Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life

Part I

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THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

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Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Kerr Foundation, and the Zarrow Foundation. He was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Professor Fears is the author of more than one hundred articles, reviews and historical plaques on Greek and Roman history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*, *The Theology of Victory at Rome*, and *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology* and *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*. He has also lectured widely in the United States and Europe, and his scholarly work has been translated into German and Italian. He is very active in speaking to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad. Each year, he leads study trips to historical sites in the United States and Europe.

On 21 occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003, he received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Great Plains Region of the University Continuing Education Association. In 2005 he was named the national winner of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the University Continuing Education Association. The Senior Citizens Great Books Course, which he teaches at the University of Oklahoma, was cited prominently in this National Excellence in Teaching Award.

Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life is the fifth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *A History of Freedom*, and *Churchill*.

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Books That Have Made History:
Books That Can Change Your Life

Scope:

This course, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, is a companion to my earlier Teaching Company courses: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*. Like these courses, *Books That Have Made History* rests upon the conviction that history is made by great individuals, great events, and great ideas. This course explores these great ideas through a discussion of some of the most seminal writings in history, books that have shaped the minds of great individuals and events of historic magnitude.

Our earlier courses, *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*, have all discussed some of the great books that have made history. In those contexts, we have studied such works as the *Apology* of Socrates, *Oedipus the King*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and the magisterial histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Gibbon, and Churchill. We will return to some of these treasured books from entirely new perspectives, but for the most part, we will strike off on new paths with new books.

The books we will discuss range in time from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the 20th century. Our geographical scope will carry us from Mesopotamia and China to Europe and America. It is the ideas that are important, and our course will be organized thematically around eternal questions that endure throughout history and that every thoughtful person must seek to answer. Either by conscious choice or by omission, nations, groups, organizations, and corporations, as well individuals, answer these questions:

- Question 1: God. Does God or do gods exist? What is the nature of the divine? Does God or do the gods care about humans and their actions? This is the first question with which every thoughtful person must come to grips. The other questions and some of the answers will flow from it.
- Question 2: Fate. What is fate? Do events, great and small, happen because they are predetermined by divine will or simply by chance and random occurrence? Do humans have free will? Do you determine your life, or is it already predetermined? Are you free to choose, or has your DNA already made the choice for you?
- Question 3: Good and evil. What do we mean by good and evil? Are there consequences for our actions, whether freely chosen or predetermined? If there are consequences for our actions, does this mean that there are standards by which to judge these actions? Who or what determines those standards? Are those standards enduring for all time? Or are there no

absolute standards? Do circumstances determine what is right and wrong at any particular moment and for any particular individual, group, or nation? Does evil exist? Can we speak of evil as a real force that affects events and lives?

- Question 4: How should we live? Our answers or failures to answer or even to ask these questions have consequences. They determine how we, individuals, groups, nations, live our lives. They give us the values or absence of values to determine how we act toward others. Our great books course examines our actions under the following eternal human conditions, emotions, and challenges:
  - The meaning of life
  - Truth
  - Duty and responsibility
  - Law, government, and social justice
  - Love, jealousy, and hate
  - Courage, honor, and ambition
  - Beauty
  - Nature
  - History and the past
  - Education.

These themes will provide the context in which we discuss the books that have made history and books that can change our lives. It is the hallmark of a great book that it may offer us insights into many of these conditions and emotions. Thus, the same great book may be brought into our exploration of several of these themes.

We have repeatedly used the term *great book*. What do we mean by a great book? Can we even speak of great books?

The answer is yes. *Great book* is an unfashionable, even controversial term today, because it implies value judgments. As a society, we do not wish to make value judgments. *Judgmental* is an expression of reproach. However, great books are great precisely because they challenge us to make value judgments.

A great book has the following three essential qualities:

- Great theme. A great book is concerned with themes and issues of enduring importance.

- Noble language. Great books are written in noble language, language that elevates the soul and ennobles the mind. It is not the specific language, say Latin or English, that is noble. Any language can be used in such way that it conveys ideas and emotions powerfully and memorably.

- Universality. A great book is “a possession for all time” (Thucydides). It speaks across the ages, reaching the hearts and minds of men and women

> far removed in time and space from the era and circumstances in which it was composed. Thus, a great book summarizes the enduring values and ideas of a great age and gives them as a legacy to generations to come.

For us, in this course, what ultimately makes a great book is its ability to speak to you as an individual. You can read a great book many times, and each time, you read it with new eyes. At each stage of your life, you will find new messages to address new concerns. A great book gives you the personal wisdom to be better, better as an individual and better as the citizen of a free nation, empowered with the awesome responsibility of self-government.

Ultimately, great books are an education for freedom.

Lecture One

Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers From Prison*

Scope: This course, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, is a companion to my earlier Teaching Company courses: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*. Like these courses, *Books That Have Made History* rests on the conviction that history is made by great individuals, great events, and—above all—by great ideas. This course explores these great ideas through a discussion of some of the most seminal writings in history, books that have shaped the minds of great individuals and events of historic magnitude. Lecture One asks the question: What is a great book? Great theme, noble language, universality are fundamental elements in a great book. But most important is the ability of such a book to speak to you as an individual and to influence your life and the ideals by which you live. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who chose a life of fighting the evil of totalitarianism over comfort and safety, embodies for us the ideal of an individual shaped by the lessons of the great books.

Outline

I. The subject of this course is great books. These are books that over the course of time have proven their ability to speak to us and have given us lessons for living our lives.

II. On April 9, 1945, when Germany's defeat in World War II was imminent, the German Gestapo hanged the Lutheran pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer as a traitor to his nation and its leader. Bonhoeffer, who lived from 1906 to 1945, was shaped by his knowledge of great books.

- **A.** Bonhoeffer was born into a comfortably well-off family in Berlin. He received a German classical education.
- **B.** He chose theology as a career and became a pastor.
- **C.** He became interested in the ecumenical church movement and went to New York in 1939. Although his friends urged him to remain in the United States, he decided to return to Germany. He later stated that as soon as he boarded the boat, his spirit became quiet, because he knew that he was doing what he was destined to do.
- **D.** By 1942, Bonhoeffer was involved in the resistance movement. He joined those who had realized that Hitler represented evil and must be destroyed; he understood that the only way to stop this evil was for individuals to take actions that others might consider treason and place

a belief in good above what others would consider to be their duty to the country.

E. Bonhoeffer was arrested on April 5, 1943.

1. He wrote while he was prison. His friends who had also been arrested brought these writings out of prison, and they were posthumously published as *Letters and Papers From Prison.* This work joined the *Apology* of Socrates and the *Crito* of Plato as powerful statements of the soul in prison and how the soul could continue to speak despite cruel punishments.

2. In prison, Bonhoeffer read Plutarch, the Bible, and the *Prison Dialogues* of Plato. He realized that such works could speak in a different voice at different times of life, in times of triumph or times of trial.

3. While in prison, Bonhoeffer also evaluated his concept of God. He developed the theology of the cross, the theology of a world without God. He believed that God had been driven from the world and had abandoned it. This belief allowed him to come to grips with the concept of evil. He explored the question of why evil flourishes and whether evil exists. He believed that the individual must take action and in that action find his own God. His Christianity, therefore, became a Christianity without formulas of religion.

4. Bonhoeffer's Christian faith, his use of great books, and his thought and contemplation enabled him to deal with this crisis in his own life.

5. Bonhoeffer had read the same books as those who tormented him. His judge, Otto Thorbeck, had received the same type of classical education as Bonhoeffer. Judge Thorbeck believed that his duty was to carry out trials that he knew were wrong. Bonhoeffer, however, read books with the moral compass of absolute right and wrong. Great books themselves are no cure. They offer a means to live life in a way that can do either good or harm.

III. In hopes that we can gain some wisdom, this course, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life,* explores the ideas that have made history and shaped lives by discussing some of the most influential writings in history. These books range in time from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the 20th century and range from the classical civilizations of China, India, Greece, and Rome to the Europe of the Renaissance to contemporary Europe. The books were chosen because of their intrinsic greatness and because they still speak to us today.

IV. The course is organized thematically around the eternal questions that endure through history and that every thoughtful person must consider.

A. The first theme is God, and the question is: Does God exist? This theme includes books of polytheism, such as the *Iliad*, and books of monotheism, including the biblical book of Exodus, the Gospel of Mark, and the Koran.

B. The second theme is fate, and the question is: Do things happen by chance, or is there a plan? Marcus Aurelius explores this theme.

C. The third theme is good and evil, which explores several questions.

1. Are good and evil absolutes that are true in all times and all places and for all people? Although Bonhoeffer believed in absolute good, he also believed that telling lies was necessary at times.

2. Is it always right to tell a lie—or always wrong? Homer, for example, praises Odysseus as a man who knew how to tell many lies and tell them well.

D. The fourth theme explores how we should live. Do these great books give us a way to learn the meaning of our lives?

V. This course seeks answers to these questions under eternal conditions, emotions, and challenges that are interconnected.

A. The meaning of life: Do we ask the question of whether life has meaning, or do we just go through life without asking?

B. Truth: Do we live our lives with questions of good or build our lives on a fabric of lies?

C. Duty and responsibility: What is our duty? Here we explore different conclusions of duty. Do we believe in Bonhoeffer's conception of his responsibility to follow the higher calling of good or Judge Thorbeck's adherence to the importance of duty?

D. Justice, government, and society: What types of justice, government, and society are desired?

E. Love, jealousy, and hate: Romantic love is extremely important in our lives.

F. Courage, honor, and ambition: These emotions run through such works as the *Iliad,* the Gospel of Mark, and the story of Faust.

G. Beauty and nature: These concepts speak to what is inside of us. Henry David Thoreau, for example, writes that our souls must commune with the beauty of nature.

H. History and the past: Books are our link to the great ideas of the past. This course is built on the belief that great books, great ideas, and great individuals make history. This concept runs counter to the Marxist idea that social and economic forces make great ideas. Such great men as Socrates, Napoleon, and Lincoln all built on ideas of the past. In truth, great ideas propel people to become great in themselves.

I. Education: The lessons of the past come together to educate us. Wisdom is the ultimate goal of any great books course. We must take the information and knowledge from this course and transform it into wisdom, applying what we have learned from these great books to our lives.

VI. How do we define a great book?

A. A great book has a great theme. It discusses ideas of enduring importance.

B. A great book is written in language that elevates the soul and ennobles the mind.

C. A great book must speak across the ages, reaching the hearts and minds of people far removed in time and space from the era and circumstances in which it was composed. Thus, a great book summarizes the enduring values and ideas of a great age and gives them as a legacy to future generations.

D. Great books are an education for freedom.

Essential Reading:

Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*.

Supplementary Reading:

Bethge, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer*.

Adler, *Great Ideas*.

Fadiman, *A Lifetime Reading Plan*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How, at the outset of this course, would you define a great book?

2. At the outset of this course, do you believe that ideas make history, or are ideas, as Karl Marx thought, made by social and economic forces?

Lecture Two
Homer, *Iliad*

Scope: The *Iliad* of Homer and the Bible are the two fountainheads of our literature. Both are attempts to explain the ways of God to man. Both thus offer answers to the first of our fundamental questions: Is there a god and does god have any effect on our lives? In *Famous Greeks*, we examined the *Iliad* as a work of history. Now, we discuss it as one of the most deeply religious books ever composed. For Homer, god is not one but many. The *Iliad* is an enduring statement of the living tradition of polytheism. Immortal and powerful, the gods of Homer are nonetheless strikingly human in their greed, arrogance, jealously, and promiscuity. However, far from being simplistic or childish, the gods of Homer are testimony to a profound effort to understand the meaning of life.

Outline

I. Some courses view the *Iliad* as a work of history. It has a strong kernel of historical accuracy and discusses the great events that led to the sacking of Troy. This course asks what in the *Iliad* speaks to us today and how it is relevant to modern people.

II. The fundamental themes of the *Iliad* are gods, fate, and the meaning of life. For Homer, fate and the gods were means by which a person could learn more about the meaning of life.

III. The *Iliad* consists of 15,693 lines, composed around 800 B.C. by a single creative genius, Homer.

- **A.** Homer composed the work in Asia Minor, in what is now Turkey.
- **B.** *Iliad* means "tale of Ilium," or Troy.
- **C.** For the Greeks, the *Iliad* had the same role that the Bible once had in American life; it was a guide for moral instruction.
- **D.** In addition, it was a book written in sublime poetry. Some Greeks even knew it by heart.
- **E.** This narrative poem describes a few days in the struggle between the Greeks and the Trojans that lasted more than 10 years.
  - **1.** Before the events of the *Iliad* take place, the story began with a dispute among the gods. The goddess of discord brought to a banquet a golden apple to be given to the fairest goddess. The gods requested that Zeus decide which one was the fairest, and he delegated the decision to Paris. Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena offered bribes to Paris, and Paris chose Aphrodite, who offered

him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris thereby incurred the wrath of Hera and Athena. Helen, the wife of Menelaus, eloped with Paris.

2. Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus, led the fleet that was to sail to Troy to retrieve Helen. However, the ships could not leave because there was no wind. A soothsayer indicated that the gods were outraged and would not be satisfied unless Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon, was sacrificed. The winds came up, and the fleet sailed to Troy. The struggle lasted 10 years, during which the Trojans were too bound by honor to give Helen back and the Greeks were too bound by honor to return home.
3. What began as an expedition to retrieve honor became a 10-year war in the Middle East.
4. Homer's poetic genius was such that he chose one episode in the war to crystallize all the great themes.
5. The story of the *Iliad* begins with the outrage of Achilles about the wrong done him by Agamemnon. Achilles believed that he had been dishonored and refused to fight; after his withdrawal, the Trojans came near to victory. To save the honor of Greece, Patroclus, a friend of Achilles, put on the armor of Achilles and died at the hand of Hector, the noblest of the Trojans. Achilles, motivated by the death of his friend and driven by honor and anger, then went into battle and killed Hector. He finally returned Hector's body at the request of Priam, Hector's father, and the story itself ends with the funeral of Hector.

IV. Central questions of the *Iliad* include the following:

- **A.** Why are we here?
- **B.** Why is war waged?
- **C.** Why do innocents suffer?

V. The *Iliad* is considered the first great work of literature. It was the work most revered by the ancient Greeks.

VI. One theme of the *Iliad* is the role of the gods.

- **A.** Homer states, "Thus was the will of Zeus fulfilled."
- **B.** Who were the gods of Homer?
  1. Homer was a polytheist, believing in many gods.
  2. For Homer, these gods were real, not silly creations of mythology. These real gods embodied powerful forces.
  3. Polytheists define a divinity as a being capable of rendering supernatural benefits to the community. These powers could do good or harm.
  4. Mythology is a means of expressing a higher truth.

5. The god Zeus, the king of gods and men, represents a seed of development that leads to an idea of one all-powerful and all-controlling god.

VII. Zeus can control fate, but men and women can make conscious decisions about good and evil.

A. It was the will of Zeus that the Greeks and Trojans should suffer and that Troy be destroyed.

B. Fate is what the gods decree for us in their power and knowledge.

C. People make conscious decisions about good and evil, and these decisions give meaning to their lives.

1. Agamemnon's wife murdered Agamemnon because he had acquiesced in the sacrifice of their daughter.
2. *Hybris*, defined as outrageous arrogance by which power is used to inflict pain upon the innocent, is a moral wrong
3. Acquiescing in this sacrifice represented an act of *hybris*.
4. Agamemnon believed his duty was to conquer Troy and return home in glory. The gods had made him morally blind. His absence of moral vision led him to commit *hybris*.
5. The gods do not forget such outrages. His judgment would come. Agamemnon might come home, but he would die.

VIII. One lesson of Homer is that the gods care about good and evil.

A. Absolute right and absolute wrong exist.

B. The gods ultimately punish what is wrong and reward what is right.

C. Mortals lack vision to understand what is good and what is evil until it is too late.

D. Homer believed that people do not understand the ways of the gods. The *Iliad* was a means of beginning to gain wisdom.

1. Homer and the Bible agree that fear of god is the beginning of wisdom.
2. The omens of the gods should be taken seriously, because they are the means by which the gods make their will known.

IX. The *Iliad* is ultimately a book about the meaning of life and how to lead that life.

A. It is a story of the education of Achilles. The mother of Achilles, who was divine, had given him a choice: He could either live a long life or live a life of glory and die young. He elected a life of glory and honor, which gave meaning to his life. He had a reputation for telling the truth, keeping his word, seeking vengeance for those who wronged him, and defending himself and the weak.

B. The importance of moderation in pursuing one's values is an important lesson.

1. Achilles attained wisdom when Priam came to claim his son; Achilles realized that the concept of honor could be pushed too far.
2. Each person has an ideal that he or she prizes and will do anything to hold onto that concept.

C. We increase our wisdom only by suffering.

1. Achilles learned by suffering, that is, by the loss of what was dearest to him.
2. Zeus willed that we learn and gain wisdom only through suffering.
3. All generations must read the same books, repeat the same errors, and fight the same wars.

X. True wisdom knows when to push a thing so far that other ordinary mortals will think it excessive. A truly wise person also must know how far is too far. Achilles gives us this lesson: All mortals must die, but how people live their lives is what matters.

Essential Reading:

Homer, *Iliad*.

Supplementary Reading:

Rose, *Greek and Roman Religion*.

Willcock, *Companion to the Iliad*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What view of Zeus do you find in the *Iliad*? Do you see the beginning of the idea of monotheism?
2. How can the *Iliad* be said to be a tale of moral growth and redemption, even for the gods?

Lecture Three
Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*

Scope: In *Famous Romans*, we discussed Marcus Aurelius as one of the most noble of the Roman emperors. But his importance goes far beyond his role in the policies and history of an empire he knew to be ephemeral. His book of *Meditations* was written to himself. But it has proven to be an enduring legacy, a reflection of an ethical life as applicable today as it was almost 2,000 years ago. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius presents the culmination of the most creative current of Greek religious thought—Stoicism—and its belief that god is one, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good, all-just. True happiness lies in our recognition that all things happen in accordance with the will of god. We thus accept our roles in life and the events that happen to us, secure in our own inner fortress of self-knowledge. The wise man, like Marcus Aurelius, is self-sufficient. Wisdom lies in understanding that we can control only our minds, what we think with our minds, and our actions based on those thoughts.

Outline

I. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius represents the culmination of Greek thought with regard to god, fate, and good and evil.

II. The writings of Marcus Aurelius have had relevance throughout the ages.

- **A.** These writings spoke profoundly to such thinkers of the 18th century as Thomas Jefferson, who believed that a book of ethics comparable to the New Testament could be compiled from the writings of Marcus Aurelius.
- **B.** The *Meditations* inspired people ranging from entrepreneurs, such as Cecil Rhodes, to Matthew Arnold, a poet who spent much of his life attempting to reform the schools of England.
- **C.** This work can represent a source of meditation for even the busiest contemporary CEO.
- **D.** The *Meditations* are forever a call to duty—Marcus Aurelius himself saw them as a call to carry out the meaning of his life as god had given it to him.

III. Marcus Aurelius was born to wealth and power in the vast Roman Empire of the 2nd century A.D., in which Greek and Latin were the common languages, the one coinage was Roman money, and the law of Rome protected its people and property.

A. The father of Marcus Aurelius died young, and Marcus was adopted by his uncle and guardian, the emperor Antoninus Pius.

B. Marcus had wanted to be a philosopher. The term *philosopher* referred to a love of wisdom; it was not a narrow academic specialty but the search for wisdom needed to live one's life.

C. Following the death of Antoninus Pius in 161 A.D., Marcus Aurelius became emperor. It was the duty of the emperor to protect individual rights and privileges, to create peace and prosperity for Rome, and to govern this "one world," the unrivaled superpower of its day.

D. As emperor, Marcus Aurelius spent much of his life campaigning to protect the borders of Rome.

E. He wrote his *Meditations,* actually called "*Thoughts for Myself*," in the evenings in his tent.

IV. The great theme of the *Meditations* is the meaning of life.

A. To arrive at the meaning of life, Marcus Aurelius began with god and fate. He believed that god exists and that even an intensely irritating person is part of that same god and has the same divine spark. Each person has a soul and that soul partakes of the essence of god. Fate, through god, has decreed a destiny for everyone.

B. The writings of Marcus Aurelius represent the development of a theme found in Homer: The Zeus of the *Iliad* has transitioned from being a capricious and lecherous king to being a god of wisdom.

1. The Stoics—who played a major role in this transition—taught that god is the universe and is all-good, all-beneficent, and all-knowing. They, too, believed that god gave each individual a soul and decreed a particular fate for each individual. This monotheistic idea paved the way for Christianity.

2. This god of the Stoics was the idea of god for Marcus Aurelius. It was a god who can be called Nature, Providence, or Reason.

C. Marcus Aurelius believed that a fate had been laid down for each one of us and that all individuals must work out their own destinies. Whether an individual believed in "order or atoms" was irrelevant. A person might believe that order existed in the universe or that the universe consisted of a random collision of atoms. That belief, however, does not change how one should live.

D. Marcus believed that both good and evil exist in the world and that wisdom lies in understanding that every person is a vehicle for doing good.

E. All that a person can control is his or her own mind, the thoughts of that mind, and the actions taken on the basis of those thoughts.

1. The mind must be trained. Meditation and contemplation, rather than books, lead to understanding.

2. No one can control the mind of another person. Actions of other people do not harm an individual; what matters is the individual's opinion of that action. An individual has been harmed only if he believes that he has been harmed.
3. People have no true control over their own property, other people, or even their own reputations. God controls events. He is like the pilot of a great ship who has let a person out on shore; when he calls, the person must return to him.

F. Another idea found in the *Meditations* is that everything that happens is good, because god would not allow something to happen if it were not good.

G. Everyone has a duty to perform.
1. Marcus, who wanted to be a philosopher, had a duty as emperor. His role was to perform that duty as well as possible, because god called him to perform that duty.
2. After death, a person turns into atoms and vanishes. A person is a mere individual, an atom in the universe. The soul does not endure. Glory does not matter. What matters is whether an individual has performed his assigned duty to the best of his ability.

V. The only real reason for studying the great books is that they present absolute values for living life. These values, according to both Marcus Aurelius and Socrates, include the following:

A. Truth: Truth is an absolute value. Some things are true in all places and times. Resisting evil, for example, is always right.

B. Justice: Justice consists of treating others as one would wish to be treated. "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you" summarizes this concept of justice.

C. Courage: Courage means standing up for justice.

D. Moderation: Nothing should be carried to excess.

E. Wisdom: Wisdom enables a person to know what justice is, to recognize when courage is required, and to do what is right.

VI. These values—which are found in the literature of classical India and classical China, as well as contemporary literature—were, for Marcus Aurelius, the way to live life to find freedom. Education is ultimately freedom, freedom from worry about this world and from the fear of death. According to Marcus Aurelius, a fear of death implies wisdom in an area that people know nothing about. Death is as natural as life.

VII. For Marcus Aurelius, everything could be understood in terms of god, fate, and the central values.

A. Justice was the essence of his role as emperor.

B. He believed that power, honor, and ambition were false ideas that led people astray. Power, for example, is ultimately unimportant. The desire to have power, obtain it, and maintain it is a false goal, because power vanishes after death.

C. Marcus Aurelius dreamed of an empire in which individuals were free to live life as they chose and to follow their ambitions. He stated, "I dream of one world in which all are prosperous and all can take care of their children, and in which there is no war."

VIII. In addition, he believed that the world is beautiful and is full of god's glory.

IX. The philosophy found in the *Meditations* can be summarized as follows: "Get out of bed, get on with your duty, and appreciate what is around you. That is the meaning of life." The goal of education, he believed, was to enable people to understand their duty, to find their assigned tasks, and to perform them to the best of their abilities.

Essential Reading:

Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*.

Supplementary Reading:

Rutherford, *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*.

Dill, *Roman Society*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does Marcus Aurelius show us that we can live an ethical life without a personal vision of god?
2. How could you, as a busy, practical person, put the lessons of the *Meditations* into your own life?

Lecture Four

Bhagavad Gita

Scope: Mohandas Gandhi called the *Bhagavad Gita* the "religious book par excellence," and it is regarded as the supreme creation of Sanskrit literature. Composed in the same period as the *Iliad*, this poem, "*The Song of God*," is also an epic statement of polytheism, of the belief that god has fashioned many roads to the truth. As in the *Iliad*, a story of war and battle provides the vehicle to explore deeper questions of the nature of god. The *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims that beyond the multitude of deities, there is an all-encompassing, single divine power. This god is truth, and the search for wisdom is the pathway to god and to the freedom that is eternal. Wisdom lies in understanding that material goods and success are false idols. Freedom comes by overcoming our desires for what is false and devoting ourselves and our work to what is true and eternal.

Outline

I. This session begins with a review of the first three lectures.

A. Great books are books that speak to us individually and represent books and authors that have made history. These books have lived past their time and can influence our lives and events today. Great books have a great theme, are written in noble language, and are able to speak across the ages.

B. The course is developed around eternal themes: God, fate, good and evil, the meaning of life, and how people live their lives in pursuit of truth. The books discuss duty and responsibility; law, justice, and government; love and beauty; courage, honor, and ambition; our relationship to nature; and our definition of education.

1. Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers From Prison* is the work of a man in search of truth who found the courage to resist evil and who gave his life in the pursuit of good. His ideas have lived on despite Hitler's attempt to crush them. The civil rights movement of the 1960s found special relevance in this work.

2. Homer's *Iliad* offers wisdom to us today in such central themes as God, fate, and the meaning of good and evil. It also teaches how to live life with courage while understanding the virtue of moderation. It is the first great work of classical Greek literature that has come down to us.

3. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius represents the summation of Greek thought on God, fate, and good and evil. The Roman Empire of Marcus Aurelius, which was the Roman Empire of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., was the cultural heir of Greece, and

Marcus Aurelius wrote the *Meditations* in Greek. The writings of Marcus Aurelius represent the culmination of the transformation of the god Zeus from the capricious and lecherous master found in the poetry of Homer to a god who is associated with absolute truth and good and who is equated with nature, is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-seeing.

