introduction to *The Great Books of the Western World*, “The task of the future is the creation of a community” that could produce “better citizens and better men.”²³ Reading and discussing the great books made that possible, Hutchins argued, in part because those books “draw out the elements of our common human nature, because they connect man with man.”²⁴

Hutchins and Adler understood the basis of this community in Encyclopedic terms: the great books provided a “common stock of ideas,” “common human standards,” and a common “tradition.”²⁵ I have described a rather different basis, a habitus that enables one to enter and understand an unfamiliar perspective, to encounter the other, whether in the Great Books or in conversation, in an authentic manner that allows for true intellectual discussion and growth. The theoretical framework through which I view Great Books seminars is thus different from that of Hutchins and Adler. But I think we share similar objectives. Several years ago, a PLS senior double-majoring in Theology explained her education this way: “Theology taught me what it means to be a Catholic in the twenty-first century. PLS taught me what it means to be human.” I think that gets it exactly right. PLS doesn’t give us a definition of what it means to be human in a

²² Ibid., 231.

²³ Hutchins, *Great Conversation*, 30, 31.

²⁴ Robert M. Hutchins, *The higher learning in America* (New Haven: Yale university press, 1936), 77.

²⁵ Hutchins, *Great Conversation*, 30.

philosophical sense or as lines from a catechism. But it brings us face to face with the human condition, with our shared experiences of death, pain, desire, joy, suffering, love, beauty, wonder, awe, limitation, weakness, failure, destruction, violence; with the challenges we face; with the multiple, conflicting ways we have found to make sense of our experience and the world. It does, in this way, bring us into communion with each other. On that thought, I will bring my evening's reflections to an end by laying this charge upon you: go forth this year, read great books, and learn what it means to be human.

NOTE ON SOURCES

My history of Great Books programs is based on several accounts. The most accessible is Alex Beam's witty but occasionally superficial book, *A Great Idea at the Time: The Rise, Fall, and Curious Afterlife of the Great Books*. Beam's main interest is the publication and promotion of *The Great Books of the Western World*, an effort that he skewers with gusto. A more sympathetic and informative study is Tim Lacy's 2006 dissertation, "Making a Democratic Culture: The Great Books Idea, Mortimer Adler, and Twentieth Century America" (Loyola University Chicago). The best primary sources are autobiographies from several major participants, including John Erskine, Mortimer Adler, and Otto Bird (who founded PLS as the "General Program of Liberal Education"). Details about the early days of the General Program at Notre Dame and its subsequent history can be found in "Notre Dame's Program of Liberal Studies: The First Fifty Years" (2000; available on the PLS website), edited by Nicholas Ayo, Michael Crowe, and Julia Marvin.

FACULTY NEWS

Michael J. Crowe continues to teach one course each year, a PLS University Seminar titled *The Extraterrestrial Life Debate: A Historical Perspective*, which he co-teaches with Dr. Matthew Dowd of University of Notre Dame Press. He also continues to do some writing and speaking, e.g. he has given talks on the relations between Msgr. Ronald Knox and Sherlock Holmes, the subject of his most recent book (see <http://www.wessexpress.com/html/knox.html>). He and his wife have now taken to spending January in Naples, Florida.

The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded **Kent Emery, Jr.**, as Principal Investigator, a three-year grant of \$300,000 for directing the critical edition of the *Reportationes* of John Duns Scotus' lectures on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard at the University of Paris. With Notre Dame's cost-sharing contribution, the total for the collaborative research project on this key medieval thinker is \$533,774. Timothy Noone (Catholic University of America) will co-direct the edition with Professor Emery. Stephen Dumont (Dept. of Philosophy) and **Bernd Goehring** (Program of Liberal Studies) are on the editorial team, as are two doctoral candidates from the Medieval Institute, Garrett Smith and Stephen Metzger. John Duns Scotus is called the Marian Doctor because by his subtle reasoning he secured the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary against carping Scholastic objections. At the pontifical ceremony accompanying Pope Pius IX's solemn declaration of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception as a dogma of the Catholic faith in the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* (8 December 1854), the Franciscan Order was given pride of place in honor of Duns Scotus' and his followers' intrepid promotion of the doctrine. Blessed John Duns Scotus was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 20 March 1992.

Steve Fallon has been on leave this year, doing research for a book on Milton and Isaac Newton. He delivered a lecture on Milton and Kant at The Hebrew University in Jerusalem in December. Joan joined him on the trip. While Steve was meeting with scholars, she visited Tantur, Notre Dame's site in Jerusalem, and Bethlehem, in the Palestinian Occupied Territory. Together Steve and Joan visited the Old City of Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives and Gethsemane, the Sea of Galilee and Capernaum, Haifa, and the Dead Sea and Masada. Steve has posted pictures on his Facebook page. In August, he is scheduled to give a talk in Tokyo. Steve's son Sam is following in his dad's footsteps as a scholar of Renaissance literature. He is writing a dissertation on late sixteenth-century English literature, but his first publication, due out this spring, is on a certain well-known English epic poem of the seventeenth century, featuring Adam and Eve.

Bernd Goehring continues to enjoy teaching in the Program of Liberal Studies and discussing his research in medieval philosophy at Notre Dame and at national and international conferences. Last September Bernd was invited to give a talk on Henry of Ghent, the most important thinker at Paris after the death of Thomas Aquinas and before the rise of John Duns Scotus, at an international conference on *Universals in the Thirteenth Century* at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa, Italy's premier research institution, which is housed in the sixteenth-century Palazzo della Carovana built by Giorgio Vasari. In October Bernd presented some of his findings at a conference on ancient and medieval philosophy at Fordham University's Lincoln Center campus in New York City. Bernd recently had an opportunity to return to New York and

Lincoln Center for a spectacular production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* with Bryn Terfel at the Metropolitan Opera, and he is looking forward to the upcoming session on *Don Giovanni* in his Great Books seminar. This summer Bernd's wife Anna will begin her Internal Medicine residency at New York Methodist Hospital, which is affiliated with Cornell University's Weill Medical College and provides clinical training at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center.

Robert Goulding will be spending the Fall of 2012 as a Fellow of the Newberry Library, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities; and will continue on research leave in Spring and Fall of 2013, funded by the American Council of Learned Societies. He will be devoting this leave to exploring the manuscripts of the Elizabethan scientist Thomas Harriot, and writing a book on his experiments in optics (in which Harriot often anticipated by almost a century the work of scientists like Newton). Robert will also be working closely with two other scholars and a technical team at Berlin's Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, the home of a project to reconstruct electronically and online Harriot's scientific activities.

Walter Nicgorski writes: Warm greetings to graduates and friends of the Program far and wide. I face now the bittersweet experience of coming to retire from being fully active in this vocation of teacher/scholar. I am very, very grateful for the quality of students I have been privileged to teach, students quite invariably distinguished not only by brains but also by character. I am grateful for the kind of faculty community to which I have been privileged to belong these past forty-eight years at Notre Dame. Just in these late March days as I write, a volume of essays entitled *Cicero's Practical Philosophy* has appeared over my name as editor. Cicero related seminars and workshops on the horizon for 2012 will bring me to New Orleans, Dallas and Budapest. I continue especially to attend in my thinking and writing to the topics of faith and reason, notably as

manifest in the work of Leo Strauss and that of the Blessed John Paul II, of the idea and ideals of liberal education, and of the philosophical foundations of democracy chiefly as probed by the French-American neo-Thomist, Yves Simon. Perhaps, the future will call for turning some of my resources to the topic of religious liberty and its rightful extent in modern democracy.

Pierpaolo Polzonetti's New Book on 18th-Century Operatic Representations of America

Cambridge University Press has published a new book by Pierpaolo Polzonetti, assistant professor of Music as a Liberal Art in PLS. The title is *Italian Opera in the Age of the American Revolution*. In this book Polzonetti investigates how revolutionary America appeared to European audiences through their opera glasses. The operas studied in this volume are populated by gun-toting and slave-holding Quakers, handsome Native Americans, female middle-class political leaders, rebellious British soldiers, screwed servants, and generous businessmen. Most of them display an unprecedented configuration of social and gender roles, which led leading composers of the time, including Piccinni, Paisiello, Haydn and Mozart, to introduce far-reaching innovations in the musical and dramatic fabric of Italian opera. Professor Caryl Clark of the University of Toronto describes this new publication in these terms: "Rigor, learnedness, erudition, and topicality leap off the page of this richly documented and engagingly written book." This is the accomplishment of a long research project. The primary sources, almost completely unknown, have been collected both in the US and in Europe. The production process has greatly benefitted from internal and external grants (ISLA, Nanovic, NEH, ACLS), some of which have sponsored

undergraduate research assistantships. Polzonetti's former PLS undergraduate assistant, Connor Nowalk, has been recently selected in the 2011 corps of Teach for America and will teach students in the D.C. Region. Typesetting music examples of Quakers singing in Italian operas was for Connor only the beginning of his ongoing contribution to the American Revolution.

Clark Power received a Templeton Grant to study the influence of schools, religious groups, and sports participation on moral development for the next two years. He continues his work as the Co-Director of the Play Like a Champion Today® Coach and Parent Education Program. He presents workshops to coaches and parents across the country. He will be in Uganda again this May leading workshops with some student-athletes from Notre Dame. He invites interested alumni/ae to come to this year's Sports Leadership Conference June 22 to June 24 (see playlikeachampion.org for more information). Clark also continues to teach Seminars with Steve Fallon at the Center for the Homeless. He has also been working with Alesha Seroczynski's Reading for Life Program that serves juvenile offenders in South Bend. This has brought him into contact with PLS alumnus, Pete Morgan, who heads the Juvenile Justice Center.

During this past year, the second of his retirement, **Prof. Phillip Sloan** has remained active in his work in the history and philosophy of the life sciences. In July of 2011 he co-organized a major week-long workshop on Adult and Alternative Stem Cell Research as a component of the inter-college Notre Dame Initiative on Adult Stem Cell Research (<http://adultstemcell.nd.edu/>). In November of 2011 he then was a participant in the International Conference on Adult Stem Cell research at the Vatican, sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Culture where he gave

the address: "Should Life Scientists Take a Hippocratic Oath?". He is active in organizing regular meetings of the Notre Dame interdisciplinary group drawn from Engineering, Science, Arts and Letters, and Law pursuing these issues. During the year he published the book (with former graduate student Brandon Fogel) with the University of Chicago Press, *Creating a Physical Biology: the Three-Man Paper and the Origins of Molecular Biology*. He is currently bringing to press the volume *Darwin in the Twenty-First Century: Nature, Humanity, God* that developed from the 2009 Notre Dame conference on evolution. He is also working on completing his book on the concept of life in modern biology. He and Katherine Tillman continue to make their new life together as members of Holy Cross Village.

