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Healing the Interim Child

by David Seal

When Pat Buchanan said this spring that he didn't want to criticize Vice-President Quayle — he'd be accused of child abuse — I spent a couple of days amused; and then I thought of Interim, that one-month stepchild of the academic calendar in January. Of course Buchanan was being disingenuous. But something of the edge of Buchanan's wit afflicts both student and faculty perception of Interim. It is the lost child of the curricular year, the foundling, the runaway. Its intellectual parentage is suspect. Its ability to do work is openly doubted. And while 74% of the faculty call Interim a "constructive experience," we all know that many favor it precisely because they don't have to teach it. Not the least of the knives of abuse is neglect.

I've detected in complaints about the Interim over the years the whiffs of condescension that we save for childish behavior. And if our attitude toward the Interim, however subtle, is a projection of the child, no one has convincingly articulated the virtues the child possesses. It is time to come to the Interim's defense. As Vice-President Quayle said, "What a waste it is to lose one's mind, or not to have a mind." What a waste it would be to lose the Interim, or not to have one, which is entirely possible unless we can construct a defense of it that redeems the adult's sneer with the prodigy's grin.

Apologies should begin with epigraphs from Holy Writ. Mine comes from one of those ubiquitous posters that adorn collegiate walls: Albert Einstein's, "Imagination is more

important than knowledge."

Damn right, Albert. Let's link the Interim to imagination; then let's see why the imagination is typically viewed as childish; and finally, let's see what children can accomplish if we only give them the right tools.

Before I state my argument, allow me my assumptions. First, imagination is an energy, not a discipline. It is not the province of literature or the other arts, but of all arts and sciences. Second, even though it is not a discipline, it can be disciplined; it can be taught and encouraged. And third, attacks on the Interim for not being intellectually respectable have a hidden and probably unconscious agenda: They constitute attacks on the imagination itself. I call this "old fartitis." We all tend to attack our imagination when we are stuck, or bored, or stressed.

The argument, then. The Interim ought to be, if devoted to anything, devoted not to the intellect but to the imagination.

I do not mean to demean the intellect. Its provinces and pathways are highly structured. Strengthening it is the university's prime directive. But one of its unavoidable side-effects is passivity, the inertia that necessarily results from following rules (the scientific method; data gathering and sifting; interpretive models; political correctness). As we accumulate rigor, we acquire its dark twin. And passivity tends to look upon the imagination with suspicion, because broken rules are what the imagination has for breakfast.

The habits required by intellectual endeavor are best served by the semester format, when time can join with habit to change intellectual behavior. The Interim's intensity and singularity best serve to break habits. In a way, it is a classic time for "destruction," in D.H. Lawrence's sense. He



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argued that knowledge is not cumulative, and that the white psyche in particular needs periodic uprooting. What better time to plow up old tired fields than at the beginning of the year? The Interim is the anomaly of the school year. It is the break in routine that is the very image of how the imagination itself works. Call such visitations divine, unconscious, or inspirational: What matters is the intrusion that incarnates. The academic calendar as we have it now speaks to our psyches in ways that make the semester or quarter system pale by comparison.

And if the imagination is the province of the Interim, we must remember that it frankly scares many academics. Creativity has always carried the touch of the devil. It's our version of sin. Hades was classically the place not just of dead souls but of imagines.

And that explains much of the resistance of academics. They want to ask, can the imagination be made to do respectable work? Yes and no. First of all, the imagination is not always respectable. Think of your fantasies. Yet this power is also at the heart of scientific genius, as Einstein reminds us. It is at the heart of entrepreneurial brilliance, it carries the world of marketing on its back, it is the tutelary spirit of technological innovation. It is a prerequisite for what the writer Thomas Pynchon called "creative paranoia," and without that skill, how could we ever keep up with, and understand, politicians from Richard Nixon to Brock Adams? In short, the imagination is what Rollo May would call "daemonic," a power neutral in itself, but readily available for good or ill.

And if you serve on the local school board, and the budget needs cutting, you head, with your axe, straight for any program that shows signs of imagination.

If you want a clearer lineage, let me trace the ancestry of intellect and imagination mythically. The intellect is descended from Spirit. The Greeks personified it as Apollo and Athena. Spirit is achievement; dryness; the aridity of a good lecture; "personal growth," regimens; goals, data; vitae; "the bottom line," seriousness. Spirit is mature. An adult is a dead child. It loves the word "analysis," probably because of its homage to anal-ly. Athena reminds us that it likes armor, particularly chest armor, so you'll find its denizens in weight rooms, or in gourmet restaurants pumping skillfully cooked plaque into openings in the heart. It likes to sit down with a "good" book, especially poetry by T.S. Eliot, epistles from Paul, and anything with the word "deconstruction" in it. Words like "input" and "operative" are the Spirit's foreplay, and a paragraph of hermetic jargon is its trope for love. It utterly understands, and is in sympathy with, the need to "define and measure" the Interim experience.

In contrast, the Imagination descends from Soul. Personified, the god was Hades, god of Invisibles, of Images. Soul is reflection; deepening; moistness; grief. Soul settles in low places. It tromps into valleys — "depressions" — because they are there. Soul is occasionally childlike, which is not to say childish; with Ursula LeGuin, it believes that an adult is not a dead child, but a child who survives. Soul listens to Bob Dylan and Billie Holiday, reads Yeats and Emily Dickinson, wears black, affects attitude. It has fond memories of college as that wonder-

ful time when it could sit in a corner, brooding, losing its religion. When commuting, it often imagines what the world would have been like if Jesus could have retaken the church from Paul in a leveraged buyout. Judas would have made a wonderful junk bond dealer.