C. In the same way that the Romans were the cultural heirs of the Greeks, the United States of today is the cultural heir of Europe.

II. The culmination of an image of god as a vision of truth can be found perhaps as early as 500 B.C. in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the "Song of God." This work was a product of classical Indian civilization.

A. Around 1800 B.C., the flourishing civilizations around the Indus River were overrun by invaders from the west.

B. The language of these invaders was Sanskrit, also the language of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Sanskrit was related to Persian and more distantly to Greek, Latin, and the Germanic languages.

C. These invaders, who called themselves Aryans, meaning "nobles," imposed their rule by conquest. From warfare and destruction came a new civilization that produced rich poetry, including the *Bhagavad Gita*, in an epic form.

D. The religion of this people was Hinduism, a polytheistic religion that rejects the notion that the world of the gods is finite, but is willing to recognize any new divine power capable of rendering supernatural benefits to the community of worshipers. All nature was seen as a manifestation of the divine. Sacrifice is fundamental to this worship; it can be used to offer homage to the gods in return for their blessings and to avert evil. Individual gods can take many forms. As in Homer's *Iliad* and the writings of Marcus Aurelius, this polytheistic notion of the divine can foster an image of one all-powerful and universal god.

III. The *Bhagavad Gita* is part of a longer work, the *Mahabharata.*

A. It is a poem that presents an epic story of warfare.

B. Its author is unknown.

C. The warfare in the *Bhagavad Gita* is a symbol of the ongoing conflict of life and the struggle for the wisdom to live life in a way that is meaningful to us as individuals. It is the struggle between two warring tribes; it is also a struggle between right and wrong and between good and evil.

D. At the beginning of the story, Arjuna, the hero, does not understand the nature of his struggle and wishes to withdraw from the war

IV. Truth is a central idea of the *Bhagavad Gita.*

A. The first word of the *Bhagavad Gita* is *dharma*, or "truth."

B. In this allegory, Krishna, the charioteer of Arjuna, is also the image of the supreme god of the universe; Arjuna is everyman, the soul. Krishna explains to Arjuna how he must travel the battlefield of life.

C. Gandhi's statements reflect the theme of the *Bhagavad Gita.* Gandhi said that it is more important to believe that truth is God than that God is truth. Truth comes first.

D. Krishna's message to Arjuna is that Arjuna must be steadfast in the truth and must fight the battle of life understanding what truth is.

V. The *Bhagavad Gita* also explains that behind the changing formations of the divine, there is one underlying divine being who is all and that Krishna is one of his manifestations.

A. God's presence is everywhere throughout all things in the universe.

B. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, God makes himself visible in his true form to Arjuna. This God is everywhere throughout the universe. The universe is contained in one atom of this divine being, and in every person, there is a part of this divine being.

VI. After this glimpse of the majesty of God and the understanding that God is all, an individual can come to an understanding of his or her role in the universe that God has created. That role is our soul.

A. This idea contrasts with the viewpoints seen in both the *Iliad* and the *Mediations.* Marcus Aurelius was unsure of the existence of the soul; if it did exist, he believed that it came to an end at death. For Homer, this life is what we have and we must live it.

B. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the soul endures, is eternal, and is divine. The task of mankind is to purify the soul and gain wisdom and truth so that the soul can gain ultimate liberation.

C. This ultimate liberation is the next step. The body is seen as a prison; bodily desires are the result of false knowledge and false wisdom (for example, the desire for power and wealth). Wisdom enables a person to begin to shed false desires.

1. The path of wisdom is to lead us to a stage that frees the soul for eternity from the bondage of the body.

2. Power leads to no ultimate liberation; after death, an individual becomes some other creature.

3. The fate an individual earns through making choices affects that individual for many cycles of death and rebirth.

4. The *Bhagavad Gita* is about making the correct choices through wisdom. Earthly actions are good or evil and have enduring consequences. Choices using true wisdom allow a person to ultimately gain eternal liberation.

D. Wisdom consists of understanding *karma*, which means the task that an individual has been assigned by God. Karma is the role and the task of

the individual. The choice to accept karma must be made with full realization of the difficulty of performing one's duty. Krishna teaches Arjuna that his duty is to fight this war.

1. A person who renounces his or her assigned task is doomed to eternal reincarnation and suffering.
2. Accepting the assigned task with fear also leads to endless cycles of reincarnation.
3. Accepting the task with a whole heart allows a being to rise a step or two.
4. Accepting the task with supreme spirit and a fully dutiful conscience and understanding can lead to ultimate liberation and the pure bliss of unification with God, which is ultimate freedom.
5. The decision to follow the assigned way can bring a being to liberation. Even the greatest sinner can be liberated by doing his or her task to the utmost.

VII. The religion of the *Bhagavad Gita* is not a renunciation of life. It is the call to learn the ultimate meaning of life. The *Bhagavad Gita* answers the questions of God, good and evil, and fate. It also deals with truth, duty, justice, and love.

A. God is all, God is eternal and everlasting, and God pervades the entire universe.

B. Good is following the mission of one's life.

C. On the subject of fate, the *Bhagavad Gita* indicates that every individual and particle of the universe has a destiny. An individual must have the wisdom to know his or her destiny.

D. Truth is everything and all things.

E. Duty and responsibility are assigned by God and may lead away from what other people recommend.

F. Ultimate justice lies in every particle of the universe willingly and joyfully carrying out the will of God. The *Bhagavad Gita* does not separate the world, God, fate, life, and government. They are all mingled in the total vision of the world and justice. Justice is not of men but is part of the divine order. The person of justice is unshakable and steadfast in the truth.

G. Love led Krishna to take form in this world so that Arjuna could see him. An individual's love is to become absolutely immersed in the divine; to do that, one may forsake all things and put oneself on God's path.

VIII. The ultimate message of the *Bhagavad Gita* is that God has created many roads to the truth; each person must find his or her own road.

A. These roads may include ritual sacrifices, a life of religious piety, contemplation and study, or struggle for liberation. Gandhi understood that his path was to struggle for the liberation of his country.

B. The Hindu never seeks to absolutely define the world of the gods. There are many different forms of God, and each one may have a role in leading one individual to an understanding of truth.

C. The form or ceremonies of God are not important. What is important is the understanding that God is truth. That understanding gives one the courage to live life and follow *karma*.

IX. The *Bhagavad Gita*, like the *Divine Comedy*, is one of the greatest works of education ever composed. It leads from the darkness of a life without meaning to the clarity of God's wisdom.

X. The civilizations of classical Greece and classical India may have had some contact with each other. However, classical Indian civilization has little regard for history or for concrete knowledge of the past. Although similarities exist between the vision of divine glory in Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, the classical Indian view would be that these similarities represent eternal and enduring wisdom that is deeper than history.

Essential Reading:

Bhagavad Gita.

Supplementary Reading:

Carrithers and Champakalakshimi in *Encyclopedia of India*.

Coomaraswamy, *Hinduism and Buddhism*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare the vision of God in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius with that of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Compare and contrast the ethical teachings of these two great books.

2. Can you translate the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* into your own life?

Lecture Five
Book of Exodus

Scope: Exodus might be called the most influential religious book ever composed. It has shaped three great living religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The *Iliad* and the *Bhagavad Gita* give us insight into the deeper religious meaning to be found in polytheism. By contrast, Exodus proclaims that God is one and demands that we have no other god but this one God. The God of Exodus is all-powerful and totally other than man. He is a god of law and judgment, the grantor of a freedom that is based on absolute surrender. Moses is his prophet, the man chosen against his will to proclaim the message of God. The prophet embodies the ideal of a divine calling. Prophets, from Moses to Socrates, from Jesus to Muhammad, and perhaps, even until our own day, call us to challenge our conventional assumptions and change our lives.

Outline

I. The *Bhagavad Gita* still speaks to mankind today.

A. Three words summarize a good part of its message.

1. The word *om* is the sacred word of God. It is the word with which a person should begin every day and every task that is undertaken simply because it is that person's work, that person's task, and that person's *karma.*

2. The word *tat* means a task being fulfilled without any thought of gain or profit.

3. The word *sat* is the perfect conclusion of a work done for God.

B. The *Bhagavad Gita*, the sacred work of the Hindu religion, is still read by millions every day.

C. The life of Gandhi, who believed that one must stand fast in the truth, epitomizes the way in which the *Bhagavad Gita* changed history.

D. The lessons of the *Bhagavad Gita* are eternal, but the date that the *Bhagavad Gita* was written is unknown.

E. The ideas in the *Bhagavad Gita* enlightened Buddha in the 5th and 6th centuries B.C., and Buddhism subsequently shaped the civilizations of China, Korea, Tibet, and Nepal.

II. The biblical Book of Exodus is the most influential book ever written. It shaped Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

A. Tradition indicates that Moses was the author.

B. The *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Iliad* are tributes to polytheism. In them, God has fashioned many roads to the truth. In the Book of Exodus—as

in the Gospel of Mark and the Koran—only one path to the truth exists. God will allow no other gods to be worshiped.

III. Moses was an actual historical figure, and a true historical context exists for the Book of Exodus.

A. Egypt was the great power of the Middle East. Ramses II, who reigned from 1279 to 1213, sought to consolidate and centralize the imperial power. Ramses II may be "the pharaoh who knew not Joseph," that is, the pharaoh in the Book of Exodus.

B. Biblical stories have some historical grounding. Wandering tribes did come in from the deserts, famines did occur, and foreigners rose to positions of power.

C. The name Moses is actually an Egyptian name. One way to read the familiar story that Moses was raised as an Egyptian is that he really was an Egyptian and that this tale was a way of making him a Hebrew after the fact.

D. In the Book of Exodus, Moses killed an Egyptian and fled into exile.

1. In exile, God found Moses and gave him his calling. When Moses, a shepherd, saw the burning bush, he asked what it was, and God answered, "I am who I am."

2. God told Moses that he was to lead the Hebrews from Egypt.

3. Moses, a reluctant prophet, did not want to lead the Hebrews, but he found meaning for his life in absolute submission to the will of God.

E. On a divine level, the Book of Exodus is a story of God and about the acts of God in history; on a personal level, however, it is about a man who was called to a great task and who gained fame and enduring meaning through acceptance of this calling.

F. Moses returned to Egypt to request that pharaoh allow the Hebrews to leave. The details in this story speak of history, including the description that the work of the Israelites involved gathering straw to make bricks for the city.

G. Because the pharaoh refused to let the Hebrews leave, God sent the plagues. Although contemporary historians can find practical explanations for these events, they were considered miracles by the Israelites and proofs of God's power.

H. Following the most terrible of the afflictions, the slaying of the firstborn, the Israelites fled Egypt under the guidance of Moses.

I. When the Israelites came to the Red Sea, the sea parted, and they miraculously escaped their Egyptian pursuers. This historic event is commemorated in the biblical song of rejoicing: "The horse and his rider He has thrown into the sea. The Lord has triumphed. Blessed be

his name." That kernel represents real history and deliverance from a historical danger.

J. The Israelites may have been an assortment of peoples who came together under a charismatic leader, who in turn, brought them to a new land and gave them a history. The tradition that Moses composed the first five books of the Bible may rest on the realization that a people need a common history and common rites that separate them from others. Such Jewish traditions as ritual circumcision and avoidance of pork may represent a legacy of the time that the Israelites spent in Egypt.

K. The Israelites made their way from Egypt and began wandering in search of the holy land that God had promised to them.

IV. After wandering through the desert, Moses brought the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where God spoke to Moses and gave him the law under which the Israelites were to make their absolute submission to God.

A. These Ten Commandments have shaped history through our own day.

B. The Ten Commandments reflect what we know about treaties in the Middle East at the time that the Book of Exodus was written (in approximately the 13th century B.C.). In these treaties, an absolute ruler or king makes an agreement to protect a people if they accept his complete domination. Such an agreement reflects the Middle Eastern (Mesopotamian) definition of freedom as rights and privileges granted by an absolute ruler that the ruler can take away at any time if his will is disobeyed.

1. God's first stipulation is "I am the Lord thy God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of bondage." Thus, the story of the Israelites begins with freedom from the slavery of Egypt and the boon that "I am" has bestowed.

2. "You will have no other gods besides me" represents monotheism in its most extreme form. This grant of freedom depends on the Israelites worshiping God and God alone.

3. The statement "You will make no graven images" is a second stipulation. It prohibits the worship of false gods.

4. "You will not take my name in vain" means that the people should swear no oaths that they will break. This God of absolute truth requires that the truth must not be breached in any way.

5. God next required the Israelites to show obedience by keeping one day, the Sabbath, holy.

6. The next commandment, to honor one's father and mother, is a bridge from commandments dealing with man's relationship to God to how individuals should deal with others.

7. The remaining commandments reflect absolute prohibitions. The Israelites were enjoined from killing others, committing adultery,

stealing, bearing false witness, and being jealous of others. These absolute truths could not be disobeyed.

C. Following the Ten Commandments would lead to salvation and freedom; breaking them would lead to destruction and enslavement.

V. The Book of Exodus is a book of social justice. It elaborates the Ten Commandments and sets up a social system, balancing the need for justice with compassion. The God of the Book of Exodus is a God who is vengeful and stern but also forgiving and compassionate.

A. As soon as the people received the commandments, including the commandment prohibiting graven images, they made a golden calf.

B. Moses kept interceding for his people. God relented and forgave them many times and treated them with compassion.

VI. Moses, the great prophet, never saw the Promised Land.

VII. The Israelites moved on and took Canaan by fire and sword, which is also validated by the archaeological record.

VIII. The origin of monotheism appears to have its roots in Egypt.

A. The pharaoh Akhenaton, who ruled from 1352 B.C. to 1336 B.C., tried to foster a religion of only one god, Aten, whose beauty was shown in the sun itself. This god was seen as an all-powerful being under which the universe prospered. Akhenaton wrote poetry about Aten and built temples to him.

B. Although Akhenaton could not impose his will on his Egyptian contemporaries, who favored polytheism, this seed of monotheism may have lived on and found an enduring form in the prophet Moses and his mission.

IX. The Book of Exodus made history and can still arouse controversy today in a society that really does not want commandments.

Essential Reading:

Book of Exodus.

Supplementary Reading:

Barth, *Word of God and Word of Man*.

Wright and Fuller, *Book of the Acts of God*, pp. 1–98.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare the idea of liberty in Exodus with your own personal concept of liberty.

2. Do you believe that it is suitable to place copies of the Ten Commandments in American law courts?

Lecture Six
Gospel of Mark

Scope: The four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are our sole sources for the life of the teacher and prophet Jesus of Nazareth. For two millennia, that story has changed untold millions of lives and has made history. It has been the source of great art and philosophical treatises, poetry, novels, and motions pictures. Each of the Gospels presents a portrait of Jesus, differing in emphasis. Mark is the most concise and dramatic, drawn from the firsthand account of Peter. The power and success of Jesus' teaching and the uncompromising message that he taught brought Jesus into direct and conscious conflict with the established political and social powers of his day. The Jesus of the Gospel of Mark is a prophet and a philosopher, who testifies to his search for wisdom by his trial and death.

Outline

I. The previous lecture, on the Book of Exodus, began the exploration of the prophet, a figure who compels people to deal with the theme of God. The previous lecture dealt with Moses, the prophet who founded Judaism; this lecture deals with Jesus, who founded Christianity.

II. The Gospel of Mark begins in Judaea, a province of the Roman Empire in 36 A.D., at the Sea of Galilee.

- **A.** To several fishermen, one of whom was Peter, appeared a man about whom they knew nothing. The man said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."
- **B.** Peter followed Jesus for reasons that he perhaps could never explain and continued following him and teaching about him until his (Peter's) death in Rome.

III. All we know about Jesus is contained in the four Gospels. Three of them—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—have a great deal in common.

- **A.** John, which has a profound message, differs substantially from the other three, even in chronology. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were named by the early church as the "Synoptic Gospels," those that see things in the same way.
- **B.** Matthew appears to have been written for a primarily Jewish audience.
- **C.** Luke, the most historically minded of the Gospels, was written for a Gentile audience.
- **D.** Mark is believed to represent the firsthand account of Jesus, as taught by Peter and taken down by John Mark, the friend and disciple of Peter; it is believed to represent the message of Jesus that Peter

preached. Like the other Gospels, it was first published around 70 A.D., but it may have been the first one written.

IV. Mark, unlike Luke or Matthew, does not begin with the birth of Jesus or with a long introduction. Instead, it begins with Jesus being called by John the Baptist, then suddenly appearing at the Sea of Galilee.

A. After calling Peter and the other fishermen, Jesus went with the men to the town of Capernaum.

B. Jesus began his public mission in the synagogue at Capernaum, which was built in the style of a Greek temple. This building style points to the penetration of Greek culture throughout the Roman Empire, even as far as the Near East.

C. Jesus is believed to have been a learned man. He knew the Hebrew testament and probably knew Greek and Latin, as well as Aramaic, the language of the people.

D. At that time, the formula for the synagogue service was prayer, followed by a reading from the Old Testament, including law, Prophets, or Psalms; then, one person stood up to give a message. Traditionally, only Pharisees gave this message.

E. The Pharisees were learned in the law. They explicated the Jewish laws, which stemmed from the Ten Commandments but had become so complex that no layperson could understand them. Jesus later said that the Ten Commandments were simple and could be summarized as "Love God and love your neighbor." The Pharisees believed that their social identity was wrapped up with their knowledge of the law. They believed that if every Jewish person followed the letter of the Jewish law for one day, the Kingdom of God would be restored, Rome would be forced to leave, and Israel would become a kingdom.

F. Jesus, who had no known academic credentials, preached his message in the temple. Unlike the Pharisees, Jesus taught as one who had authority. He did not make his message complicated, and his voice was powerful and mesmerizing. From the outset, Jesus put himself on a collision course with the Pharisees, the most influential members of the community.

G. After delivering his message, Jesus went to Peter's home, where he healed Peter's mother-in-law.

H. The next morning, a crowd was waiting for Jesus. Peter found Jesus sitting outside and informed him that people were waiting to see him. Jesus said, "Then let us go back, for that is why I have come out."

1. According to the Gospel of Mark, before Jesus arrived in Galilee, he spent time in the Wilderness, where there was a Jewish monastic community.

2. The Essenes, according to Josephus, cut themselves off from the world, lived in monastic conditions, practiced baptism, and spent

their days waiting for the coming of the Kingdom of God. They believed that it would come about by copying the word of God. The Dead Sea Scrolls come from this community.

3. Jesus may have been part of that community. He was baptized in the River Jordan by John, where God announced to Jesus alone, "You are my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." That was God's call to Jesus.
4. Jesus then had to decide whether to stay in the monastic community to prepare for the coming of the Kingdom of God or to go out and teach the message about the Kingdom of God.
5. Because he decided to go out, he became a prophet, like Moses, Muhammad, and Socrates. The public mission of Jesus began at Galilee.

I. Jesus was addressed as a teacher, a rabbi. He taught a message that is simple and ambiguous at the same time: "The Kingdom of God is at hand. This is the critical moment. Repent and believe in the good news of the Gospel." Jesus traveled on a teaching mission that lasted not more than a year, spreading this simple doctrine and performing miracles.

V. Scholars of the 19th and 20th centuries spent much time rationalizing and attempting to explain the miracles of Jesus.

A. These miracles cannot be removed or explained away. They are fundamental to the message as perceived by the audience of Jesus. As people of the 21st century believe in science, people then believed in magic. Although contemporary people may not accept that such miracles occurred, the age in which Jesus lived believed in miracles. The miracles have a progressive character, from curing Peter's mother-in-law of a fever to bringing a girl back from the dead.

B. The miracles prompted people to deal with the question of God and whether he was speaking through this prophet or whether Jesus was a false prophet. In the narrative of the Gospel of Mark, these miracles are essential to authenticate the message of Jesus.

VI. At the time of Jesus, many false prophets had appeared who were seeking to drive out the Romans. It was a time of much social unrest. The people of Judaea resented Roman taxation and the fact that the Romans sent garrisons to Jerusalem at Passover. The Jews felt a sense of national degradation at the hands of the Romans.

VII. Jesus, an unknown man who lacked academic credentials as a Pharisee, appeared and was able to cure people.

A. The Pharisees began to keep an eye on Jesus; he was perceived to be a dangerous troublemaker who claimed to be a prophet.

B. Jesus did not try to conciliate the Pharisees and, in fact, went out of his way to antagonize them.

1. The disciples of Jesus did not perform the ritual ablutions prescribed by the Pharisees before eating.

2. Jesus told the Pharisees that what defiles a person is not what goes into them but what comes out of them, specifically, lies and hypocrisy. He told the Pharisees that they were rotten inside.

C. The message of Jesus was easy to misinterpret, which the Pharisees did.

1. They thought that Jesus was preaching social revolution, that riches should be taken from wealthy people and given to the poor.

2. When Jesus stated, "The critical moment is at hand," the Pharisees interpreted it to mean a crisis, that is, a moment that would never come again. They thought that he was saying that now was the time to strike.

3. "The Kingdom of God is at hand" could be interpreted to mean that the Romans should be overthrown and the kingdom of Israel reestablished.

4. "Repent" could be interpreted to mean that everything should be changed and the existing order should be overthrown.

5. "Believe in the Gospel" might mean that Jesus was teaching a new gospel in conflict with the "good news" of Roman propaganda, that is, that the emperor was the savior of mankind. Jesus's Gospel meant the overthrow of Rome.

D. Jesus was labeled a revolutionary and an enemy of Rome.

E. Although Jesus knew that his position was dangerous, he traveled to Jerusalem, the center of Judaism, during Passover, the most sacred time of the Jewish year, when all Jews celebrate the end of their bondage in Egypt and when all Jews—even the most pro-Roman among them—hoped that Rome might be driven out and Israel restored to greatness.

F. Although the Romans generally showed respect for Jewish sensibilities, they sent a garrison to Jerusalem at Passover to prevent an uprising. Pontius Pilate, the governor of Judaea, was nervous about the emperor Tiberius, who was suspicious, paranoid, and obsessed with treason. Tiberius did not allow his governors to tolerate traitors.

G. After arriving at the Temple, Jesus drove out the moneychangers.

H. Jesus had become dangerous and had to be destroyed but could not be arrested.

1. The Sanhedrin, a council of 71 Jewish elders who governed Judaea, decided to remove Jesus from the support of his followers.

2. To test Jesus, a Pharisee asked him whether he believed that the people should pay taxes. Jesus asked the Pharisee to show him one of his coins. The coin of the Pharisee had an image of Caesar.

Jesus said, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s.”

I. The Sanhedrin had absolute control over the internal affairs of Judaea. Jesus was arrested and tried before the court of the Sanhedrin. Caiaphas, the high priest, asked Jesus whether he was the Messiah. Jesus answered, “Yes, and you will see the son of God coming, seated at the right hand of God, the father.” The Sanhedrin wished to sentence Jesus to death, but only the governor was allowed to impose a death sentence.

J. Pontius Pilate recognized that the Jews had turned Jesus over to him out of envy. Because a person was considered guilty until proven innocent under Roman law, Jesus had to at least say that he was not guilty of the crimes, but he did not do so. Blasphemy, however, was not a crime under Roman law. The Sanhedrin alleged that Jesus had called himself king of the Jews, which was indeed a crime, because there could be only one king of the Roman Empire and that king was Tiberius. Jesus refused to deny that he was king of the Jews.

K. A member of the Sanhedrin said that if Jesus was not found guilty, they would refer the case to Caesar, against Pilate’s wishes. Pilate still wanted to let Jesus go and gave the people a chance to choose which prisoner would be pardoned. Because Jesus had called the people to individual redemption rather than giving a fiery call to overthrow the Romans, they were no longer interested in his message. The crowd requested that Barabbas be pardoned, and Jesus was led to his execution.

L. In the Gospel of Mark, none of the disciples was present at the crucifixion of Jesus. A Roman officer in charge of the crucifixion stated that he had never seen a man die with such courage. The Roman officer was the first person to say, “Truly, this man is the son of God.”

M. With that statement, the message of the prophet began to reach out to the Gentile world.

N. Only those who study Roman history in detail know anything about Tiberius, but Jesus Christ transformed the lives of millions in worlds the ancient Romans never knew existed. The words of the prophet Jesus echo down the corridors of time.

Essential Reading:

Gospel of Mark.

Supplementary Reading:

Schweitzer, *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*.

Wright and Fuller, *Book of the Acts of God*, pp. 215–285.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you interpret the admonition of Jesus "to render unto Caesar, the things that are Caesar's and unto the Lord the things that are the Lord's"?
2. How could the message of Jesus, as we find it in Mark, be interpreted as a call for social revolution?

Lecture Seven
Koran

Scope: The sacred book of the Koran holds for Muslims the same place that the words of Jesus do for Christians. The words of the book itself are the revelation of God to humankind. Muhammad is the prophet chosen by God to make this revelation known to the world. From a firsthand point of view, different from Exodus and the Gospels, the Koran provides us with insight into the mind of a prophet who made history and changed millions of lives. The message of the Koran is an uncompromising one of absolute monotheism, focused on the ideal of God as truth, mercy, and power; demanding complete submission and ethical conduct; and rewarding the faithful and punishing those who reject his revelation.

Outline

I. This lecture explores two questions: Who was Muhammad, the prophet of the one and only God? What is the Koran, this revelation from God that transformed history?

II. Muhammad was born in Arabia in 570 A.D. to a respected family.

- **A.** For his first 40 years, he lived a quiet life. He had been left an orphan, was raised by an uncle, married a wealthy widow, and took part in the caravan trade.
- **B.** Muhammad listened and learned about Christianity and Judaism while sitting around campfires in distant parts of Arabia.
- **C.** At the age of 40, he stepped forward to proclaim that God had chosen him as the messenger of a belief that there was only one God, a God who demanded ethical righteousness. This was a God of individual salvation who demanded that each person make a decision to follow the truth of God or the lie of Satan. Those who chose to follow the truth of God would find themselves in paradise, but those who followed the lie of Satan would burn in eternal fire.

