

Seeds of American Thought

Moles

Junior English

American Literature

This booklet must be returned unwritten in or paid for before you can take the final exam for the first semester.

Beginnings of American Ideals

The Republic

By Plato

Written 360 B.C.E

Translated by Benjamin Jowett

Socrates, do you wish really to persuade us, or only to seem to have persuaded us, that to be just is always better than to be unjust?

I should wish really to persuade you, I replied, if I could.

Then you certainly have not succeeded. Let me ask you now: --How would you arrange goods --are there not some which we welcome for their own sakes, and independently of their **consequences**, as, for example, harmless pleasures and enjoyments, which delight us at the time, although nothing follows from them?

I agree in thinking that there is such a class, I replied. Is there not also a second class of goods, such as knowledge, sight, health, which are **desirable** not only in themselves, but also for their results?

Certainly, I said.

And would you not recognize a third class, such as gymnastic, and the care of the sick, and the physician's art; also the various ways of money-making --these do us good but we regard them as disagreeable; and no one would choose them for their own sakes, but only for the sake of some reward or result which flows from them?

There is, I said, this third class also. But why do you ask?

Because I want to know in which of the three classes you would place justice?

In the highest class, I replied, --among those goods which he who would be happy desires both for their own sake and for the sake of their results.

Then the many are of another mind; they think that justice is to be reckoned in the troublesome class, among goods which are to be pursued for the sake of rewards and of **reputation**, but in themselves are disagreeable and rather to be avoided.

I know, I said, that this is their manner of thinking, and that this was the thesis which Thrasymachus was maintaining just now, when he **censured** justice and praised injustice. But I am too stupid to be convinced by him.

I wish, he said, that you would hear me as well as him, and then I shall see whether you and I agree. For Thrasymachus seems to me, like a snake, to have been

charmed by your voice sooner than he ought to have been; but to my mind the nature of justice and injustice have not yet been made clear. Setting aside their rewards and results, I want to know what they are in themselves, and how they inwardly work in the soul. If you, please, then, I will revive the argument of Thrasymachus. And first I will speak of the nature and origin of justice according to the common view of them. Secondly, I will show that all men who practise justice do so against their will, of necessity, but not as a good. And thirdly, I will argue that there is reason in this view, for the life of the unjust is after all better far than the life of the just --if what they say is true, Socrates, since I myself am not of their opinion. But still I acknowledge that I am perplexed when I hear the voices of Thrasymachus and myriads of others dinning in my ears; and, on the other hand, I have never yet heard the superiority of justice to injustice maintained by any one in a satisfactory way. I want to hear justice praised in respect of itself; then I shall be satisfied, and you are the person from whom I think that I am most likely to hear this; and therefore I will praise the unjust life to the utmost of my power, and my manner of speaking will indicate the manner in which I desire to hear you too praising justice and censuring injustice. Will you say whether you approve of my proposal?

Indeed I do; nor can I imagine any theme about which a man of sense would oftener wish to converse.

I am delighted, he replied, to hear you say so, and shall begin by speaking, as I proposed, of the nature and origin of justice.

Glaucon

They say that to do injustice is, by nature, good; to suffer injustice, evil; but that the evil is greater than the good. And so when men have both done and suffered injustice and have had experience of both, not being able to avoid the one and obtain the other, they think that they had better agree among themselves to have neither; hence there arise laws and mutual covenants; and that which is ordained by law is termed by them lawful and just. This they affirm to be the origin and nature of justice; --it is a mean or **compromise**, between the best of all, which is to do injustice and not be punished, and the worst of all, which is to suffer injustice without the power of retaliation; and justice, being at a middle point between the two, is tolerated not as a good, but as the lesser evil, and honored by reason of the inability of men to do injustice. For no man who is worthy to be called a man would ever submit to such an agreement if he were able to resist; he would be mad if he did. Such is the received account, Socrates, of the nature and origin of justice.

Now that those who practice justice do so involuntarily and because they have not the power to be unjust will

best appear if we imagine something of this kind: having given both to the just and the unjust power to do what they will, let us watch and see whither desire will lead them; then we shall discover in the very act the just and unjust man to be proceeding along the same road, following their interest, which all natures deem to be their good, and are only diverted into the path of justice by the force of law. The liberty which we are supposing may be most completely given to them in the form of such a power as is said to have been possessed by Gyges the ancestor of Croesus the Lydian. According to the tradition, Gyges was a shepherd in the service of the king of Lydia; there was a great storm, and an earthquake made an opening in the earth at the place where he was feeding his flock. Amazed at the sight, he descended into the opening, where, among other marvels, he beheld a hollow brazen horse, having doors, at which he stooping and looking in saw a dead body of stature, as appeared to him, more than human, and having nothing on but a gold ring; this he took from the finger of the dead and reascended. Now the shepherds met together, according to custom, that they might send their monthly report about the flocks to the king; into their assembly he came having the ring on his finger, and as he was sitting among them he chanced to turn the collet of the ring inside his hand, when instantly he became invisible to the rest of the company and they began to speak of him as if he were no longer present. He was astonished at this, and again touching the ring he turned the collet outwards and reappeared; he made several trials of the ring, and always with the same result—when he turned the collet inwards he became invisible, when outwards he reappeared. Whereupon he contrived to be chosen one of the messengers who were sent to the court; where as soon as he arrived he seduced the queen, and with her help conspired against the king and slew him, and took the kingdom. Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of the market, or go into houses and lie with any one at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity, for wherever any one thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust. For all men believe in their hearts that injustice is far more profitable to the individual than justice, and he who argues as I have been supposing, will say that they are right. If you could imagine any one obtaining this power of becoming invisible, and never doing any wrong or touching what was another's, he would be thought by the lookers-on to be a most wretched idiot, although they would praise

him to one another's faces, and keep up appearances with one another from a fear that they too might suffer injustice. Enough of this.

Now, if we are to form a real judgment of the life of the just and unjust, we must isolate them; there is no other way; and how is the **isolation** to be effected? I answer: Let the unjust man be entirely unjust, and the just man entirely just; nothing is to be taken away from either of them, and both are to be perfectly furnished for the work of their respective lives. First, let the unjust be like other distinguished masters of craft; like the skilful pilot or physician, who knows intuitively his own powers and keeps within their limits, and who, if he fails at any point, is able to recover himself. So let the unjust make his unjust attempts in the right way, and lie hidden if he means to be great in his injustice (he who is found out is nobody): for the highest reach of injustice is: to be deemed just when you are not. Therefore I say that in the perfectly unjust man we must assume the most perfect injustice; there is to be no deduction, but we must allow him, while doing the most unjust acts, to have acquired the greatest reputation for justice. If he have taken a false step he must be able to recover himself; he must be one who can speak with effect, if any of his deeds come to light, and who can force his way where force is required his courage and strength, and command of money and friends. And at his side let us place the just man in his nobleness and simplicity, wishing, as Aeschylus says, to be and not to seem good. There must be no seeming, for if he seem to be just he will be honored and rewarded, and then we shall not know whether he is just for the sake of justice or for the sake of honors and rewards; therefore, let him be clothed in justice only, and have no other covering; and he must be imagined in a state of life the opposite of the former. Let him be the best of men, and let him be thought the worst; then he will have been put to the proof; and we shall see whether he will be affected by the fear of **infamy** and its consequences. And let him continue thus to the hour of death; being just and seeming to be unjust. When both have reached the uttermost extreme, the one of justice and the other of injustice, let judgment be given which of them is the happier of the two.

Plato's Republic Vocabulary To Know—

For each of the following words write the definition and use it in a sentence.

