



PROGRAMMA

A Newsletter for Graduates of the General Program of Liberal Studies

Vol. V, No. 1

University of Notre Dame

January, 1981

The View from 318

Greetings in the New Year from the General Program of Liberal Studies. Notre Dame is beautifully quiet during the Christmas and winter break. It is quite often a frozen stillness, and as forbidding as that sounds, it is another of the many attractive dimensions of this place of beauty, charm, integrity and spirit. I will confess that after some years here the physical setting passing through seasonal changes becomes hard to separate from the people who make all kinds of fruitful human efforts at Notre Dame. One knows, after another staunchly vital autumn, that these souls, including one's own, need this quiet and the peace and distance it can give. Therein must be a good part of the beauty of the winter interlude.

During the past autumn the Rockefeller Foundation issued a report on the humanities that has received considerable attention in the national press and that presents many findings supportive of the General Program's thirty-one year endeavor at Notre Dame. The report entitled The Humanities in American Life has been published by the University of California Press. Among its recommendations are the following:

- a warning against the kind of specialization in the humanities that "merely prepares for graduate study . . . rather than contributes to a liberal education";
- a call for preprofessional undergraduate education and teacher education that is intellectually broad and properly attentive to ethical inquiry;
- a call for humanist educators who speak to the tensions or seeming tensions between humanistic and scientific learning;
- a warning, to use Newsweek's apt phrasing, against curricula characterized either by "a maze of mandated trivia" or "a smorgasbord of electives";
- a call for giving the classics of Western culture a "privileged status" in the curriculum.

It will be great for American higher education (indeed, it may be critical to its health!) if the Rockefeller report gets the attention it deserves in the next few years. The report saw current deficiencies in humanistic education

as an important cause of the declining attractiveness of such education.

The General Program always has had a remarkably stable enrollment; this past autumn, however, the Program enrolled an entering class that is one of the largest ever; at present, it numbers 52. If this represents something more than a singular aberration from a stable pattern, it poses some important questions that the Program's faculty and the administrators of the University must face very soon. In a nutshell, the Program will have to expand its total number of faculty or limit enrollment if it is to retain its traditional and successful ambiance for learning and personal support. A happy problem -- but nonetheless a problem. My hope is that the Program can grow modestly in size in such a way that is not detrimental to its traditional highly personal character.

My thanks on behalf of all of us here to so many of you who have designated the Program as the beneficiary of your annual gift or your gift to the Campaign for Notre Dame. And your continuing support for Programma is heartening. General Program alumni number around 1,000 and right now we are just meeting our expenses for this newsletter through the contributions that some of you send. Linda Ferguson and all of us are appreciative of the encouraging words some have sent about the quality of Programma.

The Class of '56 is planning a GP dimension, including, of course, a seminar, as part of their 25th reunion this coming June. As the single (and part-time) administrator of this Program and community, I am grateful to Tom Wageman and Dick Clark for their initiative and efforts to put this part of the reunion together. May other classes keep it in mind. Don't you wonder whether some of your classmates will still hold the "same line" in seminar?

Elsewhere in this issue you will learn about the new regular faculty, Janet Smith and Juan De Pascuale, for whom we searched the earth last year. You will also get to meet Paul Roche, an exciting presence with us this year. During this year when Michael Crowe and Phillip Sloan have leaves-of-absence for research, we are also turning for help to Barbara Turpin, a recent Ph.D. in the History of Science and Mark Moes, a 1973 graduate of the Program currently doing advanced study in the history and philosophy of science.

The late afternoon winter sun is now beaming in 318's window. It reminds me how grateful I am that there is a view from 318. John Lyon, my immediate predecessor, broke precedent around here and insisted, when window air-conditioners were installed, that it go at the top rather than at the bottom half of the window. General Program chairmen yet to be born will toast him for that! Best wishes.

Walter Nicgorski
Chairman

PROGRAMMA (the Greek word meaning "public notice") is published toward the end of each academic semester by the General Program of Liberal Studies for its graduates.