III. The spread of Islam was not just a spiritual event but a historical, political, and military event that changed the history of the world.

IV. Arabia in 570 A.D. was caught between the two great powers of its day.

- **A.** Persia had been revitalized under a monotheistic religion that proclaimed that God was one. Ahura Mazda was the god of truth, in constant war against the lie. This religion required an ethical commitment, and it was a religion of individual salvation. Its prophet was Zarathustra. Adherents believed that a person who followed truth, believed in Ahura Mazda, and lived a life of righteousness would never

perish but would enjoy eternal life in paradise. Those who chose the lie, however, would fall into the fiery pit.

B. The other power was the Roman Empire, the empire of Christianity, which believed in one God who assumed three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. This religion of ethical righteousness demanded that believers accept God through Christ. The religion promised salvation and paradise to those who believed and lived a life of righteousness and eternal damnation to those who refused to believe.

C. Rome and Persia were declining and focused on warfare against each other.

V. Arabia itself, never occupied by Romans but within Rome's sphere of influence, was divided into a number of tribes, some of which were centered on oases and others, wanderers in the desert. Arabia of the 6th century was a society in change and turmoil.

A. Its economy had grown rapidly.

B. Political, social, and religious ideas came from as far away as China and Britain through the caravan trade.

C. Arabia had a distinctive culture.

D. The literature of Arabia included poetry written in beautiful Arabic. Some poetry glorified valor in war, and some was love poetry. Arabia also had a literature of prophesy, consisting of oracular comments that were short, pithy, and ambiguous.

E. The religion of Arabia was based on animistic ideas. In Mecca, it was believed that the Great Black Stone had fallen from heaven and that it embodied the power of the gods. People believed in demons that could take possession of them. Various forms of Christianity and Judaism also existed in Mecca, with Christians divided into opposing sects.

VI. Muhammad learned about the prophets of Judaism and about Jesus.

A. Jesus, he believed, was a prophet who had been put to death unjustly; because Jesus was divine, he had never really died but was taken into heaven and had been a messenger from God.

B. Muhammad respected Christianity as it should be in its purified form, with Christ bringing the message of the one God to the whole world.

C. Muhammad respected Judaism for its message of only one God.

D. Muhammad believed that both these religions had been led astray. He believed that God was much simpler than the current practitioners of Judaism and Christianity would allow.

VII. At the age of 40, Muhammad experienced his first revelation from God.

A. Muhammad believed that the archangel Gabriel had appeared to him and said that Muhammad was to be a messenger from God and that

God would proclaim his oneness and his demand for righteousness through Muhammad.

B. Muhammad explained to Gabriel that he was an illiterate caravan driver and asked why anyone would listen to him.

C. Gabriel answered that God had chosen Muhammad. Thus began the revelation of the Koran.

D. The role of the Koran is not like the role of the New Testament. It resembles Jesus in that the Koran itself is the revelation of God. Its words are absolutely sacred.

VIII. After three years of silence, God spoke again to Muhammad and would do so again and again over the years.

A. The simple message that Muhammad had received and was to proclaim was the following: God is the only god, and Muhammad is his prophet. God is great, powerful, all-compassionate, all-knowing, and all-seeing. He has created the universe and demands righteous behavior from everyone and calls upon everyone to accept this message.

B. Muhammad first revealed his message to family members, including his wife, who believed him and believed that God was speaking to him.

C. Muhammad spoke to larger groups in Mecca.

D. He met with resistance because he threatened vested interests.

1. Some of Mecca's wealth came from those who were making pilgrimages to the Black Stone.

2. The teachings of Muhammad threatened established ideas, including the tribal idea, which indicated that a person's first loyalty is to the tribe. Muhammad said that a person's first loyalty was to God.

3. People also questioned what gave Muhammad the right to proclaim a new god.

E. Muhammad found the mission that God had imposed on him so difficult and trying that, in 622, he fled from Mecca to Medina, which welcomed him as an arbiter in its own internal struggles.

1. Muhammad came to realize that God demanded that he spread this faith even if he was opposed by military might. He began to weld the people of Medina into an army motivated by the belief that God had chosen them to spread his word.

2. By 630, Muhammad had conquered Mecca partly by negotiations, and his message and political power began to spread throughout much of Arabia.

F. By the time of Muhammad's death in 632, he had created a political structure and military force that carried the banner of Islam and worship of one God. The religion ultimately spread through Spain into

the Pyrenees to France, to Egypt, Syria, Jerusalem, and into Asia Minor and Persia.

1. These conquests were not made by force alone; many converted to Islam not from terror but because they believed that the message of Muhammad was the truth.
2. Muhammad became a military and political leader, a successful prophet in his own day.

IX. The basic message of Muhammad and the Koran is a simple statement: "There is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet."

A. The language in the Koran is believed to be so pure that it cannot be translated. The Arabic language in it is considered to be the word of God. All that a person needs to know is contained in the Koran.

B. The Koran is divided into chapters, but its organization is difficult for the Western mind to understand. The order is not chronological. Muhammad received these revelations, dictated them, and they were thrown into a large chest. When they were arranged, the arrangement was in backward order chronologically.

X. The Koran contains answers to every issue raised by the great themes discussed in this course.

A. There is only one God. Muhammad believed that Christians tried to modify the simple message of Jesus to create three gods. To Muhammad, Christians were polytheists.

B. The world is divided into good and evil. Muhammad taught that absolute good and absolute evil exist and that absolute good is at war with absolute evil.

1. The duty of those who submit to God is to spread that message, by the sword if necessary.
2. If the infidels accept the message in peace or leave believers in peace, they can be tolerated; however, if they take up arms against believers, the believers must wage war.
3. Those who die fighting for the faith of Muhammad will go to paradise. To fight for faith and, if necessary, die for it is one of the highest callings.

C. Islam believes that God has decreed everything from the beginning of time. Nothing happens that does not come from God. God will not overburden any soul, because he gives the true believer courage to deal with whatever he sends. The meaning of life is found in total submission to the will of God. *Islam* means "total submission."

D. The duty of every Muslim is to spread the faith and to be a good person. In the Koran, Muhammad indicates that there are five righteous actions that every Muslim must take.

1. The first of these actions is to say with absolute meaning, "I believe that there is no god but God and Muhammad is his prophet."
2. The next step is to give alms. Muhammad praises those who help the poor.
3. A Muslim must pray five times a day—in the morning, at noon, in the middle of the afternoon, when the sun begins to set, and in the dark of night.
4. A Muslim must fast during Ramadan, the holy month when God first made himself known to Muhammad. Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset to show their submission to God.
5. Muslims should make a pilgrimage to Mecca if possible. The Black Stone is proof that God existed from the beginning of time.

E. Muhammad believed that Abraham, Noah, Isaiah, and Jesus were Muslims because all submitted themselves to the will of God and preached the existence of one God.

F. Islam answers the question: What is nature? Nature is the handiwork of God. God has created all that exists.

G. Moses brought the message that man should not make graven images, because God is all-powerful and all-knowing and cannot be confined by the images of mankind. The Koran is the only sacred image that mankind needs. It is the image and the revelation of God.

XI. Each one of the prophets studied in this course spoke forth and told the truth. A prophet is one who speaks forth.

A. Jesus, Muhammad, Moses, and Socrates were at first unwilling prophets.

B. All four prophets had a simple message.
1. Muhammad stated that there was no god but God.
2. Jesus said, "The time is at hand; repent; believe in the Kingdom of God."
3. Socrates said that people should believe that they have a conscience, believe that there is absolute truth, and believe that the soul is immortal.
4. Moses believed that God had said to him, "I am the Lord thy God, who led thee out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You will have no other gods before me."

C. All four prophets demanded righteous behavior.
1. Socrates spent his entire life trying to make people understand what good is.
2. Muhammad demanded that people lead righteous lives.
3. Moses brought the Ten Commandments.
4. The message of Jesus reduced the Commandments to two: Love God and love your neighbor.

D. All four of these prophets were deemed dangerous in their time, because they attacked the established order.
   1. In fact, two of them—Jesus and Socrates—were executed because of their uncompromising stand for the truth.
   2. According to Machiavelli, Moses and Muhammad triumphed because they each had an army behind them.

E. The message of each of these prophets changed the world by being institutionalized.
   1. The message of Muhammad became the religion of Islam.
   2. Jesus turned the religion of the Jews into one that the Gentiles could understand.
   3. Plato transformed the message of Socrates to follow the truth into a philosophy.

F. All four prophets presented the same powerful message: Be true to yourself and search for your soul.

Essential Reading:

Koran.

Supplementary Reading:

Carrithers et al., *Founders of Faiths*.

Esposito, *Oxford History of Islam*.

Watt, *Companion to the Qur'an*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare Muhammad and Moses as prophets, commanders, and lawgivers.

2. We have said that Muhammad does not permit a separation of church and state. What issues do you think this raises for democracy in Islamic countries?

Lecture Eight
Gilgamesh

Scope: According to the Koran, "everything that happens to us is destined by God." The question of fate or destiny is at the core of the earliest literary work to come down to us, the Sumerian epic of *Gilgamesh*, composed in the 3rd millennium B.C. in what is now Iraq. Like the heroes of the *Iliad*, Gilgamesh is faced with the inevitable fate of all humans, death. He goes in search of eternal life and learns that he must die, but what matters is how he lives, what he achieves during his life, and the reputation that he leaves behind him. The story of Gilgamesh became a formative element in the early literature of the Middle East, leaving its echoes in the Old Testament story of the flood and, centuries later, shaping the image of Alexander the Great. Of all the literature that has come down from the early civilizations of Egypt and the Middle East, the epic of *Gilgamesh* speaks most directly to us today.

Outline

I. The previous lecture explored the world of the Koran and saw the figure of Muhammad as a great prophet, whose revelation of the Koran, given by God, truly transformed history.

- **A.** The central theme of the Koran is God—who God is and what he demands of us.
- **B.** The Koran is written in noble language. Muslims believe that the Arabic of the Koran represents the perfection of language. Only one authorized translation of the Koran exists; it was created under the Ottoman Empire.
- **C.** The Koran is universal: it is studied and recited throughout the world of Islam. It is able to speak across many nations and cultures.

II. Westerners are concerned because the Koran provides an entire social and legal framework for Muslim society; however, Western society is the oddity because it separates the world of the divine and sacred from the world of the secular.

- **A.** Most of the great books show a belief that the divine is truly of the world of humans.
- **B.** The great civilizations of the past—including those of India, China, Greece, Rome, Mesopotamia, and Egypt—believed that there was no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. In those cultures, there could be no separation between church and state.

III. *Gilgamesh* is an epic poem that also reflects no separation between the

sacred and the secular.

A. *Gilgamesh* deals with the second of the themes for this course, the question of fate, a question that has consumed the minds of thoughtful individuals ever since the first days of civilization.

B. The prophet Muhammad indicates that everything that befalls people has been destined by God. This message is also central to the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.

IV. Civilization was born in Egypt and in Mesopotamia. Around 3000 B.C., both areas experienced an astonishing burst of anonymous creativity.

A. These early civilizations were characterized by systems of writing, complex government structures, and monumental architecture. Both the Tower of Babel and the pyramids represented monuments to the belief that no separation existed between the sacred and the secular.

B. Mesopotamia, the land of two rivers, is today's Iraq. Civilization there blossomed in the form of independent cities, including Uruk and Ur.

C. A complex governmental structure evolved to regulate the irrigation of the land through the two rivers. Irrigation released the population of Mesopotamia (as well as that of the Nile Valley) from the vagaries of the weather. The large cities were able to feed themselves.

D. This growth and harnessing of technology in the 3rd century B.C. came about through absolute government control.

1. The people of the Nile Valley accepted the belief that the pharaoh was god on earth and built pyramids to celebrate his eternity, the idea that the pharaoh would live forever.

2. The Mesopotamian city-states along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers were also based on the absolute power of the kingship. The king ruled because God had chosen him and placed him on the throne. Even the names of the rulers reflected this status.

V. The epic of *Gilgamesh* is the first known epic poem. Its theme is fate, and it asks the following questions.

A. What is our fate?

B. Why do we die?

C. Why can't we live forever?

VI. The epic of *Gilgamesh* has had several forms.

A. Civilization in Mesopotamia came into being with the Sumerians.

1. The language of the Sumerian civilization was not related to the Semitic tongues.

2. Early in the Sumerian culture, the people related tales of the figure of Gilgamesh, the man of joy and the man of woe.

3. Gilgamesh was a real historical figure, who lived around 2600 B.C. and had been king of Uruk. This powerful king was credited with building the walls that surrounded the city of Uruk. These walls were a symbol of his ability to organize labor and a symbol of the constant warfare in the towns of Mesopotamia.

B. Around 2100 B.C., a longer poem about Gilgamesh was written.
1. Almost from the beginning, this epic of Gilgamesh was written down; it was not part of oral composition.
2. The poem was written in the language of Babylonia, Akkadian, which was a Semitic language.

C. Around the end of the 2nd millennium B.C., a final, elaborate version of the epic of Gilgamesh appears.
1. The name associated with this poem is Shin-eqi-unninni, who is the first known great poet.
2. This poem was extensively copied, and examples of it were found in clay tablets of Ashurbanipal, the king of Assyria.
3. The Assyrians had come to rule Mesopotamia and pushed their rule to the Mediterranean Sea. They dominated Egypt for a time.
4. These stories about Gilgamesh attracted the interest of an educated audience. Oral tales of Gilgamesh also continued.

VII. The epic of Gilgamesh—a real historical figure who became the subject of mighty legends—is the story of how Gilgamesh looked into the abyss; in other words, how he came to realize that each person must die and that no one can escape that fate. It is the story of the quest of Gilgamesh for eternal life.

A. The story begins in the city of Uruk, where Gilgamesh is ruler. He flaunts his power and is mighty and vigorous, celebrating his achievements.

B. The world of *Gilgamesh* is a polytheistic one; the gods were human and accessible, like the gods of Homer. These gods intervened directly in the world of humans through oracles and dreams. Dreams were a way that the gods told humans what they were to do. The gods chose who would rule, set up codes of law, and made certain that there was no separation between the world of the divine and the world of humans.

C. Gilgamesh was two-thirds divine; his mother was a goddess, and his father was part divine, as well.

D. Gilgamesh abuses his power. The people believe that the behavior of Gilgamesh is out of control, and they appeal to the divinities for assistance.

E. The gods create Enkidu, a wild and uncivilized man who knows nothing of civilization and lives in the world of nature. Enkidu is finally civilized by a temple prostitute.

F. After a trial of strength, Enkidu and Gilgamesh become friends and set off on a series of adventures to make names for themselves so that people will remember Gilgamesh forever.

G. Together, Enkidu and Gilgamesh conquer and kill the fierce monster Khumbaba.

H. Gilgamesh rejects the love of the goddess Ishtar. Enkidu and Gilgamesh conquer a ferocious bull, a symbol of chaos, which had been sent to avenge this insult to the goddess.

I. Enkidu then sickens and dies. Gilgamesh becomes distraught and overwhelmed by his understanding that he, too, must die at some point.

J. Gilgamesh sets out to discover how he can conquer death. He discovers that one man, Ut-Napishtim, is immortal and decides to ask him the secret of immortality.

  1. To find Ut-Napishtim, Gilgamesh travels through the dark mountains, past the scorpion monster, and finally, crosses the sea of death.

  2. Ut-Napishtim explains that the gods had decided to destroy the human race and had instructed him to build an ark with two of every creature. These creatures and the family of Ut-Napishtim were the only beings who survived a mighty flood. The gods had granted Ut-Napishtim eternal life as a reward for his suffering.

  3. Ut-Napishtim tells Gilgamesh that he can become immortal if he is able to avoid sleeping. Gilgamesh immediately falls asleep. After he awakens, Ut-Napishtim tells him that he can live forever if he can bring the plant of immortality up from the bottom of the sea. Gilgamesh finds the plant, but a snake eats it. Gilgamesh then realizes that he will die.

K. Gilgamesh returns to Uruk and surveys the walls around the city. He says, "What I have done is good." He then lives the rest of his life knowing that he will die and that all that matters is his reputation and the achievements that he leaves behind.

Essential Reading:

Gilgamesh.

Supplementary Reading:

Jacobsen and Frankfort, *The Intellectual Adventures of Ancient Man*.

Hallo and Simpson, *History of the Ancient Near East*.

Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Are you engaged or put off by the fairy-tale quality of *Gilgamesh*?

2. What significance do you see in the parallels between *Gilgamesh* and the Old Testament?

Lecture Nine

Beowulf

Scope: *Gilgamesh* proclaims a heroic ideal: We are fated to die, but in the meantime, let us strive to be as great as possible. This same message is the theme of the first great work of English literature, the 8th-century Anglo-Saxon epic *Beowulf.* The story of Beowulf, like that of Gilgamesh, is the tale of a mighty warrior who goes in search of adventure and fame. In the guise of monsters, Beowulf encounters the eternal struggle of good against evil. All humans must die. That is fate. But Beowulf accepts this challenge, and in war and sacrifice, he finds the reward of enduring fame and glory. Beowulf takes his place alongside Achilles and Gilgamesh as the paradigm of the epic hero.

Outline

I. In this course, *Gilgamesh* is the first work dealing with the theme of fate and how people deal with the fact that each person must die.

A. *Gilgamesh* deals with the search for eternal life and gives a message that each person must live as best he or she can and leave behind a reputation for greatness.

B. *Gilgamesh* has the three previously mentioned characteristics of a great work: it has a great theme, it is written in noble language, and it speaks across the ages.

C. A fourth characteristic shared by many of the great works in this course is that they are works that summarize the values of a civilization at its apex. *Gilgamesh* summarizes the civilization of Mesopotamia, its values, and its belief in a divine world that interacts with the world of humans.

II. *Beowulf*, the first great work of English literature, is one of the greatest epics ever composed. This heroic epic summarizes the heroic values of the Anglo-Saxon world. *Beowulf* tells of an age in which the chief values were bravery in war, courage, and honor—the reputation for bravery and courage.

III. The *Beowulf* story was created by a warrior society.

A. Seagoing pirates from what is now northern Germany, Denmark, and Sweden attacked Roman Britain as early as the 3rd century A.D.

B. By the end of the 5th century, these raids were no longer plundering attacks but actual conquests.

C. By the 7th century, the leading tribes—the Angles, the Saxons, and the Jutes—had conquered Roman Britain and driven the inhabitants to the west, where they became the Welsh.

1. Roman *Britannia* became *England*, or "the land of the Angles."
2. The conquerors brought their Germanic language, Anglo-Saxon, which eventually developed into the English language.
3. England was divided into warring kingdoms, including North Umbria and Mercia, but these kingdoms gradually adopted Christianity. By the 8th century, the fierce war code of the Anglo-Saxons had been somewhat softened by Christianity.

IV. *Beowulf* brings readers back to the values of the pagan world, tempered only slightly by references to God.

A. The kings of the Anglo-Saxons were chosen mostly for their abilities in war. The king was the first among equals.

B. The Anglo-Saxons believed that dying with a sword in hand was the best way to die. Such an end would transport an individual to heaven.

C. For entertainment, the king would gather with his wife and retainers to listen to a minstrel. The songs of these minstrels used elaborate poetic language, which was filled with alliteration and metaphors. These songs celebrated the old days and the lineage and exploits of the king and mighty warriors.

V. *Beowulf* was one of these epic poems. It has come down to us possibly because it was the best.

A. Composed around 800, *Beowulf* rests on historical fact.

B. A Latin chronicle indicates that Beowulf participated in a raid on the coast of northern Germany in 521. Beowulf was a warrior at the court of Higelac, who had led a raid into the land of the Frisians. He was returning with his plunder when he was attacked by Franks. Higelac was killed in battle, and Beowulf swam to safety carrying his standard.

C. The poem begins and ends with the deaths and funerals of mighty warriors.

1. The funeral of King Scyld Scefing opens the poem. A ship burial discovered in 1939 at Sutton Hoo in England provides additional evidence of the veracity of aspects of *Beowulf*.
2. The kingship of Scyld Scefing passes down to Hrothgar, able and brave, who ruled over the Danes from his great hall Heorot.
3. Digressions from the main tale deal with themes of danger, death and trouble. The poet believes that, while God plays some role in these matters, real control over trouble rests with the individual and the manner in which he or she deals with it. Pride leads to trouble, and Hrothgar is proud.
4. Like the world of *Gilgamesh* and the world of the *Odyssey*, the world of *Beowulf* is filled with monsters. These beings, half-human and half-beast, have enormous powers and are evil. The

world of *Beowulf* is filled with evil, which is a tangible force that comes from nowhere and brings destruction.

5. Hrothgar's kingdom is invaded by Grendel, an evil monster who eats 30 men each night in Heorot.
6. In a digression, the poet explains that Grendel, like all monsters, is a descendent of Cain, who slew Abel.
7. Hrothgar grows older and weaker, and a melancholy darkness settles over the land.
8. In a hand-to-hand struggle, Beowulf a young and notable warrior of the tribe of the Geats, overcomes and mortally wounds Grendel.
9. Grendel's mother then wreaks havoc in Heorot, and Beowulf pursues her to the dark lake where she resides and kills her.
10. Beowulf, who has achieved fame and fortune, returns to the land of the Geats and becomes king. He rules in peace and prosperity for many years.
11. When Beowulf is an old man, a dragon terrorizes the kingdom of the Geats. This dragon—another symbol of evil—has been aroused by the plundering of a treasure trove that it guards.
12. Beowulf, with a single faithful retainer, Wiglaf, confronts and slays the dragon, but in doing so is mortally wounded.
13. He knows that he will die, but that his fame will live on.
14. The poem ends with the funeral of Beowulf, the celebration of his greatness, and the threat of disaster for his people now that the mighty warrior is dead.

D. While Beowulf lived, he faced evil every time it appeared; he stood up for what was good and true and gave his life in defense of it. These were values of the heroic age embodied in *Beowulf*.

E. Sweno's stone, dating from around 750, in Scotland, commemorates a mighty warrior who was similar to Beowulf. These were real men in a real world, where honor, courage, and glory mattered.

Essential Reading:

Beowulf.

Supplementary Reading:

Chadwick, *The Heroic Age*.

Salway and Blair, *Roman and Anglo-Saxon Britain*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare the "heroic" view of life as we find it in *Gilgamesh*, *The Iliad*, and *Beowulf*.
2. What similarities in themes and treatment do you see between *Beowulf* and *Lord of the Rings*? Do you consider *Lord of the Rings* a great book?

Lecture Ten
Book of Job

Scope: The divine plays little role in *Gilgamesh* and *Beowulf.* The heroes must work out their own destiny in a world in which humans are alone. But another great tradition makes the question of fate central to the question of the nature of God. If God is good, why does evil exists? Why do bad things happen to good people? The Book of Job is the most enduring attempt to answer that question. The author of Job took a widespread Middle Eastern folklore motif and transformed it into a dramatic and touching story of human suffering. In the hands of this unknown literary genius, that story became the means for a profound disquisition on the ultimate mystery of God and the frailty of any human attempt to understand the divine.

Outline

I. *Beowulf*, as we have seen, was an exploration of fate. In the world of *Beowulf* and in the epic of *Gilgamesh*, poets asked why people must die and whether there is a way to avoid death. After accepting that all people must die, the poets explore how people should live. The heroic image of Beowulf lives and dies, leaving behind the greatest of reputations.

II. The Book of Job raises questions of fate, as well as questions of good and evil.

- **A.** It is one of the most beautiful works ever composed.
- **B.** It is also a profound exploration of why bad things happen to good people. It explores the questions of absolute good and absolute evil. In addition, it asks what we deserve if we live our lives as well as we can and evil still happens to us.

III. The Book of Job is classified as *wisdom literature.*

- **A.** Wisdom literature had its roots in the ancient Near East.
- **B.** Wisdom literature includes such works as Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, as well as Egyptian works that give practical wisdom.
- **C.** The Book of Job goes beyond everything in ancient Near Eastern literature but *Gilgamesh* in its exploration of good and evil.

IV. Job is the story of a righteous man.

- **A.** Job is a wealthy man with 10 children. He is respected in his community. He does good works and has avoided evil his entire life.

B. The God in the Book of Job is puzzling and almost non-Hebraic. God is in heaven meeting with the sons of heaven. Satan, the personification of evil, who does not appear often in the Old Testament, is found here as a clever manipulator. God boasts about what a good man Job is.

C. Satan manipulates God to test Job by sending him terrible evils. First, his flocks are destroyed and his children are killed. Job's response is to bless God and say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away."

D. God next turns Job over to the devil to further test him. Job suffers horrible bodily afflictions. Even his wife turns on him and suggests that he "curse God and die."

E. Four friends come to comfort him.

1. These four friends are not Hebrew, which gives the story an air of universality.

2. An element of *Schadenfreude*—enjoyment of the troubles of others—can be seen in their attempts to comfort him. These friends make themselves feel good by seeing how miserable Job is.

3. The friends indicate that Job must have done something to deserve these problems, because God would not punish a righteous person. They state that Job must be guilty and should accept what he is given by God.

F. Job laments his fate in moving, magnificent verse. Job begins to transform. He speaks to God directly and asks God to explain why he is suffering. Job knows that he is not guilty and demands an explanation.

G. Finally, God appears to Job out of a whirlwind.

1. God does not offer an explanation to Job or justify his actions.

2. Instead, God proclaims his own power as the only explanation needed. God asks, "Where were you when I created the foundations of the world?" He tells Job that it is not for him to question God, because God is all-powerful.

3. Job bows his head before God.

4. God then saves Job. He reproves the friends of Job and tells Job that he will give him more than he ever had if Job offers sacrifices so that God will forgive his friends.