Consequences	Desirable
Reputation	Censure
Compromise	Isolation
Infamy	

Understanding the Reading—

On a separate sheet of paper indicate the correct answer.

1. Which of the following is a class of goods that we desire just because it has some worth?
 - a) knowledge
 - b) the sunset
 - c) the woods
 - d) criticism
2. The third class is made of
 - a) things we need to survive
 - b) people that harm us
 - c) things we do not necessarily need
 - d) people that have dominion over us
3. In what class does Glaucon place justice?
 - a) first class
 - b) second class
 - c) third class
4. What is the origin of justice?
 - a) when man decides he has no chance of being just
 - b) when man decides there his only chance is injustice
 - c) when man decides he can have neither justice or injustice
5. Socrates believed that man only diverts from injustice when
 - a) they can get the most for themselves
 - b) when they are forced to by laws
 - c) when a stronger force comes along
6. Socrates believes that man would always act unjustly if
 - a) he could act as he wanted to
 - b) he could act with impunity
 - c) he could act without a conscience
7. Which of the following does Socrates consider more valuable?
 - a) wealth
 - b) Honor
 - c) Power

Analyzing the Reading –

Choose one of the following and discuss in a paragraph no more than two its importance in developing the idea of justice in America.

8. The story of the shepherd illustrates what important element of justice that we hold true in America?
9. Socrates' endorsement of justice is satirical, what is he satirizing about justice and what does this imply about American justice?
10. In Socrates' mind what degree does honor and courage play in developing justice and how does this impact American idea of justice?

Oration on the Dignity of Man by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola 1495

Most esteemed Fathers, I have read in the ancient writings of the Arabians that Abdala the Saracen on being asked what, on this stage, so to say, of the world, seemed to him most evocative of wonder, replied that there was nothing to be seen more marvelous than man. And that celebrated exclamation of Hermes Trismegistus, "What a great miracle is man, Asclepius" confirms this opinion.

And still, as I reflected upon the basis assigned for these estimations, I was not fully persuaded by the diverse reasons advanced for the pre-eminence of human nature; that man is the intermediary between creatures, that he is the familiar of the gods above him as he is the lord of the beings beneath him; that, by the acuteness of his senses, the inquiry of his reason and the light of his intelligence, he is the interpreter of nature, set midway between the timeless unchanging and the flux of time; the living union (as the Persians say), the very marriage hymn of the world, and, by David's testimony but little lower than the angels. These reasons are all, without question, of great weight; nevertheless, they do not touch the principal reasons, those, that is to say, which justify man's unique right for such unbounded **admiration**. Why, I asked, should we not admire the angels themselves and the beatific choirs more? At long last, however, I feel that I have come to some understanding of why man is the most fortunate of living things and, consequently, deserving of all admiration; of what may be the condition in the hierarchy of beings assigned to him, which draws upon him the envy, not of the brutes alone, but of the astral beings and of the very intelligences which dwell beyond the confines of the world. A thing surpassing belief and smiting the soul with wonder. Still, how could it be otherwise? For it is on this ground that man is, with complete justice, considered and called a great miracle and a being worthy of all admiration.

Hear then, oh Fathers, precisely what this condition of man is; and in the name of your humanity, grant me your benign audition as I pursue this theme.

God the Father, the Mightiest Architect, had already raised, according to the precepts of His hidden wisdom, this world we see, the cosmic dwelling of divinity, a temple most august. He had already adorned the supercelestial region with Intelligences, infused the heavenly globes with the life of immortal souls and set the fermenting dung-heap of the inferior world teeming with every form of animal life. But when this work was done, the Divine Artificer still longed for some creature

which might comprehend the meaning of so vast an achievement, which might be moved with love at its beauty and smitten with awe at its grandeur. When, consequently, all else had been completed (as both Moses and Timaeus testify), in the very last place, He bethought Himself of bringing forth man. Truth was, however, that there remained no **archetype** according to which He might fashion a new offspring, nor in His treasure-houses the wherewithal to endow a new son with a fitting inheritance, nor any place, among the seats of the universe, where this new creature might dispose himself to contemplate the world. All space was already filled; all things had been distributed in the highest, the middle and the lowest orders. Still, it was not in the nature of the power of the Father to fail in this last creative élan; nor was it in the nature of that supreme Wisdom to hesitate through lack of counsel in so crucial a matter; nor, finally, in the nature of His beneficent love to compel the creature destined to praise the divine generosity in all other things to find it wanting in himself.

At last, the Supreme Maker decreed that this creature, to whom He could give nothing wholly his own, should have a share in the particular **endowment** of every other creature. Taking man, therefore, this creature of indeterminate image, He set him in the middle of the world and thus spoke to him:

"We have given you, O Adam, no visage proper to yourself, nor endowment properly your own, in order that whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may, with **premeditation**, select, these same you may have and possess through your own judgment and decision. The nature of all other creatures is defined and restricted within laws which We have laid down: you, by contrast, impeded by no such restrictions, may, by your own free will, to whose custody We have assigned you, trace for yourself the lineaments of your own nature. I have placed you at the very center of the world, so that from that vantage point you may with greater ease glance round about you on all that the world contains. We have made you a creature neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, in order that you may, as the free and proud shaper of your own being, fashion yourself in the form you may prefer. It will be in your power to descend to the lower, brutish forms of life; you will be able, through your own decision, to rise again to the superior orders whose life is divine."

Oh unsurpassed generosity of God the Father, Oh wondrous and unsurpassable **felicity** of man, to whom it is granted to have what he chooses, to be what he wills to be! The brutes, from the moment of their birth, bring with them, as Lucilius says, "from their mother's womb" all that they will ever possess. The highest spiritual beings were, from the very moment of creation, or soon thereafter, fixed in the mode of being which would be theirs through measureless eternities. But upon man, at the moment of his creation, God bestowed

seeds pregnant with all possibilities, the germs of every form of life. Whichever of these a man shall cultivate, the same will mature and bear fruit in him. If vegetative, he will become a plant; if sensual, he will become brutish; if rational, he will reveal himself a heavenly being; if intellectual, he will be an angel and the son of God. And if, dissatisfied with the lot of all creatures, he should recollect himself into the center of his own unity, he will there become one spirit with God, in the solitary darkness of the Father, Who is set above all things, himself transcend all creatures.

Who then will not look with awe upon this our chameleon, or who, at least, will look with greater admiration on any other being? This creature, man, whom Asclepius the Athenian, by reason of this very mutability, this nature capable of transforming itself, quite rightly said was symbolized in the mysteries by the figure of Proteus. This is the source of those metamorphoses, or transformations, so celebrated among the Hebrews and among the Pythagoreans; for even the esoteric theology of the Hebrews at times transforms the holy Enoch into that angel of divinity which is sometimes called *malakh-ha-shekhinah* and at other times transforms other personages into divinities of other names; while the Pythagoreans transform men guilty of crimes into brutes or even, if we are to believe Empedocles, into plants; and Mohammed, imitating them, was known frequently to say that the man who deserts the divine law becomes a brute. And he was right; for it is not the bark that makes the tree, but its insensitive and unresponsive nature; nor the hide which makes the beast of burden, but its brute and sensual soul; nor the orbicular form which makes the heavens, but their harmonious order. Finally, it is not freedom from a body, but its spiritual intelligence, which makes the angel. If you see a man dedicated to his stomach, crawling on the ground, you see a plant and not a man; or if you see a man bedazzled by the empty forms of the imagination, as by the wiles of Calypso, and through their alluring solicitations made a slave to his own senses, you see a brute and not a man. If, however, you see a philosopher, judging and distinguishing all things according to the rule of reason, him shall you hold in veneration, for he is a creature of heaven and not of earth; if, finally, a pure contemplator, unmindful of the body, wholly withdrawn into the inner chambers of the mind, here indeed is neither a creature of earth nor a heavenly creature, but some higher divinity, clothed in human flesh.