Faculty Editor:

Linda Ferguson

Copyright, 1981

University of Notre Dame

Editor's Notes

With this issue of Programma, we hope to set before you once again the idea of the Great Books. The feature article, an excerpt from a discussion on the subject of "greatness" in books, is followed by the seminar reading lists as they currently stand, the latter in response to a number of alumni requests. The lists, obviously, are organic, and any contemplated change requires the department to address anew the question posed in the dialogue: What makes a book great? Elsewhere in the issue you are invited to join in a consideration of this question.

For those of us who have recently completed the Seminar V course, some potential answers to the "greatness" question come to mind from some of the texts themselves. For example, Chaucer's Host could help, by pointing to merit in a story which ". . . gives the fullest measure/ of good morality and general pleasure" and by recommending ". . . stuff that nourishes/ And not too much of your rhetorical flourishes." Or we could seek an answer in Cervantes, where the Canon suggests that goodness in literature will be evident if we are "entertained by the comic part, instructed by the serious, surprised by the action, enlivened by the speeches, warned by the tricks, wiser for the moral, incensed against vice, and enamoured of virtue."

* * * * *

It is appropriate that in this issue which considers values in the use of language, we have the pleasure of including some work of a distinguished British poet and scholar, Paul Roche, whose dedication to the art of language is most apparent. Professor Roche is spending this year with the General Program as poet in residence and visiting professor, and we acknowledge and celebrate the fact of his presence among us with an essay and a poem. During his short time with us, he has already given several readings of his works; taught the poetry tutorial; directed and performed in a readers theater production of his own translation of Sophocles' Oedipus the King; and, before a public showing of the film Oedipus the King (with Christopher Plummer and Orson Welles), discussed the making of that film, for which he prepared the screenplay and in which he appeared as a chorister. A widely acclaimed poet and translator, his translation of the Oedipus cycle was chosen for the current production of the Classic Stage Company in New York, which opened recently to excellent reviews.

Also in this issue we continue the convention of inviting newly appointed faculty members to introduce themselves to our alumni. Ms. Janet Smith graciously managed to take time from her hectic first semester with us to continue this tradition. She is completing her dissertation (on myth in the Platonic dialogues) at the University of Toronto. During her first semester, Professor Smith taught the drama tutorial and the senior seminar; in the coming term she will teach the junior seminar and the ethics tutorial. Also new with us this year is Mr. Juan De Pascuale, who is currently completing his dissertation (on "Existential Thinking") at Brown University. He has agreed to offer his greetings and reflections in the Spring issue of Programma.

* * * * *

The current edition of the General Program T-shirt bears the image of Don Quixote and his windmills, along with the oft-cited (during finals week) inscription from Cervantes: ". . . and so from little sleep and much reading, his brain dried up and he lost his wits." I have speculated that if the faculty were to adopt a "great books" quotation to express their collective condition at the end of the term, it might be one of my favorite out-of-context passages from St. Augustine: "You can easily see what an endless, wearisome, and fruitless task it would be, if I were to refute all the unconsidered objections of people who pigheadedly contradict everything I say" (City of God, Bk. II, Ch. 1). But with the pressures of the fall now behind us, the lack of magnanimity in the latter quotation already seems out of place, and perhaps, by now, the students too have begun to regain their wits. Best wishes to General Program friends everywhere, and may 1981 bring madness only of the divine sort.

--LCF

THE FUNCTION OF ART

"Do you write poems to please
Or tell the truth?" she asked.
"To tell the truth," I said.
"In which I lie. Necessarily.
To make a wound
Differently from science or knowledge."
"Because of the lie?" she asked.
"Yes, and difficult.
I lie for art. Creating
Something new..." "A box
Or house?" she said. "Yes new
But not a box exactly.
Exactly, art must speak."
"Like what?" she said.
"Like what it's like to be a human being."
"I thought art was beautiful," she said.
"Of course - by how it tells the truth:
Necessarily - by lying."
"The truth's not nice," she said:
Sometimes... Murder incest suicide."
"Yes, sometimes Oedipus," I said,
"But also dreams are real
Dreams. The lie

Illuminates to wound;
The wound to please. To tease
Out essences..." "So, more
Than craft?" she said.
"Oh much, but crafty, subtle.
Even subtile. Difficult.
Too much lying," I said,
"Makes only sunsets.
Too much truth, the dead
Grammar of a mirror.
There is no way to weigh
The leap of an eye.
It's not the seeing but the vision.
Not the lasting but the moment.
Not the murder but the passion.
Something like a lie. Yes.
Pretence. Beautifully. To be...
The truth."