The Spirit writes dissertations; the Soul does its best to forget them.

I speak, then, of the war within us, of Spirit versus Soul. Of those moments when we harrumph, "Interim — a tropical scam for rich kids to (sneer) 'journal' about their personal lives." Or of those other moments when we admit that our best doesn't reach them.

And at its best, the war looks like this: Tough love versus let it be. An Interim of tough standards and real grades versus one of benign encouragement and pass/fail.

No wonder so many of us like to harrumph.

So what's my criterion for a good Interim? That's easy: Does it have soul? You say you want me to define that word? You, my friend, are a lost cause.

In recent years, the Interim Committee itself has moved away from defining the Interim as "intellectually respectable" in favor of something more experiential, "learning by doing." The Integrated Studies program a few years back faced similar pressure. Students in the program wanted more "hands-on" courses, something emphasizing projects over papers, something which would devote a class period to peer groups or role-playing instead of the received-wisdom lecture mode requiring an iron ass, passivity, and unnatural discipline.

These sorts of courses can be artful responses to the strengths and liabilities of the typical PLU student mind. Are PLU students intellectual? No. Do they do the reading if not tested on it? By and large, no. Does that mean we should be more disciplined in our approaches? For example, more graded Interims? More GUR Interims? More class hours per week? Most of my colleagues, particularly those critical of the Interim, would probably argue yes. I'd argue no. I've in a way staked my career on it, by giving up what and how I was taught in order to try new material.

My theory — my theory this month — is that their imaginations are starved, and they are simply too hungry to concentrate on demanding intellectual issues. Too hungry? Or too full of TV and movies and Nintendo. Point taken. But the very packaging of the media reduces the role the imagination plays. When we read, we move at our own speed. Television moves at its speed; its digestion is rigid. Commercially certainly don't give the imagination time to digest. As if we lacked some crucial enzyme, together with the time it takes to work, we simply take more images in rather than processing what we have. We devour more and more of the popular culture, and grow increasingly thin.

If we look at PLU student strengths, we see bright if not intellectual kids who are far more socially adept than our generations were. Still, my worst fear is that as the family (even of our alumni) becomes increasingly problematic, universities will have to become therapists. The

psychologist James Hillman says that the two great myths of today are the economic and the therapeutic. Lost, long gone in the mists of the past, is knowledge pursued for its own sake. You remember hanging around your college bookstore when books by Kafka and Wittgenstein and Mead and the Myrdals held mana. What has mana these days is found over in the sweatshirt and stuffed animal section.

What, then, is to be done? I do have some practical suggestions, and to be frank, they surrender to the therapeutic. I was trained in literary theory; I would no more try to teach a course in literary theory at PLU than I would presume to teach Cindy the elephant to tango. But it is entirely possible that students are telling us in their own quaint ways that the world wants something more than more literary theory, chilling as that may be. So when I met the Devil in a dream, this is what She told me to do: Apropos of imagination and the Interim, of course.

First, think back to your own formative "wisdom" (as opposed to intellectual) experiences. For me, junior year abroad taught me more than the rest of college put together. Of course wherever I went, I took a book and a college-soaked brain. But it was traveling, usually alone, that led me into silent discourse with a very faithful companion, my imagination; classrooms are not congenial places for our metaphorical doubles. Out of those fond memories grew my recent Interim class, "On the Road."

Meeting Robert Bly as a grad student was another such formative experience. Out of that...collision, yes, that's the right word, collision: Out of that came my classes in Dreams, my very first Interim, Fairy Tales, and even my work with dance.

I came alive outside the system but chose not to reject it. Instead, I've tried to leaven it with what I had missed.

Second, break routines. Yours and theirs. "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite" — Blake.

Third, take risks. Interim is experiential. It is supposed to be used to try new pedagogical techniques. In general, err on the side of the strange. Aim below their conscious mind, not above it.

In a word, play. Inhibit your own precociousness for a while. Remember the energy you had when sitting in class, bored, doodling, speculating about the methane content of the lecture and trying to find the great Nerd Constant for academic discourse. Treat the Interim homeopathically, not allopathically: It needs more of the child, not less. A Quazyle is a terrible waste to mind. But most of us would rather have our Quazyle, and grouse, than to chase down the great freebird of our imaginations.

Excuse me. I have to go now. I'm planning my Interims for the mid-nineties. Right now I have two possibilities: "Luther, Freud, and All That Shit: A Look at Religious and Psychological Reformations from the Bottom Up" and "Heaven." No, the latter does not involve travel. But I do have the first catalogue line: "Heaven has always been the province of theologians. But they haven't been there either." ■

Dean's Comment

It has hardly been a quiet winter in the university or the Division of Humanities. A new PLU president, Loren Anderson, will be coming July 1, and searches are currently underway for a new vice president for development and director of admissions. Here in the division, two new faculty join the Philosophy Department in September: Angelo Corlett from the University of Arizona and Erin McKenna from Purdue.