H. Job lived a long life and had more children and even greater wealth.

V. The remarkable story of Job raises the question of evil in our own day. Job showed willingness to give a speech of conscience and demand that God answer him. Contemporary people are unwilling to consider evil an absolute reality.

A. The 20th century has all but removed Satan from serious discussion. Hitler and Stalin were 20th-century embodiments of absolute evil. Hitler was able to convince the people of Germany of the righteousness of his cause.

1. The Book of Job raises the question of why the concentration camps of Hitler and the labor camps of Stalin existed. Their victims committed no crimes.
2. Good people throughout the world should have denounced these evils. Yet, people in Germany and the Soviet Union believed that their governments would not take actions that were unjustified.
3. In the 20th century, an entire nation, Germany, was organized to carry out this killing. The people involved believed that they were carrying out their duty. Evil is more than just an abstraction; it is something that dwells in each individual. It existed in the evil of Hitler and the evil of justifying and acquiescing to it.

B. Job represents the individual caught up in evil through no fault of his own. Dietrich Bonhoeffer found the Book of Job to be a powerful statement. With the whole weight of the system coming down on a person, the only resistance and contradiction to evil comes from a person of conscience.

1. The Book of Job is also about the idea of conscience. The Old Testament is a statement of the development and evolution of the idea that everyone has a conscience.
2. A glimmering of the concept of conscience appears in ancient Egypt during the age of the pyramids, around 2500 B.C. The Egyptians believed that after death, a person is brought before the gods of the underworld to answer specific questions. These answers were put on one side of a scale; on the other side was a feather, a symbol of truth. Only a person who spoke the truth would merit eternal life. Punishment existed for liars and for those who had carried out evil actions. Thus began the idea of conscience and the idea that consequences for the actions of an individual can extend through eternity.

VI. In the Hebrew Bible, during the days of David and Solomon, an age of prosperity and grandeur, prophets arose.

A. A prophet is someone who speaks the truth. Such prophets as Isaiah and Jeremiah said that all prosperity was meaningless without justice for all. They called on the people of Israel to put aside their search for political power and prosperity and look into their own hearts.

B. The prophets said that there can be no separation between private and public morality. A ruler's private life will have strong consequences for the public life of the nation.

1. A private indiscretion—such as David's taking another man's wife, then arranging the man's death—brought civil war and the rebellion of Absalom to the people of Israel.
2. The theme of separation between public and private morality is still with us today. Like the concept of evil, this notion has been marginalized.

VII. Job teaches several lessons.

- **A.** Evil is a reality. In the face of evil—whether confronting oneself or someone else—we must not justify the evil but stand up to it and demand an accounting.
- **B.** A set of universal values exists. The comforters of Job come from a variety of far-off regions to show that these values are in demand everywhere. Indeed, these values are touchstones of absolute goodness, because if absolute evil exists, absolute good must also exist. These values include the following:
  1. Justice: Job demands justice. He believes that the Golden Rule is important.
  2. Courage: As in the *Iliad* and *Gilgamesh*, courage is a fundamental human value in the Book of Job. Courage is the willingness to stand up and say what is just and true.
  3. Moderation: Despite all his suffering, Job remains moderate. Moderation consists of knowing when justice has been transformed into simple legality and when courage has been replaced by brutality.
  4. Wisdom: Wisdom is the knowledge to recognize what justice, courage, and moderation are. The Book of Job does not seek to impart erudite learning but instead gives wisdom to apply these values to daily life. Wisdom is not necessarily a happy concept. In the *Oresteia*, as in the Book of Job, wisdom comes only through suffering.
  5. These values do not necessarily make a happy world, but they help make a world in which we stand forth and make a statement.

VIII. How do we read the Bible?

- **A.** Translations always put someone between the reader and the author.
- **B.** The King James Version of the Bible represents an eloquent translation of the magnificent language and poetry of Job and the Psalms.
  1. The King James Version of the Bible is one of two great achievements that came from a committee (the other being the U.S. Constitution).
  2. King James wanted the translation to be as free of doctrinal statements as possible.
  3. The committee that created the translation knew Greek and Hebrew and was working during the age of Shakespeare, an era when the English language had reached perfection in flexibility and eloquence.
  4. The modern obsession with improvements has resulted in new and modern—but inferior—translations. These translations are inferior in their accuracy, as well as their beauty.

5. The King James Version of the Bible is written in language that ennobles the soul.

Essential Reading:

Book of Job.

Supplementary Reading:

Kallen, *Book of Job as Greek Tragedy*.

Wright and Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, pp. 190–205.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you find the resolution of Job to be satisfactory?
2. Have the late 20th and early 21st centuries produced their own equivalents to wisdom literature?

Lecture Eleven
Aeschylus, *Oresteia*

Scope: The question of fate stood at the core of the most characteristic and enduring cultural statement of history's first democracy, Athens of the 5th century B.C. Greek tragedy was developed at Athens to encourage public reflection on the most profound moral questions. Tragedy spoke to the belief that all political actions have moral consequences. Tragedy tell us that there is no separation between private and public morality. Tragedy comes about through sin, the sin of hybris. Hybris is outrageous arrogance, the abuse of power over the innocent. Hybris is punished by the gods. The *Oresteia* of Aeschylus ranks with the *Oedipus* of Sophocles as the greatest of these tragedies. The *Oresteia* is a trilogy, consisting of three plays: *Agamemnon*, *Libation-Bearers*, and *Eumenides.* The story of murder, revenge, duty, and divine intervention raises in stark form the dilemma of free will. Far from being automatons in the grip of a remorseless destiny, the characters in the *Oresteia* are possessed of free will. They make choices and they take actions that lead to disaster, both for themselves and for others. The purpose of Aeschylus in the *Oresteia* is to give us the wisdom to make the right choices and take the right action.

Outline

I. The previous lecture discussed the Book of Job, which was composed around 500 B.C. in its present form. The Book of Job explored several themes.

- **A.** It explored the questions of fate and of good and evil.
- **B.** It asked whether things that happen to people can be called absolutely good or absolutely evil or whether good and evil are a matter of circumstances.
- **C.** It also asked about the existence of a connection between public morality and private morality.

II. For the Greeks, as well as for the Hebrews, public and private morality and the questions of good and evil and fate lay at the foundation of some of the most creative literary works ever produced.

III. Aeschylus lived from 525 B.C. to 456 B.C., at approximately the same time that the Book of Job was composed. His *Oresteia* was produced in 458 B.C. The *Oresteia* is one of the most profound statements of what is good and what is evil and is a magnificent example of Athenian drama. It is also a characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy.

IV. The Athenian society was the first democracy in history.

A. It was based on the ideal of the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens.

B. The Athenian democracy featured a free-market economy and protections for the rights of individual citizens that are similar to the values of the American democracy.

C. The Athenians developed a forum for the public discussion of fundamental values, asking such questions as whether a set of values exists that must guide people.

D. Central to the question of whether a fundamental set of values exists was the question of whether the individual has free will or whether everything is fated to happen to the individual, who has no power to change it.

1. For Aeschylus, this question was at the heart of the question of good and evil and how an individual should live his or her life.

2. Muhammad indicates that everything that befalls people is destined by God. Aeschylus believed that the question was not that simple. If free will does not exist, then it becomes difficult to take responsibility for one's actions.

E. In Athens, great playwrights composed their works in competition. For Athenians, attendance at dramatic festivals was a civic duty.

F. Aeschylus, as an Athenian citizen, was proud of his role as a warrior who had fought at Marathon. He was also a poet of remarkable sensitivity.

V. The *Oresteia*, or "plays about Orestes," were the supreme statement of the art of Aeschylus. They represent the only example from the classical world of a set of three plays performed at the same time.

VI. The three plays of the *Oresteia* are *Agamemnon*, *Libation Bearers*, and *Eumenides*.

A. *Agamemnon* opens at the end of the Trojan War.

1. At the beginning of the war, Agamemnon, the commander-in-chief of the Greek forces, had offered his daughter Iphigenia as a sacrifice to the gods so that his fleet could sail to Troy.

2. Atreus had been the king of Mycenae and Argos and was the father of Agamemnon. In an act of vengeance for his brother's seduction of his wife, Atreus had murdered all but one of the children of his brother and tricked his brother into eating their flesh. The response of Atreus to the seduction of his wife lacked moderation and was an act of hybris.

3. After 10 years of battle, the victorious Agamemnon returns home with his mistress, Cassandra, the prophetess.

4. The surviving son has become the lover of Clytemnestra. He and Clytemnestra have ruled over Mycenae and Argos, and Clytemnestra greets her unsuspecting husband as a loving wife.
5. In vengeance for the murder of her daughter, Clytemnestra and her lover murder Agamemnon and Cassandra. Clytemnestra says that avenging the death of her daughter is not murder; it is execution.
6. The play ends with Clytemnestra and her lover proclaiming that they will rule on in Argos and Mycenae.

B. The *Libation Bearers* deals with Electra and Orestes, the daughter and son of Clytemnestra and Agamemnon.

1. Electra has grown up in the palace, knowing that her mother and her mother's lover have gone free and unpunished for killing Agamemnon. Electra prays for help at her father's tomb.
2. Orestes, who had been sent into exile, returns. The god Apollo, through his oracle at Delphi, had ordered Orestes to avenge the death of his father by killing his mother. Orestes goes to the palace and tells his mother that he is a stranger bringing back the news that Orestes is dead. Orestes then kills his mother and her lover.
3. The death of Agamemnon has been avenged, but Orestes is pursued by the Furies. These Furies are ancient divinities, whose task is to punish those who shed the blood of their kin.
4. Orestes has committed hybris, outrageous arrogance, by thinking that he was wise when he was not and assuming that what Apollo said was right.
5. At the end of *Libation Bearers*, Argos and Mycenae are again in turmoil; Electra is alone; and Orestes, who has been driven insane, is wandering through Greece.
6. This work is called *Libation Bearers* because Clytemnestra and her lover are the funeral offering, offered up to the ghost of Agamemnon.

C. The third work in the trilogy is *Eumenides*, or "the blessed ones."

1. At the play's beginning, Orestes is asleep at the temple of the god Apollo at Delphi. The Furies lie outside the temple boundaries.
2. Orestes awakens and asks Apollo for an end to his suffering. Apollo says that Orestes must go to Athens and stand trial before an Athenian jury. If the jury clears him, the Furies will leave him alone. Apollo will serve as his attorney.
3. At his trial, Orestes says that he executed his mother because Apollo told him to do so. The Furies, as his prosecutors, say that killing his mother was still a wrong act.
4. Everyone had been caught in a web of duty. Agamemnon was duty-bound to offer Iphigenia as a sacrifice; Clytemnestra was bound by duty to avenge the death of her daughter; Orestes was bound by duty to avenge the death of his father; and the Furies were duty-bound to avenge the death of Clytemnestra.

5. Apollo, as the attorney of Orestes, says that Orestes did not actually murder his parent, because only the father is a parent. A father is fully responsible for the seed, and the mother merely provides a house for it until birth.
6. Athena, who sprang from the head of her father, indicates that she will always be on the side of the men against women and that Orestes is free of blood-guilt.
7. The troubles of Orestes are over, and he is liberated.
8. Because the Furies are outraged, Athena suggests that they now be called *Eumenides*, or "blessed ones," and that they will be revered and honored by the Athenians.

VII. The *Oresteia* explores several questions.

A. Can public and private morality be separated? Is Agamemnon's murder of his daughter a private act or a public act? Part of Agamemnon's policy had been to sail to Troy, a public act, but to do so, he sacrificed his daughter, a private act. Aeschylus indicates that public and private morality cannot be separated. What a leader does in private is part of the same character in public.

B. Is murder ever justified? After all, war is murder on a large scale.

C. Do absolute good and absolute evil exist? In the *Oresteia*, the distinctions between good and evil are blurred. The circumstances had perhaps made it permissible for Agamemnon to kill Iphigenia, for Clytemnestra to kill Agamemnon, and for Orestes to kill Clytemnestra.

D. Did any of the characters have to commit these murders? For Aeschylus, the profound issue was fate and whether these people were fated to carry out these actions. He finds that the characters made their decisions as deliberate choices.

VIII. The tragedy of the Greek play is that people put themselves in these situations. The gods may make wrong actions tempting, but individuals are free to refuse orders, even those of the divinities. The cycle of love and vengeance in the *Oresteia* continues because people gain wisdom only through suffering.

Essential Reading:

Aeschylus, *Oresteia*.

Supplementary Reading:

W. C. Greene, *Moira: Fate, Good and Evil in Greek Thought*.

Hogan, *A Commentary on the Complete Greek Tragedies*, vol. I, *Aeschylus*, pp. 1–187.

Questions to Consider:

1. Had you been on the jury at Athens, how would you have voted in the case of Orestes?
2. Do you think that the glory Agamemnon won for conquering Troy was worth the life of his daughter?

Lecture Twelve
Euripides, *Bacchae*

Scope: For the great Athenian tragedians of the 5th century, hybris grew out of moral blindness. Such moral blindness (*ate*) was the negation of wisdom. Moral blindness led men and women to commit acts of hybris that led to ruin. But it was only at the cost of much suffering that men and women gained wisdom. In tragedy, it is frequently those who are most sure of their wisdom who suffer a tragic fall. Pentheus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides exemplifies those who believe themselves wise but are, in fact, fatally ignorant. His refusal to recognize the power of a new god, Dionysos, destroys himself and those he loves. Euripides uses this tragic tale to present a profound statement of the Greek concepts of divine power, hybris, and good and evil. A comparison of these themes in Job, the *Oresteia*, and the *Bacchae* affords rich insight into the contrasting and complementary character of the genius and legacy of the two most creative and influential traditions in European civilization, the Hebrew and the Greek.

Outline

I. The previous lecture discussed the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus.

- **A.** It represents the one surviving example of a Greek trilogy, three plays that were presented together as part of one day-long performance during the 5th century B.C.
- **B.** It explores the question of fate. Are we fated to carry out our actions in life, or do we have free will?
- **C.** The lesson of the *Oresteia* is that people make choices and are responsible for the consequences that follow.

II. This same theme is found in the one of the most profound of the Athenian tragedies, the *Bacchae*, by Euripides.

- **A.** Like the *Oresteia*, the *Bacchae* asks whether absolute values, absolute good, and absolute truth exist, or whether such concepts as good and truth depend on circumstances and perceptions.
- **B.** It also deals with questions of the existence of God and the nature of divinity.

III. Euripides is a characteristic example of the intellectual fervor of Athenian democracy of the 5th century B.C.

- **A.** This democracy was the first government that was based on the ideal of the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. Citizens of

Athens had the freedom to live as they chose. They enjoyed a tolerant lifestyle, and individual rights were protected by law.

B. Athenian drama, the tragedy, was the cultural statement of the Athenian democracy. It was the public forum that every Athenian citizen attended and in which questions with profound moral consequences were debated.

C. Athenians believed that all political decisions had a moral dimension.

D. Citizenship in Athens depended on being able to serve in the Athenian army. Because only males could serve in the army, only males could be citizens.

E. Each spring, the Athenians held a dramatic festival in honor of the god Dionysos. This festival was held in a magnificent theater. A typical play included three actors and a chorus. The chorus represented traditional, conventional wisdom. The usual theme of these plays was moderation.

F. Athenian democracy unleashed a cultural creativity that has been unparalleled until our own day. The freedom of the Athenians sparked a questioning of all values. The first history was written in 5th-century Athens, and scientific medicine began there.

G. Sophists educated young Athenians. They taught their pupils the arts of oratory and persuasion and to think critically, that is, to question values. These sophists believed that circumstances determine our perceptions of events and our perceptions of the divine world.

IV. In his plays, Euripides questioned traditional perceptions of right and wrong, normal and abnormal, excess and moderation. In the *Bacchae*, his last play, he also asked what makes a god and how we know what a god is.

A. Euripides wrote the *Bacchae* in 406 B.C. in Pella, in Macedonia.

B. The play was produced in Athens by his son.

C. The play was the last of the great Athenian tragedies, the last product of the golden age of Athenian tragedy, which lasted from the time of the Battle of Marathon to the defeat of Athens by Sparta, the same period as the golden age of Greek democracy.

V. The *Bacchae* takes place in the city of Thebes.

A. Dionysos, who appears in the form of a handsome stranger, a mortal man, addresses the audience and explains his background. He is the son of Zeus and a mortal woman, Semele, the daughter of Cadmus. Hera, the wife of Zeus, outraged at the god's infidelity, had the child destroyed. Zeus brought his son back to life and hid the baby from Hera in his thigh. Dionysos explains that he has returned from his travels to India and Persia to bring his worship to Greece, to his hometown of Thebes.

B. The women of Thebes have already flocked to his religion because it is a religion of joy; its adherents drink wine, feast, and engage in promiscuous sex.

C. Dionysos wants to test his home city and the wisdom of its ruler, Pentheus. Dionysos wants to see whether Pentheus will recognize him for the god that he is.

1. Pentheus is the young king of Thebes. His grandfather, Cadmus, has abdicated power but still lives.

2. The name *Pentheus* means "man of sorrows."

D. The mystique and fervor of the religion of Dionysos have swept through the city. Even old men, including Cadmus and Teresias, the blind soothsayer, have joined this cult.

E. Pentheus views this wild new religion as a threat to public order. He refuses to recognize the existence of the god Dionysos and regards the stranger, who is actually Dionysos in disguise, as a manipulative charlatan who is leading the women astray to seduce them.

F. The stranger warns Pentheus, a mortal, of the danger of questioning what the gods are and what the gods want. Pentheus attempts to imprison the stranger. The stranger then suggests that Pentheus should see these rites to learn about Dionysos. He suggests that Pentheus perch in the top of a pine tree to better observe them.

G. The next scene occurs in the palace. A messenger tells Cadmus that the Bacchae, the women celebrating the rites of Dionysos, thought that Pentheus was a mountain lion and shook the tree in which he had been perched. They then tore Pentheus to pieces.

H. Cadmus finds the pieces of Pentheus so that he can arrange his burial.

I. Dionysos next appears in his majesty and says that no one should ever doubt that he is a god. The Thebans, because of their hostility to Dionysos, will be punished. Cadmus will wander the world in pain lest anyone doubt that Dionysos is a god.

J. The last words of the chorus are "Let no mortal think that he is so wise that he can discern what god is, for the divine comes in many forms and wise is that man who allows his eyes to see the truth."

K. Pentheus has been shown to be a man of sorrows, who in his hybris, believing that he knew what was divine, brought destruction on himself and all of Thebes.

VI. The *Bacchae* embodies the deeper meaning of Greek tragedy.

A. The *Bacchae* had a political purpose. Greek tragedies allowed Athenians to debate fundamental questions. Placing these dramas in the distant mythological past teaches that these questions are universal and eternal and that each generation must deal with them.

B. Euripides wrote some profoundly political plays. *Trojan Women*, for example, which is often seen as a pacifist play, is the story of a patriot determined that Athens should carry out a preemptive strike against Sicily.

C. At the end of the life of Euripides, Athens was on the verge of absolute defeat. Euripides asks the viewers of the *Bacchae* to deal with questions more profound than politics. The fundamental question in this play is the question of what a god is and whether a mortal has the wisdom to determine whether a being is divine.

D. These performances were part of a religious festival in honor of Dionysos.

1. As previously mentioned, Dionysos was the son of Zeus by a mortal woman. He suffers and is brought back to life by his father.

2. Dionysos is the god of wine. Wine grapes grow on vines, which are severely pruned in winter. The vines come back to life in the spring, the time of year when these plays are performed. This eternal recurrence is an annual miracle. In addition, the grapes are crushed and give their "blood" to make wine.

3. Wine is a life-giving fluid, but the use of wine as a drink reinforces the concept of moderation. A little wine is good, but too much causes madness, like that of the Bacchae, who tore Pentheus to pieces.

E. One of the most sacred and ancient rituals of Athens was the annual festival at Eleusis. During this festival, Athenians went as a civic body to offer up sacrifices and prayers to the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone, the symbol of the death of crops in winter and their return in spring. Joined with worship of Demeter and Persephone was worship of Dionysos.

1. If a person partook of the sacred meal in honor of Dionysos and Demeter, proclaimed his belief in their power, and underwent a sacred baptism to wash himself from his old life, the Athenians believed that he would never die but would have eternal life.

2. *The Bacchae* is the story of a god with a mortal mother. The god who suffered, died and came back to life, can give individuals everlasting life and the wisdom to understand divine power.

VII. The ultimate purpose of a Greek play, such as the *Bacchae* or the *Oresteia*, was to give the individual the wisdom by which to live his life.

A. Aeschylus taught that the individual can gain wisdom only through suffering.

B. Athenian dramas often give the individual a chance to learn from the suffering of someone else. The *Bacchae* allows viewers to learn several lessons by vicariously suffering the pain of Pentheus.

1. People are not wise enough to know everything about the divine, and divine power comes in many forms.
2. A person is not fated to make mistakes; mistakes are made because of the individual's own moral blindness.
3. The ultimate message of the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae,* like that of every Greek drama, is "Sing, sorrow, sing; but good will come out at the end."

Essential Reading:

Euripides, *Bacchae*.

Supplementary Reading:

Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*.

Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In reading the *Oresteia* and the *Bacchae*, do you believe that Orestes and Pentheus make their own choices by free will or are they the playthings of fate? Has reading these tragedies changed your view about fate and free will?
2. Do you see similarities between the cult and myth of Dionysos and Christianity? What do you think these similarities mean?

Timeline

B.C.

3000	Birth of civilization in the Near East and Egypt
2500	Pyramids of Giza in Egypt
2500	Indus Valley civilization in India
2000	Stonehenge
1760	Shang Dynasty in China, first historical dynasty, with writing and bronze artworks
1500	Aryan invasion of India
1295–1225	Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt; historical context for the Exodus
1250	Trojan War
1027–56	Zhou Dynasty in China, political context for Confucius (551–479)
1000	Beginning of Sanskrit literature
563–483	Buddha
550–531	Persian Empire rules the Middle East
490–404	Golden age of Athenian democracy
336–323	Alexander the Great
218–146	Rise of the Roman Empire
48–31	Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy in the Roman Empire

A.D.

31 B.C.–180 A.D.	Golden age of the Roman Empire
6	Birth of Jesus
312	Conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity, which became the official religion of the Roman Empire
476	Fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe

800	Charlemagne establishes what became the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation
1066	Norman Conquest of England
1194–1500	Gothic art and architecture dominate Europe
1215	Magna Carta
1304–1527	Renaissance
1517–1648	Reformation
1558–1603	Queen Elizabeth I of England
1648–1789	Age of the Enlightenment
1775–1789	American Revolution and Constitution, "The Founding"
1789–1815	French Revolution and Napoleon
1860–1914	Golden age of the British Empire
1861–1865	American Civil War
1914–1918	World War I
1929–1953	Joseph Stalin rules the Soviet Union
1933–1945	Adolf Hitler rules Germany
1945–	Scientific and technological revolution
1990–	United States as the world's only superpower

Glossary

Akkad: The geographical term to describe the northern portion of ancient Mesopotamia. The Akkadians and their descendants, the Babylonians, spoke a Semitic language and were much indebted culturally to the neighboring Sumerians.

Aryan: A term derived from the Sanskrit word for "noble." *Aryan* was much used in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries to describe the Indo-European invaders of India, who conquered the peoples of the Indus Valley civilization and developed the literature and culture of classical India. The term was misused by the Nazis but still retains its value as a collective designation for use in discussing the early history of India.

Asia Minor: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

Birth of civilization: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advances occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

City-state: A term to describe a sovereign political unit based on a walled city and surrounding territory. *City-state* is frequently used to describe the political units of early Mesopotamia, Greece and Italy, Phoenicia, and medieval and Renaissance Italy.

Classical antiquity: The Greek and Roman world from roughly 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe).

Classics: Conventional term for the writings of classical antiquity, now used in general to describe great books from all periods and cultures.

Communism: An ideology maintaining that society should be constituted so that the means of production and subsistence are held in common and labor is organized for the common benefit of all. This ideal was maintained by Plato. However, as a modern political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all aspects of the individual, the society, and the economy to the control of the state.

Determinism: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequences of forces independent of the human will.

Enlightenment: Term to describe the epoch in European history from 1648 (Descartes and the end of the Wars of Religion) to 1789 (the French Revolution). The age of the Enlightenment was marked intellectually by faith in reason and progress and admiration for the legacy of classical antiquity.

Founders (Founding Fathers): Collective term for the American statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and established the Constitution.

Free will: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

Gentile: A non-Jew.

Gestapo: *Geheime Staatspolizei*, the secret state police of Nazi Germany.

Ideology: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. For example, democracy is the ideology of the United States.

Indo-European: A linguistic term to describe a number of related languages, ranging geographically from India to North and South America. These include Sanskrit and the derived languages of India (such as Hindi); Persian; Greek and Latin; the Romance languages, such as French and Spanish, derived from Latin; the Germanic languages, including English; the Slavic languages, including Russian; and the Celtic languages, including Irish. The original home of the Indo-European speakers seems to have been in southern Russia, from which they migrated east and west, beginning around 2200 B.C.

Law (Jewish): The complex code of laws and regulations, based on the Ten Commandments and elaborated in the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) and later Jewish tradition.

Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1893) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of modern communism.

Mesopotamia: "Land between the rivers." A geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period in European history between the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe (476) and the fall of the Roman Empire in the East at Constantinople in 1453.

National Socialism (Nazism): The ideology of Germany under Adolf Hitler, based on racism, nationalism, and socialism and espousing a totalitarian state in which the individual and all aspects of life were absolutely subordinate to the state.

Pharisee: Member of an influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. The Pharisees were trained in the Jewish law and insisted on a strict interpretation of that law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance ("rebirth") of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most historical designations, such as *Middle Ages*, it is difficult to define precisely the

chronological limits of the Renaissance. It began in Italy, then spread to Northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the career of the Italian poet and lover of antiquity Petrarch (1304–1374) to Martin Luther and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation (1517).

