Editorial Introduction

Jonathan Locke Hart

A human speaking to humans in culture and nature: that is the most elemental aspect of what we have tried to do in *Veritas Review*. We have sought harmony, intellectual and cultural exchange, through words and images. Poetry, prose, photographs, and portraits have worked together toward this end. What divides us gets attention in an age of machine learning or artificial intelligence. Controversy and division create heat, smoke and profit. How do the arts, sciences, humanities, and social sciences create, make, explore, flourish in an age where there can be an illusion of choice when some aspects of advertising, technology, manipulation, and propaganda can work against that very choice? Freedom of thought and expression have been hard won over the course of human history. They are fragile. Here, we try to give contributors and readers scope to explore this space of the human in nature, what freedom the human mind and spirit has had, has or will have. *Veritas Review* has contributors who seek elemental questions of life and death and this issue is no different. Thought, method, creativity, all contribute to the gifts that science, art, and the seven liberal arts have given us.

The issue begins with Anne Elezabeth Pluto's moving poetry about human companionship, deftly using images of a hospice, hush puppies, notes, notebooks, playbook, chess, traces left behind, books, dust, the dead, God, the landscape of Texas, memory, dreams of a bird, and love. Tom Conley's essay on how Rabelais can inspire us does so by remembering when his elder brother was an undergraduate and took a course, *Freshman Studies*, that Nathan Pusey had begun at Lawrence College, a brother who "insisted that that *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* embodied a love of life," indeed something that the younger Conley has embodied in this essay, at Harvard, in the world, and in his own remarkable life.

Like Conley himself in another aspect of his work, our film reviewers understand the power of movies or moving pictures in our culture. Robert Siodmak's *Criss Cross* (1949) is a work that Ross Noble praises as he examines the context and says that this LA Film Noir has the key features of the genre. Constantin Waldschmidt discusses Yukio Mishima, "Japan's last literary genius" who planned his own death and whose art is "a compulsion," and lauds the editing, voice-over, and aesthetic of Paul Schrader's film *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* (1985). Alexander Hughes considers Kathryn Bigelow's action movie *Point Break* (1991), set in southern California, and reminds us that art is also entertainment, representing "an America whose cracks are starting to show despite its affluence." Moreover, Mathieu Ronayne writes about *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006), ideals and actualities relating to war and fratricide in the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921). Jason O'Dwyer reviews Clint Eastwood's *Gran Torino* (2008), a film without a big budget in which Eastwood directs and performs as the only famous actor, and keeps verbatim Nick Schenk's screenplay about the condition of the United States.

Veritas Review has also encouraged contributions reflecting cultural and linguistic diversity, including translation. "Ode to Youth" is a poem by Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) about freedom in a world without life, a key poet in Poland, translated by Paweł Rybacki, once a student at Harvard and with whom Henry Stratakis-Allen, Danilo Petranovich, and I first discussed the idea of a journal, which, in time, after Pawel had moved to the University of Chicago, became *Veritas Review*. Jacob Conrod examines Jean Calvin (Cauvin) as a subtle mystic and shows a different dimension of the French reformer and those "Calvinists" who came to follow.

Furthermore, *Veritas Review* bridges the historical with the present and the future. Cyberpunk, as Cindy Chopoidalo notes in her essay, was prominent in the early 1980s, as an alternative to mainstream science fiction and the New Wave of the 1960s. Iosif M. Gershteyn's poems explore "I," "you" and the world—that is self and other in an exploration of nature, human connection, history, and time generally—and represent living

fully in the face of life and death. Catherine Ezell's portraits enrich the words in this issue as they have previous issues and give *Veritas Review* a distinctive style or look. Her images have been and are of some of the contributors and figures that arise from the content of some of the contributions as she sees fit.

And so, *Veritas Review* values conversation, creativity, evidence, explores the importance of science, encourages contributors at various stages of their lives and careers, and embodies civility while people consider tradition, the present, innovation and a possible or imagined future. We thank our advisors, Tom Conley and Donald Pfister, a distinguished humanist and a distinguished scientist, both at Harvard, for their advice, support and contributions. May they continue to inspire students, colleagues, readers, and all of us.

Poems by Anne Elezabeth Pluto

Hush puppy

I stop taking notes when hospice
arrives—and the notebook in my
purse becomes a scratch pad
for shopping lists—for restaurant
menus—Shakin' Seafood
does not have fried okra
no matter how many
times I ask
no red beans
no, we are not in Texas
but they do have a fried
catfish basket with french
fries, onion rings, and hush puppies.

the dog under the bed
listens to the undulating sound of
the mattress—your weight shifts in
the night of disturbed sleep—in the
beginning there is only the TV
that I turn off once you are
sound asleep—
Hush puppy.

Chess

There is no playbook
for the dead.
The dying
The caretakers.
The family.

Hospice provides a map—
Drugs arrive delivered—
Nurses—chaplains—social workers
volunteers—
Contraptions—beds that breathe
throughout the day and night—
oxygen that becomes a lullaby
sheets of paper to keep score:
Morphine—4
Patient—0
Haldol—5
Patient—0

Syringes filled to
the correct line—gently
insert in the inside
of his cheek.
That didn't hurt
until the end.

We play chess
the set that arrived
from Istanbul.
I always play for Salaheddin
you for Richard and
his Templars.
I walk you through
every move—I let you
win—and then
the Knights
the Pawns
the Queens
the Rooks
the Imams and Bishops
the King and Sultan
get put away.
I have not opened
them since that day—it hurts
to see them in
their splendor.

What You Left Behind

Your notebooks where there are
messages I cannot bear
to open you left
guitars and music fishing
line and reels—poles
and lures—flies on
the wall assemblages
feather and white tailed
deer fun to fool the large mouth
Bass hooks and weights
your clothes—I am separating
by size to divide no one
will play dice to receive
a chess set from Istanbul
a gift for me we played
the first few months of hospice
your focus shifting—I find notes
on how the Queen moves as far as
She can see in all directions—but how little
joy enjoys the Queen thereof—for I am
She and altogether joyless.

Into the Heart of the Dust

I'm finding you in books—open
the dust jacket reveals that
God is alive—you were always
a searcher—a believer—a
deceiver—you took notes
to remember what you read
God is love—and heaven
is a place where you wait
at the gate for Peter—the rock.
Roll away the stones—the
Gospels of prosperity—the
loud Pentecostal prairie pageant
you were born into—the Texas
wilderness—all tumbleweed
and rifles—cows and horses
second amendment—the well
guarded militia—the assault
rifles you carried as a Ranger
all fade into the horizontal
the looming highway: North
to Amarillo—East to Dallas
South to El Paso—West
to New Mexico—I'm going
to stand in the marketplace
at Clovis and buy a pair
of pointy boots—I'm going
to scatter the dirt of the earth
in memory of the dead
the maligned—the innocent
I'm going to sing my heart
into the heart of the dust—
that carefully tended
acre of mistrust.

Bird Dream

The tiny baby—with feathers and personality
in the palm of my hand—his face resting and
trusting—little things that fill up the heart—
how did I miss the eggs—how did I miss
the hamster who flattened out
and snuck into the cage—now in
the food watching me and filling
his cheeks with millet.

As dreams go this one remains—the birds
are always singing—not trusting me—but
lose their appetite if a neighbor feeds them.
How little did I know
about love.

Rabelaisian Beginning

Tom Conley

The year was 1957. My sole and elder brother of six years had just returned from his first year of undergraduate study at Lawrence College, in Appleton, Wisconsin. He eagerly reported to me, a dawdling high school sophomore of fourteen, some impressions of college life. He had taken a course titled *Freshman Studies*, that Nathan Pusey, the recent president of the College, had inaugurated shortly before leaving for Harvard. Still a benchmark in the curriculum of required courses Lawrence College (now Lawrence University) requires of its students, *Freshman Studies* has included, among other titles, the *Communist Manifesto*, E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, Werner Heisenberg's *Physics and Philosophy*, and Samuel Putnam's *Portable Rabelais* (Viking Press, 1946). Translated with force and verve—to my mind closer to Rabelais than later translations, rivalled only by that of Thomas Urquhart (1611-1660) and Pierre Le Motteux (1670-1718)—Putnam's *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* changed my life.[1] Dickens excepted, and some pages of *Vanity Fair* too ("a novel without a hero"), I was suddenly lifted from the schoolmarmish Victorians our English teachers were imposing in their listless classes. My brother, a painter committing himself to a studio and to let college go by the wayside, insisted that *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* embodied a love of life. It was then, as Pascal (whom I had yet to encounter) would scribble in his notes on the *pari*, I was *embarqué*: embarked on a voyage in French studies that would wend its way through an unmatched canon of poetry, art, architectuanthropology, literary history, and cultural theory.