Paul Roche

(From TO TELL THE TRUTH, Duckworth,
London, 1967)

NOTES TOWARDS A METAPHYSICAL DELINEATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF POETRY

The subconscious mind is in touch with all there is and all there has been. If the conscious mind were exposed to the same, it would "blow", it would explode. So it lets its net down slowly into the ocean and comes up dripping. One could say that the subconscious is sieved through to the conscious, letting through to it only so much as it can handle at any one time. This is what is called Knowledge and it comes first in the form of symbols: memory of sense perceptions turned into images, which then become words.

Only after this has happened, that is, only after this alchemy whereby the tangible world is possessed again intangibly, can the further stages of abstraction and ratiocination begin. What is more, these symbols, these carriers and unifiers of being, are not only images but also rhythms, because the universe is constituted in rhythm.

The act of knowing (like the act of finding a language, both verbally and in any of the arts) is therefore a poetic act, a poetic process, because "poiesis" deals uniquely with images, symbols and rhythms. A double thing takes place in poetry - here I am talking of the art of poetry: the idea is broken down again into the sensory data that gave rise to it and is re-incarnated into the symbols which are stored in the treasury of the subconscious. In other words, the idea is returned to the stratum of primary knowledge from which it came, and at the same time the incantatory pulse of the rhythm flows into the blood-beat of the universe, thus coaxing the spirit away from the tight limitations of the cerebral and letting the psyche merge again with subliminal experience.

The reason why pure poetry cannot be immediately understood is because it returns us to that level of immediate contact which is inaccessible to the conscious mind except in so far as it is sieved through the subconscious. Poetry is in some ways a waking kind of dream: a dynamic dream and a musically organized catenation of symbols which seizes the mind even while it by-passes it. And it by-passes it to produce a resonance within the whole sentient self. This resonance sounds through the words in order to go beyond the meaning of words. The waking-dream, unlike ordinary dreams, is "real", for it re-lives and re-invents the raw material from which all surreality takes its rise. One might almost say that it is more than real for it controls the actual lens that springs the senses into focus. Like dreams, this poetic transmutation is synaesthetic. Within it the senses blend and interpret one another. Sounds are seen, touches heard, visions tasted. It sees, feels, hears, tastes, smells all things through all things - becoming thus analogously divine in the way that the divine essence permeates equally all that it expresses in the very act of differentiating it with the sparkle of its own identity. The paradox is that poetry reaches universality not by being universal in its language, i.e. abstract, but by being specific and particular, just as the senses are. It cuts into and from reality magical facets each one of which shines forth the whole.

As a corollary, one might say that the basic difference between poetry on the one hand, and prose and verse on the other, is that both these latter stem primarily from the conscious mind, poetry from the subconscious. For this reason, poetry is in touch with a wider, deeper and more immediate range of being. Verse when it is also poetry is verse wherein the conscious has waited upon the subconscious for its data and not tried to force it; where in fact both are brought into an instinctive equilibrium of giving and shaping.

A second corollary might be this, that the moment symbols cease to be hidden persuaders, the moment we drag them into consciousness, we make them largely useless. They are then relegated to that tiny compartment of the intellect where secondary knowledge resides. There they cease to operate on the whole psyche through the vast domains of the subliminal. It follows that the meticulous industry of analysing poetry and literature indulged in by the academies, though it may flatter our cerebral vanity, is a rather vain predilection: an exercise to please the brain. It plucks out the very heart of poiesis and turns it into a dead lump of so-called "knowledge" - something no longer organic.