Several faculty have recently received notable awards. Patricia O'Connell Killen (Religion) won a coveted Graves Award for exceptional undergraduate teachers at private schools on the West Coast, allowing her to spend January through May 1993 researching the social function of religion, specifically the role of minority ethnic groups' religious beliefs in social criticism. Susan Brown Carlton (English) received the prize of the Association for College Composition and Communication for the best dissertation in rhetoric and composition in the U.S. in 1991; she completed her dissertation at Purdue University before she joined the PLU faculty last September. Most recently, Jack Cady, also of the English Department, received word of his selection for a \$20,000 literary fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. This award, based on his forthcoming novella, *The Night We Buried Road Dog* (Asolot Press, July 1992), will allow him to devote himself to writing fiction.

Other grant activity proceeds apace. We have just won an NEH grant for Languages Across the Curriculum (described in this issue), and we have just applied for a grant to develop seminars on social philosophy for elementary and secondary school teachers. Meanwhile, a faculty reading group and faculty publications described in this issue reveal the humanities' interest in social commentary: Sharon Jansen's book on political protest and prophecy under Henry VIII, Mark Jemen's translation of Zola's "Faccuse" on the Dreyfus Affair, and Patricia O'Connell Killen's treatment of cleric and social critic Orestes Brownson. True to David Seal's portrayal of the function of the Interim, imaginative courses were taught this January on Jamaican culture, death investigations, the spiritual assessment of ecology and justice, visions of a just society as informed by biblical writers, faith and fiction, Pompeii, schizophrenia, texts about women in the Hebrew scriptures, and more.

Engaged and on the edge—we hope you appreciate this side of the humanities at PLU. ■

Paul Menzel

CUTTING MEDICINE DOWN TO SIZE

by Paul T. Menzel

I thought I was used to medicine's ever-expanding horizons, but I wasn't prepared for this one. "We've got a dilemma we want some philosophers to help with," said a pediatric endocrinologist on the other end of the line. As I quickly found out, for a long time now they have been treating very short children who have growth hormone deficiencies with injections of growth hormone [GH]. The treatments have been successful in many cases, adding to patients' later height as adults. Until recently GH has been scarce, extracted from the pea-sized pituitary glands of cadavers. Now, however, Genentech, Inc. can manufacture it with recombinant DNA techniques, so there's "plenty." The treatments do cost \$15,000 a year, of course, and usually they have to be administered for five years to make a difference, but GH is available.

"We don't know what to do," the physician went on. "We had no trouble previously drawing a line—we only used GH on very short kids with GH deficiency. Now some of us are beginning to treat non-GH-deficient, otherwise healthy, very short stature children, too. After all, they're just as short, they often suffer as much from their stature handicap as the GH-deficient kids, and they can often gain as much extra height from GH treatments. Maybe we should treat everyone, say, in the shortest one percentile, or even others—a prospectively 5'4" Milton Friedman, say, could have been boosted to 5'7". But where do we stop? Maybe we've already gone too far."

I tried to grasp things more concretely. A 4'7" woman or a 5'1" man is in the lowest one percentile. (As I later learned, two of my faculty colleagues at PLU are in that category.) Treated with GH,

whether they are naturally hormone-deficient or not, many will add three to four inches to their adult height. GH treatments have been proven to have no harmful physical side effects, though some critics believe that the regimen of thrice-a-week shots in the bum for years on end is only likely to exacerbate a child's perceptions that shortness is a problem.

Indeed the pediatric specialists—only board-certified endocrinologists—who are so far allowed access to GH by Genentech seem right in not viewing the "disease" of GH-deficiency as the relevant line. If a human need is served (or at least a human "benefit" delivered) by adding three or four inches to the height of a likely very short person who's GH-deficient, then a human need would also seem to be served by treating successfully a non-GH-deficient patient who is likely to be equally short. The ground for treating either at insurance company or public expense is the fact that their height can be a real handicap in the lives patients will lead.

We may desperately want "disease" to do the line-drawing trick for us here, but other than some crude distinction between serious diseases on the one hand and mere enhancements of appearance on the other (elective cosmetic surgery, for example), we have long ago stepped beyond diseases in our conception of the legitimate scope of basic medicine. Pregnancy, for example, is certainly a condition we should cover in public and private insurance, but it is only a condition that needs to be monitored, not a disease. We could, of course, call everything that we thought deserved medical treatment a "disease" just to save the belief that the only care we provide at collective expense is care to remedy the effects of disease, but then we would gain no substantive, policy-informing benefit from the concept. In the GH line-drawing controversy, we might as well call very short stature a disease from the start. Yet that's laughable. It would certainly make more sense to call tall stature the disease; it causes us to build bigger cars and houses, for example, using up additional energy, space, and resources. The motto of the National Association of Short Adults (NASA), "Down in Front," hits home.

Convinced that we are no longer armed with any potent notion of disease, where do we turn? Suppose we can further clarify the factual picture along these lines. We know ahead of time that certain conditions indicate potential for responding to GH treatment: not dwarfism, but a



limited range of both GH-deficient and non-GH-deficient children. We can refine the pool of potentially benefitting children further, in turn, by dropping those who show no change in growth rate after a year or two of treatment. Among those on whom we then use full treatment, probably only three-fourths actually gain three inches or more in eventual adult height. In turn, of those three-fourths, it would seem a reasonable guess that half would not have experienced serious psychosocial adjustment problems because of their short stature anyway, and half would have. Of the latter, half in turn will find those problems largely unabated by a mere gain of three to four inches, and half will be significantly helped. That is, 25 percent of the 75 percent who gain height from long-term GH treatment will experience significant psychosocial gain. Thus, while five years of treatment costs "only" \$75,000, each real adult height gain costs \$100,000, and each major psychosocial gain costs \$400,000.