Roman Empire: The Roman world from 48 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term *Roman Empire* describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors to rule over territory ultimately stretching from Britain to Iraq. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer an overseas empire. Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic ruling the Roman Empire. The Roman people permitted Caesar and his successors, especially Augustus, to transform Rome from a republic into a monarchy in order to continue to rule this overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C., marked by political liberty and a balanced constitution.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of Jewish religion.

Semitic: Linguistic and cultural term used to describe certain related languages and cultures of the Middle East in antiquity and the modern world, including Babylonian, Hebrew, Phoenician, Syriac, and Arabic.

Socialism: A term that first appears in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, this communist state fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sumer: A nation composed of a number of city-sates in ancient Mesopotamia, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. The Sumerians influenced greatly the later history of the Middle East. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Third Reich: Name given by Hitler to Germany under National Socialism (1933–1945).

Biographical Notes

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–32 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato and founded his own university in Athens, the Lyceum. Far more than Plato, Aristotle focused on empirical studies, including natural science and history. He was perhaps the most profound mind of classical Greece as Plato was the most intellectual and Socrates the noblest. He was the tutor of Alexander the Great. Aristotle was the most influential intellectual figure in both the European and the Islamic Middle Ages. His *Poetics* is the first book on literary criticism to come down to us from classical antiquity. It provides us with a working definition of a great book as one that has a beneficent moral impact on its audience.

Augustus Caesar: Roman statesman (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career and rise to power (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the popular Julius Caesar, Octavian, at the age of 19, raised an army on his own initiative. With extraordinary political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning a decisive victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, social, and economic reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy and inaugurated two centuries of peace and prosperity throughout the Roman world. In 27 B.C., he marked the inauguration of the new order by adopting the name Augustus, which means "messiah." Augustus is rightly regarded as the greatest statesman in history, the model of the good Roman emperor. He was celebrated by Vergil in the *Aeneid*, and during his reign, Jesus was born. He is discussed at length in The Teaching Company course *Famous Romans* (Lectures Fourteen–Sixteen).

Brown, John: American opponent of slavery and terrorist (1800–1859). Born in Connecticut and Puritan in background, Brown was a failure in business. Deeply convinced of the immorality of slavery and profoundly influenced by the Bible, he took his sons to Kansas and Nebraska in 1854 in a violent effort to oppose the supporters of slavery. On October 16, 1859, funded by respected New England abolitionists, Brown, along with his sons, formed a small group that seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The goal, which failed, was to start a slave rebellion. Brown was captured, tried, and hanged for treason.

Cato, Marcus Porcius the Younger: Roman statesman and opponent of Julius Caesar (95–46 B.C.). Far more than Brutus, Cato was the noblest Roman. He loved liberty, which he defined as the political freedom of the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic. He saw Caesar as the preeminent threat to that liberty. Thus, Cato opposed Caesar at every step of the rise to power. Ultimately, Cato chose civil war rather than allow Caesar to become despot.

Defeated in that war, Cato chose suicide rather than accept the clemency of Caesar. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante paid tribute to his own love of political liberty by placing Cato as the guardian of the gates of Purgatory. Cato is discussed at length in *Famous Romans* (Lecture Twelve).

Gladstone, William Ewart: British statesman (1809–1898). Gladstone was four times prime minister of Britain during the golden age of the British Empire (1868–1874, 1880–1885, 1886, 1892–1894). He embodied the ideals of the Liberal Party. He believed in free trade and a broad franchise of voters. He believed in democracy, and he believed that democracy was only viable if ordinary citizens were educated and had economic opportunity. It was the role of the government to provide education and economic opportunity. Gladstone believed that the British Empire was a great force for good, but he was opposed to wars of aggression. He was much influenced by Lord Acton in his views of history and served as a model for Winston Churchill. For us, in addition, Gladstone is a model for how a statesman shaped his life and values around the lessons of the great books. Gladstone believed that all we need to know about ethics can be learned from Homer, and he himself wrote scholarly volumes on Homer and the historical context of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Hammurabi: Babylonian king (1728–1686 B.C.). Hammurabi is one of the most important figures in the early history of the Middle East. His reign marked the high point of Babylonian civilization and political power. He ruled over an extensive empire, including modern-day Iraq and parts of Iran and Turkey. Babylonian civilization reached new levels in astronomy and literature. The government was marked by a well-trained bureaucracy. Hammurabi issued a major code of laws that influenced the subsequent legal systems of the ancient Middle East, including the Old Testament. He is important both for our understanding of the historical background of the Ten Commandments and for the transmission of the Gilgamesh epic.

Hitler, Adolf: German dictator (1889–1945). Born an ethnic German in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Adolf Hitler was a failed artist who discovered the meaning of his life in World War I. Determined to lead Germany back to greatness after the defeat of 1918, Hitler became leader of the National Socialist Party. He transformed a fringe political group into the dominant force in the chaotic democratic politics of Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Weimar Republic. In jail, he wrote *Mein Kampf*, which stated clearly his determination to destroy the Jewish people of Europe and to begin another world war. He became chancellor of Germany in 1933 by legal means. He moved swiftly to establish a totalitarian system as complete and as evil as that of Stalin. True to his promise, he led the world into World War II. That war, as Winston Churchill said, would never have happened except for Hitler. In the name of his crackpot ideas of racism and nationalism, Hitler ordered the murder of more than 6 million people in concentration camps. The total number of people who died as a result of Hitler's war and policies is estimated at 50

million. He committed suicide in the last days of World War II, leaving his nation and Europe in ruins.

Julius Caesar: Roman statesman (100–44 B.C.). Julius Caesar is one of the most influential figures in world history and one of the most gifted individuals in history. Beginning his career as a rather shady politician, he grew into a figure who transformed history. A military genius, Caesar conquered Gaul (France), successfully invaded Britain, and defeated his rival Pompey, reputed to be the best general of the age. Caesar used this military success and the loyalty of the army to establish himself as dictator of the Roman Empire. He understood that a republic could no longer rule this empire and that the Roman people wanted authoritarian rule. He described his victories in Gaul and in the civil war against Pompey in *Commentaries*, which became the model for history and Latin prose. Such generals as Napoleon, Robert E. Lee, and George Patton have paid tribute to the military brilliance of Caesar. Caesar undertook a series of economic, political, and social reforms at Rome and in the provinces of the Roman Empire, which laid the foundation for the next 2,000 years of European history and civilization. Jealousy of Caesar and his own lack of patience led to Caesar's assassination by a conspiracy of 63 senators, headed by Brutus and Cassius. Among the great books we study, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* all pay him tribute.

King, Martin Luther, Jr.: American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to U.S. citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. His political and social views evolved into a strong resistance to the American war in Vietnam and an increasing focus on economic reform. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery. King was profoundly influenced in his beliefs by the Bible, Thoreau, and Gandhi, as well as a number of great books, which he quoted in his profoundly moving *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (discussed in *A History of Freedom* [Lecture Thirty-Five]).

Lenin, Vladimir: Soviet Russian revolutionary and dictator (1870–1924). Lenin was a convinced follower of Karl Marx who instituted one of the most brutal tyrannies in history in order to transform the Russian Empire into a Marxist state. Lenin came from a middle-class background and was well educated. His plots against the tsarist regime forced him into exile. By the agency of the German government, he returned to Russia in 1917 at a critical moment in the beginning of the revolution. Lenin had a powerful intellect and an utterly ruthless drive for power. He masterminded the Bolshevik seizure of power and victory in the civil war. He crushed all opposition and established the main features of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet Union, including the use of terror as a state policy and the concentration camps. In addition to his political leadership, Lenin also made fundamental contributions to Marxist theory, and

subsequent generations of communists all over the world have called their ideology Marxism-Leninism.

Marx, Karl: Economic thinker and intellectual founder of communism (1818–1883). Marx was one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. Born in Germany, he was educated in philosophy and the classics. He developed an all-encompassing philosophy based on economic determinism. He believed that ideas were the product of economic conditions. He was a political activist who sought to drive the workers to revolution through such publications as *The Communist Manifesto*, written with his close collaborator Friedrich Engels. Marx spent his last years in London, writing his massive work *Das Kapital*. Marx is important to us to show the different lessons that can be drawn from a study of the great books. He is also one of the preeminent examples to contradict his own view. Marx shows that history is indeed made by ideas, as the long and unfortunate history of the Soviet Union, communist China, and other communist regimes has shown.

Sophocles: Athenian writer of tragedies (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three greatest playwrights of the golden age of Athenian tragedy. Aristotle considered his *Oedipus the King* to be the perfect tragedy. He is discussed at length in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Four) and *Famous Greeks* (Lecture Fourteen).

Stalin, Joseph: Dictator of the Soviet Union (1879–1953). Born a Georgian in the Caucasus, Stalin's birth name was Iosif Dzhugashvili. He took the name Stalin during his early career as a political activist for Marxism and the overthrow of the regime of the tsar in Russia. Stalin means "man of steel," and Stalin was one of the hardest and most ruthless figures in history. A protégé of Lenin, he played an important role in the Russian Revolution and the civil war of 1917–1924. After Lenin's death, Stalin secured by brute force and cunning absolute mastery of the Soviet Union. From 1929–1953, he ruled by terror the most complete despotism the world has ever seen. Some 20 million of his own citizens died in his concentration camps. Despite this terror, he was genuinely loved by millions of Russians and was hailed as the savior of his country for the victory over Germany in World War II. Stalin is the model for Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984.* Stalin is discussed in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Thirty-Four).

Thucydides: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides was an admirer of Pericles. During the Peloponnesian War, he was exiled by his fellow Athenian citizens for his failure on a military assignment. This left him with an abiding hatred of democracy but gave him the time and opportunity to write his monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War*. This is one of the most influential works of history ever written. The Founders of the United States regarded Thucydides as a guide for political decision making in the new republic. Thucydides and his history are discussed at length in *Famous Greeks*

(Lecture Fifteen). He is important in this course as our source for the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles.

Tolkien, John Robert Reuel: British author (1892–1973). J. R. R. Tolkien was the creator of a fantasy world based on the ideals and values of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian heroic age of the early Middle Ages. He was a scholar of medieval English literature and a specialist on *Beowulf*. He was professor at Oxford University from 1925–1959. But he is remembered and important for his novels, above all *The Lord of the Rings*, which continues to grow in popularity and has been the source of one of the most successful and critically acclaimed series of films in movie history.

Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus on the books we are discussing. I have recommended editions that are available and offer guides to further reading on the book and the author. I have recommended as Supplementary Reading books that put our works into a broader context or that I find especially useful in understanding the text. This means that on several occasions, I recommend books and essays that are older and more traditional simply because I think they will be more useful than the most recent scholarship on our book and author.

Essential Reading

Aeschylus. *Oresteia.* R. Lattimore, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, numerous reprints. The best translation of this compelling tragedy.

———. *Prometheus Bound, The Suppliants, Seven against Thebes, The Persians*. P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1961, numerous reprints. A convenient and good translation.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. W. Fyfe and W. Roberts, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932, numerous reprints. A good translation and valuable for its inclusion of other classical works on literary criticism.

Beowulf. S. Heaney, trans. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Girard, 2000. A brilliant translation by a highly regarded modern poet.

Bhagavad Gita. J. Mascaro, trans. London: Penguin, 2003. An accurate and sensitive translation.

Bible. I prefer the majesty of the King James Version. Of the modern revised versions, the best, for translation and notes, is the New Revised Standard Version of the New Oxford Annotated Bible, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. A moving testimony to the courage under trial of a remarkable intellectual and man of action.

Churchill, Winston S. *My Early Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. A recent and in-print edition of Churchill's autobiography, written in 1930, when the British political world and the press thought he was finished.

———. *Painting as a Pastime*. Delray Beach: Levenger Press, 2003. Churchill's masterly essay on how to stay young, giving unique insights into the paintings of Churchill, which themselves give unique insight into Churchill the statesman.

———. *The Second World War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986. A masterpiece of historical writing, filled with the lessons of history for our own day.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Duties (De Officiis*). W. Miller, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913, numerous revisions. By far the best translation, in print, of this fundamental work on education and morality.

Confucius. *The Analects*. D. C. Lau, trans. New York: Penguin, 1979. The best translation into English, with a valuable introduction.

Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. R. Sinclair, trans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961. Of the many English translations, I prefer that of Sinclair for accuracy and for the clarity of its notes. .

Euripides. *Bacchae.* P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1972, numerous reprints. A convenient translation of this last tragedy of Euripides.

Fears, J. Rufus. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. I, *Essays in the History of Liberty*. Indianapolis: LibertyClassics, 1985. Part of a three-volume edition, the most complete collection of the writings, published and unpublished, of this seminal figure in the liberal tradition and in the great books tradition.

Gandhi, Mahatma. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with the Truth.* Boston: Beacon, 1993. A recent edition of the autobiography of a great and original man of action and thought. The biography is as idiosyncratic—I use the word in a most positive sense—as was Gandhi himself.

Gibbon, E. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. New York: Random House, 2000. This complete edition in three volumes is to be preferred to the various abridged versions in print.

Gilgamesh. B. Foster and D. Frayne, trans. New York: Norton, 2001. A good. recent translation, with useful supplementary material.

Goethe, Johann Wolgang von. *Faust: A Tragedy*. W. Arndt, trans. New York: Norton, 2000. A convenient edition and translation, with useful supplementary material.

Homer. *Iliad.* R. Lattimore, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, numerous reprints. This has rightly been called "the finest translation of Homer ever made into the English language."

Koran. The best translation is that of A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Lincoln, Abraham. *Speeches and Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1974. The fullest collection of Lincoln's words and, of course, containing the Gettysburg Address (vol. II, p. 536).

Machiavelli, Nicolo. *The Prince*. New York: Penguin, 2003. A convenient translation of this fundamental work in the great books tradition.

Malory, Thomas. *Morte d'Arthur*. New York: Norton, 2003. An excellent edition, with useful supplementary material, of this work, celebrating the central medieval values of loyalty, chivalry, love, and religion.

Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations*. M. Staniforth, trans. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964. A good, convenient translation of this enduring guide to how to live your life with Stoic courage.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. New York: Penguin, 1974. One of the seminal books on the history of liberty.

Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Penguin, 2003. The masterpiece of insight into the mentality of totalitarianism.

Plato. *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, and Phaedrus*. Harold North Fowler, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990. A good translation of the dialogues focusing on the trial and death of Socrates.

———. *Republic*. D. Lee, trans. New York: Penguin, 2003. A convenient and accessible translation of this book, which we have called the embodiment of the values and ideals of classical Greece.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. A. W. Wheen, trans. New York: Spark, 2003. The brilliant novel of World War I that is a powerful indictment of the folly of modern wars.

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Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. New York: Harper and Row, 1974–1978. The massive indictment of Soviet communism by the Noble Prize-winner and survivor of the labor camps of Stalin.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden and On Civil Disobedience*. New York: Penguin, 2004. A convenient edition of these classic works by one of America's most original thinkers.

Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Rex Warner, trans. New York: Penguin, 1954, numerous reprints. The monumental work of history; contains the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles.

Vergil. *Aeneid*. R. Fitzgerald, trans. New York: Knopf, 1990. The best translation into English, done by a noteworthy American poet. More than other versions in print, Fitzgerald's edition has a feel for the poetry of the Aeneid.

Supplementary Reading

Achtemeier, P. "Mark, Gospel of." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D. Freedman, ed., vol. IV, pp. 541–557. New York: Doubleday, 1992. A useful introduction to contemporary views on the composition and context of the Gospel of Mark.

Adler, Mortimer. *How to Think About the Great Ideas: From the Great Books of Western Civilization*. Chicago: Open Court, 2000. A traditional defense of the great books.

Andrewes, A. *The Greek Tyrants*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963, numerous reprints. The best study of tyranny among the Greeks and of the intellectual and political context in which the audience of Aeschylus responded to *Prometheus Bound.*

Barker, E. *Greek Political Thought: Plato and His Predecessors*. London: Methuen, 1960. This remains the best introduction to Plato for the general reader.

Barth, K. *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. New York: Harper, 1957. An extremely influential and provocative approach to reading and understanding the Bible.

Bethge, E. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Character*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970. The best biography of Bonhoeffer, by a close friend and confident.

Brooke, Rubert. *Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen: Selected Poems*. New York: Sterling, 2003. Poets of World War I who help us understand the impact of *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Brown, J. *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*. New Haven: Yale, 1991. A standard and good biography of Gandhi.

Burckhardt, Jacob. *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*. New York: Random House, 2002. A masterly interpretative study of the age of Machiavelli by a true humanist, a work that might well be called a great book itself.

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Dodds, E. R. *The Greeks and the Irrational*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951, numerous reprints. Remains a highly influential treatment of the broader context of the ideas presented in the *Bacchae* of Euripides.

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Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life

Part II

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

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Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Kerr Foundation, and the Zarrow Foundation. He was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Professor Fears is the author of more than one hundred articles, reviews and historical plaques on Greek and Roman history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*, *The Theology of Victory at Rome*, and *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology* and *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*. He has also lectured widely in the United States and Europe, and his scholarly work has been translated into German and Italian. He is very active in speaking to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad. Each year, he leads study trips to historical sites in the United States and Europe.

On 21 occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003, he received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Great Plains Region of the University Continuing Education Association. In 2005 he was named the national winner of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the University Continuing Education Association. The Senior Citizens Great Books Course, which he teaches at the University of Oklahoma, was cited prominently in this National Excellence in Teaching Award.

Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life is the fifth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *A History of Freedom*, and *Churchill*.

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Books That Have Made History:
Books That Can Change Your Life

Scope:

This course, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, is a companion to my earlier Teaching Company courses: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*. Like these courses, *Books That Have Made History* rests upon the conviction that history is made by great individuals, great events, and great ideas. This course explores these great ideas through a discussion of some of the most seminal writings in history, books that have shaped the minds of great individuals and events of historic magnitude.

Our earlier courses, *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*, have all discussed some of the great books that have made history. In those contexts, we have studied such works as the *Apology* of Socrates, *Oedipus the King*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and the magisterial histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Gibbon, and Churchill. We will return to some of these treasured books from entirely new perspectives, but for the most part, we will strike off on new paths with new books.

The books we will discuss range in time from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the 20th century. Our geographical scope will carry us from Mesopotamia and China to Europe and America. It is the ideas that are important, and our course will be organized thematically around eternal questions that endure throughout history and that every thoughtful person must seek to answer. Either by conscious choice or by omission, nations, groups, organizations, and corporations, as well individuals, answer these questions:

- Question 1: God. Does God or do gods exist? What is the nature of the divine? Does God or do the gods care about humans and their actions? This is the first question with which every thoughtful person must come to grips. The other questions and some of the answers will flow from it.
- Question 2: Fate. What is fate? Do events, great and small, happen because they are predetermined by divine will or simply by chance and random occurrence? Do humans have free will? Do you determine your life, or is it already predetermined? Are you free to choose, or has your DNA already made the choice for you?
- Question 3: Good and evil. What do we mean by good and evil? Are there consequences for our actions, whether freely chosen or predetermined? If there are consequences for our actions, does this mean that there are standards by which to judge these actions? Who or what determines those standards? Are those standards enduring for all time? Or are there no

absolute standards? Do circumstances determine what is right and wrong at any particular moment and for any particular individual, group, or nation? Does evil exist? Can we speak of evil as a real force that affects events and lives?

- Question 4: How should we live? Our answers or failures to answer or even to ask these questions have consequences. They determine how we, individuals, groups, nations, live our lives. They give us the values or absence of values to determine how we act toward others. Our great books course examines our actions under the following eternal human conditions, emotions, and challenges:
  - The meaning of life
  - Truth
  - Duty and responsibility
  - Law, government, and social justice
  - Love, jealousy, and hate
  - Courage, honor, and ambition
  - Beauty
  - Nature
  - History and the past
  - Education.

These themes will provide the context in which we discuss the books that have made history and books that can change our lives. It is the hallmark of a great book that it may offer us insights into many of these conditions and emotions. Thus, the same great book may be brought into our exploration of several of these themes.

We have repeatedly used the term *great book*. What do we mean by a great book? Can we even speak of great books?

The answer is yes. *Great book* is an unfashionable, even controversial term today, because it implies value judgments. As a society, we do not wish to make value judgments. *Judgmental* is an expression of reproach. However, great books are great precisely because they challenge us to make value judgments.

A great book has the following three essential qualities:

- Great theme. A great book is concerned with themes and issues of enduring importance.
- Noble language. Great books are written in noble language, language that elevates the soul and ennobles the mind. It is not the specific language, say Latin or English, that is noble. Any language can be used in such way that it conveys ideas and emotions powerfully and memorably.
- Universality. A great book is “a possession for all time” (Thucydides). It speaks across the ages, reaching the hearts and minds of men and women

> far removed in time and space from the era and circumstances in which it was composed. Thus, a great book summarizes the enduring values and ideas of a great age and gives them as a legacy to generations to come.

For us, in this course, what ultimately makes a great book is its ability to speak to you as an individual. You can read a great book many times, and each time, you read it with new eyes. At each stage of your life, you will find new messages to address new concerns. A great book gives you the personal wisdom to be better, better as an individual and better as the citizen of a free nation, empowered with the awesome responsibility of self-government.

Ultimately, great books are an education for freedom.

Lecture Thirteen
Plato, *Phaedo*

Scope: For Homer and the great writers of Athenian tragedy, the consequences of our actions were realized on this earth. The soul had only a shadowy existence in the afterlife. But 5th-century Greece saw the development of a more profound concept of the immortality of the soul. For Socrates, the belief in the immortality of the soul was the ultimate question. Plato portrays its centrality to the mission of Socrates in the *Phaedo*. In this dialogue, with death imminent, Socrates spends his last hours pursuing with his students the question of whether the soul lives forever. For Socrates, only the immortality of the soul gives a cause to accept consequences for our actions. The immortality of the soul alone is the ultimate proof of absolute values, including truth, justice, and beauty. Yet after a life of searching for truth through logic and reason, Socrates comes to the final acceptance that the immortality of the soul cannot be proven; it can only be accepted as a matter of faith. But "fair is the prize" of that acceptance. Plato shaped all of philosophical tradition, and the *Phaedo* may well rank as his most influential dialogue and the supreme legacy of Socrates.

Outline

I. This course explores great literary works in hopes that readers can apply the themes of these works to their own lives. These themes deal with questions that every thoughtful individual must consider—either by conscious choice or by neglect.

- **A.** Such questions include the following:
  1. Is there a God?
  2. Is God responsible for all that happens?
  3. Is there a basic order to life, or is it random chance?
  4. What is the nature of good, and what is the nature of evil?
  5. Do absolute standards of good and evil exist?
  6. Do choices to do good or evil have consequences?
  7. If good and evil are not absolutes, are they determined by circumstances or are they words without meaning?
- **B.** Plato's *Phaedo* and the *Divine Comedy* serve as a bridge to the next theme—applying these lessons to one's own life.
  1. Both of these great works were written by noble and just men.
  2. Each of these works summarizes a civilization at its apex. For Plato, it is the civilization of classical Athens, and for Dante, it is the civilization of the Catholic Middle Ages.

3. Both authors suffered terrible wrongs. Dante died in exile, having been convicted of malfeasance and corruption in office and under a death penalty for not standing trial. Socrates, the subject of Plato's *Phaedo*, received the death penalty after being convicted of corruption and treason.

II. Socrates was the greatest teacher in history.

A. His trial, in 399 B.C. was a product of the war between Athens and Sparta.

B. Plato's *Apology* is a record of the speech that Socrates gave before the Athenian jury in his trial for corrupting youth and believing in new and different divinities rather than in the gods of Athens. Socrates did not excuse himself but spoke the truth. His *Apology* was a profound statement of the idea of freedom of conscience.

C. In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates presents his conviction that the soul is immortal and that belief in the immortal soul can give an individual guidance for life.

D. Socrates, like Jesus, never wrote a book. His student, Plato, left a series of dialogues in which Plato pays the highest tribute to his teacher by putting his ideas into the mouth of Socrates, thereby implying that without Socrates, Plato the intellectual would not have existed.

E. It has been said that all of philosophy has been a series of footnotes to Plato and that Socrates was his intellectual father.

F. Socrates was a true philosopher, a seeker after truth and a lover of wisdom. He asked such questions as: What is justice? What is piety? What is God? What is good government? This questioning brought Socrates into conflict with the citizens of Athens. The Athenians wanted to eliminate Socrates because he forced them to think about these issues.

III. The *Phaedo* is a dialogue that takes place on the day that Socrates will carry out his own execution by drinking a glass of hemlock.

A. Phaedo is a non-Athenian who is one of the students of Socrates. At the beginning of the dialogue, the jailer gives Socrates instructions, and Socrates asks for someone to take his wife, Xanthippe, home.

B. The students of Socrates ask him why he has recently been writing a hymn to Apollo and verse versions of Aesop's fables. He indicates that in his dreams, the muses had told him to make music and poetry. When he attempted to write poetry, he realized that his search for truth was his way of making poetry. In obtaining this wisdom, he learned that his search for truth was what he should have been doing all along and that he had done what he was meant to do.

C. Crito, a student of Socrates, then asks why Socrates appears happy in his present situation. After all, Socrates has been condemned to death. Socrates states that he is happy because he has lived his whole life wanting to die and preparing to die. He believes that a person who spends his life searching for truth and wisdom is doing nothing but preparing to die. Death is the moment when the soul is liberated from the trials of the body, and the soul of a person who has prepared for death will go to the bliss of union with God, which is cause for happiness.

D. The students of Socrates next ask him why he did not kill himself. Socrates explains that suicide is not an option. A person is the slave of God and must prepare for the moment when God wants him to die.

E. The students wonder how Socrates can say that the body is a prison that keeps the soul enmeshed. Socrates says that the cares and concerns of the body—such as hunger and fatigue—prevent an individual from pursuing truth and wisdom. The more a person can do to rid himself of his desires and bodily concerns, the purer his soul will become.

F. Socrates is then asked to answer the following questions: How do you know that your soul will continue after death and that actions have consequences? How do you know whether your life, spent in the pursuit of wisdom, had meaning?

1. Socrates replies that the immortality of the soul is the basis for everything and is attested by the existence of absolutes, such as absolute truth, justice, good, and beauty. Absolute beauty, for example, occurs in heaven, and it exists and is true even if every person on earth denies it.

2. Socrates says that people are born understanding the concept of these absolutes; therefore, the absolutes can exist only if the soul existed before the body and if these ideas were imprinted on the mind in heaven. Thus, the soul existed before we were born and will exist after we pass away.

G. The next question is: If the soul existed before you were born, how do you know that it will not die when you die? Socrates says that the soul is immortal because it gives one life. Absolute life must be the opposite of absolute death, and no absolute can admit its absolute opposite into it. Therefore, the soul must continue, and it must be imperishable.

H. Socrates's students indicate that they believe him but that they do not know whether he has persuaded them. Socrates states that he has come to understand that belief in this ultimate truth is just that—a belief. One cannot prove that the soul is immortal or that good or bad actions have consequences; one must make a leap of faith to believe it. He says, "If you do, fair is the prize and great is the hope, and it is in that hope that I can go happily to my death."

I. Finally, the students ask Socrates what he believes the afterlife will be like. Socrates, who had been convicted by the Athenians of blasphemy, believed that each person had a god inside himself—a *daemon*, that is, a "good spirit" or conscience. That conscience accompanies the soul to the underworld. The soul of a person who has lived in pursuit of truth goes with his conscience to the underworld. The *daemon* of a person who has lived an evil life must drag that person's soul down. When a person reaches the underworld, his soul will be judged by God.

1. Those who have done evil deeds are thrown into a deep, fiery pit.

2. Those who have done bad deeds in a moment of anger or desperation are thrown into a great lake, where they float around until their victims, who stand on the banks, forgive them.

3. Those who have not done anything evil but who have not purified their souls will flit around until they are reborn as other creatures.

4. Those souls who have spent their lives purifying themselves in the pursuit of wisdom are free forever, and they go to heaven and are joined with God and know only happiness and bliss and purity.

J. Thus, Socrates believes in consequences for good and bad actions and knows that God cares about good and evil. All people make their choices and will pay for them.

K. The jailer makes his presence known, and Socrates says that the jailer has been good to him. The jailer then prepares the poison. After drinking the poison and beginning to feel its effects, Socrates says that Crito should offer a rooster to Aesculapius, the god of healing and health, for healing him of earthly cares and the desires of his body. Thus, with his last breath, Socrates indicts the Athenian democracy that put him to death and shows a more profound belief in the gods than those who had accused him.

L. Socrates dies and Phaedo says, "That was the end of that man who of all the men of our day was the best, the most just, the finest man who ever lived."

Essential Reading:

Plato, *Phaedo*.

Supplementary Reading:

Plato, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What parallels do you see between the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Phaedo*?

2. Do you believe that morality depends on a belief in absolute values or in an afterlife?

Lecture Fourteen
Dante, *The Divine Comedy*

Scope: Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the most compelling and magisterial proclamation of the immortality of the soul and the belief that our actions have eternal consequences. *The Divine Comedy* is the supreme summary of the thought of medieval Europe. It ranks with the *Aeneid* of Vergil as one of the most influential epic poems ever composed. If this were not enough, in this great poem, Dante shaped the Italian language as it is still spoken today. In three parts, *Inferno*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*, Dante goes in search of wisdom. He finds ultimate truth in revelation. But his search must begin in the underworld and with a new birth. Reason and the lessons of history can take him only so far in his pursuit of true liberation. The final step can be achieved only through the miraculous gift of divine love.

Outline

I. Several works discussed previously in this course have dealt with the immortality of the soul.

A. The immortality of the soul was discussed in Plato's *Phaedo*, which was concerned with the last hours of the life of Socrates. The friends and students of Socrates judged him to be the best, the wisest, and the most just man of his time; however, he was executed by the Athenian democracy on charges of corruption and treason. During the life of Socrates, his goal was to search for truth, which led to his belief in the immortality of the soul.

B. The *Bhagavad Gita* was written in approximately 500 B.C., more than 100 years before Plato's *Phaedo* was written. According to this work, the goal of a wise man, that is, a seeker after truth, is to free the soul from the body to be joined in eternal bliss with God.

C. The concept of the eternal soul is also developed in other works we have examined.

1. In Homer, after death, the soul descends into the underworld, where it leads a miserable existence. As Achilles says to Odysseus, "Better to be a slave in the world above than to be the king of the underworld."

2. In the Old Testament, the immortality of the soul is of no consequence; life on earth is what matters.

3. By the 6th century B.C., the concept of the eternal soul had been transformed. In the *Bacchae*, the souls of those who believe in Dionysus never die but live on in eternal bliss.

4. In *Phaedo*, Socrates agrees with the worshippers of Bacchus, or Dionysus, that few are chosen to receive immortal life. For the Bacchae, belief in God brings immortality and salvation. For Socrates, one's own purification, that is, the gaining of wisdom, is necessary.
5. After the time of Alexander the Great, belief in the immortality of the soul became more important in the Greek and Roman world.
6. By 19 B.C., Vergil describes an underworld where the souls of the just go to join God and the souls of evildoers are punished.
7. By the 2nd century A.D., concern for the salvation of the soul was paramount, together with a concern that the soul be joined with the body in the afterlife. In the 1st century A.D., bodies of the deceased were burned; by the 2nd century, they were buried.
8. In 312 A.D., the Emperor Constantine, fearing for his immortal soul, converted to Christianity and imposed that religion on the Holy Roman Empire. Christianity rests on the belief of the immortality of the soul.
9. The concept of the immortality of the soul was the foundation of Christianity in the Middle Ages.

II. This belief in the immortality of the soul gave rise to one of the greatest works of the Middle Ages and one of the greatest works ever composed, *The Divine Comedy* of Dante.

A. The work has a monumental theme—the soul. Life is a comedy because—for those who believe—life ultimately has the happy ending of salvation.

B. *The Divine Comedy* is written in pure and eloquent Italian, an innovation for its day, when great works were usually written in Latin. Dante believed that to speak to the soul, he must use the vernacular.

C. *The Divine Comedy* speaks across the ages.

III. Dante Alighieri, "a Florentine by birth but not by character," was born in 1265. Florence was a free nation, a city-state in Italy with its own popular government. The era in which Dante lived was one of intellectual ferment, and the city of Florence was embroiled in the political struggles of Italy.

A. Dante participated in politics and held positions of authority in the Florentine government.

B. In 1302, Dante fell victim to one of the bitter factional struggles in Florence. His political enemies convicted him on false charges of malfeasance in office. He was condemned to exile on pain of death if he returned to Florence.

C. Dante created several works of genius during the years from 1302 to 1321, while he wandered through Italy.

1. He wrote a book on the Italian language.

2. He wrote *On Monarchy*, in which he stated that monarchy in the form of the Holy Roman Emperor was the salvation for Italy's political problems and that monarchy came from God himself. The noblest institution of government had been the Roman Empire and its legacy was the German Holy Roman Empire.
3. Dante hoped that *The Divine Comedy,* his poem of salvation, would gain eternal fame.

D. Dante died in exile in 1321.

IV. Dante said that *The Divine Comedy* was composed not as an allegory but as a practical guide to salvation. It is set during Easter week in 1300.

A. In the "Inferno," Dante begins his journey in the middle of his life, in the middle of the night, in the middle of a dark wood. He is lost.
1. He sees a great mountain and understands that he must climb it to leave the wood.
2. Three beasts appear, blocking his path: a leopard, a lion, and a wolf. During the Middle Ages, every aspect of nature was believed to bear the imprint of God, and every tree and animal had a symbolic meaning: the leopard represented pleasure, the lion represented ambition, and the wolf represented greed.
3. Dante encounters Vergil, the great Latin poet, whom Dante viewed as a master. The Christian Church regarded Vergil as a noble pagan, chosen by God to foretell the coming of Christ.
4. Vergil tells Dante that they can only escape from the darkness by descending first into the underworld. On the gates is a sign that reads: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here."
5. At the outskirts of hell, Dante and Vergil encounter such noble pagans as Hector, Socrates, Plato, and Pythagoras.
6. They enter the gateway to the place of pain and suffering and cross the river with Charon, the boatman.
7. They descend through the circles of hell, passing those who committed the sins of lust and gluttony; those who committed violence against themselves, others, and God; those who practiced deceit and fraud; and those who betrayed clients, as well as traitors, those who betrayed their country.
8. At the very deepest circle of hell is Satan, who is frozen in ice because that circle is the one that is most removed from the light of God. With Satan are the three arch-traitors: Judas, who betrayed Christ, and Brutus and Cassius, who betrayed Caesar.

B. Still guided by Vergil, Dante climbs up toward Purgatory.
1. Vergil and Dante encounter those who believed in Jesus but committed sins and died outside the Church or died in such sin that they must pass years removed from God.
2. Step by step, Vergil and Dante climb upward through Purgatory. The Roman pagan Cato, who died for liberty, guards the entrance

to Purgatory. Vergil tells Cato that Dante has come in search of liberty—the true freedom of salvation.

3. At the top of Purgatory is the Garden of Eden.

C. Vergil, a pagan, cannot guide Dante into heaven. Instead, Dante is escorted through heaven by three women.

1. His first guide is Beatrice, whom Dante loved in purity.
2. His second guide is St. Lucy, the patron saint of light itself.
3. His third guide is the Virgin Mary.
4. Although modern readers find the "Inferno" more interesting, for Dante, "Paradise" was more interesting. Reason can carry a person only so far; ultimately, divine love is necessary.
5. At the climax of the journey, Mary asks God to let Dante see his glory. Dante cannot adequately describe the experience or even remember it in detail.

V. *The Divine Comedy* is a poem about love. Its fundamental text is John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life."

A. This love, as attested by the Virgin Mary, was the foundation of medieval Christianity.

B. In Gothic cathedrals, the soul was to soar upward toward union with God, like Dante's pilgrimage upward to unite with God. Many cathedrals are dedicated to the Virgin Mary, because Mary, in her love, carries one ultimately to an understanding of Jesus and God.

VI. Dante emerged from his experience to bring back the message of the love of God. This work is a deeply religious one, written by a man who had suffered profoundly and who knew that he had been wronged. Out of his misery, he produced *The Divine Comedy*, a work of profound inspiration, philosophical depth, and unsurpassed beauty in its language. Although Dante simply called this work the *Commedia*, it has been known ever since his time as *The Divine Comedy*.

Essential Reading:

Dante, *The Divine Comedy*.

Supplementary Reading:

Taylor, *The Medieval Mind*.

Lewis, *Dante: A Life*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare for yourself the messages of *The Divine Comedy* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

2. Dante gave his stated purpose in writing *The Divine Comedy* to be practical: to lead those who are living a life of unhappiness to live a life of blessed joy. Do you believe he succeeded?

Lecture Fifteen

Shakespeare, *Othello, the Moor of Venice*

Scope: The ancient Greeks and Romans did not have a figure comparable to Satan or the devil. To them, evil came in the form of human actions. In Renaissance England, this same idea was portrayed magnificently in *Othello*. The tragedy was written in 1604, at the height of Shakespeare's creative powers. The play is set against the backdrop of Venice as a world power. Othello, a North African Muslim converted to Christianity, is a general of the Venetian Republic. He achieves his ambitions, both in public and private life, in his appointment to lead the armies of Venice against the Ottoman Turks and in marrying the beautiful Desdemona. Their lives and the lives of others are destroyed by the jealousy and false ambition of Iago, a petty and spiteful man but capable of great evil.

Outline

I. *The Divine Comedy* is a work of profound philosophical and religious meaning.

- **A.** It is a *commedia* because life is ultimately a comedy in that it can end in salvation and eternal bliss.
- **B.** The goal of *The Divine Comedy* is to lead the reader to the wisdom that recognizes the love of God, which moves the entire universe and, at the same time, can care for each person as an individual.
- **C.** Dante is a member of a select company of authors.
  - **1.** Of the Greeks, Homer was the outstanding genius against whose works all others are measured.
  - **2.** Vergil was the outstanding genius for the Romans. Dante chose Vergil as a guide because of the grandeur of his poetry.
  - **3.** Goethe is the outstanding genius for the Germans.
  - **4.** In the English-speaking world, William Shakespeare is our Dante, our Goethe, our Homer, and our Vergil. Shakespeare was a master of tragedy, a master of comedy, and a master of historical plays.

II. Shakespeare lived in an age of religious fervor and grandeur in England.

- **A.** Queen Elizabeth I was the ruler of Renaissance England, which was expanding across the world and beginning to establish settlements in the New World.
- **B.** This age was an era of heroic events, for example, the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588.

C. It was a time of great leaders throughout the known world, including Queen Elizabeth I, Ivan the Terrible, and Sulayman the Magnificent of the Ottoman Empire.

D. But this was also an era was of religious intolerance; it was an age of great wars of religion.

III. Shakespeare's plays do not reflect the religious fervor of the era. In Shakespeare, the human element is paramount.

IV. The definitive cultural feature of the Athenian democracy had been Greek tragedy. In the Elizabethan age, the definitive cultural statement is found in the plays of Shakespeare—comedies, tragedies, and histories.

V. In *Othello*, produced in 1604, Shakespeare takes a story that had appeared in a hackneyed version and transforms it into a masterpiece.

A. The primary setting for *Othello, the Moor of Venice*, is Venice.

1. Venice was a world power during the 16th century and a dominant power in the Middle East. Its territory included parts of Asia Minor and Turkey, ports of northern Italy, part of Greece, and such islands as Cyprus.

2. This seagoing republic was governed by an oligarchy of senators, with an elected leader, the *doge*.

3. Venice was a beautiful and wealthy city.

B. The themes of *Othello* are intrigue, jealousy, ambition, and love, rather than God, religion, and the immortality of the soul.

C. The central character of the play, Othello, is a Moor, an outsider in Venice, who grew up in northern Africa. He has made his way in life as a professional soldier. He has converted to Christianity and has proved himself indispensable to Venice as a general who leads his armies to victory. He hopes to become totally absorbed into this society. He is also in love with Desdemona, the daughter of a senator.

D. The play opens in Venice, with Iago and Roderigo.

1. Iago is a manipulator. Othello cannot grasp how evil Iago is.

2. In the first scene, Iago describes his hatred of Othello, who had appointed Cassio as second-in-command, a post that Iago wanted.

3. Roderigo confesses his love for Desdemona. Iago tells Roderigo that he will help him win Desdemona.

4. Desdemona's father is unaware of her relationship with Othello; Iago and Roderigo inform him that she and Othello are lovers.

5. Othello assures Desdemona's father that he and Desdemona will marry. He says that he will not stand in their way, but he warns Othello that Desdemona has deceived him and may deceive Othello, thereby planting the seeds of jealousy in Othello's mind.

6. Othello has now achieved the height of his ambition: he has won the hand of Desdemona and has been placed in command of the Venetian forces in Cyprus for war against the Ottoman Turks.

E. The remainder of the play takes place in Cyprus.

1. Iago assures Roderigo that he will win Desdemona. To achieve this, they must make Othello jealous. Cassio will be the foil for this plot. Iago will make Othello believe that Desdemona loves Cassio and is being unfaithful.
2. Iago flatters Cassio and encourages him to become drunk. Cassio then wounds a nobleman in a fight, which angers Othello.
3. Iago suggests that Cassio ask Desdemona to appeal to Othello on his behalf, which Cassio does.
4. Desdemona agrees to intercede for Cassio and a now suspicious Othello sees Cassio kissing Desdemona's hand in gratitude.
5. Iago asks his dutiful wife, Emilia, to obtain Desdemona's handkerchief, a treasured gift from Othello.
7. Desdemona accidentally drops the handkerchief; Emilia takes it, and Iago plants it in Cassio's room.
8. Desdemona asks Othello to consider restoring Cassio's position, increasing Othello's jealousy.
9. Cassio finds Desdemona's handkerchief and gives it to Bianca, a courtesan. When Iago and Othello notice Bianca carrying the handkerchief, she tells them that Cassio gave it to her.
10. Othello, driven mad by jealousy, accuses Desdemona of infidelity and strangles her.
11. The senators arrive, and the truth is revealed.
12. Iago is led off to torture, and Othello kills himself.

VI. No God is working behind the scenes in Othello. Shakespeare's play deals with real human nature and real human figures.

A. *Othello* speaks across the ages. Moral blindness still grips and motivates nations and individuals.

B. Humanity is prey to deception, power, jealousy, ambition and manipulation. That is the tragedy of Shakespeare. In Shakespeare, we see humans continually making the same mistakes, unable to learn from them.

Essential Reading:

Shakespeare, *Othello*.

Supplementary Reading:

Schoek, *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour.*

Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Othello could have avoided his fate?
2. In light of *Othello*, how might you reconsider aspects of your life that have been marred by false ambition?

Lecture Sixteen

Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*

Scope: Shakespeare, the greatest English writer of tragedy, shows us in *Othello* the tragic fall of rather ordinary people, people who, with a change of costume, we might meet in our professional lives today. Aeschylus, like the other great Greek tragedians, believes that we gain wisdom from those who suffered on a titanic stage. Prometheus is the great rebel, who in defiance of the will of Zeus, has brought noble benefits to the human race. Prometheus is the eternal symbol of those who fight evil in a just cause. Prometheus accepts the terrible consequences of his actions. Zeus has violence and power on his side. But Prometheus has knowledge and courage. In the end, he will win, and it will be Zeus who gains wisdom from the suffering of this rebel.

Outline

I. The previous lecture explored the tragic vision of Shakespeare's *Othello.*

- **A.** The grand theme of *Othello* is power and jealousy, but above all, love as the motivating force of human action. History has been made by men and women undertaking tremendous tasks for the sake of love. Love propelled Othello to kill his wife. Love—that is, the love of power—propelled Iago to poison the minds of Roderigo and Othello.
- **B.** *Othello* is written in noble language. The language of Shakespeare is elevated but powerful. It even influences the speech of those who have not read Shakespeare's works.
- **C.** The works of Shakespeare are universal. His works have been translated into almost every language, and they still speak to us today.

II. Greek tragedy was the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy.

- **A.** The age of Greek playwrights—Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides—is concurrent with the Athenian democracy of the 5th century B.C. and its grand period of empire.
- **B.** Athenian society was based on democracy, the liberty to live life as one chose, and the political involvement of ordinary citizens.
- **C.** Athenians sought to educate themselves for freedom with drama. Attending drama was a civic duty for which a stipend was given.
  - **1.** Athenian tragedy provided a public forum for considering profound questions of politics.
  - **2.** The Athenian tragedies dealt with contemporary events but were set in the mythical past to show that these issues were eternal and that they reverberated through history.

D. Aristotle wrote *The Poetics* in the latter part of the 4th century B.C.; however, it reflects his thoughts regarding the great poets of the previous century—Sophocles, Aeschylus, and Euripides. In it, Aristotle provided a definition of tragedy: A tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete, of great magnitude, and noble. The tragedy is performed, not narrated. It must be performed in verse with music, and performances must include scenic effects.

E. Tragedy in the Greek drama happens to grand figures—Prometheus, Oedipus, or Agamemnon. The lesson here is that if a great figure can experience such a reversal of fortune, it is even more likely to happen to an ordinary person. Tragedy is about a reversal of fortune, a fall.

F. Action, not character, causes the tragedy to occur; character is how one endures the tragedy. Tragedy is caused by an action taken of one's own will. Neither fate nor the gods force a person to take action. The action that brings about tragedy is well-intentioned, but with disastrous results that cause the ruin of the actor and, frequently, of the innocent.

G. Greek drama was designed to arouse feelings of fear and pity, resulting in catharsis.

III. *Prometheus Bound* is about power and the abuse of power (tyranny).

A. In the 6th century, Athens had been ruled by tyrants. These tyrants, Pisistratus and Hippias, were overthrown; Athenians had no wish to be ruled by dictators.

B. Winston Churchill defined a tyrant as a person who believes that his own comfort, ideas, and policies are worth the sacrifice of millions.

IV. *Prometheus Bound* was produced in 458 B.C., when Athens had just undergone a tremendous political transformation.

A. Athens had been a democracy, based on a balance of power: the supreme court of Athens could overturn decisions made by the assembly of the Athenian people.

B. In 461 B.C., Pericles made a tremendous change to the Athenian constitution. The supreme court was stripped of its powers to review legislation, and the rule of the majority was no longer checked.

C. Pericles was also instrumental in changing foreign policy which had been based on a coalition with Sparta; however, under Pericles, Athens sought to challenge Sparta to become the only major power in Greece.

D. Cimon, who had helped Athens gain its empire, had supported and fostered the balanced constitution and the coalition with Sparta. The Athenians ostracized Cimon, that is, they voted to send him into exile.

E. In *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus represents this new political situation in Athens and warns the Athenians that the majority can be just as tyrannical as one man.

V. Aeschylus set *Prometheus Bound* in the mythological past, shortly after Zeus had come to power.

A. Zeus had overthrown his father, Cronus, to become king of the gods, just as Cronus had overthrown his own father, Ouranus, to gain power.

1. The children of Zeus—including Hera, Athena, Apollo, Hermes, and Hephaestus—assisted Zeus in this war.

2. The Titans, a race of giants, fought against the power of Zeus.

3. Prometheus had aided Zeus against his fellow Titans.

4. The Titans were punished for resisting Zeus.

B. At first Zeus, the new tyrant, honored Prometheus, but then realized that if Prometheus had turned against the Titans, he might just as easily turn against Zeus. Zeus believed that Prometheus had to be watched.

C. Zeus believed that his own ideas were worth the sacrifice of millions of innocents and decided to destroy the human race.

D. Prometheus intervened and saved humanity by giving to humans the arts and sciences that enabled them to cultivate the divine and protect themselves. He gave the human race everything that made people reasoning creatures. He taught people how to grow crops, write, understand the divine, read the signs of oracles, make sacrifices, sail, and domesticate wild animals.

VI. The play opens with Zeus carrying out the punishment of Prometheus.

A. The name *Prometheus* means "foresight." Prometheus could see what was going to happen, making him an even more tragic figure.

B. Zeus punishes Prometheus by crucifixion.

1. Zeus, like many tyrants, does not do the dirty work himself. The personification of the god Power and the god Hephaestus, the god of fire, nail Prometheus to the mountain.

2. Hephaestus represents one type of character who serves a tyrant. He apologizes to the victim for his cruelty but completes his gruesome task.

3. Power represents a second type of character who assists tyrants. Power is convinced that Prometheus deserves his punishment and encourages Hephaestus to carry it out.

C. Prometheus refuses to apologize to Zeus because he did nothing wrong.

D. The chorus pities Prometheus and asks him to give in. Prometheus refuses because he knows that he is right and that tyranny is wrong.

E. The cow Io is introduced, also a victim of Zeus's tyranny. Io had been a maiden with whom Zeus enjoyed a dalliance. Zeus—like all tyrants—is a coward. He is afraid of his wife, Hera, who turned Io into a cow followed by stinging horseflies. Prometheus, with his foreknowledge, understands that the suffering of Io will last many years.

F. Prometheus knows that Hercules will be born of the descendants of Io and will one day help Prometheus. Prometheus tells the chorus to weep not for him but for Zeus, who may not always be king. Prometheus says that he knows who will overthrow Zeus. Zeus hears about Prometheus's claim and sends Hermes, the messenger god, to extract information from Prometheus. Hermes tells Prometheus that the person with power defines right.

G. Hermes asks Prometheus to tell him who will overthrow Zeus. Even with the threat of more terrible tortures, Prometheus refuses to betray the name.

H. The play ends with thunder and lightning offstage and with Prometheus shrieking his defiance to Zeus.

VII. The play depicts the power of a tyrant able to inflict suffering on a colossal scale.

A. In his book *1984*, George Orwell defined *power* as "the ability to inflict pain and humiliation." This definition was as true in 5th-century Athens as it was in Nazi Germany or under Stalin in Russia.

B. Nothing is more terrible than simple unrelenting pain, and nothing is more devastating to the spirit than humiliation. Prometheus, who had been honored by Zeus, is crucified and subject to constant pain because he insists on his belief in what is right.

C. *Prometheus Bound* is a powerful statement of the right to resist tyranny, as well as the duty to do so. *Prometheus Bound* was read in prewar Germany as part of the classical education. That generation did not seem to learn the lesson that "just following orders" is not an excuse for acquiescing to tyranny.

Essential Reading:

Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*.

Supplementary Reading:

Hogan, *A Commentary on the Complete Greek Tragedies*, vol. I, *Aeschylus*, pp. 274–365.

Murray, *Aeschylus: The Creator of Tragedy.*

Andrewes, *The Greek Tyrants*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is there anything to be said on the side of Zeus? After all, the first duty of a government is to protect itself and to prevent civil war.

2. Is Prometheus a hero or just a hardhead? Are most heroes hardheads? After all, more than one American politician has been successful by following the adage: "to get along, go along."

Lecture Seventeen

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

Scope: The 20th century was eager to dismiss the idea of the reality of evil, reducing the devil to a comic figure. Yet to the thoughtful individual, Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin seem the most compelling proof for the existence of absolute evil. Solzhenitsyn's book is a massive indictment of the evil of Joseph Stalin and of the Communist system. Far more than that, Solzhenitsyn portrays with chilling insight the role of ordinary people in carrying out this evil. Very small individuals, intent on their own petty self-interest, do the evil. It is they who are the policeman and bureaucrats who enable the evil to flourish. No less chilling is Solzhenitsyn's portrait of the human weakness that passively allows the evil to work its way: small people hoping that, if they do nothing to resist, the evil will pass them by and destroy their neighbors. *The Gulag Archipelago* played a significant role in unmasking the lies on which the Soviet system rested and in creating that moral revulsion among Soviet citizens that led ultimately to its collapse.

Outline

I. The great books in this course have explored serious themes with which every thoughtful individual must deal:

- **A.** God: Do we believe in the gods? Do the gods care about humans? Do they intervene in human affairs? Do they set a course for people's lives?
- **B.** Fate: Is what happens to people a product of divine order or the random clashing of atoms? Marcus Aurelius says that the individual must decide—either order or atoms.
- **C.** Good and evil: Do absolute standards exist by which we can judge action?
- **D.** After making these decisions, we must ask how we should live our lives and what the meaning of our lives is.

II. We next explore questions of duty and responsibility. This discussion began with *Prometheus Bound*, in which Prometheus decided that it was his duty to oppose the order of Zeus and the destruction of mankind.

- **A.** How do we know what our duty is, and how do we decide what is right? Does the modern age even permit a true concept of conscience? Are modern society and the modern state so powerful that they destroy any concept of conscience?
- **B.** Aleksandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn catalogued the attempt of the state to destroy the idea of conscience in *The Gulag Archipelago.*

III. In February 1945, Solzhenitsyn was a captain in the Soviet Army. He had been made a captain because of extraordinary bravery in the field.

- **A.** He received what appeared to be a routine request to report to headquarters, where he was arrested.
- **B.** Agents refused to tell him why he had been arrested, although his colonel conceded "You have a friend, I believe, on the Ukrainian front," a small act of conscience in an effort to stand up to Stalin's destructive machinery of state.
- **C.** Solzhenitsyn was incarcerated and interrogated. The case against him had already been decided. If he did not provide evidence of his guilt, government agents would fabricate it. He underwent physical and mental pain before finally signing a document. In a society in which there is no real justice, legality is everything.
- **D.** Solzhenitsyn was sentenced to eight years in a labor camp.

IV. Perhaps as many as 20 million individuals died in Soviet labor camps as part of a systematic policy of rule by terror.

- **A.** In *The Gulag Archipelago,* Solzhenitsyn documents the fact that this terror was not the random aberration of one man, Stalin, but went back to the beginning of Communism and the Bolshevik Revolution.
- **B.** Lenin spoke of the need to rule by terror to eliminate anyone who represented a possible danger. One goal of this policy was to arrest people at random and, thereby, terrify others into submission.
- **C.** The entire system was weighted against those who were arrested. The interrogators, the judges, and the agents of arrest—all believed they were doing their patriotic duty.

V. Solzhenitsyn wondered whether it was fate or God that saved him from death in the labor camps.

- **A.** Solzhenitsyn had wanted to study the classics. He had not been allowed to do so and instead studied mathematics.
- **B.** After six months of hard labor, he was moved to a camp engaged in scientific research, where he worked on mathematical calculations.
- **C.** When his eight-year sentence was over, he was sentenced in absentia to exile in Kazakhstan.
- **D.** He decided not to remain silent, as so many former prisoners had done. He believed it was his duty to ensure that those who had suffered would not be forgotten.
- **E.** He wrote in secret while teaching math and chemistry in a local high school. The result was *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* a poignant and penetrating account of life in the labor camps; he sent the manuscript to a publisher.

F. In the early 1960s, the Soviet government had begun to foster the image of a Soviet society that was moving away from Stalinism.
  1. In 1956, Khrushchev had made a secret speech savagely attacking Stalin's abuse of power. The speech was made public in 1962.
  2. A literary work documenting the terror of Stalin was deemed useful and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* came out with the full approval of the Communist Party and the writers' union.

VI. Solzhenitsyn was given a chance to become a member of the Party and write what he was told. When he refused, his writings were confiscated, and he was expelled from the writers' union. He continued writing and documenting the terror.

A. *The Gulag Archipelago* is based on 227 testimonies and portrays what Solzhenitsyn called "the history of our sewage system."
  1. In *The Gulag Archipelago,* Solzhenitsyn described the interrogations and the brutality of guards who did not want the truth but a confession. He described how this system had started under Lenin and was fundamental to socialism, which must rule by terror because it denies a basic human right, the right to property.
  2. Solzhenitsyn smuggled *The Gulag Archipelago* out of the country and gave a "secret" interview to the *New York Times* about the persecution he was experiencing.

B. He was not allowed to go to Sweden to accept the Nobel Prize in 1970.

VII. Solzhenitsyn was stripped of his Soviet citizenship and exiled. He first went to Switzerland, then to Vermont, where he lived on a farm and continued to write.

A. In the West it was believed that because he was anti-Soviet, he would embrace democracy and capitalism.

B. As he moved further from the oppressive and soul-destroying experience of the Soviet Union, he found a new sense of identity.

C. He began to understand that Russia was an autonomous, 1,000-year-old culture that Communism had tried to destroy because it represented eternal values.
  1. Communism rests on the belief that because there is no God, there is no absolute right and wrong.
  2. The Communists had to destroy the old Russian culture because it rested on belief in a politicized God. Under the czars, God was the ruler of Russia, and the czar was accountable only to God. God would judge the czar on the basis of absolute right and wrong.
  3. Solzhenitsyn became convinced that in this old Russian concept of God lay his own spiritual redemption and salvation.

D. In 1978, Solzhenitsyn was invited to Harvard to receive an honorary degree and give a commencement address. Instead of offering a few

platitudes, he gave a thoughtful indictment of Western democracy, not as an enemy, but as a friend with a different vantage point.

1. He said that the colonial empires built by Western powers were fragile and left behind nothing but problems. The West had not learned and still believed that it was a model for the world. The West wanted to turn all the nations of the world into model capitalistic, liberal democracies. He believed that the spread of capitalism merely continued that imperial march.
2. Solzhenitsyn believed that the West shows contempt for justice. In the West, what is right legally, not necessarily what is just, is what matters. The United States has become a nation of suers and countersuers and is interested only in legalities.
3. Members of the press destroy a reputation by basing stories on unnamed sources and scurrilous rumors. The press is held unaccountable in the name of journalistic freedom. Thus, freedom of the press has become a form of government by terror.
4. Capitalism can become all-destroying. Spiritual concerns have been replaced by the desire to make more money and spend it on useless things. Money guides society. Money has been embraced as a positive good because society has become utterly materialistic and has marginalized God.
5. God is without meaning in the lives of ordinary individuals and the values by which they live their lives.

VIII. Following the collapse of Communism, Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia.

- **A.** Solzhenitsyn is now largely ignored both in Russia and in the West.
- **B.** Solzhenitsyn was paid an ironic compliment in the form of a literary prize in his name, an attempt to institutionalize this voice of conscience and duty, who like Socrates, spoke out from prison to give us the truth.

Essential Reading:

Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vols. I and II.

Supplementary Reading:

Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, vol. III.

———, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.

Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that the terror of the labor camps was an aberration or the natural outcome of Communism? Or, more chilling, does it reflect a fundamental character of human nature?

2. Winston Churchill defined a tyrant as one who believed his own ideas and gratification to be worth the lives of millions. How does Stalin fit that definition?

Lecture Eighteen
Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*

Scope: Like *Othello*, *Julius Caesar* was written at the height of Shakespeare's creative talents. Its theme is honor and duty, the duty of a man to resist evil by violence and murder if necessary. To Brutus, Caesar is evil. He is the most dangerous type of tyrant. He is not personally cruel. He does not rob or torture his enemies. In fact, he treats them with clemency. Caesar is evil because he is destroying the political liberty of the Roman people. But Shakespeare understands human nature far too well to make this tragedy into a simple morality play. The motives of all the conspirators, including Brutus, are complex and cloudy. The consequence of their assassination of Caesar is not the restoration of liberty but further death and destruction for their country and the emergence of a new tyrant.

Outline

I. The previous lecture explored Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*, one of the most powerful works of the 20th century. It is the work of a writer of enormous conscience, duty, and responsibility, who—despite terror and his experiences of prison, labor camp, and torture—believed that it was his duty to speak out to ensure that those who suffered in Stalin's labor camps would have a voice. The *Gulag Archipelago* is a work of honor.

- **A.** Honor, duty, and responsibility are central to the way we live our lives if we wish to live them as thoughtful individuals.
- **B.** We can define honor, duty, and responsibility, but defining how people can live these values is hard.
  - **1.** We all think that we know what our duty is, but in practice, the concept is complicated. Is duty what our company tells us to do, what our profession tells us to do, or what our own conscience tells us to do?
  - **2.** People have a responsibility to speak the truth, but we also have a responsibility to family, to country, and to the organizations we work for.
  - **3.** Honor is a term used constantly today, but it is an ideal that has no effective meaning in contemporary society. Honor is a sense of right and wrong, as well as a reputation for integrity and bravery and for doing what must be done. Others must believe that an individual has honor, and the individual must also believe that he or she is a person of honor. It is a part of one's identity.

II. Honor is the central theme of *Julius Caesar.* It was first produced in an age that took the concept of honor seriously.

A. Shakespeare was a master of human reality. He did not present people as ideals but portrayed their true behavior and motivations. In *Othello*, the motivating forces are jealousy and love, but in *Julius Caesar*, they are honor, duty, courage, and ambition.

B. *Julius Caesar* was first produced in 1599.

1. The play marked the end of Shakespeare's concern with English history and the beginning of the plays based on Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, which was one of the most influential works ever composed.

2. Although Shakespeare based *Julius Caesar* on Plutarch's *Lives*, he added qualities to the story to turn it into a monumental statement of values that remain with us today.

III. Julius Caesar was a man of genius.

A. Julius Caesar composed works of history, his *Commentaries*, to describe his victories in Gaul; these are the finest examples of Latin prose ever written.

B. He was a military genius who did not begin to command until he was 39 years old and then never lost a battle.

C. He was a statesman who envisioned Rome not as a narrow republic, ruling an empire for its own gratification, but as a world state, ruling from Britain to Iraq and from the Sahara to the North Sea. Every inhabitant of this empire enjoyed personal liberty, the freedom to live as they chose, and the freedom to pursue their own occupations.

D. Julius Caesar was a world historical force and, as such, cannot be judged by the values of ordinary lives. He believed that Gaul had to be invaded because the demands of empire justified it.

E. Some saw Caesar differently—as a man of cunning and deceit, a petty politician who would do anything to achieve his ambition of dictatorship. He would even destroy Roman liberties and the constitution that was based on a balance between the Roman assembly of ordinary people and the majesty of the senate.

IV. The play opens in Rome on February 15 in 44 B.C., one month before the Ides of March. Shakespeare has telescoped the chronology of actual events throughout the play.

A. At the beginning of the play, crowds in the streets are celebrating Caesar's victories over Pompey. The tribunes of the people are outraged by the crowds now saluting Caesar. They point out the fickleness of the crowd.

1. Shakespeare was not in favor of democracy; he did not believe that ordinary people had the sense, good will, or values to govern themselves.

2. Democracy, as embodied in these foul-mouthed, ordinary people, has been the ruin of Rome, because this kind of uneducated mob will welcome any dictator who fills their pockets and stomachs and entertains them.

B. The play opens during a critical time in the political life of Rome; it is the day of the Lupercalia, an ancient ritual that could be traced to Rome's founding. At the conclusion of the Lupercalia, before the assembled people of Rome, Caesar has arranged that Marc Antony will offer him the crown and he will become king for life, as well as dictator; Caesar's sense of honor demands that he become king.

C. Marcus Junius Brutus is standing outside the sacred area of the celebration and has fallen into conversation with Cassius.

1. Cassius is lean and hungry, a dangerous man from an ordinary Roman aristocratic family.
2. Brutus traces his ancestry back to Lucius Junius Brutus, who drove out the last king of Rome and established the free republic.
3. The idea of kingship was hateful to the people of Rome. Lucius Junius Brutus had established the consulship, which placed limits on executive power.
4. Brutus had fought on the side of Pompey and against Caesar at the Battle of Pharsalus in 48 B.C.
5. Caesar spared the life of Brutus, as well as that of Cassius, and they each held the office of praetor.
6. Rather than loving Caesar for his clemency, these men secretly hate him. They believe that Caesar had dishonored them by saving their lives.

D. Hearing cheering from the crowd, Brutus says he fears that the people "would make Caesar king."

E. Brutus also says that he loves "the name of honour" more than he fears death. Cassius appears jealous of Caesar and makes honor the theme of a speech to Brutus in an effort to enlist Brutus in a conspiracy to assassinate Caesar.

F. Portia, the wife of Brutus, often reminds Brutus that her father, Marcus Porcius Cato, committed suicide rather than give up honor and liberty.

G. After further thought and encouragement, Brutus becomes the head of a conspiracy of 63 senators, who came together because of their confidence in Brutus. Brutus is the one man that the people will accept as having participated in the conspiracy only out of a sense of duty.

H. A soothsayer has told Caesar to beware the Ideas of March. Caesar, however, is arrogant, convinced that he is too great to be brought down. He does not trust thin, dangerous, thinking men, like Cassius.

I. When some senators ask Caesar to accompany them to the Senate on the Ides of March, Caesar is at first not willing to leave his house. He

has promised his wife, Calpurnia, that he would stay home because she dreamed that he would be struck down. The senators tell Caesar that he will be offered the crown, and he eagerly accompanies them.

J. Caesar is struck down by the conspirators.
  1. The people are not prepared for freedom and liberty.
  2. The conspirators come up with a new plan. They turn to Marc Antony and agree to a reconciliation. They decide that Marc Antony will celebrate Caesar in a funeral oration.

K. In the forum, Brutus justifies the action of the conspirators by saying that he loved Caesar but loved duty and honor more.

L. Marc Antony gives a powerful oration, in which he manipulates the crowd. He turns Brutus's concept of honor around, for can any conspiracy can be honorable?

M. The people turn against the conspirators, who are forced to flee from Rome.

V. The conspirators flee to Greece. The armies of Brutus and Cassius, defending the liberty of the Roman people, must take up arms against Marc Antony and Octavius, the 19-year-old great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar, who will later be known as Augustus.

A. Caesar's ghost continues to motivate the action and warns Brutus that they will meet again at Philippi.

B. Cassius and Brutus have a falling out, but they reconcile. Cassius urges that they delay, but Brutus suggests that they seize the moment.

C. Brutus and Cassius are defeated at Philippi and commit suicide.

D. Of Brutus, Marc Antony says, "this was the noblest Roman of them all… and the elements So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up And say… 'This was a man!'" Brutus was indeed a man—a man who possessed the virtues and flaws of most men. He was a man who disguised, even to himself, his true motives of envy, jealousy, and ambition.

VI. For Shakespeare, honor is but a device that men use, and duty and responsibility are slogans that cloak the eternal lust for power and ambition.

Essential Reading:

Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*.

Supplementary Reading:

Plutarch, *Lives of Caesar, Brutus, and Antony*.

Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would you define honor? Do you believe that honor is a viable concept in today's world?
2. With what character in the play do you most identify?

Lecture Nineteen
George Orwell, *1984*

Scope: Prometheus and Brutus show us individuals who can make a stand against evil .In his novel *1984*, George Orwell raises the pertinent and disturbing question of whether any individual can resist the modern power of the state. The Oceania of Big Brother is the embodiment of the idea that the individual exists to serve the state. Indeed, the individual has no meaning. The state or the party controls all aspects of human existence, all thought, all language, all action. In a brilliantly engaging and disturbing fashion, Orwell illuminates the logical consequences of a series of books that have made history: Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*, Georg Wilhelm Friedich Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. All of these subordinate the individual to anonymous social and economic forces. Orwell puts the human face of evil to these doctrines of totalitarianism. His central character, Winston Smith, demonstrates the absolute helplessness of the individual in the face of the modern state.

Outline

I. George Orwell's *1984* continues our discussion of the themes of duty and responsibility and how we live our lives with a sense of honor and a sense of conscience that require us to speak out about what we know to be our duty and to do what is honorable.

- **A.** In *Julius Caesar*, honor is seen as a mask that enables people to pursue their own ambitions, motivated by jealousy and envy.
- **B.** George Orwell's *1984* is a fictional work of frightening reality that describes a world similar to the one that Solzhenitsyn later discussed in *The Gulag Archipelago*. It raises the question of whether honor, duty, and responsibility are possible in our own day for the individual who finds himself under the control of the modern totalitarian state.

II. George Orwell was the pen name of Eric Blair, who was born in 1903 and educated at Eton.

- **A.** Orwell served briefly in the police force in Burma, part of the British colonial civil service. This experience left him with a lasting distaste and contempt for the jobs of bureaucrats. He believed that bureaucrats were forced to put aside their conscience and honor to do their duty.
- **B.** Orwell fought in the Spanish Civil war on the side of the Communist forces, or Loyalists, against the Fascists. This experience left Orwell with a deep suspicion about the intentions of communism.

III. The novel *1984* was published in 1948.

A. In the book, Orwell portrayed the new age under a totalitarian regime.

B. Stalin is the basis for Orwell's depiction of Big Brother. Throughout *1984*'s city of London, and across the continent of Oceania, Big Brother is watching. He is a handsome, middle-aged man with a heavy black moustache. The phrase "Big Brother is watching" is not itself terrifying, but Big Brother cannot be escaped.

IV. The novel opens at noontime on a windy April day in 1984.

A. The events of Dante's *Divine Comedy* take place during Easter Week, and Greek tragedies were produced in the spring, the time of rebirth and redemption. Beginning the narrative in April suggests that Winston Smith, the central character, is making an attempt to renew his life and redeem himself.

B. The first name of Winston Smith reminds the reader of Winston Churchill—a man of duty, responsibility, and honor—who rallied the British people to stand and fight totalitarianism. The last name Smith, the most common name in the English language, transforms Winston into Everyman, taking a stand for what is right, but that task is not easy in the world of *1984*.

C. In *1984*, the earth is divided into three great powers: Oceania, where the story takes place, consists of Britain and North and South America; the other powers are Eurasia (Russia) and Eastasia (China). In Oceania, the government tightly controls all sources of information, so the people of Oceania do not truly know what is going on in Eurasia or Eastasia. Information is not lacking, however; the people of Oceania are constantly flooded with news.

D. Winston Smith is one of the small cogs that helps make the system work. He works in the Ministry of Truth, which is one of four great government apparatuses of Oceania.

1. The Ministry of Truth is devoted to lies.

2. The Ministry of Peace is devoted to war.

3. The Ministry of Plenty is devoted to consciously contrived poverty.

4. The Ministry of Love is devoted to torture and hate.

E. In the world of *1984*, language is controlled and speech is constantly being revised to reflect the political currents. What the Party wants said must be said in language that is approved.

F. Thought is also controlled. The thought police are the most dreaded instruments of control. They operate from the Ministry of Love.

G. Winston Smith's job at the Ministry of Truth is to fabricate history, because one slogan of the Party is that he who controls the present controls the past and he who controls the past controls the future.

Those in power can rewrite history and, thereby, control the perceptions of future generations.

H. In *1984* in Oceania, there is no truth. Truth is whatever the Party says it is. God has been officially banished, as in the Soviet Union. There is also no absolute good or evil.

I. Winston can vaguely remember a time when London was not a boarded-up, poverty-stricken city and that there may have been a time when there was no Oceania. He remembers that he once had a mother, but she disappeared. With great difficulty, he can reflect and reconstruct what life was like before the Party.

V. Winston has decided to make a stand for conscience on this April day.

A. He goes to his tiny apartment on his lunch hour, takes a swig of Victory gin, and conceals what he is doing from the telescreen, which is a device that constantly broadcasts information and watches each individual.

1. He takes out an old-fashion notebook and pen, which he has bought in the proletariat part of London.

2. Although the Party is allegedly governing in the best interests of the proletariat, it does not really care about the masses; the proletariat has been reduced to almost a savage level.

3. Winston writes, "Down with Big Brother" and finds that the act of writing this statement gives him a real sense of freedom.

B. Winston returns to his task at the Ministry of Truth and to the set of conscious lies that dominate the life of every inhabitant of Oceania.

C. In Oceania, people are told that ignorance is strength, war is peace, and slavery is freedom. The people must be willing to accept these paradoxes. To survive in the Oceania of *1984*, one must practice and be convinced of doublethink, the ability to hold in one's mind two completely contradictory ideas and believe them both sincerely.

D. During the mandatory hate sessions, Winston has glimpsed a woman named Julia. He fancies that she is not as absorbed during these sessions as the others are.

E. He has also noticed a heavy-set senior Party official named O'Brien. During a hate session, someone has whispered to him, "We will meet again in a place where there is no darkness." That person sounded like O'Brien.

F. Winston decides to take Julia into his confidence, and the two begin a relationship.

G. Winston is invited to O'Brien's home. He has already started to convince himself that O'Brien is an honorable man. He is told of a conspiracy against the Party that consists of people like Winston throughout Oceania who seek to overthrow the government. O'Brien

asks Winston if he is willing to swear that he would do anything to overthrow the Party, and Winston states that he is.

VI. To continue their relationship, Julia and Winston rent a small apartment in the proletariat part of London, where they make love and talk about freedom.

A. Winston reads to Julia a disturbing book that O'Brien has given him. It indicates that the Party is really about control, describes how to get and maintain power, and shows that warfare is a way of creating constant poverty. Winston learns that the entire social fabric is a lie.

B. One evening, Winston notices that the clock on the wall shows one time, but the shadows outside indicate a later time. A voice says, "Stay where you are. Here comes a lantern to light you to bed. Here comes a chopper to chop off your head." The thought police then break in to the apartment.

C. Winston realizes, just as Solzhenitsyn understood, that nothing is more awful than physical pain.

D. Winston and Julia are taken to the Ministry of Love, where O'Brien interrogates and tortures Winston until he believes that 2 + 2 = 5 if the Party says it does. Power is the ability to inflict pain and humiliation on another. Winston, the man of honor and courage, understands what the individual can do in the face of such overwhelming power—nothing.

E. Under torture Winston betrays Julia and suggests that she be tortured.

F. Winston is released and receives a new job with a higher salary than his previous job and few duties. He spends much time in the Chestnut Tree Cafe, where a song is often played: "Under the spreading chestnut tree, I sold you and you sold me."

G. Winston knows that at some time he will be rearrested, tried, and executed by the Party just to show that it can be done. At the end of the novel, he goes out to join the crowds in the street who are celebrating Oceania's victory over Eurasia.

Essential Reading:

Orwell, *1984*.

Supplementary Reading:

Orwell, *Animal Farm*.

———, *Homage to Catalonia*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Compare the Newspeak of *1984* with changes in the English language brought about by political currents of the last decades.

2. We see how easily the Oceania and Party of *1984* compare with the Russia of Stalin. Do you see any comparison with America of 2005?

Lecture Twenty
Vergil, *Aeneid*

Scope: In the course *Famous Romans*, we examined the *Aeneid* as a source of the history and ideas of the age of the Emperor Augustus. We turn to it now both as a work of literature and as a powerful and influential statement of the necessity of war in a just cause. In its theme, noble language, and universality, the *Aeneid* is the embodiment of the ideal of a great book. It is an epic about the moral value of duty. Its theme is civic virtue, the willingness of an individual to subordinate his own interest to the good of the community as a whole. Aeneas is *pius* because he chooses to serve his nation, and in that service, he fulfills his divine destiny. That service forces him into war—a civil war—a war he does not want. But through the leadership of Aeneas, his nation is reborn, and he achieves immortality.

Outline

I. The previous three lectures have examined the concepts of duty, responsibility, and honor and their role in the way we lead our lives. In the 20th century, Solzhenitsyn and Orwell portray the individual as having little ability to live his or her life in terms of duty, honor, and responsibility.

- **A.** In *1984*, the individual counts for nothing. Whatever feelings of conscience an individual has can be destroyed by brainwashing. The state can replace feelings of conscience with whatever it wants.
- **B.** Solzhenitsyn says that God was what saved him among all those who perished without mention or remembrance in the Gulag Archipelago.
- **C.** *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *1984*, and *The Gulag Archipelago* all deal with the desolation of war and its effects on the soul; these books also deal with labor camps and totalitarianism and their effects on the soul.
- **D.** The 20th century was the greatest democratic age in history, but it included two of the most despotic regimes in history—Hitler's Third Reich and Stalin's Soviet Union, as well as the most destructive wars in history, World Wars I and II.

II. Vergil's *Aeneid* tells about another age of civil war, destruction, and widespread hopelessness from which the entire world was saved by one man who did his duty. That man was Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, known to the world as Augustus.

- **A.** In the *Famous Romans* course, the *Aeneid* was examined briefly for what it told of the policies of Augustus.

B. The *Aeneid* was written by Vergil, the greatest poet of his day, who was born in 70 B.C. and came of age in the turmoil that preceded and followed the death of Julius Caesar. He had witnessed the Roman world brought to political and economic ruin by self-satisfied politicians who sought only their own best interests.

C. Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ends with the deaths of Caesar, Brutus, and Cassius. Shakespeare's audience would have been aware that these deaths had led to a new round of civil war.

D. In 31 B.C., with his victory over his former friend and colleague Marc Antony, Augustus triumphed.

E. Augustus was the greatest statesman in history. Out of a ruined world, he constructed a new order that guaranteed individual liberties and brought peace and prosperity to the Roman world. He began two centuries of unparalleled prosperity, peace, intellectual creativity, and social mobility through a carefully disguised dictatorship. All instruments of constitutional government remained in place, but all real sources of power—political, military, and economic—were vested in Augustus and his successors.

F. Augustus urged Vergil to write an epic poem that would celebrate the founding of Rome and would portray in allegorical form the struggles that Augustus had undergone in his efforts to bring peace and prosperity to Rome. The Augustus of Rome is found in the person of Aeneas.

1. Vergil died before completing the *Aeneid.* He had urged a friend to burn it, but the friend and Augustus had the work published.