Poetry, then, is a way of illuminating knowledge beyond the confines of knowledge. It is a way of encompassing more than the mind can know. For, by sparking into apprehension new revelations of being, it extends the boundaries of the real and opens up sudden avenues to uncharted experience. It "can transform into a strange sensuous energy what in its origin had been mere aesthetic impulse."* The art of poetry is the art of giving voice and form to elemental inspiration. That is why, in Keats' immortal phrase, poetry must "surprise with a fine excess", and why, for a moment, it makes the universe as coherent and tranlucent as a drop of water.

Paul Roche
Notre Dame 1980

*Oscar Wilde: "The Portrait of Mr. W.H."

INTRODUCING PROFESSOR SMITH

The phrase "words to live by" although associated with a kind of noon-hour religious inspirational fix, intrigues me, for I find that most people have words -- usually the sayings of great thinkers, or Biblical aphorisms, or advice from those who have touched their lives -- written on their hearts and that they do live by them. The ability of a saying or aphorism to sustain and motivate people exercises a fascination on me, a fascination linked with the arresting magic which I believe words have in general. Learning the etymological meanings of words, the historical alterations a word undergoes, the vast array of connotations and uses which most words boast can be a dazzling experience. I say all this as an introduction and a justification for my chosen field: classics. I chose to study Latin and Greek, in part, because I liked the label philologist, which means a lover of words (although some who know me well think that in my case "philologist" means that I love to talk). Now classics, when taught well, allows one to study individual words in some depth and some of the most magnificent conglomerations of words, or literary, historical, and philosophical masterpieces, which have ever been written. My coming to the General Program, then, is not an unusual step, but a natural step into the liberal arts of a broader tradition. The General Program allows me to become more catholic in my studies, and also, I hope, more Catholic. It is an astonishing blessing to have colleagues and to teach students who for the most part, take questions of Faith extremely seriously. What promise the intelligent probing of fundamental

questions of life -- in a Catholic context -- holds. My appreciation for what this opportunity means for students and faculty derives oddly enough to a large extent from the fact that I received my college education in the late 60's.

I arrived at Grinnell College in Iowa determined to put behind me all the conservatism and narrowness of my small town upbringing (which, I believed, included my Catholicism). Grinnell, although a small town school, was a very radical place in the 60's; one of our greatest sources of energy was a desire to out-scoop Eastern schools in radical activity: we had the first male home-coming queen, we were one of the first to close down after Cambodia, and so forth. The mood on campus was exactly that which seemed typical of the 60's -- alienation, scepticism, and a kind of deterministic, materialist, behaviorist "philosophy" marked most clearly by a moral relativism (not to say licentiousness). Nevertheless we all believed we had personally transcended our backgrounds and were certain that the Vietnam War was absolutely wrong. It was the paradox of our beliefs and our behavior which prompted me to turn my scepticism on the sceptics. Providentially, I took a class from an outstanding practitioner in dialectic, John Crossett, who, through relentless argumentation forced us to see that we could know some things and that understanding of what is good and bad was accessible to us to some considerable degree. While Crossett was responsible for my renewed acceptance of the evidence of my senses and my reason as a means to knowledge, reflection, revealed to me that the truths yielded by these means were strongly compatible with those taught by the Catholic Church. And so began my return to Catholicism (which makes me a "revert"). I had found a new and more compelling word to live by -- through and with, the Word Incarnate.

After acquiring my M.A. at the University of North Carolina, I moved to Toronto where new adventures in grace awaited me. The Pontifical Institute and the Institute for Medieval Studies there attract many Catholics eager to learn the historical, philosophical, and theological underpinnings of their faith. I found my association with them to be an exhilarating adventure into the shared discovery of the incomparably splendid gift of the Catholic Faith. We formed study groups on the Bible, Vatican II documents, and the writings of Thomas in our zeal to learn the fundamentals of our faith. This line of study was really very new to me for as an undergraduate my professors taught as if there were no thinkers worthy of serious consideration after Aristotle and before Descartes; certainly little associated with religion -- and less with Catholicism -- found its way into the curriculum. The Catholic atmosphere at Toronto had, some might say paradoxically, a liberating effect on my friends and myself. Unlike our morose and pessimistic days of the 60's, we found ourselves free to be joyful and optimistic -- and free to explore a much wider range of sources in our search for truth. I find the same freedom to look for truth of a personally compelling kind and wherever one might find it, here in the GP. This freedom mingled with the love of words of great men and of The Word, accounts, I suspect, for the general good cheer of members of the GP. I am delighted to be here.