Katherine Tillman's CD Lecture Series, *Cardinal Newman: Man of Letters* has just been released by "Now You Know Media" (<http://www.nowyouknowmedia.com/>), a production outfit specializing in audio and video lectures by leading Catholic authors and intellectuals. This is a series of 12 audio lectures of 25 minutes each that examines the full range of Newman's productions in literature, poetry, philosophy, education, spirituality and theology, beginning with his transformative journey to the Mediterranean and ending with discussion of his epic poem the "Dream of Gerontius" and his classic sermons.

Henry Weinfield is looking forward, with great anticipation, to the seminar on Lucretius that he will be leading during the Alumni Reunion weekend, and then to the PLS Summer Alumni Symposium. He urges those alumni interested in the Symposium to register as soon as possible.

DEPARTMENTAL NEWS



Mary Etta at her retirement celebration with Coni Rich 1989 graduate.

R.I.P. Mary Etta Rees (1923-2011)

It was with sadness, but also with fond memories, that we learned of the death of former departmental Administrative Assistant, Mary Etta Rees. She served as the main front person for the department in our old quarters in 318 O'Shaughnessy from 1976 until her retirement in 1986, and had served in other positions in the College of Arts and Letters before this. Those of us who worked with her remember her bright, sparkling personality that seemed a natural reflection of her fire-red hair, and also her no-nonsense style that reflected some of her experience in the Women's Army Corps during WWII. She helped keep the department on an even keel through a time of many changes. She and her husband Ed were regular attendees at our departmental functions, and all who were in the PLS (called "GP" when she started her tenure with us) remember her well for her enthusiasm for the Program, her good humor, her deep concern for the students, and her hard work on our behalf. We also remember her witty Op-Ed columns on various topics in the *South Bend Tribune* that displayed her talent as a writer and wry commentator on current events. She once took after the State License Bureau for taking the kind of unbecoming photographs that "graced" drivers' licenses; there was some awe if not fear in the faculty on where she might next focus her satire. About thirteen years after she retired, she called Professor Nicgorski to report that as she cleaned her attic to prepare for a move to a more accommodating retirement home she found a letter from her best friend in Hope, Arkansas, where she grew up. That friend, Virginia Blythe, happened later to become the mother of President-to-be Bill Clinton. In fact, she was pregnant with the future President when she wrote this letter to Mary Etta; she was living in Chicago and had just lost her husband in an automobile accident. The letter included the revelation that she and her husband had planned to visit Mary Etta and South Bend and take in a Notre Dame football game at a future point. Professor Nicgorski confirmed Mary Etta's sense that the letter had historical significance and assisted her in contacting the White House to work out a way to give the letter to the President. Her offer was welcomed there as staff were preparing many things for the Presidential Library being built in Arkansas. Mary Etta wanted to give the letter directly to the President and to have her family with her when she did. Literally in the last weeks of his Presidency as Bill Clinton toured the country thanking supporters, an arrangement came together in which the President stepped out of the main ballroom at Chicago's Palmer House Hotel and visited in a side room with Mary Etta and her family. Mary Etta handed over the letter and saw tears in the President's eyes as he read it through. It was a very special moment both in her life and, it seems, in his. Her husband, Ed,

preceded her in death in 2006. She left a family of three children, eight grandchildren, and one great granddaughter.

We recently received word of the death of **Doris Paffenbach**, who served as PLS secretary from 1968 to around 1978. Doris died in Hospice House in South Bend, her husband Earl having preceded her in death. She is survived by her daughter, Jill, and two grandchildren. Doris was a fine person and a good natured and effective secretary for PLS (then the General Program of Liberal Studies). She enjoyed meeting and helping the students in the department. Condolences have been sent to her family.

STUDENT AWARDS

2011 Willis Nutting Award

Co-Recipients – Laura E. Lindsley and Cornelius S. Rogers

The graduating student who contributed most to the education of classmates and teachers.

Laura is working with the local food movements & organizations.

Conor is teaching 6th through 8th grade language arts in Fort Worth, Texas through the Alliance for Catholic Education.

2011 Otto Bird Award – Josef M. Kuhn

The best senior essay judged to best exemplify the ideals of liberal learning.

“The Many-Faced God: Dionysus, Tragedy, and Socratic Wisdom in Euripides’ *Bacchae*”
Directed by Gretchen Reydams-Schils

Joey had a journalism internship at Religion News Service in Washington, D.C. for the fall.

2011 Susan M. Clements Award – Emma M. Zainey

A female senior who exemplifies outstanding qualities of scholarly achievement, industry, compassion and service.

Emma Zainey is currently applying to law schools.

2011 Edward Cronin Award – Kathryn Petrik 2012

For the best paper submitted in a PLS course.

“Epistemological Status of Mathematics.” This paper appears in this issue.

2011 Stephen Rogers Endowment for Graduate Studies

Co-Recipients – Mary Ann Doughton Wilson and Peter N. Hadley

Mary Ann is currently in the Master of Divinity Program here at Notre Dame.

Peter is attending the only urban planning program in the D.C. area, at the University of Maryland, College Park.

THE 2011 EDWARD J. CRONIN AWARD WINNER

Epistemological Status of Mathematics

Kathryn Petrik
Class of 2012

As Mario Livio, renowned astrophysicist and author, states in the preface to his book *Is God a Mathematician*, “Mathematics provides the solid scaffolding that holds together any theory of the universe.”¹ This in itself is an impressive claim, and it becomes even more curious when one realizes the controversial and ambiguous nature of mathematics. As British Philosopher Sir Michael Dummett said, “The two most abstract of the intellectual disciplines, philosophy and mathematics, give rise to the same perplexity: what are they *about*? The perplexity does not arise solely out of ignorance: even the practitioners of these subjects may find it difficult to answer the question” (Livio IX). In this essay, I will discuss the three prominent schools of thought regarding the epistemological status of mathematics and argue that a blend of the three provides the most complete perspective. I will also cover the debate over whether math is *a priori* or *a posteriori*, inductive or deductive, and created or discovered. With regard to the first two controversies, I believe a blend of the opposing positions is again most satisfying, while the third debate offers one definite conclusion. Mathematics appears to be imperfectly discovered rather than invented, a fact that may point to a perfect Creator.

¹ Mario Livio, *Is God a Mathematician?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009), IX. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Livio.”

The three most common schools of thought that attempt to pinpoint the epistemological status of mathematics are the empiricist, Platonist, and Kantian traditions.² Empiricists, including David Hume and John Stuart Mill, argue that math is based on experience. As Mill stated in his 1843 work *System of Logic*, “Every theorem in geometry is a law of external nature, and might have been ascertained by generalizing from observation and experiment.”

Platonists maintain that “mathematical entities have a real existence independent of the mind” (Crowe 1). Triangles, for example, according to this theory have a real existence, and are observable by the mind as dolphins are observable by the eye. Plato and G. H. Hardy are the two most prominent proponents of this theory.

The Kantian position holds that “mathematical entities are in some sense products of the human mind” (Crowe 1). Kant argues in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that “knowledge is rooted in the combined workings of the faculties of ‘receptivity’ and ‘spontaneity.’ The former is the source of the raw materials of knowledge and the latter synthesizes them into the ‘formal structures’ or objects of the experienced world.”³ The structure of the mind

² Michael Crowe, *Mathematics: Its Nature and Development* (Notre Dame: Poverty Publishing Company, 2003), 1. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Crowe.”

³ Leslie Steffe, *Epistemological Foundations of Mathematical Experience* (New York: Springer-

determines the form of mathematics just as the medium of an artist determines his resultant creation.

A blend of these three positions most completely captures the journey of mathematics. Implied in the empirical position are certain Platonic ideals. Experience is necessarily *of* something. Mathematics, then, according to this position and in agreement with the Platonic position, is the discovery of an external truth. This experience, however, must be filtered and interpreted by having the experience. The Empiricist thus has implicit Kantian debts as well. Mathematics is forwarded by empirical observations of an externally extant truth interpreted through the lens of the human mind.

The next issue to be addressed is whether mathematics is *a priori* or *a posteriori* in nature. *A priori* ideas are known independently of experience, that is, without experiment, observation, or “science,” while *a posteriori* truths depend on experience (Crowe 3). According to my understanding of these definitions, very few ideas are *a priori*. The examples of *a priori* sentences given in the text actually do depend on experience. Knowledge that “the score of a basketball game, before it starts, is 0 to 0,” depends on experience with sports and an observationally-derived understanding of the rules of the game. Other examples given are “all triangles have three angles” and “Aristotle was born before or after Plato” (Crowe 96). The former depends on a definitional knowledge of triangles, necessarily gained through experience, and the latter upon experience in this world of chronologically sequential events. *A priori* truths, if they exist, would rather be along

the lines of an intrinsic knowledge of a higher being, an innate understanding that motion is possible, or an instinctive logical grasp of *modus ponens*. These, however, even depend on the experience of being alive.

Regardless, Kant and the Platonists ascribe to an *a priori* view of mathematics, while Mill and most empiricists claim it is *a posteriori* (Crowe 3). I would argue that neither of these polemical views captures the complete truth. Historical experience and commonsensical reflection seems to disprove the *a priori* hypothesis: scientists and mathematicians have made vast progress in mathematical knowledge over time, and you and I were not born understanding even basic algebra, much less the most complex of recent theorems. Humans do not understand math independent of experience. Some would counter that *a priori* does not necessarily imply that we are born with the knowledge, but rather that it can be conceived of without reference to experience. I would address this valid challenge with the fact that many mathematical ideas do depend on experience. Integers, for one, inherently reference the physical world. That is, “counting” numbers *count* something. Another example is the calculation of the area created by rotating an arc around an axis. The ability to conceive of and complete this calculation depends on experience moving objects in space, physical distances, visualization, and a familiarity with adding and subtracting quantities. Mathematics cannot be wholly *a priori*.