It began with Rabelais, and begin it did with *Gargantu*a, chapter 13, known as the *propos torcheculatifs*, the account of the child-prince's "experience" and invention of the ideal rump-wiper. The young Gargantua essays (or wipes his bottom with) 68 items, including a bonnet, a pillow, a slipper, a basket (alas, "o le mal plaisant torche-cul"), a piece of taffeta, a satin cloth, a chicken, a rooster, a veal's hide, a hare, a pigeon, a cormorant, etc., crowned by that of the warm neck of a downy goose deftly held between the legs—which I later read in the original: *le cou d'un oyson bien dumenté, pourveu quon luy tiegne la teste entre les iambes*—left me in bodily bliss. Rabelais, it seemed, suddenly freed us from puritan prurience. Like what Hélène Cixous called "le rire de la méduse," to be done with the so-called total social fact dictating that "castration" was at the core of the human condition, he laughed in our face.

Years later, at the University of Minnesota, on the heels of a lecture Marc-René Jung delivered on "La Légende de Troyes au Moyen Âge en France," in the enjoyment of dining in his company (Jung was then Rector of the University of Zürich), conversation turned to Rabelais. He noted astutely that the oeuvre ought to be read in three phases. The first, as it had been in my adolescence, entailed discovery, unabashed laughter, and liberation. In concert with the erudite labors, among legions of others, of Michael Andrew Screech, a scholar and cleric for whom Rabelais was a deeply religious figure in the tumult of the Reform, the second dealt with context and close analysis of the text in respect to murderous events from the 1520s up to the author's death in 1553. So as not to lose the forest from the trees, Jung proposed a third reading, a sublation of wonder and studious application, in which, however oxymoronic the formula may sound, "informed joy" would be a rule and measure. Recalling Leo Spitzer's keystone essay on "Rabelais et les rabelaisants,"[2] in which the linguist reminded the academic world that *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* motivated play of language whose force exceeded meaning and context, Jung's words called back to Alfred Glauser's *Rabelais créateur* (1966), an engaged essay, armed with only one footnote, on what, four years later, in quiet modesty, Roland Barthes would call the pleasure of the text. In 1966 it was Glauser, under whose aegis I began doctoral study at the University of Wisconsin, who merely read the text aloud, *à haute voix*. It was more than pleasure. Glauser made Rabelais come alive.[3]

How and why? Spinning off Panurge's dialogue with Dindenault in the early chapters of *Le Quart livre* (1552), Rabelais's unfinished, late, and presumably—only presumably—last work, *revenons à nos moutons* [let's get back to our sheep]. Or, rather, *revenons à nos torcheculs*: it has been observed that the episode in *Gargantua* belongs to an allegorical design in which a "first," inferior, "medieval," syllogistic education is set in strong contrast to a counterpart, to a renaissance, in which the child is shaped all the art and sciences and, thanks to the printing press, taught not to lose a minute of the day. For that reason, in chapter 24, under the tutelage of a new instructor, Ponocrates, Gargantua learns to philosophize in the outhouse (fig. 2): "Puis sen alloit es lieux secretz fayre excretion des digestions naturelles. Là son precepteur repetoit les poictz [sic] plus obscurs & difficiles. Eux retourans consideroient lestat du ciel, si tel estoyt comme lavoient note au soir precedent…." [Then he went off to the secret places to excrete his natural digestions. In returning they [Gargantua and Ponocrates] considered the state of the heavens, to see if they were such as they had noted the evening before].[4] In noting the difference of style conveying the first and second "institutions" (or educational programs), Glauser ran the risk of asserting that the pleasure of the enumeration in the first or failed education carried wit and vivacity that was somewhat muted in the second. And thus we can appreciate the impish Gargantua punctuating his fecal rhapsody with a *rondeau* whose incipit and refrain are "En chiant" (in shitting and/or in criss-crossing, if the figure of *chiasmus* is seen and heard in the gerund):

En chiant laultre hyer senty
La guabelle que a mon cul doibts,
L'odeur feut aultre que cuydois:
J'en feuz du tout empuanty.

O si quelqun eust consenty
Mamener une que attendoys,
En chiant.

Car ie luy eusse assimenty
Son trou durine a mon lourdoys,
Ce pendant eust avecq ses doigtz
Mon trou de merde guarenty.
En chiant.

[In shitting the other day, I felt the pot I owe to my ass, / The odor was other than I believed: / I was smeared and stunk. / Oh! if a person would have consented to bring the one I'd been waiting for, / In

shitting…. / For I would have plugged my dimwit's pisshole, / However, it was with his fingers / That my shithole was cleaned].

Retorts the precocious poet to his dad, to Grandgousier, "Or dictez maintenant que ie ny scay rien. Par la mer de ie ne les ay faict mie, Mais les oyant reciter a dame grand que voyez cy, les ay retenu en la gibbessiere de ma memoyre. Retournons (dist Grantgoudier) a nostre propos."[5] [So tell me now that I know nothing! By the mother of God/Shit itself I didn't make the [words] my own. But hearing them recited to the grandma [*dame grand*, big lady/great soul] whom you see here, I've retained them in the gamebag of my memory] (np). Where *mer de ie* is concerned, the spacing of the words and letters tells us that *'this' hits* the fan: the mother of God [*mer(e) d (ie) (u)*] puns on *merde* and mother-of-*shit*.

The chapter could not have been better for either an adolescent or a seasoned scholar. From *this* point Rabelais became a vademecum. Not only for the riotous pages of an *adolescence gargantuine*, but for protracted study of the extraordinary changes of tone, tonality and, in a word, style or manner in *Pantagruel* (1532), which preceded, but was not a prequel to *Gargantua*; in the very different work of the next decade, *Le Tiers livre des faicts et dicts hëroiques de Pantagruel : composez par M. Franç. Rabelais docteur en medecine, & calloier des Isles Hieres* (1546, 1547, and 1552), which, for the first time, was authored in the name of Rabelais—a doctor in medicine—and not, as in the books of the years 1532-35 and their final edition in 1542, under the pen name of Alcofribas Nasier, "abstracter of quintessence." In *this* book, by virtue of dialogue and dialogism, the good physician considers the creative character of doubt. Retrieving Panurge, the trickster who became Pantagruel's lifelong companion—or alter ego—in the first book of *Pantagruel* (published as the second in 1532, before *Gargantua* in 1535), Rabelais turns him into a middle-aged bachelor wondering if he ought or ought not marry.[6] The narrative follows Panurge's failed consultations with a variety of monomaniacs until, with Pantagruel at his side, the couple meets the judge Bridoye ("goose-bridle"), who throws dice to let fate go as it goes. And in *Le Quart Livre des faicts et dicts Heroiques du bon Pantagruel* (1552), fortune leads them to take to the high seas in search of the wisdom of the *dive bouteille*. Where the *Tiers livre* located its hero and his other in the author's stomping grounds of the Chinonais, six years later, ostensibly based on accounts of travel to the new world, sailing in different directions and happening upon strange and unsettling islands, the *Quart livre*, portraying Panurge so overwhelmed with fear and trembling that he soils his britches, leaves its reader adrift, in greater suspicion and doubt over the sorry state of the world.

Without proceeding to the fifth book, attributed to Rabelais shortly after his death in 1553, it can be said that the *Tiers* and *Quart livres* are at a far remove from the works that drew its readers into their worlds. For *this* one, 56 years after happening upon *Gargantua* in 1958, reading Rabelais remains a joyously difficult, enriching, unfinished venture. It is hoped that despite the culture in which we find ourselves, the work will continue to inspire and lead us along its ever-changing path.

Notes

1. We can recall that Samuel Putnam, a devoted Communist and columnist for the *Daily Worker*, also bequeathed to us a vibrant translation of *Don Quixote* and was the father of Hilary Putnam, celebrated thinker and writer of *realism*, who shaped Harvard's Department of Philosophy in the years 1976-2000.

2. Leo Spitzer, "Rabelais et les rabelaisants," *Studi francesi*, v. 4 (1960), pp. 401-23.

3. I would add that in her Pléiade edition of the *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), Mireille Huchon graces us with a fourth reading, which she aligns with "steganography," that is, with anamorphosis and slanted entries into the layerings of the text Rabelais continually *alters* in successive or variant editions of the text. Along this line Romain Menini has produced his magnificent *Rabelais altérateur: graeciser en françois* (Paris: Éditions Classiques Garnier, 2014), 1143 pp.

4. See gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8609586k.image, an edition circa 1535, in *lettre bâtarde*.

5. We can take *propos* in the sense of *propulsion*, on which Rabelais elsewhere plays in equivocating on "A propos" (in respect to…) and "Aspre aux pots" (bitter in the pots).

6. In his path funding studies of Rabelais, e.g., *Les langages de Rabelais* (1974), it is François Rigolot who remarks brilliantly and simply that "Pantagruel" carries the characters of "Panurge" + "alt."