-- -- Janet Smith.

WHAT MAKES A GREAT BOOK?
(A Dialogue Inviting Your Response)

In April, 1977, John Lyon, then Chairman of the General Program, invited me to join him in representing the Program at a conference primarily involving faculty and administrators from schools and programs committed to the great books approach to liberal education. The conference was sponsored by St. John's College (Annapolis and Santa Fe) and the National Endowment For the Humanities. The conference was held in Santa Fe and extended over three days.

At the heart of each day was, quite appropriately, a seminar focused on a question of common concern. William Darkey, chairman of the conference and tutor at St. John's, opened each seminar with a question. A court reporter transcribed the discussion. The excerpt below is from the first part of the first day's seminar. The second day's seminar concerned whether the great books seminar or philosophy and theology tutorials ought be the center of curriculum. The third day's discussion considered the place of Poetry in liberal education.

The excerpt that follows bears on a question of continuing interest to the faculty and students of the General Program. Your response to the discussion and/or the question with which it ends would be very welcome. Can we begin a discussion among alumni -- possibly in the pages of Programma?

We reprint the excerpt below with the kind permission of St. John's College. It comes from the book, Three Dialogues on Liberal Education, which contains the published account of the seminars noted above. That book is available for \$3.00 (\$1.50 for soft-cover) from the St. John's College Bookstore, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87501.

Besides Mr. Darkey and myself, the following portion of the first day's dialogue involves Robert Bart, Dean of St. John's at Santa Fe, Richard Weigle, the President of St. John's Ronald McArthur, President of Thomas Aquinas College, and Thomas Simpson and John Steadman, tutors at St. John's.

--W.N.

* * * * *

Mr. Darkey: . . . The question, then, with which we propose to begin today's discussion looks towards a possible re-examination of the idea that great books are the best instruments for liberal education. I ask then, what do we now think great books are? How do we think they ought to be used for liberal education? And why?

Mr. Bart: I've often heard it said, and I think I agree, that the reason we use great books can only be because we expect to find the truth in them. If I'm quite sure the truth is not in a book, then I'm sure it is not a great book, and I see no particular reason for students to read it.

I can well imagine my account of great books would prove very controversial, but as I have reflected on it, that seems to me to be where I really stand. Books from which I did not expect to learn at least a truth, if not the truth, I think I would reject outright as not being useful for our educational purposes. I feel my duty as a teacher is to bring my students to confront a great book as being one that proposes a possible truth. I am ready to entertain the thought that the truth is in it.

Now I admit this claim is difficult to maintain with respect to certain of the books we read, say, the older scientific works that we feel are outdated. For instance, I don't entertain at all seriously the idea that the earth is at rest with the planets going around it. On the other hand, I think Ptolemy's approach to his data in his Almagest may be as good an approach as a scientist can possibly take. So, although that's not a truth in any final sense, I do think it is worthwhile to look at Ptolemy's work. And yet, even so, I would doubt the value of our studying some other "outdated" scientific works, because I don't see anything in them like what I see in Ptolemy.

So I suppose that, even to myself, I'm not going to be able to justify all of the books on our reading list on the simple proposition of their truth. Even so, in the case of the most central books, I would maintain that we read them because we expect to find the truth there. That makes my position different from the position of those who hold that the truth is in some particular one of these books; and also from the position of those who say that it is not in any of them. Both would disagree with me completely, and they would have to give an account entirely different from mine of how and why these books ought to be used in liberal education.

Nevertheless, I have stated my own assumption and the teaching practice that follows from it: I put one of these books before the student, and we inquire together in complete seriousness whether what the author says may not be the truth of the matter.