But what is the purpose of all this? That we may understand --- since we have been born into this condition of being what we choose to be --- that we ought to be sure above all else that it may never be said against us that, born to a high position, we failed to appreciate it, but fell instead to the estate of brutes and uncomprehending beasts of burden; and that the saying of Aspah the Prophet, "You are all Gods and sons of the Most High," might rather be true; and finally that we may not, through abuse of the generosity of a most

indulgent Father, pervert the free option which he has given us from a saving to a damning gift. Let a certain saving ambition invade our souls so that, impatient of mediocrity, we pant after the highest things and (since, if we will, we can) bend all our efforts to their attainment.

How must we proceed and what must we do to realize this ambition? Let us observe what they do, what kind of life they lead. For if we lead this kind of life (and we can) we shall attain their same estate. The Seraphim burns with the fire of charity; from the Cherubim flashes forth the splendor of intelligence; the Thrones stand firm with the firmness of justice. If, consequently, in the pursuit of the active life we govern inferior things by just criteria, we shall be established in the firm position of the Thrones. If, freeing ourselves from active care, we devote our time to contemplation, meditating upon the Creator in His work, and the work in its Creator, we shall be **resplendent** with the light of the Cherubim. If we burn with love for the Creator only, his consuming fire will quickly transform us into the flaming likeness of the Seraphim. Above the Throne, that is, above the just judge, God sits, judge of the ages.

But how can anyone judge or love what he does not know? Moses loved the God whom he had seen and as judge of his people he administered what he had previously seen in contemplation on the mountain. Therefore the Cherub is the intermediary and by his light equally prepares us for the fire of the Seraphim and the judgment of the Thrones. This is the bond which unites the highest minds, the Palladian order which presides over contemplative philosophy; this is then the bond which before all else we must **emulate**, embrace and comprehend, whence we may be rapt to the heights of love or descend, well instructed and prepared, to the duties of the practical life. They can give us the fullest and most reliable testimony concerning these matters because they had an almost domestic and connatural knowledge of them.

Let us ask the Apostle Paul, that vessel of election, in what activity he saw the armies of the Cherubim engaged when he was rapt into the third heaven. He will answer, according to the interpretation of Dionysius, that he saw them first being purified, then illuminated, and finally made perfect. We, therefore, imitating the life of the Cherubim here on earth, by refraining the impulses of our passions through moral science, by dissipating the darkness of reason by dialectic --- thus washing away, so to speak, the filth of ignorance and vice --- may likewise purify our souls, so that the passions may never run **rampant**, nor reason, lacking restraint, range beyond its natural limits. Then may we suffuse our purified souls with the light of natural philosophy, bringing it to final perfection by the knowledge of divine things.

Let us also cite Moses himself, who is but little removed from the living well-spring of the most holy and ineffable understanding by whose nectar the angels are inebriated. Let us listen to the **venerable** judge as he enunciates his laws to us who live in the desert solitude of the body: "Let those who, still unclean, have need of moral philosophy, dwell with the peoples outside the tabernacles, under the open sky, until, like the priests of Thessaly, they shall have cleansed themselves. Those who have already brought order into their lives may be received into the tabernacle, but still may not touch the sacred vessels. Let them rather first, as zealous Levites, in the service of dialectic, minister to the holy offices of philosophy. When they shall themselves be admitted to those offices, they may, as priests of philosophy, contemplate the many-colored throne of the higher God, that is the courtly palace of the star-hung heavens, the heavenly candelabrum aflame with seven lights and elements which are the furry veils of this tabernacle; so that, finally, having been permitted to enter, through the merit of sublime theology, into the innermost chambers of the temple, with no veil of images interposing itself, we may enjoy the glory of divinity." This is what Moses beyond a doubt commands us, admonishing, urging and exhorting us to prepare ourselves, while we may, by means of philosophy, a road to future heavenly glory.

In fact, however, the dignity of the liberal arts, which I am about to discuss, and their value to us is attested not only by the Mosaic and Christian mysteries but also by the theologies of the most ancient times. What else is to be understood by the stages through which the initiates must pass in the mysteries of the Greeks? These initiates, after being purified by the arts which we might call expiatory, moral philosophy and dialectic, were granted admission to the mysteries. What could such admission mean but the interpretation of occult nature by means of philosophy? Only after they had been prepared in this way did they receive "Epopteia," that is, the immediate vision of divine things by the light of theology. Who would not long to be admitted to such mysteries? Who would not desire, putting all human concerns behind him, holding the goods of fortune in contempt and little minding the goods of the body, thus to become, while still a denizen of earth, a guest at the table of the gods, and, drunk with the nectar of eternity, receive, while still a mortal, the gift of immortality? Who would not wish to be so inspired by those Socratic frenzies which Plato sings in the *Phaedrus* that, swiftly fleeing this place, that is, this world fixed in evil, by the oars, so to say, both of feet and wings, he might reach the heavenly Jerusalem by the swiftest course? Let us be driven, O Fathers, by those Socratic frenzies which lift us to such ecstasy that our intellects and our very selves are united to God. And we shall be moved by them in this way as previously we have done all that it lies in us to do. If, by moral philosophy, the power of our passions shall have been restrained by proper controls so that they achieve harmonious accord; and if, by dialectic, our reason shall have progressed by an

ordered advance, then, smitten by the frenzy of the Muses, we shall hear the heavenly harmony with the inward ears of the spirit. Then the leader of the Muses, Bacchus, revealing to us in our moments of philosophy, through his mysteries, that is, the visible signs of nature, the invisible things of God, will make us drunk with the richness of the house of God; and there, if, like Moses, we shall prove entirely faithful, most sacred theology will supervene to inspire us with redoubled ecstasy. For, raised to the most **eminent** height of theology, whence we shall be able to measure with the rod of indivisible eternity all things that are and that have been; and, grasping the primordial beauty of things, like the seers of Phoebus, we shall become the winged lovers of theology. And at last, smitten by the **ineffable** love as by a sting, and, like the Seraphim, filled with the godhead, we shall be, no longer ourselves, but the very One who made us.

Next he will warn us of two things to be avoided at all costs: Neither to make water facing the sun, nor to cut our nails while offering sacrifice. Only when, by moral philosophy, we shall have evacuated the weakening appetites of our too-abundant pleasures and pared away, like nail clippings, the sharp points of anger and wrath in our souls, shall we finally begin to take part in the sacred rites, that is, the mysteries of Bacchus of which we have spoken and to dedicate ourselves to that contemplation of which the Sun is rightly called the father and the guide. Finally, Pythagoras will command us to "Feed the cock"; that is, to nourish the divine part of our soul with the knowledge of divine things as with substantial food and heavenly ambrosia. This is the cock whose visage is the lion, that is, all earthly power, holds in fear and awe. This is the cock to whom, as we read in **Job**, all understanding was given. At this cock's crowing, erring man returns to his senses. This is the cock which every day, in the morning twilight, with the stars of morning, raises a *Te Deum* to heaven. This is the cock which Socrates, at the hour of his death, when he hoped he was about to join the divinity of his spirit to the divinity of the higher world and when he was already beyond danger of any bodily illness, said that he owed to Asclepius, that is, the healer of souls.