On the Case for Criss Cross, THE LA Noir

Ross Noble

"What is the best LA film noir?" There is no wrong answer to this question, of course, as long as you can make a solid argument for why. Me? I'm a total sucker for all things noir, especially LA noir: *Double Indemnity, The Big Sleep, Sunset Boulevard, In a Lonely Place, Chinatown, The Long Goodbye, LA Confidential*. 100 more. Let's pour some stiff brown water and break it down.

Catch me another day and I'll make the case for any of them, but my latest obsession is with Robert Siodmak's 1949 masterpiece *Criss Cross*, which checks all nine of the LA Noir boxes:

* Angel's Flight/Bunker Hill

* B&W

* Chiaroscuro

* Doomed from the get-go

* Fat Ties and Bad Lies

* Voiceover told by a dead man

* Suggestion, not depiction

* The trampy tomato

* Wifebeaters and heaters

Lesser known than Siodmak's *The Killers* from 1946 two years prior, *Criss Cross* is a case study in efficiency. It clocks in at just under 90 minutes and not a frame or moment is wasted. It's amazing, all that's packed into it. Yet it does not lose any of noir's trademark layering of plot or complexity of character. Three scenes come to mind.

The opening aerial is a Pollockian splattering of LA nightlife that helicopters us from the LA skyline quickly into the parking lot of The Round Up, Slim Dundee's swinging supper club. We're swept into Ann (Yvonne de Carlo) and Steve (Burt Lancaster) necking between a couple of parked Pontiacs. They're suddenly headlighted, outed to us but not yet to Dundee (Dan Duryea). Is this THE defining moment in noir?

Criss Cross has one of the most gorgeously evocative *dance scenes* in film, let alone noir. Set to legendary rhumba band leader Esy Morales' "Jungle Fantasy," it has DeCarlo glowing as she congas with a young Tony Curtis, in his first movie appearance and credited as "*Gigolo*." Ha. Side note: tragically, Morales would die just a few months after filming at age 33 from a sudden heart attack brought on by excessive drug use, likely cocaine, according to Ginell's *The Evolution of Mann: Herbie Mann and the Flute in Jazz* (2014). But there is more to it than pure dance. When Steve walks in, he is obsessed, smitten on an unfulfilled promise from the past. You're just waiting for the moment when he and Anna lock eyes, then they do and it's over. She feeds him some BS like a farmer feeds his pigs, and Stevie the slow slops it up silly. He's all in. We know it won't end well, but *how* unwell? They talk openly about the days they used to fight, almost lightheartedly, and when Anna segues into how great it was when they ended and they made up, oh how they made up, Steve melts. That was the best part, wasn't it, Steve, the making up part?

And, during the plotting scene near the middle of the film, where do we even begin? Ann smoking with An-

gel's Flight in the backdrop may the defining scene in noir. Call it *Ann-gel's flight* in this scene from the middle of the movie. Chiaroscuro overload!

A note about Yvonne de Carlo. Kids of boomers, like me, know her as Lily Munster, the matriarch of the Munsters, but here she is, 15 years prior, and striking. She's taken some critical heat for not being Rita Hayworth or Ava Gardner, but she holds her own easily. She's sexy in an Eva Mendes kind of way and is worthy of more accolades for her performance of Anna the trampy tomato. Her "You and me, the way it should have been, right from the start" echoes Phyllis Dietrichson's "Straight down the line" from *Double Indemnity* three years prior.

And, little did anyone know that 8 years later, in 1957, Curtis would star in Alexander Mackendrick's Gotham noir *The Sweet Smell of Success*.

Perfect Purity, or Artist's Scheme?
Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters

Constantin Waldschmidt

Yukio Mishima

Over a 25-year writing career, Yukio Mishima published 34 novels, 50 plays, a film, and at least 50 collections of short stories and essays. Art, to him, was not a career but a compulsion. On November 25, 1970, he and members of his private army infiltrated a military base, took its commandant hostage, and attempted to rouse the soldiers to revolt. The attempted coup failed, and Mishima committed ritual suicide in the samurai style. He was Japan's last literary genius, and his magnum opus was his own methodically planned death.

Paul Schrader's *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters* is aesthetically rich, to the point of delirium. Expertly edited, and lacquered with an eloquent voice-over, the film depicts both the author's life and several of his most iconic novels. Eiko Ishioka, the production designer, is responsible for the sets in the sections adapting Mishima's works. Each is unique in color palette, lighting, and atmosphere. None is like anything else you'll ever seen onscreen again. All feature young men, remarkably physical, displaced by the unrelenting murmur of some perfect ideal.

In the first story, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, a handicapped student is tormented by a glorious temple and the sense of inferiority it instills in him. The opaque setting shimmers with ambers and greens; Schrader shows us "Mishima as self-hating poet," oppressed by beauty.

In the second, *Kyoko's House*, a narcissistic actor sells his body to a gangstress to settle a family debt. Blues, whites, and gorgeous pinks rule this segment; conversations start darkly alluding to the destiny of the story's author. The main character of *Kyoko's House* identifies a paradox: the greatest sculptures and paintings are of human bodies, implying that the body is the true source of beauty; at the same time, the body decays rapidly, and even the most beautiful bodies are soon destroyed by age. Mishima's answer is grim: to embody (and not just observe) beauty in a lasting way, one must "devise an artist's scheme" to preserve it: noble death at the aesthetic climax. Here, Schrader serves us "Mishima as auto-erotic narcissist."

The last adaptation, *Runaway Horses*, tracks closest to Yukio Mishima's ideal: a zealous young athlete assembles a band of his peers and aims to assassinate corrupt oligarchs. The protagonist rebuffs all efforts to pacify or moderate him: an ideal, unless "perfectly pure," is no ideal at all--and perfectly pure ideals are worth killing and dying for. Bold crimson leaps at us throughout, and sets without boundaries fade eerily to black. Paul Schrader, by including "Mishima as charismatic warrior," finally provides the viewer a map to his magnum opus.

Indeed, it's only when showing his last day that reality is finally shown in color. The colors are balanced and naturalistic, suggesting the personae Mishima crafted in his previous works have combined and matured. Gone are the sets that exaggerate their own artifice; this time, the set is in real life, and he is playing for keeps.

With Yukio Mishima as its subject, this challenging narrative format meets its perfect match. Only his life could be mapped to a film this feverish, and anything less creative would have failed to capture his mad prodigy.

A common response to his philosophy is to frame it as a pathological reaction to childhood trauma. This is, after all, the interpretation preferred by Schrader, who in interview and commentary around the film describes Mishima's creative process as purgative. "Art works," explains Schrader, and by creating it, an artist may satisfy desires otherwise too antisocial to fulfill. Schrader posits that for Mishima, art failed to work. His literary body grew, but so did his shadow behind it. Greater did it grow, and darker, until it boiled and stretched into political territory. Idealistic young men were wrapped in its tendrils. It gave them slogans and uniforms, lured them into an ultranationalistic death cult.

But, to what extent was Mishima a genuine idealist, and to what extent was he merely sliding through psychodrama?

It's a fact that his grandmother trampled his childhood; she was utterly devouring, manipulative, interred him constantly, and drilled softness into him like a fairytale witch. In phrasing Mishima's life this way, however, Schrader simplifies and dismisses decades of Mishima's historical scholarship and essays. To call Mishima's thought inauthentic for this reason is lazy, and ignores the cultural-historical environment that shaped his ideology. It would be equally ridiculous to accuse Nietzsche, another chaotic visionary, of having praised Greek tragedy because he was raised by a house full of women.

Rather, Mishima was born at the right time and with the right tools to diagnose his people with sickness of will. By wedding the richness of life with the finality of death, he struck at the heart of a modern cowardice that would only uncloak itself decades after his own transformation. No reader can deny that, after having witnessed years of pointless and exhausting medical tyranny, our dominant moral law is to reduce the possibility of harm. Mishima demanded with vengeance a return to both principled ideals and the primal satisfaction of a real world. He decried the commercial abstractions that were starting to dominate Japanese society, the political right and left being just two styles of one clammy economist. He asserted the uniqueness of his ancestral people, and their right to be armed in their own homeland. He gave shape to ideals, actions to words. He mastered life, tangibly.

The meticulousness of Mishima's last day often goes understated: consider that its director chose a set, picked a date well in advance (November 25 was the day he began his writing career), wrote a script, gathered an audience, selected a cast, and even designed their uniforms. In other words, the last day of his life was essentially a stage play, a masterpiece worth more than any book because it was both witnessed and lived. And, while Schrader's biopic-drama is marvelous in its own right, a thorough and textured appreciation of Yukio Mishima demands something similar. To understand his philosophy means not just to study, but to watch, to read, and, like him, to experience and live.