As a parent or physician, then, what should we do if our child or patient is prospectively very short? Though I can understand how pressures build up on us to desire every marginal improvement in opportunity that we can create, shouldn't we also keep some perspective on what we are being pulled into here? For one thing, would we care about physical stature were it not for the influence of male-centered preconceptions about physical strength? And even then, will a gain of three or four inches much matter? Will the notion of a "handicapping height" — the lowest one percentile, for example, which is 4'7" and 5'1" respectively for women and men — begin to provide any kind of line? There will always be another bottom one percentile if we boost those who would only be 4'7" and 5'1". As to equal opportunity in life, would we really choose to invest \$75,000 in height-raising GH if we were truly intent on improving the range of real opportunities for a child? Think of what a trust fund could later do for the child if that amount were invested. And what about other children who start from much greater total disadvantages and could be helped more with far fewer resources?

What is really tough for physicians and parents to notice at this point is that these considerations can apply to GH-deficient children as well. Even if they do have in some sense a biological "disease," why should we think that warrants an investment of this magnitude when the benefits are as chancy and meager as they are? Instead of pushing us to expand GH treatment, our skepticism about the GH deficiency line leads us back to criticism of what we have been doing even for many GH-deficient children. Undoubtedly, some GH- (and non-GH-) deficient children do deserve help; Turner's syndrome patients, for example, suffer a wide range of other handicaps and medical complications, and their gain in stature of close to half a foot from GH may constitute a significant increase in otherwise highly limited opportunities. But they are the exception, not the rule.

Am I wrong or insensitive in thinking that here is another case where we need to cut the narrow-sighted enthusiasm for a frontier technology down to size? Maybe we should say to medicine, "Down in front!" ■

[Editors' note: Rodney Swenson of the Department of Languages (German) recently FAXed this report for readers of *Prism* on his experiences in Estonia.]

Letter from Estonia

Rodney Swenson

February 24, 1992

"We are living in such hard times." This comment is frequently the beginning of a conversation, and it summarizes economic conditions here. Estonia has been an independent nation since August 1991, but it seems that the country, like Rip van Winkle, is awakening from a long sleep. After a half-century of occupation, exploitation, and deportation, people remark that there is now at least hope. Hope was scarce as recently as three years ago.

The most serious immediate problem is an insufficient supply of petroleum. Consequently, all heating has been reduced and warm water (water here is never hot) is available only occasionally. The Scandinavian countries have been very generous in providing supplementary oil supplies during the colder months.

People have waited for independence for a long time, but when it appeared, it came so rapidly and in so unexpected a way that very few were prepared for it. The organizations and structures needed for a democratic system and a market economy are slowly emerging, but these are difficult to establish when requisite expertise and experience simply do not exist. As an incentive to encourage investment, Estonia has enacted laws that are extremely favorable to foreign capital. To sit for a short time in the lobby of the Hotel Viru, Tallinn's largest and most prestigious tourist hotel, is to observe in person international wheeling and dealing in many languages.

The currency here is still the ruble, although there are rumors of converting to the Estonian Crown (already being printed in Canada). Actually, all three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) are using money of another country. The current rate of exchange is about one hundred rubles per dollar, but the banks will not sell rubles, because they hope to earn a profit later through speculation. It is indeed a curious situation. Hard currency shops seem to be everywhere; I saw in a recent newspaper that there are around forty, but the number increases almost daily. It is not unusual to find shops with merchandise priced in DM (German marks), FIM (Finnish marks), U.S. dollars, or rubles. What determines the currency of the selling price is still a mystery to me.

Tallinn (the first syllable is accented) is a medieval city with about five hundred thousand inhabitants; of these almost half are of Russian origin, for during "the Occupation" (the term Estonians use), continuous efforts were

made to dilute the Estonian citizenry with Russian settlers. Consequently, all signs are in both Russian and Estonian. All streets with names celebrating Communism have reverted to their previous names, however, and all statues of Lenin have been removed.

The Estonian language is something of an anomaly for linguists. Estonian is not an Indo-European language. It is not related to any languages I have learned, except for a few words borrowed from English and German. Estonian is a highly inflected language in which nouns have fourteen cases, but it is pronounced exactly as it is written. Since they can receive Finnish television, most Estonians can speak Finnish, although the reverse is not the case.

I am frustrated by my lack of progress in learning Estonian. Since there are only one million five hundred thousand speakers, few foreigners want to learn it. Consequently no grammar book exists — at least I have not yet located one or even heard of one. An Estonian-English dictionary exists, but like so many other things one might want to buy, it is not available. I have traded German and English lessons for Estonian lessons.

My teaching responsibilities are interesting and rewarding. I teach one class for younger students (18-20 years old) who are beginning their business training, another for managers and/or executives who work during the day and learn English in the evening, and a third for teachers of English interested in pedagogical methods (this course was even advertised in the newspaper!). The Estonian Business School is a private institution that grants Bachelor's and Master's business degrees; it was established only three years ago in an attempt to educate people with expertise for a business-oriented economy. The PLU influence is very much in evidence in the publications of the school.