These are the reasons, most reverend Fathers, which not only led, but even compelled me, to the study of philosophy. And I should not have undertaken to expound them, except to reply to those who are wont to condemn the study of philosophy, especially among men of high rank, but also among those of modest station. For the whole study of philosophy (such is the unhappy plight of our time) is occasion for contempt and contumely, rather than honor and glory. The deadly and monstrous persuasion has invaded practically all minds, that philosophy ought not to be studied at all or by very few people; as though it were a thing of little worth to have before our eyes and at our finger-tips, as matters we have searched out with greatest care, the causes of things, the ways of nature and the plan of the

universe, God's counsels and the mysteries of heaven and earth, unless by such knowledge on might procure some profit or favor for oneself. Thus we have reached the point, it is painful to recognize, where the only persons accounted wise are those who can reduce the pursuit of wisdom to a profitable traffic; and chaste Pallas, who dwells among men only by the generosity of the gods, is rejected, hooted, whistled at in scorn, with no one to love or befriend her unless, by prostituting herself, she is able to pay back into the strongbox of her lover the ill-procured price of her deflowered virginity. I address all these complaints, with the greatest regret and indignation, not against the princes of our times, but against the philosophers who believe and assert that philosophy should not be pursued because no monetary value or reward is assigned it, unmindful that by this sign they disqualify themselves as philosophers. Since their whole life is concentrated on gain and ambition, they never embrace the knowledge of the truth for its own sake. This much will I say for myself --- and on this point I do not blush for praising myself --- that I have never philosophized save for the sake of philosophy, nor have I ever desired or hoped to secure from my studies and my laborious researches any profit or fruit save cultivation of mind and knowledge of the truth --- things I esteem more and more with the passage of time. I have also been so avid for this knowledge and so enamored of it that I have set aside all private and public concerns to devote myself completely to contemplation; and from it no calumny of jealous persons, nor any invective from enemies of wisdom has ever been able to detach me. Philosophy has taught me to rely on my own convictions rather than on the judgments of others and to concern myself less with whether I am well thought of than whether what I do or say is evil.

I was not unaware, most revered Fathers, that this present disputation of mine would be as acceptable and as pleasing to you, who favor all the good arts and who have consented to grace it with your presence, as it would be irritating and offensive to many others. I am also aware that there is no dearth of those who have condemned my undertaking before this and continue to do so on a number of grounds. But this has always been the case: works which are well-intentioned and sincerely directed to virtue have always had no fewer --- not to say more --- detractors than those undertaken for questionable motives and for devious ends. Some persons disapprove the present type of disputation in general and this method of disputing in public about learned matters; they assert that they serve only the exhibition of talent and the display of opinion, rather than the increase of learning. Others do not disapprove this type of exercise, but resent the fact that at my age, a mere twenty-four years, I have dared to propose a disputation concerning the most subtle mysteries of Christian theology, the most debated points of philosophy and unfamiliar branches of learning; and that I have done so here, in this most renowned of cities, before a large assembly of very learned men, in the

presence of the Apostolic Senate. Still others have ceded my right so to dispute, but have not conceded that I might dispute nine hundred theses, asserting that such a project is **superfluous**, over-ambitious and beyond my powers. I should have acceded to these objections willingly and immediately, if the philosophy which I profess had so counseled me. Nor should I now undertake to reply to them, as my philosophy urges me to do, if I believed that this disputation between us were undertaken for purposes of mere altercation and litigation. Therefore, let all intention of **denigration** and exasperation be purged from our minds and with it that malice which, as Plato writes, is never present in the angelic choirs. Let us amicably decide whether it be admissible for me to proceed with my disputation and whether I should venture so large a number of questions.

I shall not, in the first place, have much to say against those who disapprove this type of public disputation. It is a crime, --- if it be a crime --- which I share with all you, most excellent doctors, who have engaged in such exercises on many occasions to the enhancement of your reputations, as well as with Plato and Aristotle and all the most esteemed philosophers of every age. These philosophers of the past all thought that nothing could profit them more in their search for wisdom than frequent participation in public disputation. Just as the powers of the body are made stronger through gymnastic, the powers of the mind grow in strength and vigor in this arena of learning. I am inclined to believe that the poets, when they sang of the arms of Pallas and the Hebrews, when they called the *barzel*, that is, the sword, the symbol of men of wisdom, could have meant nothing by these symbols but this type of contest, at once so necessary and so honorable for the acquisition of knowledge.

If I am not mistaken (and this will become clearer in the course of the proposed disputation) anyone subscribing to these theses will be able to resolve any question proposed to him in natural philosophy or theology on a principle quite other than that taught us in the philosophy which is at present to be learned in the schools and is taught by the masters of the present generation. Nor ought anyone to be surprised, that in my early years, at a tender age at which I should hardly be permitted to read the writings of others (as some have insinuated) I should wish to propose a new philosophy. They ought rather to praise this new philosophy, if it is well defended, or reject it, if it is refuted. Finally, since it will be their task to judge my discoveries and my scholarship, they ought to look to the merit or demerit of these and not to the age of their author.

This is a condensed form of the total document containing only the parts as they pertain to what we are studying if you would like to read the rest of the document go to:

<http://www.escs.umich.edu/~crshalizi/Mirandola/>

Giovanni's Dignity of Man

Vocabulary To Know—

For each of the following words write the definition and use it in a sentence.

Admiration	Archetype
Endowment	Premeditation
Felicity	Esoteric
Resplendent	Emulate
Rampant	Venerable
Eminent	Ineffable
Superfluous	Denigration

Understanding the Reading—

On a separate sheet of paper indicate the correct answer.

- All other animals operate under -?- that man sets.
 - persistence
 - restrictions
 - brute survival interest
- God bestows the seeds of -?- on man at his conception.
 - pestilence
 - hope
 - possibilities
- What is it that sets man apart from the brutish animals?
 - his ability to reason and understand
 - his ability to lower himself to the level of an animal
 - his ability to act without reason or thought
- Man needs ambition in order to escape
 - brutish intentions
 - mediocrity
 - failure
- What is it that we wash away as a result of moral science and intelligence?
 - the filth of ignorance and vice
 - the last visages evil
 - the appearance of pessimism
- Philosophy opens up the -?- of God and the universe to mankind.
 - windows
 - doors
 - mysteries
- Moral philosophy restrains our -?- and allows us to move forward with confidence.
 - passions
 - ignorance
 - natural inclination towards evil
- Who should have access to knowledge and philosophy?
 - only the rich
 - only the church fathers
 - everyone
- What is the painful thing that troubles Giovanni about education?
 - it is reserved for only the rich
 - the poor are not able to learn
 - no one benefits but the ones who have the most to lose.
- What is it Giovanni believes should be valued the most?
 - knowledge and wealth
 - ambition and wealth
 - knowledge and truth
- What has philosophy taught Giovanni?
 - to rely on the convictions of others
 - to rely on his own convictions
 - to doubt convictions
- Giovanni equates learning to -?- for the mind.
 - food
 - gymnastics
 - peace

Analyzing the Reading –

Choose one of the following and discuss in a paragraph no more than two its importance in developing the idea of justice in America.

- Explain how Giovanni's ideas are considered the foundation for the American idea of public education?
- Make the connection between philosophy and knowledge so that you reveal an American idea about free will and its responsibility.
- Explain how Giovanni's ideas might influence the new religious movements that would lead a people to believe they have the right to settle a continent.

Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences
by Dr. Martin Luther, 1517 Published in:
Works of Martin Luther
Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et Al., Trans. & Eds.
(Philadelphia: A. J. Holman Company, 1915), Vol. 1, pp. 29-38.

DISPUTATION OF DOCTOR MARTIN LUTHER ON THE POWER AND EFFICACY OF INDULGENCES
OCTOBER 31, 1517

Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther,

Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.

In the Name our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

1. Our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, when He said Poenitentiam agite, willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance.

2. This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e., confession and satisfaction, which is administered by priests.