Point Break

Alexander Hughes '25

Kathryn Bigelow's 1991 action movie *Point Break* is not the most obviously philosophical film. Its trailer offers the last gasp of the 1980s action movie, setting Patrick Swayze and Keanu Reeves against one another in feats of athletic one-upmanship. However, the competition between the two men—Reeves' Johnny Utah, a rookie FBI agent, is responsible for catching Swayze's Bodhi, the leader of a surfing crew-cum-bank robber—quickly becomes an exploration of the interaction between manhood and law.

Keanu Reeves and Patrick Swayze

Set in contemporary southern California, *Point Break* depicts an America whose cracks are starting to show despite its affluence. The otherwise apparently efficient FBI is incapable of nailing Bodhi's "Ex-Presidents" because their robberies are not primarily motivated by financial gain. He robs banks for the same reason he surfs: as a rejection of his anesthetized society. In this, Bodhi represents untrammeled thumos. He intends to show "those guys that are inching their way on the freeways in their metal coffins that the human spirit is still alive," or to die trying. Despite his criminality, he is idealistic enough to be believable. Perhaps Americans, newly unburdened by the challenges of the Cold War, really do need to be shaken out of their stupor.

Utah, for his part, is a former collegiate star quarterback, and the film's opening montage shows him acing a marksmanship drill. His physical prowess offers a worthy match for Bodhi. But where Bodhi's manly self-assertion admits no limitations, Utah tries to play by the rules. In the first part of the movie, Bigelow makes a strong case for Bodhi's brand of manhood. Utah's boss at the Bureau is worse than useless, continually insulting him despite his own inability to solve the case. Even Utah's partner, though sympathetic, has given up on the case until Utah reenergizes him. Bodhi and his crew elude the Bureau at every turn, without so much as collateral damage during a robbery. Even their choice of disguise mocks the legal system that cannot constrain them. One, wearing a Nixon mask, reminds us that he "is not a crook!" The moral distinction between the law and the lawless is thus erased.

Utah clearly feels tempted by this lifestyle. He goes undercover to infiltrate the Ex-Presidents, another indication that enforcing the law requires stepping outside of its normal confines. Furthermore, though Utah may be as athletic as Bodhi, they are not equals. Bodhi initiates Utah into his adrenaline-junkie lifestyle, teaching

him to surf, saving him from a local gang, and taking him skydiving. The temptation reaches its peak when Utah catches Bodhi in the act, leading off an extended chase scene. Utah is unable to catch Bodhi, staying close enough behind to shoot him; buthe does not do this, even when a knee injury ensures that he will not apprehend Bodhi alive. A certain honor exists between them. Utah fires round after round into the air, unable to take down a man he has not fairly bested. Bodhi's spirit demands to be met in kind, and Utah acquiesces to this despite its consequences.

Those consequences come roaring back. Having already denied the limits of both nature and law, Bodhi finally loses his self-control as well. He kidnaps Utah's girlfriend and uses her as leverage to force Utah into helping him with a final robbery. He gets greedy, stopping for the first time to rob the bank's vault, and people die—including one of his own. In the ensuing escape, he forces Utah to choose whether to kill them both or to let him go. The destructive power of pure thumos is finally revealed.

The film ends on a beach with once-in-a-lifetime swells building. After a final fight, Bodhi is reduced to begging to be allowed to surf one final wave. He will not survive it, but a glorious death is preferable to an ignominious life in prison. Utah lets him go, throwing his badge into the surf. The conflict between their forms of manliness is left unresolved. Bodhi's, of course, is unacceptable; transcending physical limits makes him great, but violating moral ones makes him repulsive. Yet law-abiding men like Utah have little recourse against men like Bodhi; they are only stopped when they exhaust themselves. In earlier eras, Bodhi might have been a knight, a samurai, a frontiersman. The tragedy of *Point Break*—the tragedy of a comfortable society—is that it offers no path for such a man to work for society instead of against it.

The Wind that Shakes the Barley

Mathieu Ronayne

Stories are concrete abstractions, arguments about ideals whose premises and conclusions are human acts, not propositions. They help us see the implications of our convictions. The political arts—law, statesmanship, and war—each practically apply abstract principles to particular situations. A politics devoid of reason is animalistic, and a politics divorced from practical, material circumstances is angelic; neither is human. Our contemporary concern for the quality of our political discourse attests to this. If politics are only practical, then we must justify why arguments, rather than actions alone, matter; but, if politics are only abstract, then we must explain why our concern for political argument is more than merely academic. Stories help us think abstractly about practical matters; in a sense, they help us think politically.

Cillian Murphy

The Wind that Shakes the Barley is a story of how disagreements about abstract ideals can lead to concrete conclusions of fratricide and war. The historical-fictional film's protagonist, Damien O'Donovan, fights in the Irish War of Independence rather than moving to London to practice medicine, and he dies in the Irish Civil War rather than obeying the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Teddy, his brother, orders his execution by firing squad.

The tragedy runs deeper than familial rift, for not only were Teddy and Damien brothers, but they were also close comrades in the same unit of the Irish Republican Army in the months preceding Damien's death. They both desired an independent Ireland, but did their disagreement over its form need to end so brutally? Midway through the film, Damien says, "I hope this Ireland we're fighting for is worth it." What Ireland do Damien and Teddy believe they are fighting for?

Consider what kept Damien from leaving Ireland for London. Teddy and others try to convince him to remain following the death of their friend Micheál—"a real Irishman," according to Teddy—at the hands of the Black and Tans "because he wouldn't say his name in English." Damien does not deny the injustices of the British; he rejects the call to fight because of either the improbability of winning or the lack of value in trying and failing. He is not swayed by appeals to culture and kin.

Damien stays in Ireland after witnessing a train driver and flagman beaten by British soldiers. His decision is not merely driven by compassion, for presumably he cared more about Micheál than those strangers. He was moved by the reason for their resilience: they refused the soldiers entry onto the train according to their

union's orders. Damien's ideal is essentially economic, united with the concerns of labor, among those of other groups.

The friendship Damien later forms with Dan, the train driver, further reveals how he understands Ireland. Damien and Dan start speaking with each other when Dan completes, by memory, a line from an anticlerical poem of the Englishman William Blake that Damien began reading off the prison wall. Damien is not allured by "Catholic Ireland" as his ideal, which he makes clear later when he rebukes the Church, saying "once again, the Catholic Church, with honorable exception, sides with the rich." Damien and Dan bond over their admiration for James Connolly, quoting together his argument that an Ireland free of the British army and Union Jack would, in reality, remain under British rule if it were not a socialist republic.

Teddy does not define Ireland in strictly economic terms, and this causes his explicit disagreements with Damien: first, over the court's ruling with the peasant woman against the wealthy man; second, over the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Similarly to Damien's early disagreement with the appeals made to him to remain in Ireland, Teddy disagrees, not with the justice of the woman's cause, but with the practical implications: "What Mr. Sweeney did to Mrs. Rafferty was wrong. It was wrong, but I need the man's money to buy weapons. We can't fight a war without weapons." Teddy subordinates the question of economic justice to that of how to protect the institutions necessary for such justice, like independent courts. He similarly disagrees with the practical results of rejecting the Treaty: "Immediate and terrible war." He does not support the Treaty for its own sake, and he tells Damien as much in his promise that "We'll tear up the Treaty once we're strong enough, but I need you to be with me on this." Damien argues that the election that decided the Treaty's fate was not fair because the "most powerful country in the world threatens war." Teddy does not deny the injustice of the threat; he merely refuses to deny its reality. This disagreement ultimately lays down the logic for Damien's eventual execution.

Our stories—historical, fictional, and their combination—remind us that our rhetoric and arguments have real, and possibly grave, consequences. Even when we do not speak of violent measures, we must remain aware of the real weight and implications of our arguments and the political acts that follow from them. Politics are practical, and we must not deny the reality of circumstances that influence our acts, nor the real consequences that follow.

Gran Torino Illustrates the Way Forward for the American Man

Jason O'Dwyer

Clint Eastwood's 2008 drama *Gran Torino* was a controversial hit. Eastwood decided that he would both direct and star in this film after reading Nick Schenk's screenplay without changing one word, believing that any changes would "emasculate" the film. Aside from Eastwood, this cast featured no famous actors; yet, it tells a gripping story of America's decline and hope with a budget half the size of the average Hollywood film.

Clint Eastwood portrays Walt Kowalski, a grizzled Korean War veteran and former Ford factory worker in early 2000s Detroit. Walt's loss of his wife before the movie sparks a process of alienation and rage that echoes the downward spiral of the American psyche. This course is reversed only when he finds himself inadvertently mentoring a troubled young Vietnamese man. Through this relationship, *Gran Torino* crafts a story of how American men, and American culture more broadly, might dig their way out of some of the worst ills that currently plague them. This movie was controversial and was ignored by the Academy, making the film a classic in the eyes of many moviegoers interested in the problems facing America in postmodernity.