The weather here is somewhat comparable to that of Tacoma. Of course it is colder here, with days of snow alternating with days of rain, as Tallinn is much further north, at about the fifty-eighth parallel.

I am provided with hotel accommodations, including food, that are modest but very adequate. From here to my teaching location in different buildings, I must ride a bus that takes about twenty-five minutes each way. The buses are always extremely crowded and there is almost never an opportunity to sit, but these bus rides offer excellent opportunities for people watching. Yesterday I observed a lady cuddling her dog and a man protectively holding his approximately twelve-year-old daughter. Today a stylish, expensively dressed Russian lady asked me for directions, but alas, I was unable to be of any assistance. Foreigners are easy to recognize and one is frequently approached by people who want to sell Russian army uniforms, especially their fur hats, insignia, and badges.

In all, my experience here has thus far been very positive and extremely satisfying. Teaching in another country, especially in one with a history of foreign domination, is exciting, and I am genuinely convinced that I have gained far more than I have been able to give. ■

“Harmony” in Chinese Aesthetics and Philosophy

by Wei Hua

Why do Chinese favor tragicomedies? In a traditional Chinese painting, why is some space left blank to set off the strokes of the brush? Why, in classical Chinese prose and poetry, do parallel yet contrastive couplets abound? The key to these mysteries lies in the Chinese principle of “harmony.”

The meaning of “harmony,” or *he* (pronounced like “her” without the “r”) in Chinese, is three-fold: In the narrowest sense, it means unity of two opposites (such as *yin* and *yang*, heaven and man). In a broader sense, it signifies harmonious heterogeneous elements. In sense, *he* is harmony achieved along with elements of a

This principle is crucial traditional or modern. Professor American expert in Chinese its significance very well:

...basic among patterns is the desire to conflicting elements into Chinese philosophy. In their two are usually re- tary and mu- than as hostile and incompatible.



synthesis of various the broadest from opposites different nature. in Chinese culture, Derk Bodde, an philosophy, states

Chinese thought merge seemingly a unified harmony. losophy is filled with which, however, component elements regarded as complementarily necessary rather

Indeed, both traditional Chinese philosophy and aesthetics are filled with dualisms, such as heaven and man, principle and material force, substance and function, external refinement and inner substance, fantasy and mimesis, movement and stillness, strength and gentleness, realist detail and broad expression, and involvement in the world and renunciation of the world. The ideal state of “harmony” is reached when such conflicting elements are merged into a perfect unified harmony. However, this kind of unity does not mean the total elimination of opposites; instead, it allows each of those seemingly contradictory yet actually complementary opposites to become exactly appropriate so that all can coexist without



conflict.

Over the years, the concept of "harmony" has found both direct and theoretical expression in traditional Chinese dance, sculpture, painting, calligraphy, architecture, and literature. For example, in *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*, the first comprehensive work of Chinese literary theory, written in the sixth century, the author repeatedly stresses the importance of harmony between emotion and intellect, of balance between the beauty of linguistic expression and the "good" of philosophical substance in literary works. This book contains the essence of Chinese literary and rhetorical principles.

Ancient Chinese philosophers first defined the concept of "harmony" by contrasting it with "uniformity" (*tong*) despite the fact that both words describe a state of unity. According to Yan Ying, who lived in the seventh century B.C., "harmony" is unity achieved through the complementing and conditioning functions of different and/or opposing elements. If there are no different elements — for example, when making soup, "give water a flavor with water" — and no contradictions or opposites — for instance, "if lutes were to be confined to one note" and the minister never disagrees with the ruler — the unity achieved thereby is "uniformity." *Hé*, on the other hand, implies balance, without excess or deficiency. In Yan Ying's mind, *hé* represents beauty and good, while *tong* does not.

Later Chinese philosophers of the Confucian and the Taoist school elaborated on the significance of "harmony." Consider the following passage from *The Doctrine of the Mean*, a Confucian classic:

Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are stirred up, [the emotional state] is called equilibrium (*zhong*, centrality, the mean). When these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called harmony. Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony its universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, heaven and earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.

Confucianists evidently view "harmony" as "good." And they consider as the ultimate good the sage who has undergone continuous moral cultivation of the self to overcome any deviation of temperament. Because Confucianists maintain that heaven, earth, and all things form one integral whole with humans, they believe the sage's effort of moral cultivation will have transforming influence and accomplish meritorious achievements in the world.

The ideal of "harmony" is equally important to Taoists. Yet Lao Tzu recommends that instead of sedulously seeking it, people "attain complete vacuity and maintain steadfast quietude." Unlike Confucianists, Taoists hold that the numerous opposites engendered by the movement of *Tao* will naturally return to equilibrium and attain harmony if there is no outside force of interference. As a consequence, they regard all things in the universe, or nature, created by *Tao* in its undisturbed state

as harmonious:

Tao begot the One,
The One, two;
The two begot three,
And the three, a myriad of things.
All these things carry the *yin* and
embrace the *yang*, through blending with
the material force achieve harmony.
(*Tao Te Ching*, ch. 42)

This harmonious unity of nature, in the eyes of Taoists, embodies beauty in its highest form. As expressed in Chuang Tzu, "Heaven and earth possess great beauty beyond description"; "[I]f it is natural, all things under heaven cannot compete with it in beauty."