3. Yet it means not inward repentance only; nay, there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers mortifications of the flesh.

4. The penalty [of sin], therefore, continues so long as hatred of self continues; for this is the true inward repentance, and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

5. The pope does not intend to remit, and cannot remit any penalties other than those which he has imposed either by his own authority or by that of the Canons.

6. The pope cannot remit any guilt, except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and by assenting to God's remission; though, to be sure, he may grant remission in cases

reserved to his judgment. If his right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.

7. God remits guilt to no one whom He does not, at the same time, humble in all

things and bring into subjection to His vicar, the priest.

8. The penitential canons are imposed only on the living, and, according to them, nothing should be imposed on the dying.

9. Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us, because in his decrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.

10. Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those priests who, in the case of the dying, reserve canonical penances for purgatory.

11. This changing of the canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown while the bishops slept.

12. In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after, but before absolution, as tests of true contrition.

13. The dying are freed by death from all penalties; they are already dead to canonical rules, and have a right to be released from them.

14. The imperfect health [of soul], that is to say, the imperfect love, of the dying brings with it, of necessity, great fear; and the smaller the love, the greater is the fear.

15. This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory, since it is very near to the horror of despair.

16. Hell, purgatory, and heaven seem to differ as do despair, almost-despair, and the assurance of safety.

17. With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.

18. It seems unproved, either by reason or Scripture, which they are outside the state of merit, that is to say, of increasing love.

19. Again, it seems unproved that they, or at least that all of them, are certain or assured of their own blessedness, though we may be quite certain of it.

20. Therefore by "full remission of all penalties" the pope means not actually "of all," but only of those imposed by himself.

21. Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved;

22. Whereas he remits to souls in purgatory no penalty which, according to the canons, they would have had to pay in this life.

23. If it is at all possible to grant to any one the remission of all penalties whatsoever, it is certain that this remission can

be granted only to the most perfect, that is, to the very fewest.

24. It must needs be, therefore, that the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and high sounding promise of release from penalty.

25. The power which the pope has, in a general way, over purgatory, is just like the power which any bishop or curate has, in a special way, within his own diocese or parish.

26. The pope does well when he grants remission to souls [in purgatory], not by the power of the keys (which he does not possess), but by way of intercession.

27. They preach man who say that so soon as the penny jingles into the money-box, the soul flies out [of purgatory].

28. It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money-box, gain and avarice can be increased, but the result of the intercession of the Church is in the power of God alone.

29. Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory wish to be bought out of it, as in the legend of Sts. Severinus and Paschal.

30. No one is sure that his own contrition is sincere; much less that he has attained full remission.

31. Rare as is the man that is truly penitent, so rare is also the man who truly buys indulgences, i.e., such men are most rare.

32. They will be condemned eternally, together with their teachers, who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.

33. Men must be on their guard against those who say that the pope's pardons are that inestimable gift of God by which man is reconciled to Him;

34. For these "graces of pardon" concern only the penalties of sacramental satisfaction, and these are appointed by man.

35. They preach no Christian doctrine who teach that contrition is not necessary in those who intend to buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionalia.

36. Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without letters of pardon.

37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.

38. Nevertheless, the remission and participation [in the blessings of the Church] which are granted by the pope are in no way to be despised, for they are, as I have said, the declaration of divine remission.

39. It is most difficult, even for the very keenest theologians, at one and the same

time to commend to the people the abundance of pardons and [the need of] true contrition.

40. True contrition seeks and loves penalties, but liberal pardons only relax penalties and cause them to be hated, or at least, furnish an occasion [for hating them].

41. Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution, lest the people may falsely think them preferable to other good works of love.

42. Christians are to be taught that the pope does not intend the buying of pardons to be compared in any way to works of mercy.

43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons;

44. Because love grows by works of love, and man becomes better; but by pardons man does not grow better, only more free from penalty.

45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need, and passes him by, and gives [his money] for pardons, purchases not the indulgences of the pope, but the indignation of God.

46. Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need, they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families, and by no means to squander it on pardons.

47. Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will, and not of commandment.

48. Christians are to be taught that the pope, in granting pardons, needs, and therefore desires, their devout prayer for him more than the money they bring.

49. Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful, if they do not put their trust in them; but altogether harmful, if through them they lose their fear of God.

50. Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon-preachers, he would rather that St. Peter's church should go to ashes, than that it should be built up with the skin, flesh and bones of his sheep.

51. Christians are to be taught that it would be the pope's wish, as it is his duty, to give of his own money to very many of those from whom certain hawkers of pardons cajole money, even though the church of St. Peter might have to be sold.

52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain, even though the commissary, nay, even though the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.

53. They are enemies of Christ and of the pope, who bid the Word of God be

altogether silent in some Churches, in order that pardons may be preached in others.

54. Injury is done the Word of God when, in the same sermon, an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons than on this Word.

55. It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons, which are a very small thing, are celebrated with one bell, with single processions and ceremonies, then the Gospel, which is the very greatest thing, should be preached with a hundred bells, a hundred processions, a hundred ceremonies.

56. The "treasures of the Church," out of which the pope grants indulgences, are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ.

57. That they are not temporal treasures is certainly evident, for many of the vendors do not pour out such treasures so easily, but only gather them.

58. Nor are they the merits of Christ and the Saints, for even without the pope, these always work grace for the inner man, and the cross, death, and hell for the outward man.

59. St. Lawrence said that the treasures of the Church were the Church's poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the word in his own time.

60. Without rashness we say that the keys of the Church, given by Christ's merit, are that treasure;

61. For it is clear that for the remission of penalties and of reserved cases, the power of the pope is of itself sufficient.

62. The true treasure of the Church is the Most Holy Gospel of the glory and the grace of God.

63. But this treasure is naturally most odious, for it makes the first to be last.

64. On the other hand, the treasure of indulgences is naturally most acceptable, for it makes the last to be first.

65. Therefore the treasures of the Gospel are nets with which they formerly were wont to fish for men of riches.

66. The treasures of the indulgences are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.

67. The indulgences which the preachers cry as the "greatest graces" are known to be truly such, in so far as they promote gain.

68. Yet they are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.

69. Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commissaries of apostolic pardons, with all reverence.

70. But still more are they bound to strain all their eyes and attend with all their

ears, lest these men preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.

71. He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons, let him be anathema and accursed!

72. But he who guards against the lust and license of the pardon-preachers, let him be blessed!

73. The pope justly thunders against those who, by any art, contrive the injury of the traffic in pardons.

74. But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use the pretext of pardons to contrive the injury of holy love and truth.

75. To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin and violated the Mother of God -- this is madness.

76. We say, on the contrary, that the papal pardons are not able to remove the very least of venial sins, so far as its guilt is concerned.

77. It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now Pope, could not bestow greater graces; this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the pope.

78. We say, on the contrary, that even the present pope, and any pope at all, has greater graces at his disposal; to wit, the Gospel, powers, gifts of healing, etc., as it is written in I. Corinthians xii.

79. To say that the cross, emblazoned with the papal arms, which is set up [by the preachers of indulgences], is of equal worth with the Cross of Christ, is blasphemy.

80. The bishops, curates and theologians who allow such talk to be spread among the people, will have an account to render.

81. This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter, even for learned men, to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander, or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.

82. To wit: -- "Why does not the pope empty purgatory, for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there, if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a Church? The former reasons would be most just; the latter is most trivial."

83. Again: -- "Why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued, and why does he not return or permit the withdrawal of the endowments founded on their behalf, since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed?"

84. Again: -- "What is this new piety of God and the pope, that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God, and do not rather, because of that pious and beloved soul's own need, free it for pure love's sake?"

85. Again: -- "Why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead, now satisfied by the granting of indulgences, as though they were still alive and in force?"

86. Again: -- "Why does not the pope, whose wealth is to-day greater than the riches of the richest, build just this one church of St. Peter with his own money, rather than with the money of poor believers?"

87. Again: -- "What is it that the pope remits, and what participation does he grant to those who, by perfect contrition, have a right to full remission and participation?"

88. Again: -- "What greater blessing could come to the Church than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day what he now does once, and bestow on every believer these remissions and participations?"

89. "Since the pope, by his pardons, seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why does he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted heretofore, since these have equal efficacy?"

90. To repress these arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone, and not to resolve them by giving reasons, is to expose the Church and the pope to the ridicule of their enemies, and to make Christians unhappy.

91. If, therefore, pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved; nay, they would not exist.

92. Away, then, with all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Peace, peace," and there is no peace!

93. Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ, "Cross, cross," and there is no cross!

94. Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, deaths, and hell;

95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through many tribulations, than through the assurance of peace.

Analyzing the Reading –

1. Choose five of the Theses and explain how they either reflect an American idea, an American belief, or shaped the ideas that would give a people the courage to take on a continent.

2. Choose one of the Theses and explain how this idea personally impacts you either as an American or an individual.

Beginnings of American Thought Poetry

Visions of the worlds Vanitie By Edmund Spencer 1567

One day, whiles that my daylie cares did sleepe,
My spirit, shaking off her earthly prison,
Began to enter into meditation deepe
Of things exceeding reach of common reason;
Such as this age, in which all good is geason,
And all that humble is and meane debaced,
Hath brought forth in her last declining season,
Griefe of good mindes, to see goodnesse disgraced.
On which when as my thought was throughly placed,
Vnto my eyes strange showes presented were,
Picturing that, which I in minde embraced,
That yet those sights empassion me full nere.
Such as they were (faire Ladie) take in worth,
That when time serues, may bring things better forth.

2

In Summers day, when *Phoebus* fairly shone,
I saw a Bull as white as driuen snowe,
With gilden hornes embowed like the Moone,
In a fresh flowring meadow lying lowe:
Vp to his eares the verdant grasse did growe,
And the gay floures did offer to be eaten;
But he with fatnes so did ouerflowe,
That he all wallowed in the weedes downe beaten,
Ne car'd with them his daintie lips to sweeten:
Till that a Brize, a scorned little creature,
Through his faire hide his angrie sting did threaten,
And vext so sore, that all his goodly feature,
And all his plenteous pasture nought him pleased:
So by the small the great is oft diseased.

3

Beside the fruitfull shore of muddie *Nile*,
Vpon a sunnie banke outstretched lay
In monstrous length, a mightie Crocodile,
That cram'd with guiltles blood, and greedie pray
Of wretched people traouailing that way,
Thought all things lesse than his disdainfull pride.
I saw a little Bird, cal'd *Tedula*,
The least of thousands which on earth abide,
That forst this hideous beast to open wide
The greisly gates of his deuouring hell,
And let him feede, as Nature doth prouide,
Vpon his iawes, that with blacke venime swell.

Why then should greatest things the least disdaine,
Sith that so small so mighty can constraîne?

4

The kingly Bird, that beares *Ioues* thunder-clap,
One day did scorne the simple Scarabee,
Proud of his highest seruice, and good hap,
That made all other Foules his thralls to bee:
The silly Flie, that no other redresse did see,
Spide where the Eagle built his towring nest,
And kindling fire within the hollow tree,
Burnt vp his yong ones, and himselfe distrest;
Ne suffred him in anie place to rest,
But droue in *Ioues* owne lap his eggs to lay;
Where gathering also filth him to infest,
Forst with the filth his eggs to fling away:
For which when as the Foule was wroth, said *Ioue*,
Lo how the least the greatest may reprove.

5

Toward the sea turning my troubled eye,
I saw the fish (if fish I may it cleepe)
That makes the sea before his face to flye,
And with his flaggie finnes doth seeme to sweepe
The fomie waues out of the dreadfull deep,
The huge *Leuiathan*, dame Natures wonder,
Making his sport, that manie makes to weep:
A sword-fish small him from the rest did sunder,
That in his throat him pricking softly vnder,
His wide Abyesse him forced forth to spewe,
That all the sea did roare like heauens thunder,
And all the waues were stain'd with filthie hewe.
Hereby I learned haue, not to despise,
What euer thing seemes small in common eyes.

6

An hideous Dragon, dreadfull to behold,
Whose backe was arm'd against the dint of speare
With shields of brasse, that shone like burnisht golde,
And forked sting, that death in it did beare,
Stroue with a Spider his vnequall peare:
And bad defiance to hisemie.
The subtill vermin creeping closely neare,
Did in his drinke shed poyson priuily;
Which through his entrailes spredding diuersly,
Made him to swell, that nigh his bowells burst,
And him enforst to yeeld the victorie,
That did so much in his owne greatnesse trust.
O how great vainnesse is it then to scorne
The weake, that hath the strong so oft forlorne.

7

High on a hill a goodly Cedar grewe,
 Of wondrous length, and streight proportion,
 That farre abroad her daintie odours threwe;
 Mongst all the daughters of proud *Libanon*,
 Her match in beautie was not anie one.
 Shortly within her inmost pith there bred
 A litle wicked worme, perceiue'd of none,
 That on her sap and vitall moysture fed:
 Thenceforth her garland so much honoured
 Began to die, (O great ruth for the same)
 And her faire lockes fell from her loftie head,
 That shortly balde, and bared she became.
 I, which this sight beheld, was much dismayed,
 To see so goodly thing so soone decayed.

8

Soone after this I saw an Elephant,
 Adorn'd with bells and bosses gorgeously,
 That on his backe did beare (as batteilant)
 A gilden towre, which shone exceedinglie;
 That he himselfe through foolish vanitie,
 Both for his rich attire, and goodly forme,
 Was puffed vp with passing surquedrie,
 And shortly gan all other beasts to scorne,
 Till that a little Ant, a silly worme,
 Into his nostrils creeping, so him pained,
 That casting downe his towres, he did deforme
 Both borrowed pride, and natiue beautie stained.
 Let therefore nought that great is, therein glorie,
 Sith so small thing his happines may varie.

9

Looking far fourth into the Ocean wide,
 A goodly ship with banners brauely dight,
 And flag in her top-gallant I espide,
 Through the maine sea making her merry flight:
 Faire blew the winde into her bosome right;
 And th' heuens looked louely all the while,
 That she did seeme to daunce, as in delight,
 And at her owne felicitie did smile.
 All sodainely there cloue vnto her keele
 A little fish, that men call *Remora*,
 Which stopt her course, and held her by the heele,
 That winde nor tide could moue her thence away.
 Straunge thing me seemeth, that so small a thing
 Should able be so great an one to wring.

10

A mighty Lyon, Lord of all the wood,
 Hauing his hunger throughly satisfide,
 With pray of beasts, and spoyle of liuing blood,
 Safe in his dreadles den him thought to hide:
 His sternesse was his prayse, his strength his pride,
 And all his glory in his cruell clawes.

I saw a wasp, that fiecely him defide,
 And bad him battaile euen to his iawes;
 Sore he him stong, that it the blood forth drawes,
 And his proude heart is fild with fretting ire:
 In vaine he threats his teeth, his tayle, his pawes,
 And from his bloodie eyes doth sparkle fire;
 That dead himselfe he wisheth for despight.
 So weakest may any the most of might.

11

What time the Romaine Empire bore the raine
 Of all the world, and florisht most in might,
 The nations gan their soueraigntie disdaine,
 And cast to quitt them from their bondage quight:
 So when all shrouded were in silent night,
 The *Galles* were, by corrupting of a mayde,
 Possest nigh of the Capitol through slight,
 Had not a Goose the treachery bewrayde.
 If then a Goose great *Rome* from ruine stayde,
 And *Ioue* himselfe, the patron of the place,
 Preserud from being to his foes betrayde,
 Why do vaine men mean things so much deface,
 And in their might repose their most assurance,
 Sith nought on earth can challenge long endurance?

12

When these sad sights were ouerpast and gone,
 My spright was greatly moued in her rest,
 With inward ruth and deare affection,
 To see so great things by so small distrest:
 Thenceforth I gan in my engrieued brest
 To scorne all difference of great and small,
 Sith that the greatest often are opprest,
 And vnawares doe into daunger fall.
 And ye, that read these ruines tragicall
 Learne by their losse to loue the low degree,
 And if that fortune chaunce you vp to call
 To honours seat, forget not what you be:
 For he that of himselfe is most secure,
 Shall finde his state most fickle and vnure.

EPIGRAMS.
LXXX. — OF LIFE AND DEATH
By Ben Johnson
1602

The ports of death are sins ; of life, good deeds ;
 Through which our merit leads us to our meeds.
 How wilful blind is he, then, that would stray,
 And hath it, in his powers, to make his way !
 This world death's region is, the other life's ;
 And here, it should be one of our first strifes,

So to front death, as men might judge us past it :
For good men but see death, the wicked taste it

Gather Ye Rose Buds
By Robert Herrick
1612

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may
Old Time is still a-Flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.
That age is best which is the first,
When youth and blood are warmer;
But being spent, the worse, and worst
Times still succeed the former.
Then be not coy, but use your time;
And while ye may, go marry:
For having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

Death Be Not Proud
By John Donne
1618

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow,
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure; then from thee much more must flow,
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones, and soul's delivery.
Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;
And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well
And better than thy stroke; why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep past, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die.

Mac Flecknoe
By John Dryden
1637

ALL human things are subject to decay,
And, when fate summons, monarchs must obey.
This Flecknoe found, who, like Augustus, young
Was called to empire, and had governed long;

In prose and verse was found without dispute,
Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute.
This agèd prince, now flourished in peace,
And blessed with issue of a large increase,
Worn out with business, did at length debate
To settle the succession of the state;
And, pondering which of all his sons was fit
To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
Cried,--"Tis resolved! for nature pleads, that he
Should only rule, who most resembles me.
Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,
Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense;
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.
Besides, his goodly fabric fills the eye,
And seems designed for thoughtless majesty;
Thoughtless as monarch oaks, that shade the plain,
And, spread in solemn state, supinely reign.
Heywood and Shirley were but types of thee,
Thou last great prophet of tautology!
Even I, a dunce of more renown than they,
Was sent before but to prepare the way;
And, coarsely clad in Norwich druggot, came
To teach the nation in thy greater name."

**A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUL
AND BODY**

By Andrew Marvell
1638

Soul:

O, WHO shall from this dungeon raise
A soul enslaved so many ways ?
With bolts of bones, that fettered stands
In feet, and manacled in hands ;
Here blinded with an eye, and there
Deaf with the drumming of an ear ;
A soul hung up, as 'twere, in chains
Of nerves, and arteries, and veins ;
Tortured, besides each other part,
In a vain head, and double heart ?

Body:

O, who shall me deliver whole,
From bonds of this tyrannic soul ?
Which, stretched upright, impales me so
That mine own precipice I go ;
And warms and moves this needless frame,
(A fever could but do the same),
And, wanting where its spite to try,
Has made me live to let me die

A body that could never rest,
Since this ill spirit it possessed.

Soul:

What magic could me thus confine
Within another's grief to pine ?
Where, whatsoever it complain,
I feel, that cannot feel, the pain ;
And all my care itself employs,
That to preserve which me destroys ;
Constrained not only to endure
Diseases, but, what's worse, the cure ;
And, ready oft the port to gain,
Am shipwrecked into health again.

Body:

But Physic yet could never reach
The maladies thou me dost teach ;
Whom first the cramp of hope does tear,
And then the palsy shakes of fear ;
The pestilence of love does heat,
Or hatred's hidden ulcer eat ;
Joy's cheerful madness does perplex,
Or sorrow's other madness vex ;
Which knowledge forces me to know,
And memory will not forego ;
What but a soul could have the wit
To build me up for sin so fit ?
So architects do square and hew
Green trees that in the forest grew.

A World in an Eare-Ring
By , Margaret Cavendish
1644

An *Eare-ring* round may well a *Zodiacke* bee,
Wherein a *Sun* goeth round, and we not see.
And *Planets seven* about that *Sun* may move,
And *Hee* stand still, as *some wise men* would prove.
And *fixed Stars*, like *twinkling Diamonds*, plac'd
About this *Eare-ring*, which a *World* is vast.
That same which doth the *Eare-ring* hold, the *hole*,
Is that, which we do call the *Pole*.
There *nipping Frosts* may be, and *Winter* cold,
Yet never on the *Ladies Eare* take hold.
And *Lightings*, *Thunder*, and great *Winds* may blow
Within this *Eare-ring*, yet the *Eare* not know.
There *Seas* may *ebb*, and *flow*, where *Fishes* swim,
And *Islands* be, where *Spices* grow therein.
There *Christall Rocks* hang dangling at each *Eare*,
And *Golden Mines* as *Jewels* may they weare.
There *Earth-quakes* be, which *Mountaines* vast downe
fling,

And yet nere stir the *Ladies Eare*, nor *Ring*.
There *Meadowes* bee, and *Pastures fresh*, and *greene*,

And *Cattell* feed, and yet be never seene:
And *Gardens* fresh, and *Birds* which sweetly sing,
Although we heare them not in an *Eare-ring*.
There *Night*, and *Day*, and *Heat*, and *Cold*, and so
May *Life*, and *Death*, and *Young*, and *Old*, still grow.
Thus *Youth* may *spring*, and severall *Ages* dye,
Great *Plagues* may be, and no *Infections* nigh.
There *Cityes* bee, and stately *Houses* built,
Their inside *gaye*, and finely may be gilt.
There *Churches* bee, and *Priests* to teach therein,
And *Steeple* too, yet heare the *Bells* not ring.
From thence may pious *Teares* to *Heaven* run,
And yet the *Eare* not know which way they're gone.
There *Markets* bee, and things both bought, and sold,
Know not the price, nor how the *Markets* hold.
There *Governours* do rule, and *Kings* do Reigne,
And *Battels* fought, where many may be slaine.
And all within the *Compass* of this *Ring*,
And yet not tidings to the *Wearer* bring.
Within the *Ring* wise *Counsellors* may sit,
And yet the *Eare* not one wise word may get.
There may be *dancing* all Night at a *Ball*

And yet the *Eare* be not disturb'd at all.
There *Rivals Duels* fight, where some are slaine;
There *Lovers mourne*, yet heare them not complaine.
And *Death* may dig a *Lovers Grave*, thus were
A *Lover* dead, in a faire *Ladies Eare*.
But when the *Ring* is broke, the *World* is done,
Then *Lovers* they into *Elysium* run.

LXX. The World
Katherine Phillips
1651

We falsly think it due unto our Friends,
That we should grieve for their untimely ends.
He that surveys the World with serious eyes,
And strips her from her gross and weak disguise,
Shall find 'tis Injury to mourn their Fate;
He onely dies untimely who dies late.
For if 'twere told to Children in the Womb,
To what a Stage of Mischiefs they must come;
Could they foresee with how much toil and sweat
Men court that guilded nothing, being Great;
10

What pains they take not to be what they seem,
Rating their bliss by others false esteem,
And sacrificing their Content, to be
Guilty of grave and serious Vanity;
How each Condition hath its proper Thorns,
And what one man admires, another scorns;
How frequently their Happiness they miss,
And so far from agreeing what it is,
That the same Person we can hardly find

Who is an hour together in one mind:
20

Sure they would beg a Period of their breath,
And what we call their Birth would count their Death.
Mankind are mad, for none can live alone
Because their Joys stand by comparison:
And yet they quarrel at Society,
And strive to kill they know not whom, nor why.
We all live by Mistake, delight in Dreams,
Lost to our selves, and dwelling in Extremes;
Rejecting what we have, though ne're so good,
And prizing what we never understood.
30

Compar'd t'our boisterous inconstancy
Tempests are calm, and Discords harmony.
Hence we reverse the World, and yet do find
The God that made can hardly please our Mind.
We live by chance, and slip into Events;
Have all of Beasts except their Innocence.
The Soul, which no man's pow'r can reach, a thing
That makes each Woman Man, each Man a King,
Doth so much lose, and from its height so fall,
That some contend to have no Soul at all.
40

'Tis either not observ'd, or at the best
By Passion fought withall, by Sin deprest.
Freedom of Will (God's Image) is forgot;
And, if we know it, we improve it not.
Our Thoughts, though nothing can be more our own,
Are still unguided, very seldom known.
Time 'scapes our hands as Water in a Sieve,
We come to die e're we begin to live.
Truth, the most sutable and noble prize,
Food of our Spirits, yet neglected lies.
50

Error and Shadows are our choice, and we
Owe our perdition to our own decree.
If we search Truth, we make it more obscure;
And when it shines, we can't the light endure.
For most men now, who plod, and eat, and drink,
Have nothing less their bus'ness then to think.
And those few that enquire, how small a share
Of Truth they find, how dark their Notions are!
That serious Evenness that calms the Breast,
And in a Tempest can bestow a Rest,
60

We either not attempt, or else decline,
By ev'ry trifle snatch'd from our design.
(Others he must in his deceits involve,
Who is not true unto his own Resolve.)
We govern not our selves, but loose the Reins,
Courting our Bondage to a thousand chains;
And with as many Slaveries content
As there are Tyrants ready to torment,
We live upon a Rack extended still

To one Extreme or both, but always ill.
70

For since our Fortune is not understood,
We suffer less from bad then from the good.
The Sting is better drest and longer lasts,
As Surfeits are more dangerous then Fasts.
And to complete the misery to us,
We see Extremes are still contiguous.
And as we run so fast from what we hate,
Like Squibs on Ropes, to know no middle state;
So outward storms strengthned by us, we find
Our Fortune as disordered as our Mind. 80
But that's excus'd by this, it doth its part;
A trech'rous World befits a trech'rous Heart.
All ill's our own, the outward storms we lothe
Receive from us their Birth, their Sting, or both.
And that our Vanity be past a doubt,
'Tis one new Vanity to find it out.
Happy are they to whom God gives a Grave,
And from themselves as from his wrath doth save.
'Tis good not to be born; but if we must,
The next good is, soon to return to dust.
90

When th'uncag'd Soul fled to Eternity
Shall rest, and live, and sing, and love, and see.
Here we but crawl and grapple, play and cry;
Are first our own, then others, enemy:
But there shall be defac'd both stain and score,
For Time, and Death, and Sin shall be no more.

Paradise Lost

Anno ætatis 17.

On the Death of a Fair Infant Dying of a Cough

By John Milton

1667

I.

O Fairest flower no sooner blown but blasted,
Soft silken Primrose fading timelessly,
Summers chief honour if thou hadst out-lasted
yBleak winters force that made thy blossome drie;
For he being amorous on that lovely die [5]
That did thy cheek envermeil, thought to kiss
But kill'd alas, and then bewayl'd his fatal bliss.

II.

For since grim Aquilo his charioteer
By boistrous rape th' Athenian damsel got,
He thought it toucht his Deitie full neer, [10]
If likewise he some fair one wedded not,
Thereby to wipe away th' infamous blot,
Of long-uncoupled bed, and childless eld,

Which 'mongst the wanton gods a foul reproach was held.

III.

So mounting up in ycie-pearled carr, [15]
Through middle empire of the freezing aire
He wanderd long, till thee he spy'd from farr,
There ended was his quest, there ceast his care.
Down he descended from his Snow-soft chaire,
But all unwares with his cold-kind embrace [20]
Unhous'd thy Virgin Soul from her fair biding place.

IV.

Yet art thou not inglorious in thy fate;
For so *Apollo*, with unweeting hand
Whilome did slay his dearly-loved mate
Young *Hyacinth* born on *Eurotas* strand, [25]
Young *Hyacinth* the pride of *Spartan* land;
But then transform'd him to a purple flower
Alack that so to change thee winter had no power.

V.

Yet can I not perswade me thou art dead
Or that thy coarse corrupts in earths dark wombe, [30]
Or that thy beauties lie in wormie bed,
Hid from the world in a low delved tombe;
Could Heav'n for pittie thee so strictly doom?
Oh no? for something in thy face did shine
Above mortalitie that shew'd thou wast divine. [35]

VI.

Resolve me then oh Soul most surely blest
(If so it be that thou these complaints dost hear)
Tell me bright Spirit where e're thou hoverest
Whether above that high first-moving Spheare
Or in the Elisian fields (if such there were.) [40]
Oh say me true if thou wert mortal wight
And why from us so quickly thou didst take thy flight.

VII.

Wert thou some Starr which from the ruin'd roof
Of shak't Olympus by mischance didst fall;
Which carefull *Jove* in natures true behoofe [45]
Took up, and in fit place did reinstall?
Or did of late earths Sonnes besiege the wall
Of sheenie Heav'n, and thou some goddess fled
Amongst us here below to hide thy nectar'd head.

VIII.

Or wert thou that just Maid who once before [50]
Forsook the hated earth, O tell me sooth,
And cam'st again to visit us once more?
Or wert thou that sweet smiling Youth!
Or that crown'd Matron sage white-robed truth?
Or any other of that heav'nly brood [55]
Let down in clowdie throne to do the world some good.

IX.

Or wert thou of the golden-winged hoast,
Who having clad thy self in humane weed,
To earth from thy præfixed seat didst poast,
And after short abode flie back with speed, [60]
As if to shew what creatures Heav'n doth breed,
Thereby to set the hearts of men on fire
To scorn the sordid world, and unto Heav'n aspire.

X.

But oh why didst thou not stay here below
To bless us with thy heav'n-lov'd innocence, [65]
To slake his wrath whom sin hath made our foe
To turn Swift-rushing black perdition hence,
Or drive away the slaughtering pestilence,
To stand 'twixt us and our deserved smart
But thou canst best perform that office where thou art. [70]

XI.

Then thou the mother of so sweet a child
Her false imagin'd loss cease to lament,
And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild;
Think what a present thou to God hast sent,
And render him with patience what he lent; [75]
This if thou do, he will an off-spring give
That till the worlds last end shall make thy name to live.

Analyzing the Reading –

Each of the above poems contains an idea that has become truly American though conceived in English literature the idea found a home in American literature and has become the American idea. Some express ideas that became profound in edifying the values, beliefs, and actions of those that would come to our country and settle it. Chose one of the poems and explain the idea found in the poem that reflects a truly American idea or that might have influenced Europeans to believe it was their destiny to come to America and forge a new nation. Paper should be no more than 1200 words and offer specific citations from the poem to illustrate your ideas.