Eastwood exhibits an older masculine archetype at 78 than he did in *Dirty Harry* and *The Man with No Name*. As the film begins, Walt grapples with his loss, which reunites his family. However, Walt is only reminded of the contempt that he has for his family, engrossed in Baby Boomer culture and Millennial modernity. Having lost the joy of his wife's presence, he clings to the only good things he still has—his dog, his nice lawn, his gorgeous car, and cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon—while he sees that the America he loves has degraded. His family has become ungrateful and untraditional after moving away, and his neighborhood has become filled with diverse ethnic groups with no affinity for one another.

Walt's bitterness furthers after a young Vietnamese boy named Thao, pressured by a local gang, attempts to steal Walt's pristine Ford Gran Torino, the movie's symbol of American heritage and ingenuity. Walt catches him and scares him off, after which, Thao is sent by his family to pay off the debt of his attempted theft. The rest of the film follows these characters and their families as Walt slowly becomes a mentor to the young Thao, teaching him to be a classic American man who properly assimilates, while Walt realizes that he has a lot more in common with these traditional Vietnamese neighbors than his own untraditional family.

Gran Torino accomplishes a great deal considering the small size of its production budget. Nick Schenk writes a compelling script, and despite a few lines that don't quite land properly, the screenplay as a whole does a very good job at portraying the dynamics of the film. Eastwood's direction is entirely on point, and it seems clear that his decades of production experience carry the film to great heights. Simple camera shots, first-time actors, and a complete lack of special effects, under Eastwood's leadership as an actor and director, come together to form a work that is anything but mediocre.

The screenplay of this movie is so strong that Clint Eastwood was not interested in changing a single syllable of the script when he read it. Unsurprisingly, Schenk has personal experience with the cultures that he writes about. He worked in a factory in 1990s Minnesota as the state's industrial activity was declining, and many of his fellow factory workers were Hmong, the same ethnic group that Walt's mentee, Thao, belongs to. Schenk wrote the screenplay while at a local dive bar in Minneapolis years later. These experiences shine through the words of the movie, as the language and attitude of Walt and his peers are exactly of the sort of language you hear at any working-class, old-school American construction site in the country. Furthermore, Schenk and the Hmong consultants on his team add to this drama colorful and lively scenes of cultural interaction between the different ethnicities portrayed in the film.

While the script is high quality, Eastwood's phenomenal direction makes *Gran Torino* what it is. His signature directing style is apparent throughout this movie. The characters portray just as much through their body language and hand motions as they do with their words, and one can often foresee the mood of a given scene just by the music, the colors, and the environment. Fans of Clint Eastwood might recognize the similarity that this film has to his other works, such as *Mystic River* or *Revolutionary Road*.

Gran Torino's view on religion is an engaging one, though it is more of a philosophical view of religion rather than any sort of theology. However, viewers should not count this against the film, as the movie isn't an explicitly religious one, but rather uses religion as a means to consider ideas of tradition and social ethics. Walt is Catholic, and part of the movie revolves around the dissonance between his traditional religious view, the modern "softness" of his priest, and the Eastern tradition of his Hmong neighbors. We see the movie simultaneously glorify Walt's Catholicism and the Hmong spiritual practices for being rooted in tradition and family, while it subtly disparages the modern, uprooted faith of Walt's priest and family. Interestingly, the movie does not seem to put the two very distinct faiths of Walt and the Hmong in conflict; rather, it seems to suggest a potential unity between them, despite their differences, because of the tradition and unity that their practitioners are striving toward.

I do not know if Eastwood intended this film to be such a philosophical one, but he clearly lays out certain problems in philosophy and religion with compelling style. *Gran Torino* proposes as the ideal of American masculinity one that philosopher Edmund Burke would call a "prejudiced" one, and he would say this approvingly. For Burke, prejudice is a set of traditions, assumptions, and stereotypes that allow us to sift through the plethora of choices quickly and successfully we are faced with every day. For Walt, that prejudice is mowing your lawn, keeping your house in order, and sticking to the cultural standards that have kept him happy all these years—its's as simple as that. The skills of masculinity are like the tool kit in Walt's shed, which he explains to young Thao. Any man, according to Walt, should be able to accomplish just about anything with a few tools—WD-40, a vice grips, and duct tape—but as for the finer tools, Walt says, "a man acquires this over a period of 50 years."

Gran Torino unapologetically—and humorously—calls out some of the worst aspects of liberal, multicultural modernity and gives a good-faith effort at describing the road that we might take in the future. In the film's vision, the future could and should be one in which the emasculated, wayward youth looks to the pre-Boomer era for inspiration and guidance on how to live, eschewing the dominant cultural narrative for a more traditional one. In doing this, the youngest among us might just bring the "antiquated" aspects of our tradition into the present, and if we're diligent, everyone may be the better for it.

Oda do młodości

Adam Mickiewicz

Bez serc, bez ducha, to szkieletów ludy;
Młodości! dodaj mi skrzydła!
Niech nad martwym wzlecę światem
W rajską dziedzinę ułudy:
Kędy zapał tworzy cudy,
Nowości potrząsa kwiatem
I obleka w nadziei złote malowidła.

Niechaj, kogo wiek zamroczy,
Chyląc ku ziemi poradlone czoło,
Takie widzi świata koło,
Jakie tępymi zakreśla oczy.
Młodości! ty nad poziomy
Wylatuj, a okiem słońca
Ludzkości całe ogromy
Przeniknij z końca do końca.

Patrz na dół—kędy wieczna mgła zaciemia
Obszar gnuśności zalany odmętem;
To ziemia!
Patrz. jak nad jej wody trupie
Wzbił się jakiś płaz w skorupie.
Sam sobie sterem, żeglarzem, okrętem;
Goniąc za żywiołkami drobniejszego płazu,
To się wzbija, to w głąb wali;
Nie lgnie do niego fala, ani on do fali;
A wtem jak bańka prysnął o szmat głazu.
Nikt nie znał jego życia, nie zna jego zguby:
To samoluby!

Młodości! tobie nektar żywota
Natenczas słodki, gdy z innymi dzielę:
Serca niebieskie poi wesele,
Kiedy je razem nić powiąże złota.
Razem, młodzi przyjaciele!...
W szczęściu wszystkiego są wszystkich cele;
Jednością silni, rozumni szałem,
Razem, młodzi przyjaciele!...

I ten szczęśliwy, kto padł wśród zawodu,
Jeżeli poległym ciałem
Dał innym szczebel do sławy grodu.
Razem, młodzi przyjaciele!...
Choć droga stroma i śliska,
Gwałt i słabość bronią wchodu:
Gwałt niech się gwałtem odciska,
A ze słabością łamać uczmy się za młodu!

Dzieckiem w kolebce kto łeb urwał Hydrze,
Ten młody zdusi Centaury,
Piekłu ofiarę wydrze,
Do nieba pójdzie po laury.
Tam sięgaj, gdzie wzrok nie sięga;
Łam, czego rozum nie złamie:
Młodości! orla twych lotów potęga,
Jako piorun twoje ramię.

Hej! ramię do ramienia! spólnymi łańcuchy
Opaszmy ziemskie kolisko!
Zestrzelmy myśli w jedno ognisko
I w jedno ognisko duchy!...
Dalej, bryło, z posad świata!
Nowymi cię pchniemy tory,
Aż opleśniałej zbywszy się kory,
Zielone przypomnisz lata.

A jako w krajach zamętu i nocy,
Skłóconych żywiołów waśnią,
Jednym "stań się" z bożej mocy
Świat rzeczy stanął na zrębie;
Szumią wichry, cieką głębie,
A gwiazdy błękit rozjaśnią—

W krajach ludzkości jeszcze noc głucha:
Żywioły chęci jeszcze są w wojnie;
Oto miłość ogniem zionie,
Wyjdzie z zamętu świat ducha:
Młodość go pocznie na swoim łonie,
A przyjaźń w wieczne skojarzy spojnie.

Pryskają nieczułe lody
I przesądy światło ćmiące;
Witaj, jutrzenko swobody,
Zbawienia za tobą słońce!

(Source: literat.ug.edu.pl/amwiersz/0004.htm)

Ode to Youth

Translation by Paweł Rybacki ‘21

With no hearts, no spirit; crowds of skeletons rathe
Oh Youth! Grant me thy wings!
So that over the lifeless world will I fly
Into illusion’s paradisal domain;
Where enthusiasm works miracles,
Shakes the flower of the new,
And in hope it wraps paintings of gold.

May he whom his age dazes
While leaning toward the ground his knitted brow
See the same circle of the world
As he draws with dull eyes
Oh Youth! You above levels
Fly off, and with the Sun’s eye
Humanity’s entire myriads
Penetrate from end to end.