Both Confucianists and Taoists value harmony. Both the Taoist model of "harmony," nature, and the Confucian model, the sage, result from the return to the state of equilibrium from opposites. So Taoism and Confucianism can be considered as being congruent with each other at the level of "harmony." Before these two philosophies converged, Taoists may be considered to have discovered in *hé* more beauty than good, while Confucianists may be said to have found in *hé* more good than beauty. After the convergence of Taoism and Confucianism, the ideal of *hé* becomes a unified harmony between heaven (nature) and man (the sage); between beauty and good. This kind of *hé* is *Hé* with a capital letter, which has been referred to as *tai hé* (great harmony). This is the most treasured and time-honored ideal in Chinese aesthetics as well as philosophy.

Chinese aestheticians have indicated two major systems in Chinese aesthetics: that of the Confucianists, represented by Confucius, and that of the Taoists, represented by Chuang Tzu. These two systems oppose and complement each other to form all of Chinese aesthetics. Although after the eighth century, the aesthetics of the Chan (Zen) School also made unique contributions, it did not fundamentally depart from the Confucian or the Taoist aesthetics.

The above discussion has dealt with the significance of the principle of "harmony" in both Confucian and Taoist philosophy as well as aesthetics. *Hé* is closely related to the concepts of *zhong* (the mean), *mei* (beauty), and *shan* (good). At the highest level, *hé* incorporates the highest beauty and the highest good. The Confucian and the Taoist ideal are merged into a perfect unified harmony.



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anguages Across the Curriculum: A New Opportunity to Use Foreign Languages at PLU

by Paul Webster

Few people today doubt that there are good reasons to know a foreign language. Business and personal travel, interest in other cultures, access to scholarship, and greater professional mobility are primary reasons for most people. And as Goethe, the greatest of the German poets observed: "Wer fremde Sprachen nicht kennt, weiß nichts von seiner eigenen." — "People who know no foreign languages know nothing of their own."

As the revised courses come on line, students who know French, German, Norwegian, or Spanish will be able to use them in courses outside the Department of Languages. In an International Business course, for example, students might work with case studies in Spanish or French; in medieval English literature they might be able to study the French writers who influenced Chaucer; in European history they might study German documents to learn more about the origins of the First World War.

Ideally, students at PLU who do not know a foreign language will also benefit from the LAC program. For example, in a course in international law at another college, students have the following assignment: one group reads a French article from *Idées et Actions*, a publication of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a second group reads a Spanish article from *Idées y Acci6n*, also by FAO, and the rest covers a set of articles from American sources. Each group reports

back to the entire class on the content of the materials; the FAO texts broaden the class perspective, since they are authentic voices from the Third World, rarely heard in the American press.

Some LAC courses at PLU might use similar assignments depending on what the faculty members want to accomplish in them. The new program will probably cause some changes in the Department of Languages, too. Courses, especially at the intermediate level, will have to address the needs of students headed for the LAC courses in other departments.

Most important, in the LAC program students will find opportunity to extend their foreign language skills and to use them in other contexts. And as they extend their foreign language experience, they should also, as Goethe maintained, gain the broader knowledge of their own language that comes from knowing others. ■



PLU has developed a program to help students and faculty grow more fluent in their language skills in a world in which knowing other languages and cultures is increasingly valuable. The two-year

Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) program is sponsored by a \$188,348 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. While several other LAC programs have been created at such colleges as St. Olaf and the University of Minnesota, PLU is the first medium-sized comprehensive university in the country to develop one.

The project has two stages: in the first, some of the sixteen faculty participants from the Global Studies, Integrated Studies, International Business, and Scandinavian Area Studies programs will extend their own foreign language skills; a few have even started new languages. In the second stage they will team up with faculty from the Department of Languages to prepare materials for classroom use. The first LAC courses are planned for Fall 1993.

FACULTY READING GROUP FOCUSES ON POST- STRUCTURALIST THEORY

by Charles Bergman

Every Thursday, for this past academic year, a group of PLU faculty has gotten together for two hours in the evening to read some of the most stimulating and philosophically challenging writing of the twentieth century. The texts have been chosen from the philosophical tradition that has generated such influential theories in cultural criticism as "difference" and the "other" — phenomenology as it swoops in the late part of the century into the post-structuralists. So far, the reading group has focused on writers like Walter Benjamin, François Lyotard, and Martin Heidegger. They are part of a tradition which is under-represented in the curriculum and yet constitutes the theoretical basis for the most radical perspectives on contemporary social issues from gender studies to the re-construction of consciousness.

We have adopted a method of reading that is very effective with the intellectually dense texts we've chosen. We read the text aloud, beginning to end, in the group. As one person reads aloud, anyone can jump in to ask questions or comment or interpret. We find ourselves reading the works much more carefully, understanding philosophical material that might otherwise seem daunting and impenetrable, and getting into highly stimulating debates and discussions among ourselves. We have developed a way to interrogate the texts publicly.