On the other hand, discoveries are oftentimes not made on the basis of rigorous observation, and some mathematical principles are seemingly hardwired into our brains from an early age. Fundamental geometric bodies, for example, do not exist

Verlag, 1991), 2. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Steffe.”

in the natural world. Perfectly straight lines, parallel lines, and uniform spheres exist solely in the abstract realm of the mind. Livio writes, “Most of the researchers agree that certain mathematical capacities appear to be innate. For instance, all humans are able to tell at a glance whether they are looking at one, two, or three objects (an ability called *subitizing*),“ (Livio 232). Thus, mathematics seems to be a blend of *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge.

Heisenberg’s writings confirm that math employs both experience and logic. In *The Statistical Interpretation of Quantum Theory*, he says, “The world of concepts derived from everyday experience was . . . left behind in Einstein’s relativity theory.”⁴ The mathematical truths of relativity cannot be deduced from and confirmed by commonplace experiences. He also writes, “The concepts of position, velocity, and energy have been derived from simple experiments of everyday experience,” (Heisenberg 143). Mathematics, therefore, does not make use solely of observation or of *a priori* knowledge.

An examination of Euclid and Pascal’s work indicates elements of both intuition and deduction within mathematics. Euclid’s propositions were most likely not discovered in a rigorously deductive fashion; rather, men accepted various ideas about how space was composed and shapes interacted, and Euclid set about proving them in a systematic fashion (Crowe 2). Many of his ideas probably occurred out of order and without all the logically preceding steps firmly in mind. Deduction, therefore, is not geometry’s exclusive foundation. Neither are all propositions, on the other hand,

⁴ Werner Heisenberg, *The Physical Principles of The Quantum Theory* (New York: Dover, 1930), 149. Subsequent references will be given in the text as “Heisenberg.”

intuitable. In Propositions 35-38, Euclid shows that area does not directly correlate with perimeter, a misconception rampant among non-mathematicians (Crowe 52-55). Proclus, a fifth century Platonist, described how “certain members of communistic societies in his own time . . . cheated their fellow members by giving land of greater perimeter but less area than they took themselves . . . [and] Thucydides estimate[d] the size of Sicily according to the time required for circumnavigating it” (Crowe 54). If mathematical matters were purely *a priori*, they would, as Crowe writes, “impose themselves upon us with such force that we could not conceive” otherwise, which is clearly not the case (Crowe 115). Proclus warns more explicitly against over-crediting intuition with, “[W]e have learned from the very founders of this science not to pay attention to plausible imaginings in determining what propositions are to be accepted in geometry. . . . ‘I am aware that those who make proofs out of probabilities are imposters’” (Crowe 98). The fact that something makes sense to the human mind is not proof of its correctness. Deduction and induction, then, both play a role in geometry.

Pascal’s writings dismiss pure intuition as well. He comments, “It is an infirmity natural to man to believe that he possesses truth directly; and thence it comes that he is always disposed to deny everything that is incomprehensible to him.”⁵ This warning against overconfidence in intuition parallels Proclus’s as discussed above. Pascal continues, “There is no geometrician that does not believe space divisible ad infinitum. He can no more be such without this principle than man can exist without a

⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Of the Geometrical Spirit* (Harvard Classics, 1914), 9-10. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Pascal.”

soul. And nevertheless there is none who comprehends an infinite division.” These geometricians do not instinctively know the truth of infinitely divisible space, but they trust in its veracity due to their powers of logical deduction.

The development of mathematical knowledge is a process dependent on multiple elements. Man’s understanding increases over time by means of more than induction or experience. This advancement in mathematical knowledge is evidenced in the improvement from Aristotle to Galileo. Aristotle believed that bodies of unequal weights moved through the same medium in direct proportion to their difference in weight, that is, $T/t :: M/m$, M and T being the objects’ respective weights and times.⁶ Galileo, with the assistance of a *reductio ad absurdum* thought experiment, discounted Aristotle’s hypothesis and came to the conclusion that the bodies fall at the same rate.⁷ Galileo’s theory was different from and superior to Aristotle’s, demonstrating all mathematical knowledge is not innate or intuitable. The fact that Galileo logically deduced the claim without assistance from physical experience also refutes the hypothesis that math is purely *a posteriori*.

A counterexample supporting math’s intuitability lies in an uncanny resemblance between one of the most ancient and one of the most modern philosophies of space. Plato, in one of the oldest extant semi-scientific treatises, detailed his belief that

⁶ Aristotle, *Physics* ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 2001), IV.215. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Aristotle.”

⁷ Prof. Sloan, *Early Modern Science and Developments in 20th C. Physics* (Notre Dame, 2010), 8. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Sloan.”

the cosmos was essentially spherical, though composed of various solids.⁸ The Creator, according to Plato, “worked [the cosmos] in a circular fashion, sculpting it into the form of a sphere, the figure that keeps itself in all directions equidistant from its center to its extremities and which, of all figures, is the most perfect and most similar to itself” (Plato 63). Millennia later, Einstein’s theory of relativity demonstrated that Riemann’s spherical non-Euclidian geometry best describes and predicts the behavior of the universe on a large scale (Crowe 117). This startling concurrence between an idea that felt right to Plato and the most advanced of physical theories may support the notion of ingrained mathematical intuition.

The next question arising from this acknowledged development of mathematical understanding is whether this progression is driven by invention or realization. More simply, is math created or discovered? Mario Livio describes three extant realms of the universe: physical, mental, and mathematical (Livio 2-3). The physical contains “real” objects such as toenail clippers, elm trees, slippers, and stars. The mental realm includes thoughts, sensations, emotions, and abstract ideas. The mathematical world contains numbers, shapes, theorems, and theories. Livio then describes the remarkable relationship between these three realms. The brain, which exists in the physical world, gives rise to the mental, which in turn creates the mathematical, *which describes the physical!* If one accepts the premise of these three realms and their relationship, two hierarchical schematizations of the system present themselves. Either the whole system

⁸ Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. Peter Kalkavage (Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2001). All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Plato.”

is merely a product of the mind (moths, the world, math, people, etc. are all just imagined) or mathematics governs the universe. Although there is no way to disprove the first arrangement, we will reject it as absurd for the sake of argument. Mathematics, then, reigns supreme, even over the human mind. This extremely ordered system, of such complexity that it still escapes our comprehension, points to the existence of an ultimate intelligent designer.

Proponents of the “invented” viewpoint argue from a Kantian perspective. British mathematician Sir Michael Atiyah remarked that “man has created mathematics by idealizing and abstracting elements of the physical world,” (Livio 10-11). Atiyah claims that math is a human invention: of course it describes the world as we see it, for it was created by the same brain that sees it. Psychologist Leslie Steffe says that we “are never without expectations that select a subset of information contained in the perceptual field. It is for these reasons that data are ‘theory-laden,’” (Steffe 7). Man functions by ascribing meaning to his sensory perceptions, through a method of “top-down processing.” Mathematical theories, then, while they may make sense to us and exhibit self-consistency, are not necessarily “true.” Steffe elaborates, “In assimilating sense data or accommodating to it, we cannot experience ‘the world’ without already ‘knowing’ something about it. This is not to say that what one knows is correct, true, or even viable. . . . we cannot experience the world mathematically without using mental operations we would call mathematical” (Steffe 260). As Kant explained, “It is we therefore who carry the phenomena which we call nature, order and regularity, nay, we should never find them in nature, if we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, had not originally put them there”

(Steffe 3). These arguments do not account for accidentally discovered true and applicable theories. Mathematicians have *unintentionally* stumbled across formulas that are later found to describe the real world with extraordinary precision.

Mathematics, apparently born of the mind, has the ability to predict events in the physical world with incredible accuracy. Consider how man is able to land a robot on one of Jupiter’s moons, nearly 100 million miles away. Or reflect on knot theory, developed on a lark by French mathematician Alexandre-Theophile Vandermonde in 1771, which was later discovered to describe the behavior of replicating strands of deoxyribonucleic acid and filaments in string theory (Livio 204-216). Or consider Newton’s law of gravity, which turns out to possess experimental accuracy greater than one ten-thousandth of a percent (Livio 218). Which seems more probable: that we just happened to invent a system accurate within a trillion decimal places in some calculations, or that a mathematical code actually governs the universe, and we are merely growing in understanding of it?

A further argument against mathematics’s invention is the following: if humans make up mathematics according to the way their brains are wired, why is it so difficult for them? Steffe discussed several studies that examined children learning mathematics. The process was explained as an incomplete, complex, and tortuous evolution of thinking (Steffe 12). One student was described as struggling “with creating a consistent and meaningful structure” for the topic he was learning. Livio mirrored this complaint. “But, if mathematics is just another language, how can we explain the fact that while children study languages easily, many

of them find it so hard to study mathematics?” (Livio 12).

Livio discusses another hypothesis supporting the theory of mathematics’s discovery. Max Tegmark of MIT proposed that “our universe is not just described by mathematics—it *is* mathematics,” (Livio 228). He begins with the mundane claim that “an external physical reality exists that is independent of human beings” and proceeds to the conclusion that “the only possible description of the cosmos is one that involves only abstract concepts and the relations among them,” which he considers to be the definition of math. As author and mathematician Martin Gardner pointed out, only half in jest, “If two dinosaurs joined two other dinosaurs in a clearing, there would be four there, even though no humans were around to observe it, and the beasts were too stupid to know it” (Livio 10). Mathematical principles define and govern our universe whether or not we discover or acknowledge various theories.

“The universe,” British physicist James Jeans said, “appears to have been designed by a pure mathematician,” (Livio 1). Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell extended the framework of classical physics to encompass all known electric and magnetic phenomena with just four equations (Livio 4). Descriptions of experimental results pertaining to these phenomena had previously occupied volume after volume of explanatory text. In addition to its universality and simplicity, mathematics has the distinctive quality of “truth” (Livio 13). As mathematician Ian Stewart said, “There is a word in mathematics for previous results that are later changed—they are simply called *mistakes*” (Livio 14). Some philosophers of mathematics, such as Hilary Putnam, who do not ascribe fully to the belief that

mathematics is “real” and discovered, still acknowledge its objectivity (Livio 242-243). Putnam holds that mathematical propositions “are true or false, and what makes them true or false is external to humans.” There seems to be a deep human need for this absolute external truth. Richard Bernstein writes, “Either there is some support for our being, a fixed foundation for our knowledge, or we cannot escape the forces of darkness that envelop us with madness, with intellectual and moral chaos” (Steffe 2).