Look down—where the everlasting fog obscures
The fields of indolence deluged with maelstrom
This is the earth!
Look how above its deathly waters
Soared some shelled amphibian
It for itself being the only steer, sailor, and ship;
Chasing the pulses of tinier amphibia
And it soars, and it hits the depth;
No wave sticks to it, nor does it do to any wave;
And suddenly, like a bubble it bursts by a boulder’s body
No one knew its life, no one knew its loss
They are selfish!

Oh Youth! To you is the nectar of life
Sweet for the time when I share it with others:
Heavenly hearts are overjoyed
When tied with a thread of gold
Together, young friends!...
In everything’s happiness is everyone’s purpose
Strong by unity, judicious by ecstasy
Together, young friends!...

Even he is happy who fell amidst the game,
If, with his fallen body,
He left others a rung to the city of glory.
Together, young friends!...
Although the path is steep and slippery,
Violence and weakness defend the ascension:
May violence imprint itself with violence,
And to share with weakness let us learn in our youth!

Who has torn off Hydra's head is like a child in a cradle,
This youth will strangle the Centaurs,
From hell will it tear a victim,
To heaven will it go for the laurel wreath.
Reach where your sight does not reach;
Break what your reason won't break:
Oh youth! aquiline is the power of thy flights,
Thy arm is like a thunder.

Hey! Shoulder to shoulder! with common chains
Let us gird the Earth's great circle!
Let us shoot the thoughts into one bonfire
And into the one bonfire the spirits!...
Come on, oh massive block, from the seats of the world!
Through new tracks will we push you
Until, having rid thyself of thy moldy bark,
You come to remind of the green years.

And as in the lands of confusion and night,
Antagonized by the feud of upheavals,
With a single "let there be" from the divine power
The world of things has stood on the verge;
The gales are rustling, the depths are leaking,
And the stars will brighten the blue—

In the lands of mankind still a dead-silent night:
The upheavals of urge are still in a war;
Now love breathes fire,
Out of the turmoil will emerge the world of the spirit:
The youth will conceive it in its womb,
And friendship will link in bonds eternal.

The cold-hearted ice is shattering
And the old light-dislimning superstitions;
Welcome, o dawn of freedom,
Behold the sun of salvation behind you!

Calvin the Mystic

Jacob Conrod

John Calvin

There is a certain popular image associated with the person of John Calvin. To his admirers, he was the closest thing to a saint they will admit; to his detractors, he was the bloodthirsty butcher of Geneva, a man who established a semi-theocracy in Switzerland to worship a God that rejoices at the damnation of sinners. To friend and foe alike, however, he was an austere scholar—cold, even harsh—the literary stoic set as an antitype to the firebrand Luther. The Reformed tradition that he influenced, likewise, has a reputation for a detached intellectualism; one need only peek into a Presbyterian congregation during Sunday worship to see that being one of God's elect comes with a certain penchant for stillness. If there is one thing that the Reformed tradition, and Calvin by extension, is not lauded for, it is their mystical tradition. In the history of the Reformed churches, there has been no St. Francis of Assisi, preaching to birds as he receives the stigmata. Nor does the Reformed tradition boast of islands of quiet monks, praying to God in the hope of catching some glimpse of the divine light. The perception of the Reformed as being fundamentally anti-mystical is exacerbated by their station in contemporary American Christianity. In the somewhat frenzied landscape of modern American Protestantism, the Reformed are the staunch opponents of the rising tide of charismatics. To many Reformed Christians, the claims of Pentecostals and other charismatics to apostolic gifts (such as speaking in tongues) and extra-Biblical revelation smacks of sensationalism and opens the door to an evangelical movement untethered from the truth of Scripture. The Reformed tradition as it stands today, then, at least in the popular imagination, comes as close to a type of rationalism as any religious faith can be said to approach.

In stark condemnation of this notion, however, stands the fact that John Calvin—a man with as much claim to be the father of Reformed Christianity as anyone since Augustine—was something of a mystic in his own right. This side of John Calvin is most apparent in his writings on the Eucharist, and it is with the bread and the wine that Reformed mysticism is carried on throughout the history of the tradition, even if at times it exists in an antagonistic relationship with the rationalistic mainstream.

The text most widely associated with John Calvin—and the text with which any serious students of his thought should strive to familiarize themselves—is of course his monumental *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Originally penned in Latin, and then soon after in Calvin's native tongue of French, the volume is the closest thing that Protestantism has to a *Summa Theologica*. A brief skim over the table of contents will immediately reveal some of Calvin's mystical bent: the longest chapters in the book are not dedicated to the controversial doctrine of double predestination most commonly associated with his name, but rather to prayer and the

Eucharist, at 52 and 50 subsections, respectively.

Historians and theologians have long labored to identify the unifying element of Calvin's theology, much as it has been argued that *Sola Fide* was the glue that held Luther's thought together. Interpretations of Calvin's thought abound—the idea that predestination was the basis of his entire system lives on in the popular imagination, both within churches and without—but one of the more compelling, especially in light of the structure of the *Institutes*, is that of Union with Christ.

Calvin's doctrine of Union with Christ is an oft-overlooked aspect of his theology, even by many modern Calvinists. In its most basic form, it is a way of understanding sanctification, the process by which the justified Christian is made holy throughout his/her mortal existence and is united closer to the person of Christ. To dig deeper into the vaults of this doctrine, however, is to discover a doctrine that forces the Christian religion to the apex of Christocentrism and bears essential fruit for the doctrines of atonement and justification. To ignore this concept is to miss the central aspect of Calvin's theology altogether - not predestination or the divine decrees, important as they may be—but the eternal God-man Himself, Christ Jesus.

Critics of the Reformation's doctrine of imputed righteousness—the rock upon which the Reformed understanding of justification stands or falls—have ascribed to it the character of a "legal fiction," to quote the late R.C. Sproul.[1] The critique seems valid; how can a just God inflict his wrath on an innocent victim, this punishment standing in place of that which is deserved by the guilty? The idea is scandalous. This is not how justice works. The atonement necessitates that Christ be a true representative of the guilty—that, somehow, the guilty be united to Christ. Truly, for the crucifixion to have been of any avail, *we must have been crucified with Christ*. It is into this crucial gap that the Calvinistic doctrine of Union with Christ emerges in all its glory.

When Adam fell from paradise, the entirety of the human race fell with him, because *in Adam was contained, truly and organically, all of mankind—not merely by proxy*. In like manner, when the second Adam was hanged on the cross, all of mankind (or at least all of the elect), hung with Him. As in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. Like our union with Adam, our union with Christ is not merely a figurative union by proxy—such would perhaps be open to charges of legal fiction—but is a *true union*, by which the believer is united truly and organically to the person of Christ, much as the head is united organically to the body.

Such, at least, mirrors the argument presented by the somewhat-obscure Reformed theologian John Williamson Nevin in his work on the Eucharist, *The Mystical Presence* (1846).[2] Although it was controversial at the time of its publication, and is practically unknown in most Calvinistic circles today, Nevin's book, in my view, means that he, more than any other thinker I have read, correctly taps into Calvin the mystic.

In his 2008 book *Recovering the Reformed Confession*, Dr. R. Scott Clark wrote that the Reformed churches descended from Calvin locate their "modest mysticism in Word and sacrament."[3] The mysticism of John Calvin and the churches he inspired may be called modest in breadth—certainly you will witness no speaking in angelic tongues, levitating, or other powers ascribed to mystics both ancient and modern in your average Presbyterian congregation—but it would be a mistake to consider it modest in depth. What Calvin and the Reformed divines of the sixteenth century denied was transubstantiation and the local or carnal presence; what they did not deny, but rather upheld, was that what happened in the sacrament of the Eucharist was a miracle.

Though Calvin denied that the body and blood of Christ were carnally received in the sacrament, what he and his successors did not deny was that the body and blood of Christ were truly and substantially received by the power of the Holy Ghost—a doctrine most commonly known as the *spiritual presence*, but perhaps ought better to be called the *mystical presence*, as Nevin named it. Calvin held that what was received by the believer was the same flesh of Christ that was crucified, buried, and rose again, the same blood that once watered Golgotha. What is received in the Supper is both the real, substantial bread and wine, and the real, substantial body and blood of the God-man; in this way the sacrament typifies the Incarnation. A mere ghostly, Gnosticized doctrine of the sacrament, this is not. Calvin almost seemed to evoke the sacerdotalism he opposed when, in discussing the Eucharist in his *Institutes*, he wrote that "the communion of the flesh and blood of

Christ is necessary to all who aspire to the heavenly life."[4]

The Reformer of Geneva was able to make such a claim because the sacrament of Communion was inseparable from the Union with Christ. Calvin held that the sacraments were true means of grace, aids to sanctification, albeit not *ex opere opero*. In this scheme, the Supper occupied a principal place as one of the chief means by which the Union with Christ was effected and strengthened. The body of Christ is offered "that we may become one body with him," by participating in the sacrament "Christ truly form[s] one with us."[5]

The mysticism of John Calvin is a subtle mysticism; to an outside observer, there is nothing immediately striking about the taking of the bread and the wine in a pious silence. However, as referenced earlier, the depths of Reformed mysticism are bottomless, plunging ever deeper into the life of the eternal Christ. It is the life of Christ that is offered in the Supper; through the body and blood, the believer is bound ever more tightly to Him, to His Passion, His crucifixion, and His resurrection. The Union with the King of Kings is such that the Christian can truly say with the Apostle Paul: I was crucified with Christ, I was buried with Christ, I will rise with Christ. This is no legal fiction.