In the fall, we read Walter Benjamin's essay, "The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction." From a largely Marxist foundation, he argues that the mechanical nature of modern culture has transformed art, and in the process is leading to different relations among people to both art and themselves. Formerly, art was recognized through the presence of the original, which is the prerequisite to its authenticity. That is no longer the case. Film is for Benjamin the modern example of art, and we don't watch originals. Every film we see is one of hundreds, or thousands. We watch reproductions in movies. As Benjamin puts it, the actor presents himself or herself differently to an audience on stage than he or she does in a film. In film, the actor presents him or herself to a camera. As Benjamin says, "The feeling of strangeness that overcomes the actor before the camera . . . is basically the same kind as the estrangement felt before one's own image in the mirror." Here is the modern, or postmodern, experience of the self.

We read also François Lyotard's book, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Seeing the postmodern as a form of knowledge, as a style of language, Lyotard argues that it is the attempt always to say what is not being said. Its method is a kind of dialogue, debate, and perpetual challenge. It "denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia of the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable." The pleasure that comes from such a way of knowing is "the increase of being and the jubilation which result from the invention of new rules of the game."

Lastly, we have been reading Martin Heidegger's essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art." In it, a work of art becomes a focus for examining the place of humans in a world of things, and the ways in which art shapes our consciousness of and within that world of rocks and animals and temples. By examining art first as a physical object, Heidegger claims that the Western philosophical tradition cannot adequately account for a "thing." And yet our "long-familiar mode of thought preconceives all immediate experience of beings. The preconception shackles reflection on the being of any given entity. Thus it comes about that the prevailing thing-concepts obstruct the way" to the thing itself.

Heidegger's analysis tries to clear the way for a new philosophy of being, but his method has been used by subsequent cultural critics. Michel Foucault, for example, uses this Heideggerian strategy in all his work: "Whether in penal theory or in his 'archaeology of knowledge,'" Foucault exposes inherited ways of thinking that both shape and shackle our ability to see.

How is it that theory is practical? Take one of my interests. I write about the environment and about animals. Heidegger is writing about phenomenology, which might be defined as the study of the relations between the subject and the object. This opens up radical ways of thinking about environmental issues. I would by no means adopt Heidegger uncritically, but he is clearly and often explicitly trying to find new ways of re-conceptualizing our relationship with nature, or the world, or with "things." And I believe that, in the long run, if threatened animals are to have any hope of living outside of zoos in the future, it will have to come through a struggle to re-imagine them, to redefine our relationship with them.

The reading group is small but growing, and faculty from all disciplines are urged to join us. We have had wide-ranging discussions, and intense disagreements with and about the texts. We all agree, I think, that we are reading a philosophical tradition which gets at the roots of many current social issues, such as our relations to the natural world and other people, and our discussions and debates often become fervent. There's a strong sense, in the writers and in us as readers, that the theoretical issues matter — they matter because they connect directly with current social issues. ■

Recent Humanities Publications

Sharon L. Jansen

Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII.

Boydell & Brewer, 1991.

10 In late 1537, a Yorkshire vicar named John Dobson was accused of numerous "crimes and defaults" by his parishioners. But in the examination of Henry VIII's Council of the North, the charges against him offer only such "crimes" as having said that an eagle "would spread his wings over the realm," that a crumb "would be brought low," and that scallop shells "would be broken and go to wreck." Such talk seems strange, but hardly dangerous. Nevertheless, Henry's Council undertook a lengthy, detailed investigation of the unfortunate vicar, who was executed for these crimes in early 1538.

Dobson's case is not an isolated incident during the tumultuous decade of the 1530s, when Henry's matrimonial crisis had become only one issue in a series of more widespread theological, ecclesiastical, social, and political controversies. Public response to this series of disputes was immediate and dangerous. Such talk as Dobson's was, in contemporary terms, powerfully persuasive political rhetoric and posed a serious threat to royal authority.

Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII examines public protest in the decade of the 1530s, focusing on cases like Dobson's. In their resistance, opponents of the government wielded the authority of reputed prophets like Merlin and employed the ancient traditions and techniques of prophecy. In the explosive confrontation between royal prerogative and the individual conscience, such political prophecies were a justification, even a mandate, for resisting the power of the King and his government.

Beyond its examination of contemporary depositions, trial records, memoranda, personal letters, and investigations of the tireless Thomas Cromwell, *Political Protest and Prophecy under Henry VIII* offers texts, commentary, and notes for a number of the most popular (and dangerous) political prophecies circulated during the decade. For the first time, historical records of those accused of spreading prophecies and literary texts of the prophecies themselves have been laid side by side so that modern readers can evaluate the interrelationships of politics and literature in the sixteenth century. ■

Mark K. Jensen

Zola's "J'accuse": A New Translation with a Critical Introduction.

Bay Side Press, 1992.

As more and more people came to believe that Alfred Dreyfus, a French Army officer, had been unjustly sentenced in 1894 to life imprisonment for selling military secrets to Germany, and that high officials were covering up evidence, the issue of Dreyfus's guilt or innocence became the center of an extraordinarily divisive episode in French history known as the Dreyfus Affair.

Although Emile Zola's "J'accuse" is the central literary document of the Dreyfus Affair, a complete translation has long been difficult to find for the reader of English. Moreover, available versions are stilted and, because they are excessively literal, fail to convey the force of the original. This edition attempts to remedy both situations by making easily available a readable English translation of one of the most famous open letters of all time.