Mr. Nicgorski:

Working with your preliminary account, could we try to bring under its umbrella some of those books like the outdated ones in the history of science, where their account doesn't seem to be the truth, by saying that we can find in them something that is true about the method or the art of inquiry? This might be a way to move from your preliminary account of great books as having the truth to an independent and secondary consideration of these books as examples of the arts of inquiry and the liberal arts of expression?

Mr. Simpson:

But surely we don't need to make any apologies for Ptolemy's work. His fundamental principle of regular motion in a circle is hardly outdated.

More generally, though, I think there are many ways in which a book may be speaking the truth.

Mr. Bart: I wasn't saying that Ptolemy's work was simply not speaking the truth; and the case is certainly a simpler one than others might be.

I'm grateful for the implications of your remarks.

Mr. Weigle: I think what Mr. Nicgorski has said ought to be followed up. For it does seem to me that the great books are exemplars of the liberal arts, the arts of the mind. That's at least a second reason for using them in a liberal arts curriculum: they demonstrate to the student what is possible in the way of inquiry and expression.

Mr. Steadman: I'd like to suggest another approach to the question, though I don't know how far it is in the end from what Mr. Bart suggested. Could we start with the Socratic principle, the one principle he has faith in and will fight for, that it is our duty to inquire for the truth, because that will make us better men? From that viewpoint, it may be that we see in a great book the work of a human being at the height of his humanness. Aristotle terms it "the activity of the soul in accordance with reason and the most excellent of its kind." Looked at that way these authors can be seen as human beings who are carrying out this human activity in its best mode. That would mean that, whether or not they had come to certain understandings which we would want to call "scientific" truths, nevertheless, we as human beings have some essential relationship to what they have done.

This points from another direction to a possible reason for the use of great books in liberal education, (remembering that liberal education means freeing education), namely, that we want to help our students begin to carry out that specifically human "activity of soul in accordance with reason", and to carry it out as excellently as they can. So we try to get them to confront and understand and be led to admire and imitate some other human being who has achieved that kind of excellence.

I think the two views that have been expressed so far of what great books are, products of the highest human activity, as I've been saying, or containers of the truth, as Mr. Bart was putting it, may not be so far apart.

Mr. McArthur: Mr. Bart raises a practical problem in saying that when he puts a great book before his students, he is seriously proposing it to them as a book that may contain the truth about the subject--or even a truth about the subject. A new or inexperienced tutor couldn't do that, because he might never have read, say, Newton's Principia, or some other great and difficult work that is prescribed by the curriculum. Doesn't a tutor in that position have to say, then, that as far as he's concerned, the work in question is a proposed

great book, and that he has a certain faith in the judgment of the teaching community that it's worth his time and his students' time simply to explore it, seeking for what's there? Because it may be only after years of study that he can come to any settled judgment of his own about the greatness of such a work as the Principia. But that oughtn't to prevent him from exploring works like that with his students.

So your statement, Mr. Bart, would be the statement of a person with considerable experience, but it couldn't be the stance that a young tutor just beginning could take with his students.

Mr. Simpson:

It seems to me that even the initial reading of these books, however exploratory and doubtful and complicated it may be, somehow or other is energized by the smell of truth. There is something about even this first reading that is attractive to the mind.

And I think that's somehow the point about the seminar. Over the years, the seminar is energized by the sense that we are in contact with sources that are rich and exciting; that in a certain sense there is more substance to the experience than an abstract faith that the community has hit on the right books; and that really we are feeling excitement at the prospect of something turning out to be right. And even if, on the face of it, it turns out to be dead wrong - maybe like the Ptolemaic system of the world - it's wrong in a way which looks fascinating to the mind.

I like the ground you proposed for us, Mr. Bart.

Mr. Bart:

I welcome your support. It helps me move towards an answer to Mr. McArthur. I think what you say, Mr. McArthur, about the situation of the new teacher is probably simply true. But I was looking mainly to the student rather than the teacher.

I think the claim the student has on us is that he rightly wants to know the truth about things. Of course we can say, "You're very young, and you'll have to postpone that concern"; but even if we avoid him that way, it still seems to be his legitimate concern to know what is the truth about the world and about his relationship to it. In that sense, I cannot picture myself addressing him without presupposing that he might find the truth in what I'm offering.