Reading Calvin is, at times, daunting. He is measured, not quite as analytical as some suppose, but a far cry from the bombastic Luther. One can almost see his frail form hunched over his desk, pen in hand, on a cold night in Geneva. His words float off the page like a whisper, the structure of his work so strikingly similar to the Augustine whom he loved. Calvin was undoubtedly a complex historical figure. Peppered references to Michael Servetus throughout the *Institutes* cannot help but bring to mind the orange glow of flames flickering against the sky, the odor of burning flesh, and then the crackling of flames in the fireplace as the theologian dips his pen once more to the inkwell. John Calvin has been remembered in history by many names: a scholar, a tyrant, a stern philosopher, the greatest mind of his generation, and the cruelest. If I may add a title to his legacy, let it be this: Calvin the Mystic; a man whose life was possessed by a burning desire to be united, for eternity, to the divine *Logos*.

Notes

1. R.C. Sproul, *Justified by Faith Alone* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

2. John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence, and Other Writings on the Eucharist* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1966).

3. R. Scott Clark, *Recovering the Reformed Confession: Our Theology, Piety and Practice* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2008), 113.

4. Jean Calvin and Henry Beveridge, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2017), 900.

5 *Ibid.*, 900-901.

A Brief Introduction to Cyberpunk

Cindy Chopoidalo

Dedicated to the memory of Douglas Barbour

Cyberpunk first gained prominence in the early 1980s as a response not only to the 'traditional' science fiction of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, but also to the New Wave movement beginning in the 1960s, which took a more self-consciously 'literary' approach to the genre. On the website *Cyberpunk Review*, a user known by the name "Illusivemind" defined it as follows: "Cyberpunk is about expressing (often dark) ideas about human nature, technology, and their respective combination in the near future."

In contrast to the tendency of more traditional science fiction works to be set on worlds far removed in space and time from those of author and reader, cyberpunk stories generally take place in nearer futures, or even alternative presents, on Earth. The distinguishing feature of cyberpunk, and the origin of its name, is its emphasis on the relationships between humanity and technology—the *cyber*—within societies that are in the process of radical change or breakdown, told from the perspective of the underground and/or the lower classes—the *punk*. In the introduction to her 2002 anthology *The Ultimate Cyberpunk*, Pat Cadigan, one of the subgenre's first prominent female authors, points out that although elements of what we now recognize as cyberpunk have appeared in science fiction from its beginnings, the immediate catalysts for the movement as we know it were "the technological trinity […] the telephone, the television, and the personal computer. These items have since merged into one unit with three functions." The subcultures that grew out of this "technological trinity," especially hackers and gamers, not only helped to give rise to cyberpunk as a literary and multimedia phenomenon, but in some circles even became known as cyberpunks themselves.

In addition to the elements it inherited from earlier works of science fiction, cyberpunk was also influenced by hardboiled mystery and film noir. This is particularly evident in its use of lone anti-heroic protagonists, embroiled in plots involving manipulation of characters and/or settings, in foreboding and often dystopian worlds dominated by shadowy institutional structures such as governments or corporations—and often both. Such wariness of large institutions, and with it an often ambivalent relationship with mainstream popular culture, is an attitude cyberpunk shares with punk music, as are both movements' paradoxical adoption of distinctive styles combining dark motifs and neon colour schemes on the one hand, and desire to strip their respective creative genres down to their basics on the other. Indeed, the name *cyberpunk* has come to refer also to a subgenre of electronica/industrial music that grew out of synthesizer-dominated film soundtracks from the 1970s and 1980s by composers such as Vangelis, Wendy Carlos, and Brad Fiedel. Many cyberpunk works, and authors, are fascinated with the idea of artificial stimulation in all its forms, from perception-altering drugs to cybernetic implants to the addictive nature of cyberspace itself. A further influence on cyberpunk is the field of futurology, especially the works of Alvin Toffler, whose *The Third Wave* (1980) not only outlined and anticipated the information revolution that is a major theme in cyberpunk, but also encouraged the teaching of science fiction in schools to help students better acclimate to rapid technological and sociological changes.

William Gibson's first novel, *Neuromancer* (1984), a pioneering and iconic work within the field of cyberpunk, helped to popularize both the concept of cyberspace and the word itself following its introduction in his story "Burning Chrome" (1981). It also serves as a transitional point of sorts between the worlds of cyberspace and outer space, between those of old-school science fiction and cyberpunk, and even between established and emerging technologies in the actual world, given that Gibson wrote *Neuromancer* on a typewriter and did not even own a computer at the time. The novel has provided inspiration to researchers and developers in the

fields of actual-world communication and information technology, and its being set partially in Japan has also helped to codify the country and its culture as key elements in the cyberpunk aesthetic.

Despite, or maybe even because of, the efforts of creators within the genre to distinguish it from its predecessors, cyberpunk soon became established enough to make inroads into mainstream popular culture and to become the subject both of academic essays and of parody. For instance, Donna Haraway's 1985 essay "A Cyborg Manifesto" uses the cyborg, a hybrid of human and machine, as a metaphor for her approach to socialist feminism, and for hybridization of previously binary oppositions in general—not only human/machine but also human/animal, natural/artificial, physical/non-physical, male/female, black/white, rich/poor, self/other, fiction/reality, and many others. Unlike more negative fictional depictions of cyborgs such as, for example, the Cybermen in *Doctor Who* or the Borg in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, Haraway does not see the cyborg as a foreboding of the potential loss of humanity and individuality. Instead, she regards it as a simultaneous liberating and undermining of the human, a blurring of boundaries, in which "[t]he replicant Rachael in the Ridley Scott film *Blade Runner*"—which helped to bring cyberpunk film into the mainstream, and was itself inspired by Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, a forerunner of the movement—"stands as the image of a cyborg culture's fear, love, and confusion."

Where Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" brought cyberpunk into the more 'serious' environment of academia, Neal Stephenson's 1992 novel *Snow Crash* took a more light-hearted approach, essentially becoming to cyberpunk what Douglas Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (1979) had been to old-school and New Wave science fiction—an affectionate parody that stands as a first-rate work in its own right. Stephenson imagines a comically exaggerated anarchocapitalist society in which inflation runs rampant and everything is privatized and for-profit, to the point that organized crime has become legitimized and corporations have replaced governments. However, he has claimed that the society depicted in his novel is meant less as a social commentary than as "a thought experiment […] as funny and outrageous and graphic novel-like as I could make it." But what *Snow Crash* is perhaps best known for is its envisioning of cyberspace, which Stephenson calls the Metaverse, as a fully-immersive virtual-reality environment that allows users to interact from anywhere and reinvent themselves in any way they want, limited only by imagination and bandwidth. Though Stephenson himself has acknowledged that in many ways, the virtual world of *Snow Crash* "turned out to be a failed prediction […] it worked better as a novel than as a prognostication," it became a formative influence on the development of multiplayer online gaming, particularly platforms such as *Second Life* and *Active Worlds*. Furthermore, much as the term *cyberspace* came to us through William Gibson's fiction, Stephenson popularized (but did not invent) the term *avatar*, originally derived from Hindu mythology, for a user's online representation.

Cyberpunk has endured and thrived in the early decades of the twenty-first century, even as the possible futures depicted in the classic cyberpunk works of the 1980s and 1990s have given way to the present—and in many cases have now become alternative presents and/or recent pasts. Turn-of-the-millennium and twenty-first-century cyberpunk, exemplified in works such as Lana and Lilly Wachowski's *Matrix* film tetralogy (1999, 2003, 2021), Richard K. Morgan's 2002 novel *Altered Carbon* and its 2018-20 web-series adaptation, and Denis Villeneuve's 2017 film *Blade Runner 2049*—released two years before the time in which Scott's original film, and four years before the time in which Dick's novel that inspired both films, was set—are continuing the genre's explorations and questioning of the human/technology relationship, the meaning(s) of being human, and the nature of reality itself. Designers and directors of modern and postmodern adaptations of 'canonical' literary works have even occasionally used the cyberpunk aesthetic in their approaches to these works, both to appeal to new generations of readers/viewers and to bring together the classical and the (post)modern in a characteristically cyberpunkesque manner. Emma Vieceli and Richard Appignanesi's 2007 graphic novel *Manga Shakespeare: Hamlet* is a case in point. Their collaboration transposes the iconic play and its characters into a future world devastated by climate change and living in constant threat of war, visually influenced by the style of Japanese cyberpunk manga but written in English and illustrated by a British artist. As the centrepiece of their adaptation, Vieceli and Appignanesi set the most famous passage in *Hamlet*, the

"To be or not to be" soliloquy, in a virtual-reality room, as a particularly vivid illustration of a theme common to both Shakespeare and cyberpunk: the questioning of reality.