Though admirable progress has been made through the ages, some mathematicians and certain theorems hint that man may never fully understand the language of the universe. There seem to be fundamental gaps in our ability to know. Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, for one, states that the momentum and position of a particle cannot be known simultaneously, which also limits our knowledge of causality (Heisenberg 142). Gödel’s incompleteness Theorem implies that “all logical systems of any complexity are by definition incomplete.”⁹ If Mathematics is “the language of God,” so to speak, it would accord with Christian tradition that our human minds are not able to completely grasp the language, hence the necessity of faith. Aquinas writes that faith alone participates in the final stage of the ascent towards truth.¹⁰ For “those things which are of faith surpass human reason,” (Aquinas, Question 6, Article 1). Aquinas

⁹ William Denton, “Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem” (Miskatonic University Press: 22 March 2009) <<http://www.miskatonic.org/godel.html>>

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas, “On Faith,” *Summa Theologiae*, IIaIIae, qq. 1-16 (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990), Question 6, Article 1. All subsequent references will be given in the text as “Aquinas.”

explains that it is an error to “measure Divine things by the rule of sensible objects” (Aquinas, Question 7, Article 2). Faith is necessary in this life due to a “natural defect of the human intellect, according to the present state of life” (Aquinas, Question 7, Article 2). Where reason fails, faith must assume control; it overcomes the remaining gap between man’s capabilities and the Divine truth.

Professional and layperson alike have hotly debated the epistemological status of mathematics. The most comprehensive analysis appears to yield a blend of empiricist, Platonic, and Kantian views; a mixture of *a priori*, *a posteriori*, intuited and deduced truth; and discovered rather than invented mathematical system. Mathematics is discovered with the help of empirical observations made and interpreted by the human mind, a fact not incompatible with the existence of mathematical truth independent of the mind. That said, as Bertrand Russell wrote, “Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves” (Livio 252). In contemplating these questions, “through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind is also rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes its highest good.” Contemplating these questions, as Schrodinger points out, keeps firmly in our minds “the role [our] particular subject has within the great performance of the tragicomedy of human life” and assists us in obeying “the command of the Delphic deity, get to know yourself.”¹¹ He continues along the same lines as Russell, quoting

Plotinus, who said, “Perhaps we were there already before this creation came into existence . . . pure souls and mind united with the whole universe . . . at one with the whole.

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¹¹ Erwin Schrodinger, *Science and Humanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 112 and 108.

2011 SENIOR ESSAY TITLES

Maria Antoniak	<i>Sehnsucht</i> as Narrative Longing: Plato and Calvino on the Longing for the Ideal	Bernd Goehring
Tesia Chen	Interpretations that Speak Daggers: Interpreting <i>Hamlet</i> with Violence and Camelion Poetry	Stephen Fallon
Lillian Civantos	Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, and the Art of Circumstance	Julia Marvin
Theresa Civantos	Crime and Character Education in Twenty-First Century America: A Catholic Woman's Perspective	Clark Power
Kathryn Colby	Rousseau's Ethical Economy	Thomas Stapleford
Kathleen Dufner	"Find a way or make one. There are no excuses." The Power of the KIPP Culture: an Assessment of the Development and Success of the Knowledge is Power Program with a Focus on KIPP LEAD in Gary, Indiana	Clark Power
Adam Francis	R. G. Collingwood and the Relation between Philosophy and History	Kent Emery, Jr.
Courtney Gandy	Defining Human: Rahner's Theology, Biological Anthropology, and the Nature of Humankind	Krista Duttonhaver
Nathan Geary	The Interaction of History and Thought in Saint Augustine's Theology	Krista Duttonhaver
Brigitte Githinji	Monasticism for the Modern Catholic Spiritualist: The Resurrection of John Cassian's Teaching by Jacques Philippe	Kevin Mongrain
John Greil	Of Serpents, Doves, and Fathers: True and Pure Religion in the Works of Francis Bacon	Robert Goulding
Josef Kuhn	The Many-Faced God: Dionysus, Tragedy, and Socratic Wisdom in Euripides' <i>Bacchae</i>	Gretchen Reydam-Schils
Hilary Landgraf	The Abelard-Heloise Connection: Reconciliation and Mutual Dependence in the Letters of Abelard and Heloise	Julia Marvin
Nick LaPlante	In Imitation of the Beast-Man: Machiavelli's Justification of a New Political Philosophy	Walter Nicgorski

Laura Lindsley	Following the Farmer: An Inquiry into the Relevance of Jefferson's Agrarianism	Walter Nicgorski
Norma Lujan	Don Quixote's Madness as the Manifestation of an Ideal	Julia Marvin
Genevieve McCabe	Eleazar and Socrates: An Examination of the Literary and Conceptual Relationships between Maccabean and Socratic Literature	Candida Moss
Andrew Peiffer	"A Love Which is Beyond All Bounds": The Literary Afterlife of Abelard and Heloise	Robert Goulding
Eric Prister	Confession(s) Against the Donatists: Augustine's Anti-Donatist Argument in the <i>Confessions</i>	Candida Moss
Erica Ramirez	The Repristination of <i>Apatheia</i> : An Analysis of How John Cassian Revises Evagrius Ponticus's Teaching of <i>Apatheia</i>	Kevin Mongrain
Octavia Ratiu	T. S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens: Supreme Being and Supreme Fiction	Henry Weinfield
Cornelius Rogers	Justifying the Ways of God to Man: Free Will and Narrative in <i>Paradise Lost</i>	Stephen Fallon
Sara Romano	I run Like a Girl, I Jump Like a Girl, I Swing Like a Girl, I Tumble Six Feet Over a Four Inch Beam... Like a Girl: An Inside Look at the Culture Behind Women's Gymnastics	Clark Power
Laura Schaffer	The Petrarchan Sonnets of Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Journey in Three Parts	Henry Weinfield
Jessica Shaffer	Can Study Abroad Educate the Global Citizen?	Felicitas Munzel
Kathleen Shircliff	The Rule of Sancho Panza: The Meeting of Political Humanism and <i>Raison d'état</i> in <i>Don Quixote</i>	Walter Nicgorski
Reid Spears	An Unreflective Commonplace: How Enlightenment Philosophy and Economic Theory Have Changed Our Conception of Human Nature	Felicitas Munzel
Andrew Spica	The 'Imperial President': A Critical Examination of the Truman Presidency and the Origins of the National Security State	Thomas Stapleford

Kaitlin Spillane	From Cyrus to Putin: The Evolution of the Notion of the Tyrant in Antiquity and the Russian State	Robert Goulding
Laraque Stewart	Eve: Milton's Inner Conflict	Stephen Fallon Abigail Palko
John Thornton	From the Waste Land to the Sacred Wood: T. S. Eliot's Dantesque Journey From Hell to Purgatory	Kent Emery, Jr.
Emily Whalen	Yeats' Wanderers: Irish Folklore and Unity of Being in the Early Poetry of W.B. Yeats	Henry Weinfield
John Wolohan	Thinking about the Emotions in the Philosophies of St. Augustine, Descartes, and Wittgenstein	Bernd Goehring
Emma Zainey	The Future of Futurism	Pierpaolo Polzonetti

A CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF DR. RICHARD SPANGLER



1955—2011

June 1, 2011

From his funeral mass

Dr. Richard T. Spangler spent his life caring for those in need, as close as Chicago's near North side, and as far away as Leogane, Haiti. Family and friends agree that he approached his life's mission with incredible kindness and gentleness. His life exemplified commitment to family, community and making a positive difference in the lives of the many people he touched.

Just last July, he and Patti, his wife of 27 years, spent 10 days in Haiti, where Rich ran an outpatient emergency clinic while Patti, a nurse practitioner and midwife, delivered pre-natal care.

"He felt strongly about making sure the under privileged got access to healthcare, especially under-served kids," says Patti. "He is my hero. Still is, and always will be."

Rich Spangler, 56, passed away suddenly at home on Wednesday, May 25, 2011. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Maura, and sons Michael and Peter.

He instilled in his children his mission of service by involving them in projects at their parish, Ascension Church of Oak Park, where he served on the School Board and Parish Council, and by helping at the Chicagoland Muscular Dystrophy

Association's summer camp in Lake Villa, where he had volunteered since medical school.

"I was still quite young when I spent my first week at MDA camp with him," says son Michael, 26. "I learned early on the importance of giving back and helping others, and that is a part of my Dad that will stay with me forever."

Dr. Spangler's service extended to the St. Vincent de Paul Center on North Halsted and Marillac House on South Francisco, where he volunteered for more than 20 years performing physicals and checkups for underprivileged children.

"Dr. Spangler was one of the kindest and most giving of any person I've ever met and a truly gentle man," says Sr. Joyce Flowers, D.C., a nurse who worked with him at both locations. "He was wonderful at making the children calmer during their physical examinations. He gave of himself for so many years in a very caring way."

In 2003, the St. Vincent de Paul Center presented Dr. Spangler with its Fleur de Lis Award, which recognizes those who exemplify the mission of St. Vincent de Paul by serving those in need. The news of his sudden passing came as a shock to his

colleagues at Chicago's St. Joseph Hospital, where he was the chairman of the Pediatrics Department and champion of the hospital's Laboure Outpatient Clinic and Seton Family Health Center.

"He was a strong leader of Pediatrics and of our community outreach efforts because he was such a relentless advocate for kids," says John Steiner, director of physician services at the hospital. "He lived our mission and he taught us about living our mission."

Steiner points out that Dr. Spangler—who received the hospital's 2010 Physician Leadership Award—demonstrated the importance of "gentleness and giving" to the Family Practice residents that he taught. "His spirit and approach to patient care will live on here at St. Joseph's forever by the way he taught our physicians of tomorrow."

Dr. Spangler was born in Omaha, Nebraska, and moved to Chicago's west Auburn neighborhood when he was three years old. His parents, William and Mary Jane Spangler, opened an auto glass replacement business on Southwest Highway. Rich lived at his home on South Kenneth Ave. with his three sisters and two brothers until graduation from St. Laurence High School in 1973. He attended the University of Notre Dame, graduating in 1977. Spangler then

entered medical school at the University of Illinois, where he met fellow first-year student, Bryan Traubert, in anatomy class where the two were paired on their first human cadaver dissection.

"Rich was one of the most gentle and kind souls to be partnered with on something so complex for a first year med student," recalls Dr. Traubert, who today practices ophthalmology in Chicago and serves as president of the Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners. "We went out afterwards for pizza and a couple of beers, and I learned nothing was more important to him than family, friends and his Cubs."

Beyond his family, friends and life's work, his other passions in life were the Chicago Cubs and Notre Dame sports. He has been a Cubs season ticket holder since 1985. "Those Cub tickets were our real estate before we owned our first home," says wife Patti.

Son Peter will always treasure the times he spent with his Dad, especially the road trips to Pittsburgh to see Peter's beloved Pirates.

Daughter Maura shared a love of music with her Dad. They were in the Ascension Choir and could often be found either talking or playing music.

REFLECTIONS FOR THE RICHARD SPANGLER MEMORIAL MASS

by
Prof. Phillip Sloan (Emeritus)
June 8, 2011

As one of the long-time faculty members in the Program, I have been asked to offer a few reflections at this mass on the unexpected and tragic passing of former PLS student Richard Spangler. We were all shocked to hear of his death. He was a regular attendee at these summer alumni seminars, and I recall well his participation in my weeklong seminar just last summer on Pascal's *Pensées*. As always, he was an engaged and active participant in those discussions, which led us into the deeper questions of life, faith, reason, and the ultimate meaning of existence.

I also remember talking to him about his work in Haiti with the victims of the earthquake and his interest in developing a network of volunteers to help in this medical mission. His dedication to this work was fully in keeping with the larger picture I have gained of Rich as a physician who carried the learning in the great works of the tradition into an active life of service that included work with the Muscular Dystrophy summer camps, the St. Vincent de Paul clinic, and the Merrilac House in Chicago.

Rich was one of the first students I knew in the Program when I joined PLS in 1974. He was interested in the fact that I joined PLS after previously teaching on a medical school faculty. I had served for five years previously on the admissions committee of the University of Washington Medical School. This experience convinced me that what the medical profession needed most was not more technical experts, of which there were plenty, but people who were educated more broadly in the liberal arts, philosophy, and even theology. And if this

was true then, it is even truer now with the great developments of biomedical science and biotechnology. So Rich and I had conversations about his intent to combine his interest in PLS with premedical studies.

In those days of the Program, it was more difficult to do this than it is today. All of our students had a required four courses per semester, and exceptions were rare. Usually this meant waiving the 3 semesters of science, but the rest of the courses pretty much had to be taken in sequence. This was a heroic way to get a degree at Notre Dame.

Rich also had to pursue these educational goals against some parental opposition and worries. I recall well a conversation with his father at Junior Parents' Weekend, and his deep skepticism about the prospects that Rich would ever get into medical school with such an unconventional premedical education. As the first student I recall advising along this road, I can admit I was greatly relieved when he was accepted to the University of Illinois Medical School as the first of several students I was able to see move from PLS to careers in medicine. I cannot say I have kept in much contact with Rich over the years except for the summer seminars, but we have always had good conversations about the combination of training in the great books with his vocation as a physician.

As I read over the entries in his on-line remembrance book, I was deeply impressed, and saddened, by the messages reflecting how he had touched so many lives as a dynamic, creative, and concerned physician who devoted his life to children and curing

their diseases. One especially detailed entry from the Murray family speaks of his “exemplary skills as a doctor; he was a kind, compassionate and selfless man. He had a knack for reassuring and encouraging us as parents” as he helped the family work through a severe lung infection with their premature daughter.

He was also an inspiring teacher of new generations of physicians. His colleague and Chair of Pediatrics at Loyola, Jerome Stirling, speaks of his important work over 15 years as a clinical teacher at Loyola with the young medical students. The messages detail in many ways his care, compassion, and dedication to his patients, students, family and community.

To lose someone so promising at the height of his career in such a tragic way is deeply painful to all of us here, and especially to those of us who were his teachers. The deaths of our students leave us with a hole in our hearts. Our hearts do indeed go out to his family and friends at this time. I wish I had known Rich, and his family and friends, better. He affected so many by his presence.

Times like this press us all to what Edward Cronin used to say was “the brass tacks” of life. We grapple to understand the mystery of life and death. I pray that we can take new hope and new consolation for ourselves, and for Rich and his family, in the events we commemorate here at this Mass. Each time we share in the Eucharist together, we celebrate the way in which life transcends death and mortality.

I want to close with a prayer from Saint Augustine that seems particularly appropriate on this occasion:

O Thou God, full of compassion, I commit and commend myself unto Thee, in whom I am, and live, and know. Be Thou the Goal of my pilgrimage, and my Rest by the way. Let my soul take refuge from the crowding turmoil of worldly thought beneath the shadow of Thy wings; let my heart, this sea of restless waves, find peace in Thee, O God.

May Rich rest in this goal of life’s pilgrimage.

REMARKS AT SUMMER SYMPOSIUM BANQUET

by
Steve Fallon
June 9, 2011

Many of us knew Rich Spangler, and many of us regret now that we did not know him better. He was a welcome presence at our Summer Symposium, which Patti Spangler, his wife, dubbed “smarty-pants camp.” Any one of us, if asked, could begin to put a finger on what made him memorable, despite the fact that he never called attention to himself. Or perhaps because he never called attention to himself. Again and again at visitation, funeral, and celebratory lunch in the basement of Rich’s parish, Ascension in Oak Park, I heard about Rich’s kindness and humility.

Rich perhaps was, and it might be impious to say this, too humble. While I knew that Rich shared his time and medical talent with others, I had no idea how extensively and heartily he gave himself. Muscular Dystrophy camp, trips with Patti, a nurse, to Haiti to help quake victims, volunteer service at the St. Vincent de Paul Center on N. Halsted and at Marillac House on South Francisco, which serves the needs of the poor and the working poor, over more than two decades. Rich was also a champion of LaBoure Outpatient Clinic at his hospital, St. Joseph’s in Chicago, a clinic that provides services regardless of the ability to pay. Rich, as you’ll see in the biography in the program from his funeral services, was beginning to win awards for a now tragically foreshortened lifetime of service.

You wouldn’t know about the awards from talking to him. What you would know is that he was a good listener (no wonder he was a great pediatrician), that he was an unfailingly interesting interlocutor, and that he was self-effacing and kind, and that he

loved his family and his church, Notre Dame and the Cubs.

Teaching in the Summer Symposium is a pleasure for us on the faculty. We attract such a wonderful group of students. Our students, Rich and you in this room and the many who could not make it this year, have led and are leading admirable lives, examined lives; those of us on the faculty are paid life examiners, but our students are on their own clocks. I could give examples from those of you in this room, but I don’t want to embarrass you. We brag on you for the rest of the year, and colleagues in other departments are surprised when we tell them about it (sometimes I’ve felt that I have become the occasion of the deadly sin of envy).

Rich’s life was especially admirable. I always knew that it was a pleasure to know Rich, and I’m learning only now that it was an honor and privilege as well as a pleasure.

One of my favorite memories of the Symposium, now in its 13th year, comes from the first or second, when Phil Sloan and I played a round of golf on Notre Dame’s old golf course with Rich. Rich golfed, Phil played a bit, and at that time of my life I played with religious regularity, once every two years. Rich displayed infinite patience with, speaking about myself and not Phil, a particularly inept golfer. I’ve played rounds with golfers who could not hide their exasperated impatience with someone who could need as many as 13 or 14 shots on a par 5. As it happens, I’ve not played golf since that round, so my memory of my most recent round has remained for more than a decade now a happy one.

Like many of us, I've been surfing Rich's remembrance pages. They tell us a great deal about him, as a few snippets, I hope, will suggest:

"The world loses another great man and Heaven gains a beautiful soul!"

"Besides his exemplary skills as a doctor, he was a kind, compassionate and selfless man. He had a knack for reassuring and encouraging us as parents. Someone as special as Dr. Spangler is a rare find in this world and we realize how truly blessed we are to have crossed his path in life."

"I will never forget his big laugh, love of music, and philosophy of living life through service. He has long been an inspiration to me."

"I brag to all my friends that I have the best pediatrician in the world. He is kind, compassionate, and dedicated and my children love him."

"Rich's kindness, goodness, loyalty, generosity and unselfish service to family, friends and community distinguished him as a herald of Christ's Gospel in this world. He put love of God and neighbor first in his life and we were honored to call him our dear friend."

"Rich always brought light to every gathering."

"A good, good man. Gone way too soon. Will miss him very much."

I'd like to leave you with some impressions gleaned from the services for Rich. I went up to Oak Park wondering what I would find. What I found was love for Rich and gratitude for his life. Patti said that she was consoled knowing that now Rich was at

peace, that he had struggled with an illness, and that the illness in the end had won. No bitterness, no despair. Evident in her words and her eyes was love for Rich. They must have been a formidable couple.

The lunch after the Mass was like an Irish wake, with some tears but with lots of food and lots of laughter. There was singing, including the Notre Dame fight song. When one speaker at the open mike asked for a show of hands of those for whom Rich had done a favor, a forest of hands appeared; when he asked how many had been allowed by Rich to return the favor, there were only a few. The speakers were poor and rich; young and old; Latina, Asian-American, African-American, and white; the constant refrain was of Rich's generosity, his skill, his sense of humor, and his love for family and all of his neighbors.

The Mass of the Resurrection was one of the most moving services of any kind I have witnessed. Hundreds filled the large church. The music, by the choir in which Rich himself sang, was glorious. Patti's brother, Fr. Jerry Rogers, gave the homily, in which he voiced what all of those who had come to mourn and celebrate Rich seemed to know: that Rich was now with God. He knew, as it seems only the family knew, how Rich had struggled over the last two years, and he gave thanks for Rich's life and thanks for the end of his pain. The gifts were brought up by the staff of the LaBoure Clinic, it seemed like forty of them, each carrying a white rose.

The strength of the family was palpable, a reason for hope and joy, but heartbreaking at the same time. Daughter Maura sang the verses to "Eagle's Wings," and the congregation and choir sang the refrain.

At the end of the service, Rich's two sons delivered eulogies. Michael, the elder, told us that he cannot recall his father being impatient with him or the other children, or

as arguing with Patti. I would have been more skeptical of his picture of Rich's infinite patience—infinite patience does not describe my own experience of raising children—if I had not played golf with Rich. As it happens, Michael then turned to his own story of golfing with his dad.

Peter then stepped to the microphone. He told us that because Michael had told us everything good about his dad, he would have to cover what was wrong with his dad. The congregation laughed. Peter waited a

few beats, saying nothing, and then concluded, "that's it."

When the family left the church, there was the most extraordinary of moments. Hundreds and hundreds of people, no speaking, no coughing, no stirring, no reaching for hats or purses, but standing as if rooted to the floor, a spontaneous and heartfelt moment, I would say, if it has lasted only a moment, instead of for minutes, as those whom Rich loved and who loved him said goodbye.

ALUMNAE/I NEWS

The editorial staff of *Programma* welcomes contributions and reserves the right to edit them for publication. For information about becoming a class correspondent, please contact the Program of Liberal Studies Office.

Please help us update our alumni database!

Send us your current email address, mailing address, and phone number. If you would like to let your classmates know what you are doing these days, please include an update as well. You can forward your information to pls@nd.edu or call the office at 574-631-7172.

Class of 1954

Class of 1955

(Class Correspondent: George Vosmik, 21151 Lake Rd., Rocky River, OH 44116-1217, flyty@apk.net)

Class of 1956

Class of 1957

Class of 1958

(Class Correspondent: Michael Crowe, PLS, 215 O'Shaughnessy Hall, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN 46556, 574-631-6212, crowe.1@nd.edu)

Class of 1959

Added by the PLS Office:

Joseph Heil wrote, "I am pleased to inform you that my 525 page novel, *The War Less Civil*, was selected as a Finalist in the Faulkner - Wisdom Creative Writing Competition for 2011. This recognition validates the 14+ years I have labored on the book.

Many thanks to my wife Ursula, my in-house, natural-born editor, and to my professional editor, Mr. John Wallbank of Los Angeles, for their invaluable insights, feedback and input.

Next step is publication, probably in electronic form. So rush out and buy yourself a Kindle!

A special thanks to my "special" readers (all two dozen of you). You know who you are; your wonderful encouragement always sustained and motivated me.

Kindest regards, Joe aka Joseph Lewis Heil"

Class of 1960

(Class Correspondent: Anthony Intintoli, Jr., 912 Georgia St., Vallejo, CA 94590-6239 aintintoli@yahoo.com)

Class of 1961

Added by the PLS Office:

John Osipowicz wrote, "The satisfaction I received from discussing The Great Books influenced me to become a teacher. I am now retired after forty years of teaching high school English. Recently I've been writing mystery novels and published my first book titled, *The Serpent's Tooth*. The book is available at bookorders@rosedogbooks.com. A short synopsis is: **Did one, two, or all three of his daughters murder their father?** I

also have other mystery books available at Amazon.com.

I guess reading philosophy eventually turned me toward crime.

Reading *Programma* does keep me current with what is happening in the Program of Liberal Studies. There seems to be that same fine quality of scholarship that I experienced.

Best wishes to all the graduates!”

Class of 1962

(Class Correspondent: John Hutton, Box 1307, Tybee Island, GA 31328)

Class of 1963

Added by the PLS Office:
Wyrsh Hobbs & Mirakian, P.C., announced that **James R. Wyrsh** has been named a recipient of the 2011 Sean O’Brien Freedom Award from the Midwestern Innocence Project. It is the fourth time in the history of the organization that this award has been given. Previous recipients include the author John Grisham.

Class of 1964

(Class Correspondent: Joseph J. Sperber, 42 Ridge Road, East Williston, NY 11596, Tel: 516-747-1764, Fax: 516-747-1731, Email: joe42ew@gmail.com)

Class of 1965

(Class Correspondent: Lee Foster, P.O. Box 5715, Berkeley, CA 94705)

Class of 1966

(Class Correspondent: Paul Ahr, 8020 East Drive #318, Miami Beach, FL 33141, 305-965-9303, paulahr@cpcontext.com)

Dr. Paul Ahr of Camillus House was presented with the Barry University 2012 *Faith and Freedom Award*. Since 2001, the *Faith and Freedom Award* has recognized women and men whose lives, work and/or volunteer activities embody the values of respect and justice in addressing the

challenging issues of our community. Past honorees include Archbishop Emeritus John C. Favalora, Tracy and Alonzo Mourning, Dr. Pedro (Joe) Greer, Jr., Monsignor Bryan O. Walsh, Dr. Horatio Aguirre and Sister Jeanne O’Laughlin, OP, Ph.D.

University Chairperson William J. Heffernan and President Sister Linda Bevilacqua presented the honor to Dr. Ahr for his outstanding advocacy and leadership at Camillus House to provide the programs and services for our sisters and brothers who are poor and homeless in Miami-Dade County. “We are very pleased to present Barry’s prestigious *Faith and Freedom Award* to an outstanding leader and advocate for those less fortunate, **Dr. Paul Ahr** — whose encouragement and leadership role at Camillus House is providing necessary programs and services for our homeless sisters and brothers in South Florida,” said President Sister Linda Bevilacqua OP, Ph.D.

Joined by his wife, Patricia Forde Ahr, his family and friends, Dr. Ahr’s remarks reflected upon St. Francis de Sales’ teachings on devotion – the love of God put into action – within the context of the Camillus House mission, as we [Brothers, board members, staff and volunteers] strive to help persons, who come to us as our guests, to overcome their limitations while our clients, and become our peers as productive citizens.”

Since 2004, Dr. Paul R. Ahr has served as president and chief executive officer of Camillus House, where he provides general oversight of day-to-day operations of this Roman Catholic non-profit organization. A native of New Jersey, Dr. Ahr was a cum laude graduate of the University of Notre Dame. He was awarded a doctorate degree in clinical psychology by the Catholic University of

America and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California. He was a post-doctoral fellow in community mental health administration at the Harvard Medical School, and was awarded a certificate in international affairs by Washington University in St. Louis. He has held teaching posts at Boston University, Virginia Commonwealth University, the University of Southern California and the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Dr. Ahr is the author of two books on public mental health services and co-authored a third book on employee retention with his son, Dr. Thomas B. Ahr. He is married to Patricia A. Forde, and together they have three additional children, Andrew, Victoria and Patricia, and two grandchildren, Matthew and Brian.



President Sister Linda Bevilacqua, OP, Ph.D.,
Dr. Paul R. Ahr, Ph.D., University
Chairperson William J. Heffernan

Class of 1967

(Class Correspondent: Robert McClelland, 584 Flying Jib Ct., Lafayette, CO 80026-1291)

Class of 1968

Class of 1969

Class of 1970

(Class Correspondent: William Maloney, M.D., 3637 West Vista Way, Vista, CA 92056-4522, 760-941-1400, MaloneyEye@yahoo.com)

Class of 1971

(Class Correspondent: Raymond Condon, 4508 Hyridge Dr., Austin, TX 78759-8054)

Class of 1972

(Class Correspondent: Otto Barry Bird, 15013 Bauer Drive, Rockville, MD 20853, BarryBird@hotmail.com)

Class of 1973

(Class Correspondents: John Astuno, 16 Meadowview Lane, Greenwood, CO 80121, johnastuno@earthlink.net and John Burkley, 200 Law Road, Briarcliff Manor, NY 10510, burkley@optonline.net)

Class of 1974

(Class Correspondent: Jan Waltman Hessling, 5613 Frenchman's Creek, Durham, NC 27713-2647, 919-544-4914, hessling@mindspring.com)

Added by the PLS Office:

Condolences go out to **John Panelli** on the loss of his father (March 2, 2012).

Class of 1975

(Class Correspondent: David Miller, 4605 Aberdeen Avenue, Dublin, OH 43016)

Class of 1976

(Class Correspondent: Pat Murphy, 2554 Rainbow Drive, Casper, WY 82601, 307-265-0070 W, 307-265-8616 H 307-262-2872 C pmurphy@wpdn.net)

Class of 1977

(Class Correspondent: Richard Magjuka,
Department of Management, Room 630C,
School of Business, Indiana University,
Bloomington, IN 47501)

Added by the PLS Office:

Condolences go out to **Andy Panelli** on the
loss of his father (March 2, 2012).

Class of 1978

Class of 1979

(Class Correspondent: Thomas Livingston,
300 Colonial Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15216)

Class of 1980

(Class Correspondent: Mary Schmidlein
Rhodes, #9 Southcote Road, St. Louis, MO
63144 mvsvr3144@sbcglobal.net)

Class of 1981

(Class Correspondent: Tom Gotuaco, World
Marketing Alliance, 2234 A Westborough
Blvd., S. San Francisco, CA 94080-5405)

Class of 1982

Class of 1983

(Class Correspondent: Patty Fox, 902 Giles
St., Ithaca, NY 14850-6128)

Class of 1984

(Class Correspondent: Margaret Smith, P.O.
Box 81606, Fairbanks, AK 99708-1606)

Class of 1985

(Class Correspondent: Laurie Denn, 5816
Lyle Circle, Edina, MN 55436-2228)

Class of 1986

(Class Correspondent: Margaret (Neis) Kulis,
1350 Coneflower, Gray's Lake,
IL 60030, kulis.hom@sbcglobal.net)

Added by the PLS Office:

Fr. Mike Kueber received a Licentiate in
Sacred Theology (STL) in Liturgy in October
2011 from the Pontifical Liturgical Institute,
Sant'Anselmo, Rome. **Larry Lamanna**
received his Ph.D. in Political Science and

International Affairs from the University
of Georgia in Dec. 2011. His dissertation
title is "Theoretical Reasons for Variations
in the Intelligence-Policymaking Distance
in the United States and the United
Kingdom.

Class of 1987

(Class Correspondent: Terese Heidenwolf,
49 W. Church St., Bethlehem, PA 18018-
5821 heidenwt@lafayette.edu)

Class of 1988

(Class Correspondent: Michele Martin,
3106 Voltaire Blvd., McKinney, TX
75070-4248, mmmartin99@hotmail.com)

Class of 1989

(Class Correspondent: Coni Rich, 1529
South Lake George Drive, Mishawaka, IN
46545, 574-271-0462,
conijorich@aol.com)

Class of 1990

(Class Correspondent: Barbara Martin
Ryan, 45 Westmoreland Lane, Naperville,
IL 60540-55817, jbryan45@att.net)

Class of 1991

(Class correspondent: Ann Mariani
Morris, 101 Raymond Rd., Sudbury, MA
01776-3454 annie@rickmorris.com)

Class of 1992

(Class correspondent: Jennifer Adams
Roe, 3805 Ault Park Avenue, Cincinnati,
OH 45244)

Class of 1993

(Class correspondent: Anthony Valle, 147-
55 6 Ave., Whitestone, NY 11357-
1656)

Class of 1994

Class of 1995

(Class Correspondent: Andrew Saldino, 14
Harrison Street, Asheville, NC 28801-
2226)

Class of 1996

(Class Correspondent: Stacy Mosesso
McConnell,

50600 Woodbury Way, Granger, IN 46530)

Added by the PLS Office:



The Boston College Chronicle reports that **Erik Goldschmidt**, a Boston College alumnus and executive vice president of FADICA (Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities) in Washington, DC, has been named director of the Church in the 21st Century Center.

“I’m honored to be the director of C21 going into its second decade,” said Goldschmidt. “I was a graduate student at Boston College when the C21 Center was founded at a time when the Church needed a forum to engage in difficult conversations about critical issues. I’ve been truly impressed by how C21, through its various programs and publications, has successfully balanced theological engagement and pastoral need. C21 has been a gift to the Church and to the Boston College community.”

Since its inception in 2002, the center has explored four focal issues: handing on the faith, especially with younger Catholics; relationships among lay men and women, deacons, priests, and bishops; sexuality in the Catholic tradition; and the Catholic intellectual tradition. In the past nine years, the center has attracted more than 60,000 people to its programs on campus, has published 16 issues of C21 Resources and 10 books, and developed a website with 300 archived webcasts and hundreds of thousands of visitors from 132 countries. It has also

established a social media presence and a new C21 mobile app.

“The center will continue to address salient issues for the Church in a respectful fashion that facilitates productive dialogue,” said Goldschmidt. “The work ahead will build on the success of these past 10 years and ensure that C21 has a greater presence at the national level.”

At FADICA, Goldschmidt coordinated the organization’s work with a younger generation of foundation leaders, managed the planning of a conference on Catholic philanthropy and assisted in identifying foundations with a focus on Catholic giving. Prior to FADICA, Goldschmidt served in a variety of positions in the Lynch School of Education, including teaching fellow, adjunct professor and program director in Boston College’s Center for Child, Family, and Community Partnerships.

Goldschmidt, who earned master’s and doctoral degrees in counseling psychology at Boston College, has master of divinity and bachelor’s degrees from the University of Notre Dame and a master’s in teaching from the University of Portland.

He has a long commitment to Catholic education, both as a researcher and a practitioner. His professional work at Boston College involved examining the academic outcomes of addressing the whole child through implementing a comprehensive student support system in Boston’s urban Catholic elementary schools.

“Erik is both an academic and a person of strong faith,” said University President William P. Leahy, SJ. “He understands the importance of engaging contemporary

issues in ways that advance dialogue and understanding, and his own life manifests a deep commitment to Catholic life and values. I look forward to having him as C21's next director."

Class of 1997

(Class Correspondent: Brien Flanagan, 2835 NE Brazee Court, Portland, OR 97212-4946, bflanagan@schwabe.com)

Class of 1998

(Class Correspondents: Katie Bagley, 1725 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Apt. 201, Washington, DC 20009-2541, ksbagley@hotmail.com, and Clare Murphy Shaw, 4448 Frances, Kansas City, KS 66103) Added by the PLS Office, from a report by Sara Burnett (Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters Communication Office):

Kelly Gleason was leading a team of maritime archeologists on a research expedition some 600 miles northwest of Honolulu when they found two anchors, three trypots (used for boiling whale blubber down to oil) along with whaling implements and ship's rigging all from the early 19th century.

After two years of follow-up research and field work, Gleason and her team from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Office of National Marine Sanctuaries confirmed that they had discovered a gem of maritime—and literary—history: the resting place of a ship called the Two Brothers, which wrecked on a reef at French Frigate Shoals in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands in 1823.

The ill-fated Nantucket ship was captained by George Pollard Jr., whose earlier whaling vessel, the Essex, was rammed by a whale and sunk in 1820, inspiring author Herman Melville's novel *Moby Dick*.

The Two Brothers, which Gleason calls a "once-in-a-lifetime" find, is believed to be the first discovery of a wrecked whaling ship from

Nantucket—once known as the whaling capital of the world.

Stories to Share

Discovering shipwrecks and the stories behind them is the most exciting part of her work, says Gleason, an underwater archeologist for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and the maritime heritage program coordinator at Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, one of the largest ocean conservation areas in the world.



And while Notre Dame may be among the nation's more landlocked universities, Gleason says she credits its Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) for where she is today.

"I'm constantly reminded how grateful I am that I chose to major in PLS," she says. The PLS major in the College of Arts and Letters explores the "great books" of Western civilization and the Catholic intellectual traditions. A series of discussion- and reading-based tutorials provides students the opportunity to delve deeply into literature, philosophy, science, theology, political theory, the fine arts, and cultural history.

In the process, students in the program acquire a broad intellectual background while honing their abilities to read texts critically, formulate articulate and thoughtful arguments, and communicate effectively.

And in effect, Gleason says, “PLS gives you the tools to do anything you want to do.”

A Leap of Faith



It was during a PLS retreat her senior year that she decided to follow her heart and pursue a career in marine archeology.

“We were talking about what we were going to do after college, and my classmates were discussing pursuing your dream versus doing what’s ‘practical,’” Gleason recalls. “A lot of people choose a path that’s secure and practical, which is certainly understandable and noble. But it can be easy to put off pursuing a dream, and the longer it stays a dream, the more difficult it can be to attain.”

“I had this moment where I decided: I’m going to try to pursue the one thing I’ll always regret *not* doing.”

After graduation, Gleason went on to receive her master’s degree at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, which offers an underwater archeology program in its department of history. She then returned to the United States and completed her doctorate at Eastern Carolina University.

While there, she obtained an internship with NOAA—a position that later turned into her full-time job.

Valuable Lessons

Every day, says Gleason, she uses skills she learned in PLS, whether it’s communicating with scientists across various disciplines, doing historical research into ship logs and newspaper records to confirm that the wreck her team found in 2008 was the Two Brothers, or working with the Hawaiian and Nantucket community and the media to show the discovery’s relevance to today.



“These are much more than a collection of artifacts or things on the sea floor,” she says.

“They represent a story—a moment in time—but also these men’s livelihoods, a way of life, and a whole era of history that is a fascinating reminder of where we’ve come from; a time when we thought our ocean’s resources were infinite.”

With its ties to one of the literary classics she studied as a PLS major in the University of Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters, the Two Brothers shipwreck was also a reminder of how Gleason got her start.

“I don’t think I would have had the courage to pursue such an obscure career path if I hadn’t been involved in a program like the PLS, which really did encourage taking leaps of faith like that, as well as the skills to understand and interpret exciting discoveries on the seafloor like the Two Brothers.”

Class of 1999

(Class Correspondent: Kate Hibey Fritz,
11424 Rokeby Avenue, Kingston, MD 20895,
kefritz@gmail.com)

Added by the PLS Office, from a report by
Rachel Hamilton (Notre Dame's College of
Arts and Letters Communication Office):



Dan O'Brien has always considered himself an actor and now he is a successful professional. As a lead on the NBC sitcom *Whitney*, he can share his passion for performance with all of America.

O'Brien says he did not major in theater at Notre Dame because he knew already that his passion was for acting and he was not particularly interested in the technical and behind-the-scenes work which the major entailed. Instead, he participated in the College of Arts and Letters' Program of Liberal Studies and took as many acting classes as he could.

"I had the opportunity to attend performing arts schools on scholarships, but I wanted to go to Notre Dame," he says. "I am a third-generation Notre Dame student. The school is of huge importance to my family and to me."

After graduating, O'Brien began to seriously pursue his career as an actor. He moved to New York City and lived in a room he built out of two-by-fours in the basement of a building a friend owned. For three years, O'Brien worked unpaid acting jobs non-stop. In order to support himself while pursuing his career, he worked a large number of odd jobs as well. He even used his acting skills to help a private investigating firm catch people selling counterfeit goods in the city.

"I consider those years to be my graduate experience," he says.

He had a great deal of success in New York's theater community, even starting his own company, Black Rocking Chair Productions, with his wife, a playwright. Eventually, he performed in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the largest arts festival in the world, where he won a Scotsman Fringe First award. It was this success that launched him into a career of television commercials.

O'Brien can be seen in a Xerox commercial that airs during Notre Dame football games, in which he debates printing issues with a cardboard cutout of the Notre Dame Leprechaun.

"When I heard about the commercial, I thought to myself, 'I have to get this. I can retire happily from TV commercials if I get this one'," he said.

After his success in commercials, the Notre Dame family re-entered O'Brien's life.

"A classmate from Notre Dame saw a Cingular commercial I did and found me on Facebook three years ago. She worked for the Creative Artists Agency and set me up with my manager," he said. "In the acting business, you have to have a good manager to get good auditions."

Eventually, O'Brien moved from New York to Los Angeles to begin pursuing more film and television roles.

"When you audition for one part, you're really auditioning for every part in town," O'Brien says, explaining the casting process for *Whitney*.

Originally, he auditioned for a film titled *Wanderlust*, which will be released later this year. The casting director for the film also worked on casting *Whitney*, and O'Brien got the part and filmed the pilot last April. Now that NBC has picked up

the show for the full season, he is in production again six days each week.

“I hope to continue acting on *Whitney* for a few more years. Then I plan to keep pursuing films and TV shows,” he says. “I also hope to work on producing some original pieces.” While the Notre Dame connection has had a great impact on O’Brien’s career, from helping him find an agency to co-writing a screenplay with a fellow graduate, one of the most memorable moments of connection happened recently.

“When the guys on the crew found out that I was a Notre Dame guy, they started talking about what a huge Notre Dame fan their old friend George was,” he says. “They are all about 20 years older than me and worked on the set of *Cheers*. The George they were referring to was George Wendt, who played Norm.” Wendt was famously a Notre Dame fan and attended the University briefly.

“I grew up watching *Cheers* and loving it,” O’Brien said. “I can’t believe how far I’ve come and that I’m a part of this world now.”

Class of 2000

Class of 2001

Added by the PLS Office:

Jeni Rinner wrote: “After graduation, I taught third grade as part of the Alliance for Catholic Education program, and went on to do graduate work at the University of Denver in Digital Media Studies. Currently, I live in Eugene as I work toward a Ph.D. in English at the University of Oregon; I’m studying twentieth-century American poetry, including Gwendolyn Brooks, Elizabeth Bishop, Theodore Roethke, Lorine Niedecker, and Robert Hayden. Later this summer I’ll be getting married to Jeremy Gates in my hometown of Denver, Colorado. We met as co-founders of a mobile arts collaborative, No One Way Arts (www.NoOneWayArts.com).”

Class of 2002

(Class Correspondent: Ricky Klee, 2010 Hollywood Place, South Bend, IN 46616-2113 rklee3@gmail.com)

Class of 2003

Class of 2004

Class of 2005

Added by the PLS Office, from a report by Mike Danahey (Notre Dame’s College of Arts and Letters Communication Office):

Short Film by Arts and Letters Alumnus Wins Sundance Prize



A movie produced and co-written by University of Notre Dame alumnus **John Hibey** ’05 was awarded the jury prize for short filmmaking at the 2012 Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

The winning film, *Fishing Without Nets*, tells a tale of a poor, young Somali fisherman who ends up joining a group of pirates.

“By approaching a story of epic scope with an intimate perspective, this visually stunning film creates a rare, inside point of view that humanizes a global story,” the Sundance short film jury said in announcing the prize on January 24.

Going to the Source

Hibey, who was a major in both the Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) and the Department of Film, Television, and Theatre, is a freelance film and video maker in Washington, D.C., where he worked on a number of projects with

director and co-writer Cutter Hodierno. Intrigued by a series of Somali pirate stories in *The New York Times*, the two men began writing a script together. Eventually, recalls Hodierno, they decided to go to East Africa to learn about pirate life directly from Somali refugees. “John’s just the sort of guy who would do that sort of thing,” he says.



When Hibey and Hodierno left for Mombasa, Kenya, in late 2010, they thought the trip would last about five weeks. They ended up staying three and a half months. And what the two men found there was a world far from their own.

“Nothing could prepare you for the heightened level of our alert system,” Hibey says. “We were constantly at attention.”

Navigating an unfamiliar culture was only part of the challenge in creating *Fishing Without Nets*, he says. The men cast locals—not trained actors—and they filmed the movie in the Somali language.

Doing so, Hibey says, meant finding people in Kenya who could translate dialogue from English to Swahili and from Swahili to Somali, and trusting that the words actually spoken on film were the ones he and Hodierno intended. To make sure, the men showed their work to a group of immigrants back in Washington, D.C., who call themselves the “Somali Embassy.”

“Attempting to relate ideas through two language barriers is a frustrating yet incredibly creative endeavor,” Hibey says. “We had to

learn, in a very quick time, a nonverbal way of communicating. It was a shock and a relief months later when we found from our ‘Somali Embassy’ that everything was going as intended, if not better. The wing and a prayer panned out.”

Building an Audience



The end result, *Fishing Without Nets*, was one of 64 films selected from a record 7,675 submissions in the 2012 shorts competition at Sundance. This led to an invitation for Hibey to write about the project for *The Huffington Post*’s “Sundance Diaries” series.

“To tell a Somali pirate story from the perspective of the pirates,” Hibey explains in his first column, “we had to borrow from our cast’s lives, from the stories of the characters we were portraying, and from the stories we had researched prior to our trip to Kenya. In this strange conflagration of real and not real, we found a powerful narrative.”

The buzz around the film only intensified after the award was announced last week, and the team has been meeting with potential backers about returning to Kenya to turn the winning short into a full-length feature.

Whether he is promoting a movie at Sundance, filming in Kenya, writing, acting, or making music videos and

commercials, Hibey says he continues to draw on the skills and experiences he developed as a student in Notre Dame's College of Arts and Letters.

"In both the film program and PLS, we were encouraged to bounce ideas off our fellow students, to expand our knowledge base or creativity before shooting projects or writing pages," Hibey says. "Cutter and I take a similar creative approach to finding the narrative in *Fishing Without Nets*."

"For developing a collaborative creative process, those two degrees in tandem, both of which inspired a creative approach to discourse, opened me up to a way of going about my work."

Class of 2006

Class of 2007

Added by the PLS Office:



Inspired by her experiences coaching running with Girls on the Run NYC at an elementary school in Harlem, **Anne Shreiner** decided to raise money for Girls on the Run NYC and tackle a personal goal of running the 2011 NYC marathon. Thanks to the wonderful support from friends and family she raised close to \$4,000 for the program and completed the marathon in 4 hours and 22 minutes. The experience was so positive that Anne just completed her second marathon in Feb 2012 in Austin, Texas, in 4 hours and 12 minutes. She has plans for running NYC again in 2012 and perhaps one more marathon in 2012. She continues to be inspired by the dedication and enthusiasm of the 9-11 year-old girls she

coaches and hopes to impart to them the knowledge that with dedication and hard work they have the ability to achieve their goals.

Class of 2008

Class of 2009

Class of 2010

Added by the PLS Office:

Kristi Haas wrote: "I am finishing up my time in Notre Dame's Echo program, and therefore preparing for comprehensive exams for the M.A. in Theology. As part of the program, I serve as a full-time lay minister at Most Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Angleton, TX, which is located south of Houston."

Class of 2011

Added by the PLS Office:

Kathryn Colby wrote: "I miss the PLS program terribly! I'm doing well, still managing with Hillstone Restaurant Group. I was just recently transferred to Houston's restaurant in Addison, Texas. If anyone is ever in Dallas for a conference, please shoot me an email at kcolby@alumni.nd.edu or give me a call (814-574-1326); I'd love to catch up and treat any of the professors to a meal at my restaurant."

Octavia Ratiu is currently on a leave of absence from her first year of medical school. In the meantime, she is working as a research intern at The Witherspoon Institute in Princeton, NJ, a think tank that works to enhance public understanding of the moral foundations of free and democratic societies. She is considering returning to medical school as well as applying to law school or Ph.D. programs in philosophy or political philosophy.

MANY THANKS TO ALL CONTRIBUTORS

Contributions Received at the PLS Office for Support of *Programma* and the Program of Liberal Studies since the Last Issue

The Program of Liberal Studies is home to a distinguished group of scholar-teachers committed to a vision of the power of a liberal arts education centered on the Great Books. Program faculty members strive to establish an intellectual, social, and spiritual community for students. These efforts often rely on the generosity of the University's alumni/ae to meet with success.

We are fortunate to be at Notre Dame, a university that receives enthusiastic support from its alumni and alumnae. Many of our graduates, however, may not know that it is possible to earmark a gift by specifying the unit to receive it in a letter accompanying the donation.

As I have written to some who have contributed to the Program in recent years, I am deeply grateful not only for the financial support but for the continuing vote of confidence in the department, its faculty, and its students. I have been asked to tell potential contributors that, if you wish to have your gift recorded in the current tax year, you should time the contributions to arrive before December 10. After that point, Debbie is likely to be on vacation, and checks might not be processed until the new year.

When responding to the Notre Dame Annual Fund, please consider donating to the Program of Liberal Studies.

If you would like to make a gift of any kind, contact:

Gretchen Reydams-Schils
Chair, Program of Liberal Studies
215 O'Shaughnessy Hall
Notre Dame, IN 46556
prlibst@nd.edu

We heartily thank you for your support of our programs.

Contributions to the Rev. Nicholas Ayo, C.S.C. Award

A new award established to honor Nicholas Ayo after his retirement from teaching in the Program.

Contributions to the Otto A. Bird Fund

This is a tribute to the faculty member who worked with Mortimer Adler in founding the General Program. Otto A. Bird started the department in 1950. This award recognizes the graduating senior who wrote the year's outstanding senior essay. The announcement of this award is keenly anticipated each year at the Senior Dinner, when students and faculty gather to celebrate the completion of the final requirement for graduation.

Annemarie Sullivan Hitchcock
Gary Raisl

The Calcutt Fund

Established by the Calcutt family for the purpose of student recruitment and allowing for team-teaching in the Program.

Mr. and Mrs. John P. Calcutt, Jr.

Contributions to the Susan Clements Fund

Susan was an extraordinary student and a remarkable young woman who graduated in 1990. She was preparing for a career as a scholar and teacher when she met an early and tragic death in 1992. This award is presented each year at the Senior Dinner to a woman among the Program of Liberal Studies graduating seniors who exemplifies outstanding qualities of scholarly achievement, industry, compassion, and service.

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Clements

Contributions to the Edward J. Cronin Fund

The Cronin Fund both honors a legendary teacher and helps to reward (and thus to encourage) undergraduate efforts to write lucidly and gracefully. The Award is for the finest piece of writing each year by a student in the Program of Liberal Studies. This is a distinct honor; it constitutes the Program's highest prize for writing in the course of ordinary course work. Your gift will help us to recognize Program students who meet the high standards for writing set by our invaluable senior colleague.

Charles Boudreaux
David Carlyle
Annemarie Sullivan Hitchcock
Thomas Kwiecien

Contributions to the Program of Liberal Studies Center for the Homeless Project

In 1998 the Program of Liberal Studies began a community outreach seminar with students from the South Bend Center for the Homeless. The World Masterpieces Seminar runs for the entire academic year. Contributions help defray the cost of the books and outings to plays, concerts, and operas.

William John

Contributions to the Jay Kelly Memorial Scholarship

The Jay Kelly Memorial Scholarship was established in memory of a PLS student who came to Notre Dame in the fall of 1988. He battled cancer for two years and passed away after his junior year of college. This award, commemorating Jay's spirit, is awarded annually to a junior in the Program who is in financial need.

Contributions to the Willis D. Nutting Fund

The Willis Nutting award was established to memorialize one of the great teachers in the Program. Those who taught with or studied under Willis remember his gentle style, his clever wit, and his deep faith. The Willis Nutting tree outside the Art Department bears this motto from Chaucer: "And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche." This was his style, and we hope that it will always be yours as well. The Award is for "that senior who has contributed most to the education of his or her fellow students and teachers."

Contributions to the Stephen Rogers Memorial Fund

Stephen Rogers graduated from our department in 1956. He later became a remarkable asset to our department faculty. Steve was physically challenged; he was blind. In 1985, Steve died during the final portion of senior essay time. We can't think of a better way to keep Steve's ideals alive than to fund a scholarship in his name. The Stephen Rogers Fund helps us to assist worthy students facing unexpected financial difficulties. The fund is given to the PLS student with the most financial need. On more than one occasion, the Fund has allowed students to remain in school when otherwise they would have had to withdraw.

David Carlyle
Elizabeth Drumm
Elizabeth Lyon
John Muench

Leslie Nardine
Daniel Smith
Gregory St. Ville

**Contributions to the
Stephen Rogers Endowment
for Graduate School Studies**

The endowment will be used to support Graduate School Studies
for students of the Program of Liberal Studies.

**Contributions to the University
Designated for PLS since the Last Issue**

These contributions provide the department funds for the many faculty and student
functions (Opening Charge, Christmas Party, Senior Dinner, Senior Brunch),
office equipment, and much more. They also provide us the means to
send *Programma* to over 1,900 alumni/ae all over the world.

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