The critical introduction to this new translation argues that three aspects of Zola's text ground its enduring importance. First, the letter exemplifies the notion of the independent writer as the voice of conscience and judge of society, a figure who, if need be, stands apart from compatriots and takes on the prophet's prerogative of speaking truth to power. Second, "J'accuse" is a sterling example of the art of persuasion. Third, it gives eloquent expression to deeper social conflicts which made the struggle for review and reversal of Alfred Dreyfus's conviction a focal point of French political controversy for a decade. The history of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century has increased our sense of the Dreyfus Affair's importance, and the recent successes of Jean-Marie Le Pen's all but overtly anti-Semitic National Front give the basic themes of "J'accuse" a new topicality. ■

Patricia O'Connell Killen

"Social Concern and Religious Commitment: Orestes Brownson and Contemporary Catholicism."

New Theology Review 5, no.1 (February, 1992):52-75.

This article addresses the question: Is there coherence between Orestes Brownson's incisive critique of early industrialization, best known from his famous essay, "The Laboring Classes" (1840), and his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1844? And, if there is, what might it reveal about contemporary Christian debate about

religious faith and commitments to social justice?

The article rejects the psychological interpretation among secular scholars who appeal to insecurity and the need for a father figure to explain Brownson's conversion, viewing it as an escapist abandonment of his critique. The article rejects as well Catholic scholars' equally distorted reading of the relationship between Brownson's critique and his conversion; they argue that the former was insignificant to his conversion or piously praise the fit between the latter and contemporary Catholic social justice teachings while ignoring his historical context.

Placing Brownson's critique of industrialization back into the pastoral and theological contexts in which it originated makes three important points clear. Brownson's economic critique of the industrializing United States resulted from his use of a hermeneutic (interpretive strategy) of suspicion to judge political and economic events against a biblically grounded vision of a just society. His economic critique led Brownson to explore how market-based industrial capitalism generated alienated consciousness in individuals and cultures. Finally, Brownson assessed the dominant forms of Christianity in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century in an effort to find a countervailing force to "industrial feudalism," the culturally destructive impact of capitalism.

Brownson opted for Roman Catholicism as a solution to industrial feudalism because he judged this church to be the only community of discourse left which could engage in a compelling critique of industrial capitalism. Further, Catholicism's sacramental system and ritual communal life could counteract the distortions of human consciousness occasioned by participation in an industrial capitalist culture. Catholicism, then, provided a context for sustaining healthy communities in a culture now dominated by an economic system which encouraged extreme subjectivistic individualism and materialism.

Two points of particular interest for contemporary Christian discussions of social justice and religious commitment follow. First, the assumption that significant social critique comes only from those with a liberal or progressive religious vision must be questioned. Brownson's critique of industrialization, the most radical among the Christian ministers of his day, was based in a traditional religious vision, one in which Scripture and theological tradition provided a standpoint for cogent cultural criticism. Second, Brownson's appeal to religious ritual as a creator of critical consciousness raises important questions for Christian leaders more comfortable with verbal argument and education as strategies for building critical consciousness among contemporary Christians in the United States.

Paul O. Ingram

"The Power of Truth Words: Kūkai's Philosophy of Language and Hermeneutical Theory."

The Pacific World 7 (1991): 14-25.

In his *Sangō shibi* (Indications of the Goals of the Three Teachings), the founder of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism, Kūkai (774-835), wrote that shortly after his eighteenth birthday he initiated his Buddhist monastic career by undertaking a special practice called the Morning Star Meditation in the mountains of Yashino outside Nara. Part of this discipline involved chanting a *dharani* to Kōkūzō (Aśagarbha) one million times while visualizing the full moon hovering above the bodhisattva's heart. Kūkai performed this meditation because he believed it would give him the ability to remember and understand every Buddhist and non-Buddhist text he read. In other words, his religious search as a Buddhist began as an intellectual quest.

Yet Kūkai also knew that the Reality (*Dharma*) he sought was beyond the charted coordinates of all words, even the words of Buddhist texts. Along with mystics and sages of all religious Ways, he knew that whenever a theory is completed and rounded, the corners smoothed and the content made cohesive and coherent, it is likely to become a thing in itself, a work of art. It is then like a finished sonnet or a painting completed. One hates to disturb it. Even if subsequent information and experience shoot holes in it, one hates to tear it down because it was once beautiful, whole, and seemingly permanent.

But beyond all this is the issue of why words — language — at all! This question cannot be answered analytically. What is required is intuitive, nondiscursive, participative forms of wisdom found only in the practice of meditation guided, paradoxically, by words. Such wisdom Kūkai called "esoteric" (*mikkyō*), and he regarded it as the fulfillment of all religious Ways. For him, linguistic theory and hermeneutical theory are interdependent.

This essay is about this interdependence as Kūkai systematically wrote about it in his *Shōyōjōshi* (The Meaning of Sound, Word, and Reality), *Bosshōmutsu nibyō* (The Difference between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism), and *Jūjūshū Ron* (The Ten Stages of the Development of Mind), actually summarized in an earlier letter he wrote to Emperor Heizei in 806.

The *Dharma* is beyond speech, but without speech it cannot be revealed. Suchness transcends forms, but without depending on forms it cannot be realized. Though one may at times err by taking the finger pointing at the moon to be the moon itself, the Buddha's teachings which guide people are limitless.

—*Shōrai mokaraku* (Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items) ■

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