Pat Cadigan opens the introduction to *The Ultimate Cyberpunk* with the question "Is cyberpunk dead?" and her answer, "If it were, you wouldn't be asking me that question." Though in many ways a specific product of the literary/artistic and sociopolitical milieux of the early 1980s, cyberpunk in the decades since it was first named has evolved, and been constantly reinvented, as humanity continues not only to develop new technologies but also to adjust, come to terms, grapple with its implications for our relationships with ourselves, each other, scientific and creative endeavours, and even the planet itself. It may be said that the continuing popularity of cyberpunk, in all its forms and with all its subgroups, can be summarized on the one hand by Paul Valéry's famous remark in *Reflections on the World Today*, "The future, like everything else, is no longer quite what it used to be," and on the other by a statement commonly attributed to William Gibson, "The future is already here; it's just not evenly distributed." Though the often-dystopian fictional worlds of cyberpunk serve as warnings to readers in the actual world of the potential negative consequences of technological advancement and socioeconomic inequality, they are also worlds full of possibility, reminders that even in societies dominated by unfeeling machines and indifferent institutions, it is the human, the individual, that will always find a way forward.

Liminal Phantasmagoria

Iosif M. Gershteyn

The Cape

Now that you are gone—
More weight I give to feeling than to thought
I seek out the romantic, searing reason into naught
My rationality has served no purpose close to you
Your will capricious as a woman with a clue
Yet resolute like ancient rulers—darkened eyes
You have passed judgment hoping to disguise
That which I loved about you—beast inside
Ferocious like a thousand hungry wolves—arose
Growling, barking, howling—so disclose
Your one true nature; that of skin and sin
Of deep desire, lust—hunger within
Devouring my body with your lips
Salt coated from the sweat under eclipse
Words whispered hurriedly within angelic bed
Furnished with verdant grasses, wine light red
Surrounded by the crisp late summer air
Out near the beach, in public, where we dared
To ride together through the night
Our bodies cherishing moonlight
That shone upon your bare and perfect breasts
The night that left us both a holy mess
And in the daylight hours we got dressed
To come back home to our future nest
Where it dissolved into a wisp
Of July's fancy
Blown astray

Maybe

Maybe I got broken in too many places
Maybe all that's left are scars in place of faces
Maybe my heart got trampled and left for dead
Maybe now a rock resides where blood is red

Maybe I forgot how it felt to love you
Maybe I recall only sounds of sad tunes
Maybe there's nothing left and we are but strangers
Maybe I forgot how to be scared of danger

Maybe the next car passing will be the last
Maybe forever is fleeting and long since passed
Maybe your name is etched and bound within me
Or maybe it's been released and floats up singly

Ohm Ω

I am your history's repository breathing
A thousand shattered memories reside
In loving threads warmed via my blood's sheathing
The signals pulsing regularly glide

Percussive bass of chemicals releasing
Along the flow electric to the cleft
Replaying final remnants concerto
To one great hippocampal intellect

The swell of sounds, of images so fleeting
Their vibrancy eclipsed just by the sun
That barely skin at tips of fingers reading
Can hold on to their fire one by one

Our final evidence—neuronal
Will last with me until my final breath
And then transmuted into clouds of quanta
—will seed passions from my last, my only bed of rest.

Drive

Like an addiction, or early conviction
I cannot escape the incredible me
The ego, the self, the persistent illusion
Drags me and drops me into vast sea

From mountains in Poland—
Where I heard my last thoughts
To oceans in Bali—
Among all the black sharks

The twisting, and turning of unquiet mind
The beating, and yearning of jaded design
There is no forever of quiet repose
Not for the joker behind this big nose

I'll last in this journey, this feverish quest
For as long as I can, whilst keeping my zest
And falling from sky, acceleration accreting
I'll open my arms to hug earth's heart beating.

Ships Pass

Your eyes used to shine so brightly—seeking mine
Gentle hands maneuver lightly to entwine
Our luminescent touch in full moon's glow
Joins blood, joins heart, joins hunger to and fro
Voiding the ever present distance in its flow
Keeping us as one until the throw
Of unrelenting fates hard heavy blow
The blow that shattered us apart
Before a hope could bloom
Of a new start
Before the tide could turn and grant us a reprieve
We fell below the pressure—could not breathe
Our love asphyxiating as a child
Wrapped round its neck the navel cord run wild
Into a thousand pieces cut apart
Never to cleave together that new start
You sail far and further from my shores
I'm left alone and broken
Wanting more

The End

You will know it once it's gone—

When days drift endlessly towards night
and night itself is no respite
When meadows green do not ignite
a moment's hope or joy held tight
When books seem barren of the truth
laid strings of words struck from dead tooth
When films don't dazzle or demand
the very time under command
When bedsheets seem too cold
Or hot, or just an empty parking lot

Yes, then you'll know,
and then you'll bend
returning back into the end—
of how you held
of how you lost—

O how the pain of fire is
—ultimately—better,
than the pain of frost.

The Share

As this world turns
We know nothing of it
Save dapper tracks—
Ink left on ticker tape
The firm conclusion
Of a thousand minds
From tides of history distilled
A line for every man, for every firm
Reflecting future's starry dreams
and horrifying fantasies—
Beware the stocks move of the day
For tides run deep and rule the way

Lost & Found

Is there something lost that can never be found?
Something tragic and dear as a world without bound?
Is it a past love that meant more than the clouds?
Is it childhood friendship adolescence unwound?
Is it mother, or grandma, or old hometown?
Whilst growing were more than a human endowed
With capacities—never stop to astound—
of care and of love
—that had wonderful, warm, condition-less sound
Now swept ashore on adult battleground
With its victories, burdens, and losses abound
All those memories far, so seem not around
Yet one hopes to dip back into that melody too
One day again soon, or eve after the tomb
But wherever I find them, wherever they are
Those feelings and loves are not quite as far
As to be lost to my heart, my thoughts, and my soul
They return to an eternal home in the role;
as human, as animal, as soul of the true
And I wish, very soon, they come back to you too

Seconds

I don't want to die
But if I know that I must
I'd like to live a bit more,
A bit more than I have been
A bit more than I am

I'd like to spend some more moments
In moment immersed
Overwhelmed by the second—
That can't be rehearsed

One such second in Barça
One such second out West
One such second in Cambridge
Another—a test

Second by second—
It seems not enough
Though each one of those seconds
Fulfills life—overstuffed

Yet life keeps on going—
and thirst with it still
By beat of the heart
so sounding its trill

I'd like to see Paris
In its glory revived
Or a new city
that will take its stride
I'd like to be *in* there
A part of it too
Not just observing
While others go to
I'd want to be *in* it
To live here and now
Less meditation—
More drink, and more sound

I want to live fully
By G-d not alone
Surrounded by passion
and a path towards a throne

I wish to be happy
Not sad,
nonetheless
I'll take being there—
In a beautiful mess
Over sterile a life
Living slow, constant time
with calendar's march
—the only ragtime

Do come and join me
When insight does strike
and we will make merry
Most any a night

Biographies

Editors

Cindy Chopoidalo is the Assistant Editor of the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* and a member of Editors Canada. Her publications include *Shakespeare's First Tetralogy, Epic Poetry, and Historiography: How a Dramatist Creates a Fictional World* (2014) and *Shakespeare's Possible Worlds* (2018), and she also contributed to *The Definitive Shakespeare Companion: Overviews, Documents, and Analysis* (2017).

Catherine Ezell has an advanced education in English literature and is a self-taught artist. She has experience in scholarly editing and writing and has devoted her life to drawing and painting. Combining her passion for good writing and art, Catherine creates portraits of authors that are meant to reflect the tone of their works.

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Contributors

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Constantin Waldschmidt studied mathematics, biochemistry, and poetry at Virginia Tech. He works in software, and in his spare time writes film reviews.

Advisors

Tom Conley is the Abbot Lawrence Lowell Professor of Visual and Environmental Studies and of Romance Languages and Literatures in the Romance Languages and Literatures Department at Harvard. He studies relations of space and writing in literature, cartography, and cinema. His work moves to and from early modern France and issues in theory and interpretation in visual media.

Donald Pfister is the Asa Gray Research Professor of Systematic Botany at the Harvard University Herbaria & Libraries. He studies fungi, particularly ascomycetes. In his studies he uses molecular, morphological, and life history information to understand the relationships among these fungi and their activities in nature. He also uses archives and museum specimens to document collections and their origins.