That's what he wants, I believe, and I don't think he is properly served either by being told to wait or by being presented with some opinion as though it were a truth, nor yet by being told that everything is just a matter of opinion--as I was told when I first went as a student to Harvard. "Look around," they said, "and take up anything that interests you. One course is as good as another." I can't think of anything more chilling for a young person who would really like to know the way the world is. It's tough enough that there's no book of which you can say, "Go read this and you'll know the truth."

What you've said, Mr. McArthur, has been immensely helpful, because it has helped me to say explicitly that so far I have been thinking about the student's situation and about my relation to him as a teacher. I don't shrink from declaring I don't have the truth, and I don't really know that the truth is in these

books. But I don't know anywhere else to look for it. I must say I offer them to students wholeheartedly with the idea in mind that they do, somehow, contain the truth, so that I am frequently accused of being a complete believer in a vast variety of incompatible texts.

Mr. Nicgorski: Then, Mr. Bart, you are stepping back from your first position and are now saying that you don't know that the truth is in these books, but that you have some sense that they are the best place to look for it?

Mr. Bart: Yes. If that's a stepping back, yes.

Mr. Weigle: Maybe that's where the faith in the judgment of the community comes in.

Mr. Bart: I meant to be saying that we - or I - put these books before the students because the truth might be in them. I see no other adequate reason for doing what I do. But I fully understand that a teacher who would say that he knew the truth was in a particular one of these books would have to give a different account of why we should read them.

Mr. Steadman: Are there any books you're quite sure the truth is not in?

Mr. Bart: In the sense in which Mr. Simpson joins me, I would say no.

Mr. Steadman: Then any book might be a great book?

Mr. Bart: No, most would not.

Mr. Steadman: But why wouldn't any book be a great book, if, as you say, the truth might be in any one of them?

* * * * *

The Current Great Books Seminar
READING LISTS

Sophomore Year:

The Epic of Gilgamesh; Homer, The Odyssey; Plato, Apology, Crito, Republic; Aristophanes, Clouds; Herodotus, The Histories; Sophocles, Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone; Epicetetus, Enchiridion; Augustine, Confessions; Dante, The Inferno; Aquinas, Treatise on Law, Machiavelli, The Prince; Bacon, The New Organon; Descartes, Discourse on Method; Hobbes, Leviathan; Milton, Samson Agonistes; Hume, An Inquiry Concerning Human Understanding; Rousseau, The Social Contract; Tocqueville, Democracy in America; Newman, Idea of a University; Mill, On Liberty; Melville, Moby Dick.

Junior Year:

Homer, The Iliad; Confucius, The Analects; Mencius; Chuang Tzu, Basic Writings; Aeschylus, Agamemnon, The Choephoroi, Eumenides; Bhagavad Gita; The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha; Plato, Phaedo, Symposium; Lucretius, On the Nature of the Universe; Dante, Purgatorio; Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy; Erasmus, The Praise of Folly; Luther, Three Treatises; Montaigne, Essays and Selected Writings; Shakespeare, The Tempest; Descartes, Meditations; Hume, The Standard of Taste; Burke, Reflections on the Revolution in France; Paine, The Rights of Man; Malthus, Essay on the Principle of Population; Smith, The Wealth of Nations; Hegel, Reason in History; Tolstoy, War and Peace; Darwin, The Descent of Man; Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844, The Communist Manifesto; Arnold, Culture and Anarchy; Flaubert, Madame Bovary; Thoreau, Walden.

Senior Year:

Euripides, Medea, Alcestis; Thucydides, Peloponnesian War; Plato, Phaedrus; Vergil, The Aeneid; Augustine, The City of God; Thomas Aquinas, On Happiness; Dante, Paradiso; Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales; St. Bonaventure, The Mind's Road to God; More, Utopia; Cervantes, Don Quixote; Pascal, Pensees; Swift, Gulliver's Travels; Voltaire, Candide; Goethe, Faust; Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments; Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil; Peirce, Philosophical Writings; Weber, The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism; James, Psychology; Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections; Sartre, The Flies; Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov.