SOCIETY for CLASSICAL LEARNING

THE JOURNAL

A conversation on education in the classical tradition

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The Liberal Arts

Conference Edition

ROBERT INGRAM, SCL CHAIRMAN

SCL's Rich Resources

I have a quote in my office from the journals of George Whitefield that reads, "that the University was the Fountainhead, that every Gownsmen's name was Legion, and if I should be instrumental in converting one of them, it would be as much as converting a whole Parish." Whitefield understood that the power of multiplication exceeds that of addition. For every ministerial student he could convert, he knew the effect would be equivalent to the fruitfulness of a lifetime of parish ministry. Like compounded interest, it is the Eighth Joyful Mystery!

SCL, through its Society of professional memberships, national conference, and quarterly *Journal*, has the same compounded effect. I have personally benefited greatly from SCL, and The Geneva School of Orlando has matured into a more vibrant and expressive model of classicism because of its association as well. I think Whitefield would be pleased with the multiplying effects of SCL's rich resources and would concur that they are indeed Legion. Enjoy this extended issue of the *Journal* and by all means join us in Williamsburg for this summer's national conference.

Rev. Robert Ingram

Headmaster, The Geneva School, Orlando
SCL Chairman

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ABOUT THE SOCIETY

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"I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past"

by Sam Cox

Following the establishment of Jamestown as the first permanent English settlement in the New World in 1607, it was set up to be the center of the Virginia Colony's government and commerce. However, the inhospitable swampy and insect-ridden terrain at Jamestown eventually drove the settlers to higher ground a bit further inland, to Middle Plantation. Colonel John Page, a prosperous seventeenth-century Virginia merchant and landowner, owned Middle Plantation, eight miles west of the new English settlement of Jamestown. Col. Page had earlier donated some of his vast estate for the construction of the first brick Bruton Parish Church, and later donated over 300 acres of his Middle Plantation for the development of a new town, Williamsburg.

The original settlement of Middle Plantation had grown up around a seventeenth-century palisade built as a defense against Indian attack. By 1690, it was a small village composed of stores, mills, a tavern, Bruton Parish Church, along with assorted homes. With its proximity to the James and York Rivers, and its healthier climes than nearby Jamestown, the location was an attractive one for the early colonists. When the Jamestown courthouse burned for the fourth time in 1688, Middle Plantation became the locus for colonists who envisioned a capital city equal to their aspirations. The name Middle Plantation was changed to Williamsburg, in honor of William III, King of England, in 1699.

Since that time, Williamsburg has become perhaps most well-known as the birthplace of democratic governmental principles among the patriots before and during the American Revolution, and today the restored colonial city - now known as Colonial Williamsburg - is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. Here, history comes alive in the most preserved colonial city on the continent.

When the eighteenth century began, the young Williamsburg capital was laid out in a pattern of squares and perpendicular avenues. The Market Square, or town commons, and a main street stretching from the newly constructed Capitol Building to the recently established College of William and Mary were the key elements to the plan. The Capitol and the College, founded in 1693, represented stability and continuity to the early settlers. By the eve of the American Revolution, Williamsburg was a thriving center of commerce and government, with a vibrant population of 2,000 people, half of whom were slaves. Gunsmiths, tailors, carpenters, bakers, merchants, clerks, along with their slaves all worked to form the economic nucleus for the governmental system being developed by the capital city's growing number of politicians and lawyers.

Perhaps the most important institution in town by the middle of the eighteenth-century was the tavern. Taverns were not just for drinking; they were the heart of political, social, and cultural discourse, especially as trouble brewed with England. In the late evening and even into the wee hours of the early morning colonial Virginians often exchanged their ideas of liberty and freedom for the nation-to-be. Moreover, the young city had become a center of learning, with famous political leaders, such as Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, and John Tyler, emerging from the College of William

and Mary, today the second oldest college in the United States. Others, such as Patrick Henry, also became active in developing the emerging political philosophy of what was to become a new nation.

The prominent role Williamsburg played in the events leading to the Revolutionary War is well known. In 1765, Patrick Henry delivered his rousing Stamp Act Speech at the House of Burgesses here, crying "Caesar had his Brutus, Charles I his Cromwell, and George III—may he profit from their example." Later, the First Continental Congress was called in 1774 and the Revolution ended just thirteen miles away, with the surrender of Cornwallis to General Washington on the fields of Yorktown in 1781, with the birth of American independence.

When the Virginia capital moved again, this time to Richmond in 1780, Williamsburg reverted to a quiet college town and rural county seat. In retrospect, Williamsburg's loss of capital city status was its salvation as many eighteenth-century buildings survived into the early twentieth century. The restoration of Williamsburg began in 1926 with the rector of Bruton Parish Church bringing the city's importance to the attention of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who then funded and led the massive reconstruction of the colonial city as we see it today. Today, Williamsburg is known internationally as the premier center for the preservation and interpretation of American colonial history. Over 300 acres of buildings and streets preserved as they were in the eighteenth-century, including 88 original eighteenth-century structures and hundreds of houses, shops, and public buildings. Most have been reconstructed with their original foundations, complete with costumed actors, typically graduate-trained historians. Located in the Historical Triangle of Virginia—just eight miles from Jamestown and thirteen from Yorktown and linked by the National Park Service's bucolic twenty-three mile long Colonial Parkway, the area is carefully shielded from views of modern commercial development. A visit to the restored Colonial Williamsburg is a step back in time to a thriving eighteenth-century community. It has been described as "a theater of living history where merchants sell their wares, craftspeople ply their trades and patriots sit in dark corners and whisper of revolution. Today, Colonial Williamsburg's authentic character and baroque town plan is the pride of the nation." The historic area interprets the life and excitement of Colonial Virginia—and American—history. We can still hear the words of Patrick Henry, perhaps faintly yet distinctly in the far off distance, "I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past." Come to Williamsburg, not just for the stimulation of the SCL conference, but also for the intellectual discourse in the taverns of Colonial Williamsburg with colleagues from near and far, our eyes lit by the lamp of historical experience so that we might help lead a new generation towards the future.

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

Sam Cox is Head of School at Faith Christian School, Roanoke, VA. Sam holds the M.A. in American History from the College of William and Mary, and is the great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great, great grandson of Colonel John Page, owner of Middle Plantation.

Liberal Education and the Art of "Seeing"

by Jon Fennell

For more than forty years, except for an occasional recess, I have played pool frequently and with serious intent. In early 2003, I found myself in a game of "straight pool"—the game Jackie Gleason and Paul Newman ("Minnesota Fats" and "Fast Eddie" Felson) were playing in the classic movie, "The Hustler"—with a very good player indeed. My opponent was formerly the billiards champion for all U.S. military forces in Europe. And he played like it!

In this particular game, my opponent had left me "safe," which is to say that since he had no feasible opportunity to pocket a ball, he used his formidable skills to leave me without anything to shoot at when it was my turn to play. I was about to play "safe" in return when all of a sudden I saw something. Incredibly, within the unpromising cluster of balls in front of me I clearly perceived a makeable shot. Then, as did Minnesota Fats and Fast Eddie in similar situations in the film, I approached the table with confidence and struck the cue ball. It worked. My opponent simply sighed, said not a word, and sat down. Such "seeing" is common among competent pool players. Perhaps my opponent had seen the shot as well and was hoping that I had not.

Imagine what Jack Nicklaus and Phil Mickelson must see when they prepare for their next shot on the golf course. Jack, Phil, and I have something in common: In our play we manifest the very thing that constitutes the central consequence of a liberal arts education. In this article I would like to say a few words about that consequence—"seeing"—and how a liberal arts education makes it possible.

The "seeing" that I am referring to is the capacity to identify something as an instance of what one already knows. This happens to us all of the time, and is done more or less well. Perhaps we encounter a natural phenomenon, or witness a human behavior, or just emerge from a daze. We have an urge to make sense of what lies before us. And, with very rare exception, we do make sense of it (or, at least, think we do). How is this possible?

The answer to this question becomes clearer when I remind you that when we "see" we typically are "seeing as." The sense that we achieve in the face of novelty is a function of the operation of concepts and categories that we already possess. These concepts and categories serve as tacit and largely inarticulate clues to an understanding that we confidently anticipate we will achieve. The ever-changing future that unfolds in every moment is understandable because we can, and do, apply to it that which we have learned in the past. The educated mind is rich in such concepts and categories. The world, as a result, is accessible and can be turned to our purposes. It is the nature of liberal arts education to make this possible. Such an education is a systematic effort to provide students with the understanding that makes possible a rich and effective life.

And so, in a liberal arts curriculum we teach subjects such as history, mathematics, and literature. Each of the disciplines contributes to a student's capacity to make sense of what he encounters in the world. Those who have studied fascism or the disappearance of Christian civilization in North Africa will have little difficulty developing at least a preliminary understanding

of what is taking place in Western Europe today. Persons equipped with the concepts and categories of psychological inquiry (the influence of groups, for example, or the impact of early childhood experience, or of our emotions) will better understand not only the behavior and thoughts of others, but also those of oneself. One hopes that those who study economics will find the management of our national economy (as well as their personal or corporate finances) more understandable, and, therefore, more subject to moral and intellectual control, than have many others in recent times. And, touching on a subject of particular importance to readers of this journal, one hopes that the study of Education introduces prospective teachers to the treasures not only of systematic thinking in psychology and other disciplines in the social sciences, but also to the important contributions available to intelligent teaching from literature and other humane studies, especially philosophy. We do these things so that our students can better appreciate the world in which they find themselves. We also do them so that our students can, where it is appropriate and needed, take charge of their circumstances and thereby exercise due influence over their future. As stated by the Dean of Faculty at Hillsdale College, "We offer a liberal education not *because* it is useful, but it is useful nevertheless."

But I would be remiss should I fail to mention that "seeing," while vital, is not the only thing that the liberal arts aim to cultivate and produce. In addition to "seeing," the educated mind possesses the capacity to modify or adapt what it knows in light of that which it encounters. It can, in other words, learn something new, and it wishes to learn anew on a regular basis. This power to learn is an indispensable component of the comfort in, and connection to, the world that liberal arts education offers to those who imbibe it. Because we have understood in the past, we possess a growing confidence that we will do so in the future. Or, to put the matter in slightly different terms, the liberal arts nurture our faith in the accessibility of the world. They teach us that the world is rational—that it embodies and reflects an order that can be understood by the mind. We are open to the world because we expect what we encounter to make sense and thereby make us better for coming to know more about it. In our teaching, then, whether the subject is "Abnormal Psychology" or "The Principles of Science," or whether it is "The Early Middle Ages" or "Austrian Economics," we express our commitment to the liberal arts by conveying to students the concepts and categories required to understand the world they inhabit as well as, through this very process, by promoting the confidence and faith that are so important to a fulfilling and effective life.

Dr. Jon M. Fennell is the Dean of Social Sciences and Associate Professor of Education at Hillsdale College.

Astronomy: The Cinderella of the Liberal Arts

by Ravi Jain

If the three subjects of the Trivium are the presentable sisters of the liberal arts, astronomy is the humble stepsister (of the Quadrivial clan) who doesn't get out much. Yet hidden under that maidservant's garb is the smash of the ball. Astronomy is the oldest of the arts, and one even mentioned by the Hebrew Sciptures. Over the past three hundred years, its method has become the paradigm for nearly all of modern academia. Understanding the spectacular influence of astronomy requires piecing together disparate parts of the puzzle. But after viewing the subject holistically, the conclusion is nearly unavoidable: for better or for worse, astronomy has shaped our contemporary society more than nearly any other liberal art. For, the core of astronomy transmuted to become the heart of modernity. From ancient origins to its present dominance, the liberal art of astronomy holds great favors for those who recognize her.

The Egyptians kept astronomical charts since as early as the 3rd millennium B.C. They observed the stars, planets, and heavenly objects travelling throughout the night sky and kept meticulous records. For thousands of years, a body of knowledge about the regularity of heavenly motion grew, although the charts were chiefly used for astrological purposes. The constancy of the stars and planets fascinated the ancients, and they recognized the extraordinary character and significance of this phenomenon. Most ancient cultures, probably for these reasons, associated the stars and planets with divinity and mythology. The Hebrew Scripture walks an interesting tightrope between these two dynamics. It highlights the regularity of this motion and, in fact, mentions it as a source of knowledge. But it refrains from ascribing the stars and planets divinity. Instead, it suggests that these wonders point to a God even greater than the heavenly bodies which are His creation.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
The skies proclaim the work of His hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
Night after night they display knowledge.
Psalm 19

Listening through the ages, one might overhear a dazzled Israelite mumble the million-shekel question, "But if the skies are talking, then what are they saying?" Of course they are declaring the glory of God. Yet even today the depth of that glory grows and continues to overwhelm the largest of telescopes. Not only do the heavens declare God's immensity, but they also declare the genius of His creation. And this Psalm suggests one key to that genius. It lays down a core foundation for both science and astronomy in particular: observing the regular patterns of the created world will lead to knowledge. It validates the empirical method. Moreover, the knowledge gained will declare God's glory, as Newton reiterated 2,500 years later.

Let us also consider the more formal beginning of astronomy. The arts of the Quadrivium came to Athens through the Pythagoreans who called them *mathemata*, or lessons. Plato and Aristotle champion all of what will be known as the Quadrivial arts: arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The Greeks made

the most decisive moves to search for that deeper coherence that was displayed in these arts. For the Pythagoreans, Plato's Academy, and Aristotle's Lyceum, astronomy looked for mathematical symmetries in the data. They were not content to simply observe the position of the stars and planets as the ancient Egyptians did; they were looking for mathematical implications that those observations necessitated. From the 3rd century B.C., Aristarchus, Hipparchus, and Eratosthenes, among others, made stunning conclusions. Firstly, they all recognized that the earth was spherical and not flat as often caricatured, though they proceeded far beyond that. Eratosthenes calculated the circumference of the earth to within a very small margin of error using data obtained during the summer solstice and triangulation. Aristarchus also used an early form of trigonometry coupled with measurements during eclipses to ascertain the relative sizes and distances of the earth, moon, and sun. Although his error was greater than Eratosthenes, his method was perfect, and only the inaccuracy of his tools hampered him. Hipparchus developed the trigonometrical methods used in these measurements. Even looking at these three early astronomers, the pattern of the liberal art emerges. Astronomy is concerned with taking observations of the stars and planets and using mathematical reasoning to find the necessary relationships between these observations. The scholarly tradition sometimes refers to this process as "saving the appearances". It is mathematical empiricism.

Ptolemy, the astronomer from the 2nd century A.D., is the chief exemplar of this process. He wrote the definitive work of astronomy for the ensuing 1400 years. Though popularly known through its Arabacized name, the *Almagest*, its original name, the *Mathematical Collection*, emphasizes the intertwining of observation and mathematics in his work. Aristotle is often associated with empirical thinking, but his approach to science and observation wasn't dominantly quantitative like modern science is. Although not a hindrance in biology, it severely limited his physics as a flustered Galileo points out. Aristotle appealed to experiments to justify his physics, but they were either never done or completed with so little quantitative measurement as to be abjectly wrong. Thus, for the ancients, astronomy was the chief locus of the mixture of mathematical and empirical thinking. Although Archimedes did some applied mathematics, as in engineering, he did not found a liberal art upon his work. But as Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo continually point out, when it came to the liberal art of astronomy, Aristotle valued the method of the ancient astronomers and encouraged the pursuit of the mathematical conclusions born out from the observations. These scientists contend that Aristotle would have agreed with them because he upheld their method of mathematical empiricism for astronomy.

If the liberal art of astronomy was, therefore, an empirical mathematical approach to the motions of the heavenly bodies, it was exactly this that birthed the Scientific Revolution and with it an empowered modernity. Newton, standing on the shoulders of Ptolemy, Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo (the giants), called his groundbreaking work the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* or *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*. In this he unified the principles of celestial motion and terrestrial motion under his three laws by employing his four rules of empirical reasoning and his newly developed calculus. This work culminates in a paean of praise in the General Scholium, where he lauds God as Lord Omnipotent who alone could so wisely create such a grand universe. Still, with reverent awe, Newton unveils an incredible mathematical structure that God has given to the universe as he explores it through a long tradition of empirical observation. From here, it is a settled matter that modern

science for the next couple hundred years is nearly synonymous with Newtonian science. Even the social sciences adopted the model of the hard sciences as their paradigm. Economics, sociology, and political science all rely on observation and mathematics (often statistics) as their fundamental methodology. For these reasons, I contend that the dominant model of the contemporary university, mathematical empiricism, for better or for worse comes from the liberal art of astronomy.

Of course, an inherent critique exists in this story. What about the trajectories of the other liberal arts? As in the tale, when Cinderella was all dressed up she was the hit of the ball. As long as she did not overstay her appointed hour, everybody loved her. The paradigm of astronomy has also occupied center stage for the past three hundred years. But alas, this sister didn't know how to get off the dance floor in time. It seems that the postmodern reaction to an overly empirical and mathematical approach to all knowledge has turned the coach of Scientism into a pumpkin. Though a war between the humanities and the sciences rages on, even within the hard and soft sciences, there is a breakdown. An appropriate understanding and restoration of the other liberal arts will help as the empirical mathematical paradigm of astronomy buckles under the weight of a load it cannot carry. But in order to restore the paradigm properly we must know what it is. Thus, teaching not only the content of astronomy but also its method and its story are critical for understanding the chief headwaters of our contemporary culture. And though she flees the party, looking like a wind-swept village girl, she still has her glass slipper. So if our little star-crossed Cinderella can get home and regain her wits, she may yet marry the prince and live happily ever after. And if so, it will probably be in a castle built by Christian Classicists.

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

Ravi Jain graduated from Davidson College after trifling with physics, ancient Greek, and international political economy. He worked at various churches before receiving an M.A. from Reformed Theological Seminary. Since 2003 he has taught Calculus and Physics at The Geneva School and delights that Christian classicism unites his eclectic passions.

Pre-Conference Speaker ~ June 23, 2010

KEN MYERS

Education, Imagination, and Training the Affections

Ken Myers is the host and producer of the Mars Hill Audio Journal, a bimonthly audio magazine that explores the significance of major cultural trends for Christians who are striving to be in the world but not of it. He was formerly editor of *The World: A Journal of Religion and Public Life,* a quarterly journal whose editor-in-chief was Richard John Neuhaus and of *Eternity,* the Evangelical monthly magazine. For eight years, Mr. Myers was a producer and editor for National Public Radio, working much of that time as arts and humanities editor for the two news programs, *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*. A graduate of the University of Maryland and of Westminster Theological Seminary, Mr. Myers serves as a contributing editor for *Christianity Today* and has served on the Arts on Radio and Television Panel for the National Endowment for the Arts. Learn more about Mr. Myers at www.marshill.org.

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Competitive High School Debate — Why Isn't Your School Doing It?

by Leslie Moeller

Let's start with full disclosure. I've been a debate coach for precisely eight months. My school, like many of yours, teaches debate as part of our middle and upper school curriculum. I started our in-school debate program four years ago. I also have plenty of experience arguing (just ask my husband, he says it's one of my core competencies). I am an attorney by training and had the privilege of being a member of a successful international moot court team in law school. But in the world of competitive high school debate, I'm a newbie.

Prudence would suggest that I wait a couple years, get a few successes and a lot more experience under my belt before I deign to give advice. In diving into the debate world, however, I've discovered that few if any other classical schools are involved. This means that I may have as much or more experience as any other classical debate coach. It also means that as a group of schools that emphasizes logical analysis and persuasive speaking, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. Our students should be setting the bar in debate not avoiding the arena. They need it and more importantly, the forensic world needs us.

Starting with the basics, the National Forensic League or NFL (www.nflonline.org) sets the national debate rules, selects the topics which all the state organizations use, and hosts the national tournament. One of the great advantages of debate is that it's one of the few competitive arenas where our students compete against and are competitive with every other high school student. There's no private school league or small school category. If your students advance to the state or national level, they compete at *the* state or national tournament.

Each state also has a state forensic league that holds local tournaments, usually several a month. Since the state leagues follow the national rules and topics, all high school students argue the same topics in the same events across the country. Unlike athletics, however, success at the state level does not feed into the national tournament. Here's where it gets a bit complicated. Each state has its own point system whereby students earn points through success at local tournaments. The state sets the number of points necessary to qualify for the state tournament. The NFL, on the other hand, has its own point system whereby simple participation in debate events (as opposed to success) earns points. In debate, for example, a student earns three NFL points for a lost round and six points for a win. A student must accumulate 25 points to qualify to compete in a local, district-qualifying tournament. Each region, and there are many regions within each state, will have one district qualifying tournament sometime in the second semester. Depending upon how many teams compete at the district tournament, the top one to four teams at the tournament will qualify to compete at the national tournament, which usually takes place in June.

There are a number of forms of competitive debate. If you've been exposed to college level debate then you're familiar with Policy Debate or CX and its idiotic practice of super-fast speaking (also known as "spreading"). I can't imagine why anyone would teach a student to do this or why any judge would reward a team that did, but it's the standard in CX and a good reason to stay away from this debate event. Two other formats have issues as well: Lincoln/Douglass which is highly stylized

and filled with debate jargon, and Congressional Debate (or Student Congress) which follows a mock legislative format rather than traditional debate. That leaves one last debate event in which every classical Rhetoric School should compete: Public Forum. This event was added just a few years ago, primarily as a response to the direction taken by CX and L/D debate.

The national Public Forum guide describes Public Forum as follows:

> Public Forum Debate is a team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the monthly resolution topic. The clash of ideas must be communicated in a manner persuasive to the non-specialist or "citizen judge", i.e. a member of the American jury. The debate should:
>
> - Display solid logic, lucid reasoning, and depth of analysis
> - Utilize evidence without being driven by it
> - Present a clash of ideas by countering/refuting arguments of the opposing team (rebuttal)
> - Communicate ideas with clarity, organization, eloquence, and professional decorum

In other words, in this form of debate, students strive to be persuasive to the average citizen and are encouraged to use their speaking skills and logic to do so. The format of the debate is similar to what most of our schools probably use in their in-house programs and is easily found on the NFL website.

Topics for Public Forum change monthly and are announced on the first day of the month preceding the month in which they will be argued. So far this year, my students have argued whether failed states or stable states pose the greatest threat to the U.S., whether or not President Obama's plan for Afghanistan is in the U.S.'s best interest, and whether organized political lobbying in the U.S. does more harm than good. They are currently researching whether affirmative action to promote equal opportunity is justified. It's a pretty heady experience to spend a Saturday watching high school students voluntarily engage each other on topics like these. Oh, did I mention the small detail that, in Texas at least, debate tournaments usually start about 4:00 on a Friday afternoon, run until around 10:00 p.m., start again on Saturday at 8:00 a.m., and continue often until 10:00 Saturday night? Of course, if you're there that late, your team has done well, and the adrenaline will make up for the lost sleep. Some states, such as Virginia, have single-day mid-week tournaments, so you may get off a little easier than I have.

If you want to start a team, and you should, you need to do three things. First, get on your state website right away (Google "Forensic League" and your state name), and find out if there are any local tournaments remaining this spring. If there are, go watch one. Be aware that in Public Forum, there are usually three to five preliminary rounds then the top teams "break" based on their win/loss record and their speaker points. Usually the tournament will break to quarterfinals, which means the top eight teams will move forward, and from that point it becomes single elimination. Check the schedule, usually posted on a website, and go to the later rounds to see the best debaters. Take some interested students with you if you can. If you want to look like you know what you're doing, head to the cafeteria of the school where the tournament is being held. That's where all the students hang out between events (and forensic tournaments have lots of events, not just debate) and it's also where the room assignments are posted for the next round of each event.

Second, schedule an organizational meeting *this spring*. Here's where you can learn from my mistakes. I waited until school started to

See "Debate," continued on page 15

Classical Education and the Arts of the Beautiful

by Kevin Clark

The Arts and the Liberal Arts

The traditional seven liberal arts are part of the wealth we have inherited from the classical world. The divisions of our school—Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric—bear the name of the first three of these liberal arts, which are often called the Trivium (from the Latin, meaning "the three paths"). The latter four—Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy—do not get as much press, but are nonetheless part of our core curriculum. The Ancients believed that these "arts" were not merely subjects to be mastered but sure and certain ways of forming in the soul those intellectual virtues that were necessary for acquiring true wisdom. Necessary, that is, but not sufficient. In order to acquire wisdom, one needs more than mere intellectual formation. This leads us to the fine arts, poetry, music, and drama—but not quite yet.

Knowing Truth, Doing Good

This year, our school community has been thinking and talking a lot about piety. Indeed, we are thankfully not merely thinking and talking, but praying and reading the Scriptures. This is not mere accoutrement, however; it is part of the day's education. For, in the classical Christian tradition, faith and learning go together. But the interesting thing is that this is an inheritance from both our Christian and our classical forebears.

Educators in classical antiquity saw too that wisdom required not only the formation of the intellectual virtues but also the formation of the moral virtues: the practice of piety. While it is true that, being ignorant of the scriptural revelation of God that we enjoy as Christians, these men worshipped pagan gods, they nevertheless saw that the piety a person owed to the gods, to his family, and to his city or community is essential to and inseparable from true education. So much is this the case that such famous teachers as Plato and Aristotle express their doubts as to whether a man lacking moral formation is truly capable of reasoning. For them, the man who thinks rationally must act piously; that is, in some profound way, the moral and the intellectual are connected intimately together. This notion is also thoroughly biblical, I think. Consider the Proverbs, for example, where one finds that mere knowledge without piety (the fear of the Lord) is condemned as folly.

So, in the classical and Christian tradition, faith and learning, reason and piety, are integrated. But where and how does this integration take place? Our answer to this question is twofold and brings us finally to the role of the Arts of the Beautiful—music, drama, poetry, drawing, painting and sculpting—in the classical curriculum.

The Natural Location of Integration

In order to appreciate fully the answer to this question, we must keep in mind an important distinction: whereas the liberal arts are theoretical in nature and piety is practical, the Arts of the Beautiful are poetic and aesthetic. That is to say, while the liberal arts are primarily concerned with thinking and piety, with being and doing, the fine and performing arts are directed towards creating and adoring. Without delving too deeply into philosophy or theology, I should point out that this list—being, thinking, doing, making and adoring—are a human being's principal acts. We exist, we think, we do, we create, and we love because we are human beings made in God's image, and it is

as unified human beings that we do each of these things. The same man who loves is the one who thinks; the same one who creates acts ethically; and, of course, one has to exist to do any of these things. All this to say that human beings are themselves naturally integrated: One is variously employed in each of these acts, but is yet one person.

Integration, then, is not simply or even primarily a matter of thinking through our curriculum; it is a matter of our anthropology, our understanding of what makes human beings human. The children we are seeking to educate are integrated beings themselves and they need to be given an integrated education because this respects their nature as human beings made in the image of God. I would maintain that the Arts of the Beautiful are essential to our curriculum because they appeal to, develop, and resonate with our natural human capacity to create, to love, and to adore beauty. Failure to cultivate these arts is failure to recognize the nature of the children we are educating and, as such, is failure to achieve education in anything but a truncated sense.

Where then does the integration of faith and learning, reason and piety take place in our curriculum? The most basic answer to this question is that it takes place in the student, the integral human being made in God's image. That is to say our curriculum is integrated because it flows from and is governed by our anthropology. But this is only the first part of our answer. As I indicated above, the full answer is twofold and is bound up with the Arts of the Beautiful. For, as we will see, these arts play an essential role in tuning the heart and nourishing the moral imagination.

A Surprising Discovery

When I first became interested in classical education as a teacher, I began to search everywhere to see how the great pedagogues of the past ordered their curricula. As I searched, I was amazed at what I found: the great teachers of the past had almost completely inverted the curriculum I expected to find. If classical education is anything, I thought, it is primarily an academically rigorous intellectual formation. It certainly is at least that, but as I read the early masters—Plato in his *Republic* and Aristotle in his *Ethics*—I found that they placed primary importance not upon intellectual formation but upon music and gymnastic, the tuning of the heart and the training of the body.

Interestingly, for Plato and Aristotle, gymnastic and music formed the entire curriculum until about age twenty! Now I should explain that these two subjects were not as specific as they are today. Gymnastic was apparently devoted to the entire physical conditioning of a child, and music dealt with everything the ancients believed to be inspired by the Muses (hence "music"): what we now call music, poetry, drama, and the fine arts, but also history and literature. In classical antiquity almost the entire education of children (who, mind you, would be in our Pre-K–12th grade program) was directed to physical training, discipline, singing, memorizing poetry, acting/imitating, drawing, sculpting, learning of the deeds of the great men of the past, and reading great literary works.

Training the Body, Tuning the Soul

But why? Why spend so much time in these two areas? The answer is simple: they saw that the disciplined physical training of gymnastic and the aesthetic, affective and emotional training of music are foundational to the acquisition of both the moral and the intellectual virtues. Consider what Plato writes in the *Republic*:

> And, as we were saying, the united influence of music and gymnastic will bring [the reason and the passions] into accord, nerving and sustaining the reason with noble words and lessons, and moderating and soothing and civilizing the wildness of passion by harmony and rhythm (4.442a)

Plato did not have a doctrine of original sin, but he did see apparent in his students some sort

of disorder that needed to be addressed before intellectual and moral reasoning could be pursued. He found that music and gymnastic were especially well suited for this. Plato writes,

> Musical training is a more potent instrument than any other, because rhythm and harmony *find their way into the inward places of the soul, on which they mightily fasten, imparting grace,* and making the soul of him who is rightly educated graceful, or of him who is ill-educated ungraceful… he who has received this true education of the inner being will most shrewdly perceive omissions or faults in art and nature, and with a true taste, while he praises and rejoices over and receives into his soul the good, and becomes noble and good, he will justly blame and hate the bad, now in the days of his youth, even before he is able to know the reason why; *and when reason comes he will recognize and salute the friend with whom his education has made him long familiar* (3.402a, italics mine)

Of course, as Christians, we must reject Plato's idea that aesthetic experience alone imparts grace—that is the special work of the Holy Spirit. His more general point, however, is compelling: the songs we sing, the stories we read, and the art we make and admire form our souls. If Plato is right, our musical education disposes us toward (or away from) truth and goodness.

I proposed above that the Arts of the Beautiful are essential to our curriculum because they appeal to, develop, and resonate with our natural human capacity to create, to love, and to adore beauty. A second reason that they are essential to our curriculum, however, is that they attune our souls to goodness and truth. Failure to cultivate these arts, then, is failure not merely to have certain aesthetic experiences, but it will also result in a failure to recognize goodness and truth when we find them.

The aesthetic and poetic training of the Arts of the Beautiful, therefore, forms and attunes the heart. This I submit is the location where moral and intellectual reasoning are held together. We will now turn finally to at least one of the ways how they are held together.

The Arts and the Moral Imagination

In his famous book, *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis considers the effects of an education that neglects formation of the heart and the sentiment. As the title suggests, the effects are not salutary. His argument unfolds something like this: 1) judgments about the good (ethics) and the beautiful (aesthetics) are not merely descriptions of one's personal feelings, but objective responses to reality; 2) these judgments are a function of intuition and imagination and, therefore, developed differently than the way we learn, say, math or science; 3) these judgments are nevertheless reasonable because value judgments and even reason itself are upheld by this intuition or imagination; 4) the imagination and intuition are enculturated, that is, formed through the process Plato referred to above as music and gymnastic.

For Lewis, then, the arts are not just decorations for our educational program, rather they are essential, even foundational. Without a well-stocked moral imagination, without trained sentiment, without a heart, there is no human flourishing. "It may even be said," he writes, "that it is by this middle element that man is man: for by his intellect he is mere spirit and by his appetite mere animal." The last reason I will offer in this discussion as to why the Arts of the Beautiful are essential to our curriculum, therefore, is that they more than anything else we do at the school are directed toward forming this "middle element" of the moral imagination. It is with this notion of the "middle element" that we complete our answer as to how faith and learning, reason and piety, are integrated. For, it is in the unified human being made in God's image, whose heart has been tuned and whose moral imagination has been nourished, that moral and intellectual reasoning are held together.

In years past, my school has expressed its educational goal in the phrase, "Education

for Life." I would like to submit that this phrase is perhaps more true than those who coined it may have imagined. For as we have just seen, our lives as human beings made in God's image are intellectual, moral and aesthetic. That is to say our lives are concerned with goodness, truth and beauty. The education we provide and the curriculum we embrace reflect this multifaceted and integrated life God has given us. The goal of education is of course to form whole, fully integrated people; people who think and do, but who also love and create. This means that our curriculum must flow from and be governed by our anthropology, that it must tune the heart, and that it must nourish the moral imagination. In other words, a classical school curriculum must include the Arts of the Beautiful.

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

Kevin Clark is a member of the Rhetoric Faculty at The Geneva School of Winter Park, FL, where he teaches Christian theology and the history of Western philosophy. He is also a fellow of the Classical School Foundation and serves on The Geneva School's academic council.

"Debate," *from page 11*

organize the team. Big mistake. At the start of school, everything is new and exciting and a bit overwhelming. Students have a hard time focusing let alone finding the time to research debate topics. Have your organizational meeting before summer break. Put together your teams, and let them know that they will need to start work in August. Plan at least four working meetings in August, and put them on everyone's calendar. When the September topic is announced on August 1st, your team will be ready to go. The goal is to have their research done and their arguments written before school starts. That way, they are ready to argue in September.

One of the great advantages of a smaller school is that our students get to have a much wider variety of experiences, but that means my debaters are also basketball players and actors. September is a great month to accumulate debate points before all the other events get going. The good news is that for those who are good at it, debate is addictive.

Third, come to the SCL Summer Conference. I'll be presenting a seminar on the how's and why's of starting a debate program and would be delighted to share more details with you then. We'll talk about how to match students in a team, the three stages every team goes through in learning to debate, how to research and prepare topics, and some of those other forensic events such as prose, poetry, original oratory and dramatic interpretation. More importantly, we'll explore why it's our obligation to get out students out into the world of forensics to influence the debate (literally and figuratively).

We started our team with a single, once-a-week meeting during the lunch/activity hour. We quickly found out that in the big public high schools, including the reigning national champion high school against whom we debate regularly, debate is an elective that meets four or five times a week. We added two Sunday afternoon work sessions when the students were first getting the feel for debate. We also have a vigorous email exchange between meetings. I hope to upgrade our program to a three-day-a-week elective next year, but, even on our meager schedule, two of our teams have qualified for the Texas state tournament. One of our teams will be arguing at our district-qualifying tournament next weekend in a bid to secure a spot at Nationals. Next year, we hope to see you there.

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

In addition to her responsibilities as forensic coach, Leslie Moeller is an attorney, a member of the board of the Society for Classical Learning, and President of the Board of the Geneva School of Boerne, Texas. She will be speaking about competitive debate at the SCL Summer Conference.

Susan Wise Bauer

Susan Wise Bauer is the author of *The Well-Educated Mind: A Guide to the Classical Education You Never Had* (2003), is a guide to reading the classic works of fiction, poetry, history, autobiography, and drama. Norton also published *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home* (with co-author Jessie Wise); originally published in 1999, this bestselling guide to education in the classical tradition was revised and updated in 2004. Susan has also written a four-volume world history series for children, is a contributing editor to *Books & Culture*, and frequently contributes to *Christianity Today*.

Richard M. Gamble

Richard M. Gamble is the Anna Margaret Ross Alexander Professor of History and Political Science and Associate Professor of History at Hillsdale College. He is the author of *The War for Righteousness: Progressive Christianity, the Great War, and the Rise of the Messianic Nation* (ISI Books, 2003) and the editor of *The Great Tradition: Classical Readings on What It Means of Be an Educated Human Being* (ISI Books, 2007).

Christian Kopff

E. Christian Kopff is Associate Director of the Honors Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, where he has taught since 1973. His publications include a critical edition of Euripides' *Bacchae* (Teubner, 1982) and over 100 articles and reviews. He is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome and has twice been awarded grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. His book, *The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition* (ISIBooks, 1999; third [paperback] edition 2002) is widely cited in the Classical Education movement. In 2004, he was named Director of CU-Boulder's Center for Western Civilization.

Tracy Lee Simmons

Tracy Lee Simmons is the director of the Dow Journalism School at Hillsdale College, a program he founded. He describes himself as a literary and cultural journalist. He writes regularly for *The New York Times, Washington Post, The Weekly Standard, National Review, The New Criterion*, and others. He spent part of his childhood in England where he was taught Latin and Greek by reading classical texts in their original languages. He went on to receive his masters degree from Oxford. Mr. Simmons is the author of *Climbing Parnassus, A New Apologia for Greek and Latin*, which arose out of a challenge given to him by the late William F. Buckley, and he is currently working on two books about Thomas Jefferson.

Summer Conference 2010

FEATURED SPEAKERS

Greek Ruins

by Tracy Lee Simmons, Reprinted from National Review

A speechwrier from Vice President George Bush once prepared a stump speech peppered with a bit of Thucydides, a Greek historian of the fifth century B.C. But after the Vice President tripped over the name one time too many, another staffer decided to avoid further embarrassment by drawing a line through the word and writing in "Plato." One dead Greek was as good as another, and who would know the difference?

Who indeed? Once a common possession of the well educated, classical knowledge now bobs like flotsam amid the wreckage wrought by a century of educational scuttling. In 1962, 700,000 American high-school students were taking Latin; by 1985, that number had dropped to 176,000. Consequently, classical studies in higher education have suffered. Out of more than a million BAs awarded in 1994, only six hundred went to classics majors. And these figures tell only a portion of the story. For with the passing of Greek and Latin we have lost part of the soul of our civilization.

Our Founding Fathers saw in education the key to national prosperity, both as an insurance policy against political tyranny and as an investment for worldly success-although even then dissenters disputed the premium placed upon classics. Benjamin Rush, a physician and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, dallied in 1789 with the idea of a Federal University built on a new model. "While the business of education in Europe consists in lectures upon the ruins of Palmyra and the antiquities of Herculaneum," Rush wrote, "the youth of America will be employed in acquiring those branches of knowledge which increase the conveniences of life, lessen human misery, improve our country, promote population, exalt the human understanding, and establish domestic, social, and political happiness." Expelled from the new university, therefore, would be those "tyrants" of the old curriculum, Greek and Latin, along with their cornucopia of poetry, drama, history, and philosophy, which had nourished minds and spirits for centuries. Rush's proposal sounds a modern note, confirming a cherished view we hold of ourselves as makers of a *novus ordo seclorum* (a new order of the ages).

Yet most educated men of the colonial and Federal era were not beguiled by this rash form of cultural independence. Thomas Jefferson wrote to his grandson, just setting out for college, "Your Latin and Greek should be kept up assiduously." John Adams, keeping close tabs on the education of his sons, wrote to young John Quincy in 1780: "My wish at present is that your principal attention should be directed to the Latin and Greek tongues." "I hope soon to hear," he added, "that you are in Virgil and [Cicero's] orations, or Ovid, or Horace, or all of them." And Jefferson and Adams were not mere savants; they typified their class and generation. Greek and Latin furnished their minds, formed their tastes, and perfected their style. Allusions to Greeks and Romans run as a constant motif in colonial correspondence and public documents.

Classical education continued to define the standard curriculum for the elite through most of the nineteenth century as well-although, in proper American fashion, plenty of others joined them in aspiring to pry open its vast treasure trove. James Garfield took his early education at a modest school in Ohio where he drank heady draughts of Homer, Herodotus, Livy, Tacitus, and Virgil; it was said that, years later, the ambidextrous Garfield, on hearing a sentence in English, could translate it onto paper, one hand into Greek, the other into Latin. Theodore Roosevelt, the quintessentially American man of

action, is said to have maintained his Greek and Latin reading and trust-busting and big game hunting till the end of his life.

Why were generations of students mad to suffer the inky travails of learning two difficult languages they would never speak? With concerns about education figuring prominently in the public mind today, we might well ask. After all, if another Constitutional Convention were convened next year, it's not at all clear that the current generation could bring to the chamber the same blend of practicality and learned wisdom — or want of cliché and jargon — that armed the delegates at Philadelphia in 1787. Al Gore's inability to translate *E Pluribus Unum* might then be the least of our worries.

Classical education has always signified more than Greek and Latin. The two languages secured the basis for a humanistic training, being the necessary preconditions to access Greek and Roman writings. But they were means, not ends; the text was the thing. Implicit in classics was the Virgilian dictum of *Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscrere causas*: Fortunate the man who can understand the causes of things. A classical education conferred full citizenship of the West, forcing its students to plumb the depths of their origins and tap into the vigor of their civilization, to understand it from within by the direct witness of men and women who had presided over its beginnings.

Classics as a discipline, in fact, reigned as the queen of the "humanities" before they became soft, soulless, and politicized-when, in other words, they were still the exacting study of man and his achievements. Classical study opened the student's eyes to another world both like and unlike his own, affording him multiple images of the noble and the good. It supplied him with a lifetime of historical exempla, philosophical axioms, and phrases that shone like gemstones and lent poignancy and éclat to the world he knew.

It is no accident, then, that so many who gathered at Philadelphia to declare independence and a decade later to draft a constitution were men who had apprenticed themselves to Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Polybius, and Cicero, and who could debate at length on the various constitutional forms of the classical world before they chose one for the new American nation. We owe our very existence as people in great part to classical learning.

But are classics useful today? Probably not, at least not useful by the lights of anyone prompted to ask the question. Like all humanistic learning, classics are not so much useful as they are *supra usum*, beyond use. The classical pursuit contributed not so much to bodily survival as to intellectual and spiritual sustenance-like scaling mountains or surmounting the Goldberg Variations. "To seek utility everywhere is most unsuitable to lofty and free natures," Aristotle observed. Or, as Emerson put it, the unchecked lust for utility "would abolish the rose and exalt in triumph the cabbage."

The best education isn't confined to the Three Rs; it instills the ineffable. In the words of Phillips Academy's Alfred Stearns, true education aims to develop a human being who is "something bigger and finer than a mere piece of mechanism designed to fit into place in a practical world but devoid of aspiration and idealism, bereft of vision and imagination, forever denied the privilege of tasting the things of the spirit which alone is life."

But what about the Rubicon of Greek and Latin? Why, in a time teeming with good translations, should anyone expend time and energy pounding paradigms, memorizing vocabulary, and mastering obscure points of syntax?

The short answer is intimacy. Classical knowledge does not consist only of discrete facts amenable to quick swallowing. Such knowledge is also freighted with thoughts and expression, exuberant and penetrating utterances not always

easily rendered in another tongue. Imagine paraphrasing a poem by Keats or Shelley in contemporary lingo: we know instinctively that the result would be lacking. For literature isn't just ideas; it's sound and sense together. Epic and lyric poems are more than plot liners and naturalistic images; they're products of the human imagination which must be heard and felt in a certain manner.

Furthermore, long after proficiency with the languages had lapsed, the pains taken early on kept those who had learned them aware that words grant keys to the precincts of the mind. Reading or writing Latin is an exercise in brevity; not even the taut suppleness of Greek matches for economy the lapidary quality of the Roman tongue. Long exposure to its syntax may well account for some of the finest prose of yesterday, for even those who never had Latin inhabited a culture where its drive for the *mot juste* was felt and emulated.

The decline of classical studies leaves a vacuum within American culture which is more discomfortingly apparent every year. And the real loser is the educated public at large: the people who vote, who read books, newspapers, and magazines, who watch clever talking heads spouting opinions on cable news networks with exquisite inarticulation and then imitate them. The people, in short, who can't retain disciplined habits of expression because they never learned them. Perhaps the most telling legacy of the passing of Greek and Latin isn't the college freshman incapable of declining Latin nouns; it's the schoolteacher unable to distinguish *can* from *may*.

Once a classical education could be rejected; now it can't even be described. Yet classics still march under the tattered standard of hard learning. They are the fifth column of the last legion. "Classics, in spite of our friend Rush," Adams wrote to Jefferson, "I must think indispensable." It sticks," Kipling's Mr. King says to Stalky. "A little of it sticks among the barbarians."

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

Tracy Lee Simmons is the director of the Dow Journalism School at Hillsdale College and the author of Climbing Parnassus: A New Apologia for Greek and Latin. *Mr. Simmons will be a plenary speaker at the 2010 SCL Summer Conference in Williamsburg, VA.*

The STEM Pipeline Meets the Trivium

by E. Christian Kopff

Classical Christian Education, the latest, cutting-edge curricular development in American education, was also the educational Gold Standard in the United States from the Colonial Era until after World War II. Critics arose, however, as early as the time of the Revolution. Some were radicals like Tom Paine, who wanted science to replace both the classical and the Christian elements of the traditional curriculum. Others were devout Christians like Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Rush argued that American education should promote Christian knowledge and morals and give Americans the practical training they would need to settle a new continent. Rush felt that engineering and science, not the classics, should be taught in schools and colleges.

The objections of Rush, Paine and their supporters were drowned out by the response of educators and political leaders. Thomas Jefferson defended classical education in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*: "The learning of Greek and Latin, I am told, is going into disuse in Europe. I know not what their manners and occupations may call for: but it would be very ill-judged in us to follow their example in this instance." John Adams wrote to Rush, "I should as soon think of closing all my window shutters to enable me to see as of banishing the Classics to improve Republican ideas." George Washington did not enjoy a classical education, but he made sure that his step-son, Jack Custis, did.

When the utilitarian assault on the classical curriculum was renewed in the 19th century, it was opposed by a wide spectrum of Americans. John Quincy Adams and John C. Calhoun, for all their political differences, agreed about the importance of the classics. New England Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau left the church, but defended the classics. "We might as well omit to study Nature because she is old," wrote Thoreau in *Walden*. "These works of art have such an immortality as the works of nature and are modern at the same time as they are ancient, like the sun and stars." The "Yale Report," published by the President and faculty of Yale in 1828, cemented the place of the classical Christian curriculum in colleges and so in preparatory schools until after the Civil War. As historian Carl Richard has seen, "From the beginning, Americans had been a pragmatic and commercial people, but one who had simultaneously harbored a reverence for tradition, both Christian and classical, and who had seen in these theistic and humanistic traditions a crucial means of moderating their own penchant for utilitarianism and materialism."

Recently there has been a revival of some of Rush's ideas; not about teaching Christian truth and morals, but his call for science and engineering. Under the acronym STEM ("science, technology, engineering, mathematics") educators and politicians have insisted that Americans are sadly uneducated in these subjects and have demanded that schools and even the federal government intervene to save the nation from an educational gap that will mark the end of American prosperity and plunge the United States into bankruptcy and ruin as it falls behind competitor nations, such as China and India.

This is not the first time that such appeals have been made. A similar hue and cry went up after the Soviet Union launched the first satellite, *Sputnik*, on October 4, 1957. A few days later Elmer Hutchinson, director of the American Institute of

Physics told the New York TIMES (October 8, 1957) that unless the US revamped its educational system to emphasize science, "our way of life is, I am certain, doomed to rapid extinction." Threatened with rapid extinction, the national government poured money into science programs, one aspect of the educational environment in which enrollments in high school Latin went from 728,637 in 1962 to barely 150,000 by the late 1970's.

This significant change in the nation's priorities in curriculum and funding was accomplished with remarkably little public debate. As we saw, earlier generations rejected calls to repudiate traditional classical Christian education, and America enjoyed 200 years of prosperity, creativity, and freedom. The success of the American space program in the 1960's could not have been due to the money directed at what are now called STEM subjects in schools. The scientific and military leaders associated with the space program were all educated in the previous generation.

Classical educators recognize STEM as a modern version of the quadrivium, the second level of the Seven Liberal Arts, which consisted of mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and music. Few would question that the arts of mathematics needed to be expanded in the modern period to include, for instance, algebra, calculus, chemistry, and the life sciences, to name only a few. On the other hand, those who have reflected on Dorothy Sayers's classic essay, "The Lost Tools of Learning," or observed the success of classical schools and classical home schoolers understand that the quadrivium follows and depends on the trivium, the arts of language, grammar, logic and rhetoric. They feel uneasy when they see educators and politicians rush forward with large-scale and expensive programs aimed at expanding the quadrivium at the expense of the trivium.

What T. S. Eliot's Sweeney says about himself is true of the elite: "I gotta use words when I talk to you." In *Real Education* (2008), Charles Murray argues convincingly that "The tools of verbal expression… are indispensable for precise thinking at an advanced level." The inability of our leaders to think soundly and speak persuasively affects all of us. Leaders of a regime based on consensual institutions need the full panoply of verbal ability. Even science grant proposals must be written grammatically, logically, and persuasively.

Schools know there is a problem. Throughout most of the 20th Century, when classical education and Latin were still flourishing, poor writing was viewed by colleges as a deficiency to be corrected by taking remedial courses without college credit. Those days are long gone. Most colleges and universities have regular writing programs and even departments to teach remedial writing courses that receive full college credit. Too many students arrive without the requisite writing ability. Schools do not feel justified in denying credit for such common educational gaps. They are not gaps anymore. They have become the norm. This is a real educational crisis that requires curricular reform. There is only one viable curricular alternative that puts the arts of language at the heart of its educational vision and that is classical education and its trivium.

Another area where teachers perceive a problem is what educators call "critical thinking." Many colleges and universities have instituted critical thinking requirements. Polls indicate that college teachers feel that improving their students' grasp of critical thinking is the most important goal of a liberal arts education and are frustrated at the lack of achievement in this area.

My own anecdotal experience is that both teachers of writing and those committed to improving critical thinking share a common complaint. Time and again I hear them say, "It is hard to find time to improve students' writing or critical ability, because I spend so much time correcting their grammar. They make so many

elementary mistakes." When I respond, "So you have come to think that teaching students a robust command of grammar would be a substantial aid to their ability to think critically and write clearly and persuasively," they respond with a yes. These are not classical Christian educators. Most of them have not heard of this new movement. They have learned the hard way that grammar is fundamental for critical thinking and effective writing. As classical Christian educators understand, there is a connected hierarchy of language arts and grammar is primary and basic for a later command of logic and rhetoric.

A renewed commitment to teaching the arts of language does not involve undermining math and science education. On the contrary, the greatest figures in the Scientific Revolution were classically educated: Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Johannes Kepler, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, to name only a few. They had studied ancient texts and could read and write Latin. The Scientific Revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries was very self-consciously a return to the ideals and even the texts of ancient science. Copernicus knew that he was reviving the heliocentric hypothesis of Aristarchus of Samos from the Third century B.C. The atomic theory Newton used in his optics was based on Gassendi's brilliant philological recovery of ancient Epicureanism. Galileo quotes Plato's *Meno* and *Timaeus* over and over again. The education of scientists remained classical through the time of Linnaeus in the 18th century and Charles Darwin in the 19th.

Skeptics object to the premises of this historical narrative. "Of course the greatest scientists of the modern age had classical Christian educations. All this proves is that they were educated. There was no serious alternative from the Renaissance to the 19th century. The case for vocational or technical training was made in the late 18th century by men like Tom Paine and Benjamin Rush. They argued that a relevant modern education can bypass the trivium and concentrate on an expanded quadrivium for a world in desperate need of the products of science, technology, engineering and mathematics."

History does not usually allow us to study events with a true control group. There is an exception to this situation in 19th century Germany, where there were two distinct educational paths. One led from the old classical school, now with more Greek added, and culminated in the classical or humanist *Gymnasium*, from which students then went on to the university. The other path was devoted to math, science, technology, and a modern language (usually French) and led to the technical high school or *Realschule*, from which the student went on to a professional school or a job in industry. This critical mass of technically trained graduates working in factories protected by the tariff spurred German industrial growth in the generation that preceded World War I.

The decades on either side of WWI witnessed brilliant work in Physics: the concept of quanta, the theories of special and general relativity, and the development of quantum mechanics. One might expect that the most important work in these fields would be done by graduates of the technical school system. Nearly the opposite is true. Max Planck, Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger, Niels Bohr were classically educated. Einstein attended a Swiss technical high school, but he had spent his first six years at a classical school, where his sister remembered his best subjects as Mathematics and Latin: "Latin's clear, strictly logical structure fit his mindset." Heisenberg wrote, "I believe that in the work of Max Planck, for instance, we can clearly see that his thought was influenced and made fruitful by his classical schooling." Heisenberg insisted

that his own insights into nature came from his classical education. Its combination of math and physics with language instruction led him to read Plato's *Timaeus* in Greek. He was impressed by Plato's rational appeals to understand nature mathematically rather than as a purely physical reality: "I was gaining the growing conviction that one could hardly make progress in modern atomic physics without a knowledge of Greek natural philosophy."

When we review the story of SAT scores from the high point in 1963 to a nadir reached in 1981, after which the verbal scores experienced only slight improvement, we may want to add one factor to those usually discussed. 1962, the year before the SAT high point, marked the year of the zenith of enrollment in high school Latin in the United States, when 728,637 students enrolled in high school Latin. The decline in Latin enrollments tracks the decline in SAT-Verbal scores. Latin has never regained its position as a "more commonly taught language," just as SAT-Verbal scores have never gotten back to their 1963 level. If the relation of high school Latin and SAT-Verbal scores is significant, we may note that the decline in measurable achievement was most striking in good students and it was precisely good students who tended to take high school Latin.

"Man is like the drunken peasant trying to ride a horse," Martin Luther noted. "If you prop him up on one side, he falls off the other." Luther could have been describing the educational establishment in the United States. A few years ago they perceived a crisis in writing and established writing programs in most universities. Now the STEM pipeline is supposedly drying up, and we need federal intervention to save our country.

Instead of careening from one crisis to another, our nation needs a curriculum that is balanced between the arts of language and the arts of mathematics. It should not be a recent fad; it should have been practiced for a long time, preferably for centuries. Its success should be demonstrated by wide acceptance in many countries for a long time. Its best graduates should be distinguished in a wide variety of areas, like literature, art, philosophy and political thought, politics and science, people like Shakespeare and Michelangelo, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, Jefferson and Adams, Adam Smith and Karl Marx, Galileo and Newton, Linnaeus and Darwin. Where in contemporary education can we find a curricular alternative that meets these requirements?

We know the answer. Classical Christian education balances the arts of language and mathematics and so avoids the hysterical swings between crises in reading and science that have afflicted American education since the triumph of Dewey. Classical Christian education has flourished throughout the modern era in many European countries and the United States. Its graduates are widely recognized as the most successful and creative figures in history. It connects students with their past and prepares them for a free and creative future. To restore its prominence, the drunken peasant of American educational policy needs to sober up and start listening to the wisdom of the past and then face the challenge of teaching the classical Christian curriculum that created the modern world.

2010 SUMMER CONFERENCE SEMINAR SPEAKER

E. Christian Kopff Ph.D. is associate director of the Honors Program at the University of Colorado, Boulder, and author of The Devil Knows Latin: Why America Needs the Classical Tradition. *Dr. Kopff will be a plenary speaker at the 2010 SCL Summer Conference in Williamsburg, VA.*

Aiming Lower

by John Heaton

Abstract: *Classical, Christian education is valued by most of its participants because it is perceived as presenting a fresh approach, a better way. The "better way," however, is not clear, because parents are often unclear about what it is they desire. Experience suggests that the opportunity potentially available to a student in a well-ordered classical, Christian school is not seen as the highest value; rather, the school is actually viewed as a commodity and adhered to only as long as the commodity appears to be a better value than the next available option. When it has served its purpose, the consumer moves to the next commodity that is perceived as meeting unformed desire.*

The other day I stopped briefly to read a stray blog post, where I can't remember. I do remember that the post asserted forthrightly that there will never be another Johnny Cash. America will not produce an icon of this order for several reasons: cotton is no longer hand-picked; nobody rides trains across the country anymore; and stone-faced prisons are vanishing. For different reasons but similar logic it struck me that developing liberally educated, classically informed students is no longer possible either. I don't mean to be too pessimistic at the outset; after all, I've given a significant chunk of my professional career to this educational endeavor, and I've always agreed with Chesterton that "anything worth doing is worth doing badly."

I do, however, wish to reckon honestly with where my students are culturally situated. So, perhaps, it is a dose of realism that leads me to confess that the cultural accidentals that would validate and reinforce nearly every aspect of a classical, Christian education are missing; worse, nearly everything else in a young scholar's life is hostile to my effort and militates against my success, tilting the playing field seriously against the effort.

Let's begin with the two major pillars of the project: classical and Christian. Most parents who have concluded that a public or secular education is an unacceptable option may choose a classical, Christian school because it is Christian. Years of admissions interviewing leads me to believe that parents find a school acceptable if the Christian design of the school aligns closely enough with their own beliefs. It couldn't be otherwise, of course; no matter what disclaimers I may offer by way of qualification, an inquirer is more likely than not to project *his* religious commitments upon the institution. In other words, given the assumptions of an inquirer's own religious background, "Christian School" is a term that is already defined in his mind, and I maintain little control over those settled perceptions.

Nor does it matter which particular faith flavor is in play. A family associated with my school for several years expressed astonishment that a teacher would claim that materialist, macro-evolution was neither plausible nor compatible with the teaching of the Bible; they expressed fear that the school was infected with fundamentalism – hardly a danger for a school in the Anglican tradition. On the other hand, when a parent with long association with the school learned that the chaplain did not believe that the antichrist was on the verge of being revealed and that *Left Behind* was *not* good literature, more shock and amazement followed as a more fundamentalist assumption was met with disappointment. When it became known that my faculty yawned at Harry Potter, not perceiving him to be subversive of Christian

faith and morals, those who saw him as a boogey man made their voices heard. Truth be told, the religious design of the school, other than obvious commitments to formal, orthodox dogma, is opaque to these kinds of parents.

If "Christian" is a term that others define and project on the institution, "classical" is a term that the institution defines and projects to families. Most people do not possess a nuanced appreciation for the liberal arts tradition in education, especially in grades K-12, nor are they themselves the products of an experience rooted in that tradition. Thus, for lack of common ground with such parents, classical education is what I say it is. This is communicated to parents with the usual short course in key concepts like the trivium, quadrivium, logic and rhetoric with more than a word or two about Latin and Greek. To the newly initiated, the philosophy appears to hang together, it's comprehensive, and, most importantly, it can be articulated in a relatively short space of time. Cloaked in a campus that screams quality, even a careful inquirer has trouble being skeptical.

Weight bearing on the classical pillar, however, is often as rickety as that of the Christian pillar. The school runs the risk of talking past a parent in spite of efforts to the contrary. Buy-in is achieved at a superficial level, but both sides–parents and school officials–probably assume too much. The enthusiasm of new discovery by an inquirer should not be mistaken for a conviction that "takes" all the way down.

With so much misunderstanding between parties, one has to wonder what holds the educational partnership together. We needn't look far. The school does an admirable job in the overall educational experience. Young students are safe, loved, challenged, disciplined, and they show clear signs of progress. Faith is nurtured, the arts are appreciated, and the sports program, with some notable exceptions, is respectable. In a perverse sort of way, even the struggling student validates the claim of the better way, if only because "better" is equated with "harder." In the main, neither parents nor teachers claim perfection, but overall satisfaction with the program remains high on broad points.

But for the wrong reasons. Classical, Christian schools typically get high marks doing what ought to be standard for all schools of all types. Public educational systems are so bad that in some cases it is difficult to take them seriously. Parents intuitively know that, and if they have the means to exercise an alternative option they do so. Classical, Christian education easily separates itself from the pack and tacitly makes promises of a transformational nature.

So I think we have to be clear about what we're doing, but about *all* that we are doing. A quick tour of my school conveys with absolute clarity that students are learning to read, add, subtract, multiply, divide, play the violin, paint, shoot baskets, and parse Latin verbs. The cognitive issues are not really in question; in fact, the results on this level are so superior that elevated praise for the institution at all levels is quite common and justified.

The transfer of information, however, is not the only thing we're about. Education is not simply the acquisition of data or related sets of data. To their credit, Christian educators of my generation have long realized that a young person's worldview had to be shaped and informed by Scripture. Accomplishing that has meant more than the memorization of Bible verses and a thorough rehearsing of Bible stories, essential as those exercises are. Students have to be taught to think Christian-*ly*, with a self-conscious awareness that Christian faith has as much or more to say about ordering our present lives than that of the world

to come. Moralizing has been a weak guarantee of purity in our teens, and certainly no substitute for thoroughgoing engagement with society and culture. Since the 1980's the term "worldview" gained enough currency even in communities of faith that had for decades eschewed engagement with the world as, well, world-*ly*. All of this is to be applauded.

We must reconcile ourselves, however, to the reductionist tendency in the concept of "worldview" to limit the scope of education to a set of ideas or right thinking about this or that issue. As a young graduate student, I remember many conversations with believers and unbelievers in which I made rational appeals to logic and the truth claims of the Christian faith. I was armed, like many others, with ammunition provided by C.S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, and others, all defenders of an engaged Christian faith that offered a defense of faith and a compelling narrative for the human experience. In the conversations in my own young adulthood, one could still make progress against doubt by manning the rational defenses.

Over time, however, the earth moved. Our own culture moved from modernity to post-modernity in observable migration right before our eyes. In the normal course of cultural shifts, say, from the Age of Faith to the Age of Reason, it takes historians and philosophers a long retrospect to name an epoch. One can't objectify a time period without being situated historically downstream. Objectification is a reflexive action, unavailable to the current cultural actor. With post-modernity, however, it is as though everyone lost faith in modernity all at once, held hands, and woke up the next morning talking about being post-modern. In other words the shift has been self-conscious and immediately objectified by its own adherents.

Its chief characteristic has been a kind of relativism on steroids, a worldview that embraces truth-to-me as normal and which is as individuated as individuals themselves. It installs individual utility deep within as the controlling micro-chip of self-fulfillment. It is not too surprising to discover that students wired this way are *not* hostile to faith because they are no longer threatened by its exclusive truth claims. It simply doesn't matter that your truth claims conflict with mine. Yours are good if they work for you, now let me get back to my iPod, thank you. In fact, on most college campuses today, Christian faith in the rank and file is neither despised nor persecuted. Post-moderns really do mean to honor whatever works for you.

It is precisely this controlling attitude that is resistant to the older conventions of rationality and logic, the bedrock foundation of those who first coined the term "Christian worldview." It's not that Lewis' arguments are not sound; it's just that no one cares any longer. Culture has moved students deeper into the benign realm of the affections, well beneath the head. Success in this context will require us to lower our aim. We'll still need to provide information in the classroom. We must adjust, however, to the fact that education is a process of *formation*, a task that is concerned with shaping a kind of person.

Such a process requires us to intrude into the realm of the imagination, the desires, the affections. A student will grow up to be what he *wants* to be. That is, he will likely obey his strongest desires. It might not be one overriding desire; it might be a complex of desires that modify or check one another inside him. The point is that we become what we love, and what we love is not shaped by mere cognition. I get very little traction telling my children to love each other. I repeat the command, but like me, every parent knows that the bonds of love are created by shared experiences, unique practices and routines that define your family. Eventually, children see themselves as a part

of that fabric and their affections for others within that fabric become the unique thing we call family.

Culture, institutions, and families are not formed merely around shared ideas. As James K. A. Smith says in his book, *Desiring the Kingdom,* they are collections of "practices, rituals, and routines that inculcate a particular vision of the good life...by embodied practices." My sense is that for a school to be successful beyond the cognitive tasks outlined by a curriculum it will have to intentionally create rituals and practices that tend to support those academic endeavors. A fifth-grade student who is learning his Latin might submit to the exercise with unquestioning compliance. Eventually, however, a student realizes that if nothing else in his experience validates the effort, he will not come to love it. A violin student limited to endless practices of finger positions, with nothing else to validate progress in performance, is not likely to love the instrument. The same is true for almost any discipline.

Which brings us back to Johnny Cash. He will live on in the collective cultural memory and will take on layers of attachments from generations who never saw him on TV or in concert. He will increasingly morph into a larger than life character, and the factors that contributed to who he was–especially the hardships–will be sanctified in the imagination of future fans, whose vicarious contact with those same hardships is pleasant and romantic. Those hardships, so formative of the person of Johnny Cash and his music, have zero formative effect on the masses, who are nothing more than consumers of his music.

The forces of consumption that shape the affections of youngsters in their churches and families have almost all capitulated to mimicking the powerful media and advertising cultures in broader culture. Large church narthexes resemble the mall, with convenient coffee bars, book shops, and playlands. Worship services take place in halls that are over-mediated to the point of distraction. None of these things are inherently bad, except that they have replaced so much of what is central to Christian religious experience, centered on a table and a crucified, risen Lord. The frenetic pace of family life militates against the *schola* (leisure) of an appropriately paced school program, and school activities often become the tail wagging the dog. All of these pieces are formative of desire; they shape the affections and eventually compete with the transformational character proposed and inherent in classical, Christian education.

We cannot wonder, then, that parents often choose yet another option for education in the middle or high school years. The school has not made its case for a transformational experience, and as such is regarded by parents like Johnny Cash fans – a commodity for consumers who have little real appreciation for all that can and should be instantiated in youngsters. Judged this way, the commodity can be set aside when a better deal presents itself. Overcoming this cultural reality will require us to intentionally aim lower, focusing less on the head and more on the heart.

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