2. Vergil drew on the work of Homer in writing the *Aeneid.* However, because the Western Europeans of the Middle Ages did not read Greek, Vergil was seen as the grand master. In fact, in *The Divine Comedy*, Dante calls Vergil his "great master," and Vergil leads Dante through the Inferno and Purgatory.

3. Christians regarded Vergil as a "noble pagan" who had foretold the coming of Christ.

III. The *Aeneid* made literary history.

A. The book has two grand themes: The first is the founding of Rome, and the second is the theme of duty and the requirement that the individual do his duty no matter what the cost.

B. The poetic language of Vergil is unsurpassed.

C. Answering the question of whether the *Aeneid* speaks across the ages is difficult. It is a hard poem to read because it is filled with mythological and historical references. The work possesses a quiet calm rather than the carnage and excitement of the *Iliad.* Some might be put off by the character of Aeneas himself, who introduces himself with the words "I am dutiful Aeneas."

D. Some contemporary classical scholars try to suppress the real meaning of the *Aeneid* as a statement of propaganda for Augustus and a celebration of absolute rule under a good, kind, and dutiful leader.

IV. Aeneas led his followers from the ruin of Troy to found a new Rome, just as Augustus had led the Roman people through war and suffering to found a new order.

A. Aeneas is a man of duty.

1. In *1984*, O'Brien was also a man of duty. He believed that he was carrying out his duty by torturing Winston.

2. Readers might wonder what separates the man of conscience who is carrying out his duty from the SS colonel carrying out his duty. Vergil would say that it is the moral compass—the belief in absolute right and wrong, drawn from a belief in God.

B. The *Aeneid* is a deeply religious work. This poem takes seriously a belief in God and the divine mission given by God to a man and to a nation.

C. At the beginning of the first book of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is driven by fate.

1. Troy has fallen, Aeneas has lost his wife, and he has lost his nation. He is set adrift with a small remnant of the population of Troy. They are pursued by Juno, the wife of Jupiter.

2. Juno is devoted to the city of Carthage and wants Carthage to rule the world. She realizes that if Aeneas is successful and carries out his task, Rome will eventually overcome and destroy Carthage.

3. To prevent Aeneas and his followers from reaching Italy and founding a new Rome, she sends a storm to blow Aeneas and his men off course. They are washed up on the shore of North Africa.

4. The queen of Carthage, Dido, takes Aeneas in and comforts him.

5. Dido asks Aeneas to describe the Trojan War and the capture of Troy. Aeneas talks of the Trojan people, who believed that victory was theirs and that the Greeks had sailed away after 10 years of war. The Trojans then brought into their city the wooden horse that they believed was a gift from the gods. At night, the Greeks came out of the horse and destroyed the city. Aeneas recognized that he had a duty to the last of the Trojans to take them away from that destruction. They sailed and wandered, as Aeneas sought a place of refuge where he could start a new Troy.

6. At the end of his tale, Dido is overcome by love for Aeneas, and they become lovers.

D. Aeneas avoids the temptation to stay in Carthage and rule as the consort of Dido, because that is not the will of the gods. Jupiter has told Venus, the mother of Aeneas, who fears that Aeneas will be killed and that Rome will not be founded, that the book of fate promises

empire without end for the Romans. Aeneas will found the city and from it will one day come the savior of the world, Augustus.

1. The messenger of the gods asks Aeneas why he is delaying and instructs him to leave Carthage.
2. Aeneas tries to avoid a confrontation with Dido. Dido, however, finds out he is leaving and tries to stop him. Aeneas leaves with the Trojans, and Dido, in despair, takes her own life.

E. Aeneas and his men sail on and ultimately land in Italy, on the shore of Cumae, the oldest Greek colony on the mainland of Italy.

1. Aeneas visits the cave of the Sibyl to ask when the suffering will end. She says that he must first go to the underworld itself; only there will he find the way to Rome. She will lead him, and the Golden Bough will open the gates. She warns Aeneas that the way down is easy, but the return trip is more difficult.
2. Aeneas and the Sibyl descend to the River Styx, where the boatman Charon refuses to take them across because Aeneas is alive. When they show Charon the Golden Bough, he ferries them across.
3. Aeneas sees Dido among the shadows of those who died for love, but she refuses to talk to him. Another section of the underworld contains a fire-filled area for those who committed sins so terrible that they can never be redeemed. In a lovely field, Aeneas sees souls waiting to return to the upper world.
4. Aeneas meets his father, Anchises, who shows Aeneas where following his duty will lead him and what will result from his piety, his sense of honor, obligation, duty, and courage, embodied in the Roman notion of *pietas*.
5. Anchises tells Aeneas that everything in the universe comes from God—the divine spirit, the divine soul, and divine reason mingled together. The divine spirit and mind of God have given to every creature a spark of the divine that is the soul and laid on each creature the obligation to live with justice. The soul is divine; however, the body encases it and weighs it down.
6. Anchises tells Aeneas that at death, all people will be judged in the underworld for their actions. Those who have led pure lives join the stars and never again have a body; others, lesser sinners, must pay the appointed penalty for what they have done, then return for another life. Before returning to their next lives, they drink from the River of Forgetfulness so that they will not remember their previous lives.
7. Anchises then shows Aeneas what God has for destined for him—a long line of men representing the glory of Rome, including his son, who will found a great city; Romulus, who will found Rome; and Roman warriors, such as Scipio, who will defeat Carthage. The line culminates with Augustus, who will bring peace to the

world and extend the borders of the Roman Empire to the frontiers of the world.

8. Aeneas now understands the will of the gods and that his sense of duty is right because it rests on the will of the gods.
9. Aeneas goes from the underworld, recognizing that his mission is not to reestablish Troy but to create a new and mighty nation.

F. That knowledge gives him the courage to wage war again. The seemingly unnecessary war in Italy is brought about by the jealousy and evil will of those who would thwart the destiny of Rome. Through the final part of the *Aeneid*, Aeneas leads his men into battle until victory is his.

G. Aeneas's last victory occurs when he overcomes the source of the war and rebellion, the mighty Etruscan warlord Turnus, who represents the final resistance to the will of the gods. As Aeneas overcomes Turnus, Turnus begs for his life, but Aeneas understands that he must kill Turnus. At the end of the *Aeneid*, the soul of Turnus squeals its way down to the underworld.

Essential Reading:

Vergil, *Aeneid*.

Supplementary Reading:

Eliot, "What Makes a Classic," in *On Poetry and Poets*.

Fears, "Antiquity: The Model of Rome."

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that patriotism is an expression of piety?
2. Vergil states that it was the mission of Greece to create great woks of art and literature. He tells the Romans it is their mission to "war down the haughty and raise up the proud." What would Vergil say is the historical mission of Americans?

Lecture Twenty-One

Pericles, *Oration*; Lincoln, *Gettysburg Address*

Scope: Vergil raises the question, so vital in our own day, of how we respond to evil. Do we fight evil, or do we tamely submit? If we choose to fight evil, do we use the weapons of evil, such as force, to win our fight? War is the ultimate conflict resolution. Patriotism is one of the most enduring of human values. In many ages and many great books, we are told that to die for one's country is the noblest deed. That question is as alive today as it was in history's first democracy, Athens of the 5th century B.C., or in the America of Abraham Lincoln. Two great democratic statesmen, Pericles and Lincoln, used the occasion of a public funeral for the war dead to proclaim that democracy is an absolute good. Nations that are based on government of the people, by the people, and for the people must be preserved. To die in that cause is the noblest of deaths. Separated by almost 2,500 years, these two funeral orations represent the most profound statements of the necessity of just wars.

Outline

I. The *Aeneid*, a magnificent work of Latin poetry, has influenced each succeeding generation of European literature.

A. The *Aeneid* is a statement of the Roman ideal of the mission of the Roman nation: to lead the world to a new era of peace and prosperity and to unite the world under Roman rule. According to Vergil, the mission of the Greeks was to create art and science, whereas the mission of Rome was to conquer the arrogant and lift up the weak.

B. The *Aeneid* is also a philosophic statement of duty, which is a theme that all must consider.

1. What is our duty?

2. How do we perform it?

3. Are we called to a special mission in life, or do we drift aimlessly?

C. Finally, the *Aeneid* is a poem about war.

1. Aeneas was a warrior and statesman.

2. The poem starts with the consequences of the Trojan War and the destruction of Troy. It concludes with a war that Aeneas and the Trojans did not want, that was forced on the Trojans in Italy. As a result of that war, Italy was united and a new Rome was founded.

3. In answer to the question of whether wars solve anything, Vergil would say that war enabled Rome to be founded.

II. War has been a constant in human history.

A. The earliest written historical document comes from ancient Egypt. It is a cosmetic palette, created around 3000 B.C., that depicts the wars of King Narmer to unify Egypt.

B. The generations that fought World War I and World War II believed that they were fighting the war to end all wars.

C. It is often the duty of a great statesman to lead a nation into war, just as it is the duty of that nation's citizens to fight the war.

D. The thinking person must ask whether it is more important to fight for one's country or to take a stand and say that war is wrong and that no war is right or justified.

E. War is not a question of democracy or dictatorships. The 20th century was the most democratic age in history, but it was the one that was most filled with war. Great democratic statesmen have led their nations to war in the belief that a greater good would be served.

III. This lecture focuses on two such statesmen: Pericles, of democratic Athens in the 5th century B.C., and Abraham Lincoln, during the American Civil War.

A. Both Pericles and Lincoln possessed the four qualities that distinguish a statesman from a mere politician.

1. Both had a bedrock of principles, that is, a solid foundation of beliefs that did not change. A statesman does not transform principles to satisfy public opinion polls. Both Lincoln and Pericles based their principles on democracy, that is, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

2. Each man possessed a moral compass that guided him through life. Each had a sense of absolute right and absolute wrong.

3. Lincoln and Pericles each had a vision of his nation as a model for the world and the best hope for humankind.

4. Both had the ability to build a consensus to achieve that vision. They were master orators who used the spoken word to rally their countrymen and to lead them to understand why war was necessary.

B. Both Pericles and Lincoln led their nations into great civil wars. The war between Athens and Sparta from 431 to 404 B.C. was a civil war. The Athenians and the Spartans spoke the same language, worshipped the same gods, and had for some time been allied. Similarly, the two sides during the American Civil War had come to see themselves as different but spoke the same language, read the same books, and prayed to the same God—and both expected victory from God.

C. Both Pericles and Lincoln sought these wars.

1. Pericles believed that Greece could not remain divided between the democracy of Athens and the narrowly based republican liberty of Sparta. He believed that the Greek world needed to be united under Athenian democracy.
2. As soon as the South gave Lincoln justification for the war, he embarked on his mission to end slavery and mobilized 75,000 volunteers to march on Richmond. The American Civil War ended slavery and determined that Americans are, first and foremost, citizens of the United States rather than citizens of their own states.

IV. For both Lincoln and Pericles, a funeral oration provided the occasion to present their visions of the nation and to explain why the wars were necessary.

V. Pericles gave his *Funeral Oration* in 430 B.C., during the first winter of the war. The bodies of those who had died during the war between Athens and Sparta were returned to Athens and brought to the cemetery for a public ceremony.

A. Pericles was chosen as speaker because of his superior intellect and because he was the democratically elected leader of a free people.

B. During his speech, he stated that most people who had given similar speeches had spoken as though they were honoring the men who died. Pericles said that the Athenians could not honor these men; the dead had honored Athens by what they had done.

C. Instead of honoring those who had died, Pericles wished to speak about the nation for which they had died.

1. That nation was a democracy that was based on the ideal of the greatest good for the greatest number of people. It was a tolerant nation that allowed people to live as they chose as long as they didn't harm others; it was a nation that obeyed its laws and desired its citizens to be well-rounded.
2. Pericles said that the citizens who were being buried possessed great patriotism and knew that the noblest thing they could do was to die for their country. They put aside their goals and aspirations so that their nation might be sustained and serve as a model to the world.
3. Pericles stated that those who were being buried had left a challenge for those who remained: Those left behind had to take up the struggle, to prove themselves worthy of those who had died, and to see the war through to a successful conclusion so that the Athenian democracy would not perish.

VI. Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address at the dedication of a national cemetery on November, 19, 1863.

A. The idea for the national cemetery came in the aftermath of a battle fought from July 1–3, 1863. In September of that year, Governor Curtin of Pennsylvania rode through the battlefield and was outraged that Union soldiers who had died for their country were still rotting in the fields. He appealed to the governors of other states to accord the soldiers a proper burial, and money was raised for the cemetery.

B. One of the governors thought that the president of the United States should give a speech; however, others believed that he was too controversial, was not a good speaker, and would just make a few inappropriate remarks. Instead, Edward Everett was the main speaker.

C. In his remarks, Lincoln told his countrymen what the war was about.

1. Lincoln invokes the Bible in the phrase "Fourscore and seven years ago" at the beginning of the speech.

2. Lincoln reminds his audience of the birth of a unique nation: "our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." *Bringing forth* is the second metaphor that Lincoln uses in this speech; conceiving and bringing forth a nation, just like conceiving and bringing forth a child, is a difficult process. This new nation is unique specifically because it was "conceived in Liberty" and dedicated to equality.

3. "Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." A proposition is something that remains to be proved. A question remains: Would this nation survive? The United States was less than 100 years old; its future was uncertain. The country was at war because others would destroy its founding principle of equality.

4. "We are met on a great battlefield of that war." Lincoln repeats the word *great* because it is the only word that will work.

5. "We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live." In two sentences, Lincoln has explained what the war was about and why it was being fought—so that the nation might be sustained. In none of the more recent wars, including Iraq and Vietnam, have people been told so succinctly the reason for the war. Lincoln faced the more difficult task of explaining why Americans were killing their fellow Americans. He also invoked the spirit of Christianity in asserting that these men, like Christ, died so that others might live.

6. "It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can

not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract." *Dedicate*, *consecrate*, and *hallow* are religious words. These men have made this ground sacred in dying for their country.

7. "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." When Americans cease to be touched by walking on the hallowed ground of Gettysburg, the ideals of those who fought will be but shadows.
8. "It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced." Like Pericles, Lincoln shifts back to the present: The living must take up the challenge.
9. "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us… that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Although the Declaration of Independence mentions or invokes God four times, the Constitution does not refer to God. Further, it condones slavery. Lincoln is stating that the Constitution had a flaw. The United States must have a new birth of freedom, and it must be under the will of God, who created all men equal.
10. Although Lincoln used the word *liberty* at the beginning of the speech, he used the word *freedom* toward the end. The term *liberty* refers to political liberty; Lincoln is saying that the United States is about true *freedom* of the entire human race.
11. Lincoln's largely Christian audience would have understood that "shall not perish from the earth" echoes John 3:16, which states: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but shall have eternal life." Lincoln has again transformed each of these soldiers into Christ, an individual who suffered and died so that the nation might live on.

D. Lincoln was not an ostentatiously religious man, but he believed—and became more convinced as the war went on—that he had been called to this duty, to end the great sin of slavery.

VII. Both Pericles, in his long *Funeral Oration*, and Lincoln, in his brilliant two-minute address, made a statement that the noblest thing that any person can do is to die for his or her country. Both the Athenians and the soldiers of the Civil War were propelled by that conviction.

Essential Reading:

Pericles, *Funeral Oration*, in Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book II, chapters 34–56.

Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, in *Speeches and Writings*.

Supplementary Reading:

Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*.

Zimmern, *The Greek Commonwealth*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why do you think that Lincoln's speech is openly religious and Pericles makes no reference to the gods? Do you see a meaning for today in Lincoln's statement that the new nation must be founded "under God"?
2. Can you relate the words of Pericles and Lincoln to the soldiers who have fought in America's recent wars, the Gulf War, Afghanistan, and Iraq?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Scope: It can be argued that politicians and poets know nothing of war. Only the combat soldier understands the horror of war. Erich Maria Remarque was such a solider, in the Kaiser's army in World War I. His novel was intended simply as a testament to "a generation destroyed by the war, even those of us who escaped its bullets." Published in 1928, *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a powerful novel filled with characters we care about and written in a forceful, compact German style, reminiscent of a German Hemingway. It is the best novel about war ever written. It portrayed the terrible anonymity of modern war and influenced a generation of European youth, who in England swore "never again to fight for king and country." *All Quiet on the Western Front* gave voice to those feelings that nothing was worth another war; paving the way for the appeasement policies in both Britain and France that, in fact, made another and even more horrible war inevitable.

Outline

I. The previous lecture examined the concept of duty. The two works used to exemplify this concept were the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles, delivered at the time of the civil war between Athens and Sparta in 430 B.C., and the Gettysburg Address, which Abraham Lincoln delivered on November 19, 1863, during the Civil War in the United States.

- **A.** Both Pericles and Lincoln told their fellow citizens that their supreme duty was to die for their country.
- **B.** This question of duty is one of utmost importance. Is dying for one's country the noblest thing that a person can do?
  - **1.** The generation that grew up in the years before 1914 was taught that dying for one's country was indeed noble. Boys were educated to be patriots and were told of the glory of war. Men marched off in August 1914 eager to have a chance to fight for their country. They worried that the war would be too short for them to see action.
  - **2.** After four wars of World War I, many of those who survived were convinced that the most foolish thing one could do was to die for his country.

II. The message of *Im Westen, nichts Neues*, or *All Quiet on the Western Front*, is that war is a great fraud perpetrated against ordinary people by incompetent leaders. This is the greatest novel about war ever written. Erich Maria Remarque, a veteran of World War I, published the work in 1928.

A. *All Quiet on the Western Front* tells the story of war and its costs through the eyes of an ordinary soldier, Paul Bäumer.

B. In the preface, Remarque says that *All Quiet on the Western Front* is neither an indictment nor a confession. It intends simply to tell the story of a generation that was destroyed by war.

C. The story begins in 1916 in the middle of the action, when Paul Bäumer has been in the German military for two years. Paul is happy. His company had 150 men, but their numbers had been reduced in battle to 80. Because rations for 150 men had been ordered, however, the survivors have enough to eat.

1. The soldiers agree that they do not hate anyone in France and that they are fighting because their diplomats and politicians could not think of any other way to settle their differences.

2. Paul and the men reminisce about their enlistment. Until the war started, Paul had been a schoolboy. Kantorek, his professor of classics and literature, had told the students in August 1914 that they were the iron youth of Germany and that their country was calling them. He exhorted Paul, as class leader, to enlist, and one by one, the students are killed in battle. Kemmerich [*sic*; should read "Joseph Behm"], a boy who initially did not want to enlist, was the first one killed.

3. Paul and his companions go to visit their wounded comrades in a hospital tent. They see one man who is worried about his boots but does not know that he has lost his leg.

4. Paul realizes that his life has been reduced to the contentment of a full belly and enough cigarettes to get through a day. What he learned in school was irrelevant: He was not taught useful skills, such as how to light a cigarette in the wind or keep his wits during bombardment.

D. Paul returns to the front and is subsequently involved in a battle in a cemetery.

1. He jumps into a bomb crater with a Frenchman, whom he stabs and mortally wounds. The bombardment continues all night and into the next day. Paul realizes that the Frenchman is human, too, and feels sympathy for him. The Frenchman dies. After the bombardment ends, Paul, shaken, returns to the German lines.

2. Paul says that he is going to write to the Frenchman's family to tell them how sorry he is. He is told to wait until the next day, when he will have forgotten about the episode.

3. Paul realizes that war turns men into thugs. His Sunday school lessons have no relevance in his world: To "do unto others" is to kill them. A soldier's objective is to kill as many people as possible and to steal so that he can survive.

4. The horror of war is found not only in shells but in gas attacks. These attacks show the scientific mind at work. Great nations have turned their scientists and engineers to building weapons.

E. Paul goes home on leave in 1917.
1. His mother has cancer but cooks a special meal of potato pancakes and jam. This meal reminds him of the things he has lost.
2. His father proudly takes him to a pub, where his father's friends ask him to tell them what the action is like at the front. When Paul explains that the Germans are outnumbered five to one since the American entry into the war and that a big push would be futile, he is accused of being a defeatist.
3. Professor Kantorek shows up and asks Paul to encourage his students to enlist and to tell them what the front is like. Paul tells the students that soldiers mainly try not to get killed. Kantorek asks him to tell them about the brilliant boys who went with him, and Paul explains that only 4 of the original 15 remain. The professor says that their deaths were glorious because they died for their country, but Paul sees through this hypocrisy.

F. Paul returns to the front.
1. Paul wishes he had not gone home. He has come to the realization that the whole tradition of culture is meaningless if it allows war. He realizes that he is dead inside.
2. Paul and an older comrade, Katczinsky (Kat), go on a foraging expedition and are involved in some shooting. Kat's leg seems to be broken, and Paul must carry Kat on his back to the hospital tent. Paul recognizes that he shares far deeper experiences with Kat than with his father. He asks Kat to stay in contact with him after they return home. They see a plane in the sky, the plane drops one bomb, and a fragment hits and kills Kat.

G. The unit is now filled with young boys, and they only seem to know how to get killed. The war has degenerated into one meaningless, futile assault after another. It is now summer 1918, and the war is dragging on.

H. In November 1918, there are clear indications that the war is coming to an end, that an armistice will be signed, and that Paul has lived through the experience.
1. Near the end of the book are several asterisks. Under the asterisks, the text reads that Paul was found dead, with a smile on his face, as if he was glad that the end had come.
2. Paul was found on a day so quiet that the news from the front was only one line: "*Im Westen, nichts Neues*." Paul Bäumer was just one more of 11 million dead.

III. *Im Westen, nichts Neues* encapsulated the feelings of many who fought in World War I.

A. The British poet Wilfred Owen's work cries out to his readers that it is not sweet and fitting to die for one's country. Owen died on November 4, 1918, seven days before the armistice.

B. World War I was a war with a purpose. It put an end, for a brief period, to Germany's desire to dominate Europe.

C. Some men, including the American poet Alan Seeger, were stoic about the war.

1. Seeger, a Harvard graduate living in France, joined the French Foreign Legion so that he could fight in the war.

2. Seeger was killed on July 4, 1916. His poem "I Have a Rendezvous with Death" states that he "shall not fail that rendezvous."

IV. After World War I, many people at all levels of government believed that no war was worth its cost.

A. One German infantryman named Adolf Hitler, however, did not believe that the war was a great mistake; he saw it as the greatest moment of his life.

B. Because English and French politicians were too weak and because the public believed that the war was a terrible mistake, the world found itself 30 years later in a more destructive war that would cause the deaths of 50 million people.

Essential Reading:

Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Supplementary Reading:

Brooke, *Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen: Selected Poems*.

Sassoon, *War Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*.

Horne, *Verdun*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that World War I was a senseless slaughter?

2. Do you think that Vietnam exercised a similar influence on the baby boom generation in America?

Lecture Twenty-Three
Confucius, *The Analects*

Scope: Few intellectual figures in history have so influenced a civilization as Confucius. For more than two millennia, the wisdom of this teacher guided the intellectual, political, and ethical life of China. Like Socrates, he was a teacher who sought to educate the whole of his students, based on the ideal that each student is an individual, with individual needs and abilities, and that the purpose of education is to make us better, better as individuals and as citizens. The teachings of Confucius were as revolutionary in 5th-century China as were those of Socrates in 5th-century Greece. For Confucius, the whole of an ethical life can be summarized by "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you." True education is the development of the individual's conscience. The highest calling is to be true to your conscience, to your true moral nature, which is good. In government, the logical deduction is that rulers must be educated and must govern for the benefit of their fellow citizens rather than for their own pleasure.

Outline

I. The previous lecture discussed the antiwar novel *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and explored the work for its depiction of the theme of duty. The generation of World War I had been taught that their duty was to fight for their country and that the noblest thing they could do was to die for their country.

- **A.** The Great War called that idea into question.
- **B.** World War I was not a useless war. According to Winston Churchill, however, the tragedy of World War I was that its lessons were thrown away and that a generation came out of that war unwilling to resist aggression when it appeared again.
- **C.** Churchill called World War II the unnecessary war because people failed to recognize that stopping aggression when it first appears is less costly than waiting until after it has grown.
- **D.** In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque was merely saying what almost everyone believed and wanted to believe.
- **E.** The Nazis despised Remarque, and he was forced to leave Germany. He went to Hollywood, where he became a scriptwriter and married the actress Paulette Goddard. He eventually moved to Switzerland.

II. From the question of duty in war, these lectures turn to duty in government, how the individual should behave toward the government, and how government should behave toward the individual. Good government acts on

behalf of its subjects, and its paramount concern should be the well-being of its subjects.

III. This lecture discusses the third of the great teachers in history, Confucius.

A. A central theme of this lecture is duty, how Confucius described it, and how he taught it to his students. A second theme is education, the process by which people learn their duties, and the role of a great teacher in that instruction.

B. Confucius was born in 552 B.C. in the principality of Lu in China.

1. Confucius came from a distinguished family.

2. Civilization—characterized by writing, the use of metal, the building of monumental structures, and complex government organizations—did not develop in China until around 1700 B.C. By the time of Confucius, in the 6th century B.C., the emperor was essentially a puppet. China was divided into states that owed loyalty to the emperor but were actually governed by aristocrats.

3. At first, Confucius was a civil servant and chief of police in Lu.

4. Confucius was either dismissed from the civil service or went into voluntary exile.

5. His regard for formalities and rituals was fundamental to his teachings.

6. He spent years traveling from one principality to another, giving advice and being honored for his wisdom. His advice was seldom taken, and he was not given another position of authority.

7. In his last years, he retired to the principality of Lu, where he died in 479 B.C., leaving his mark as a teacher.

IV. As a teacher, Confucius has had tremendous influence. He shaped the civilization of China from his time until the 20th century.

A. His sayings, teachings, and the works that he believed should be studied were fundamental to the educational system and the entire governmental structure.

B. Civil servants at all levels studied his sayings and had to pass an examination that was based on his teachings.

C. For any great teacher, however, life is not about a series of events that happen outside but about the teacher's intellectual and spiritual development.

D. At one time, Confucius had 3,000 students. His inner circle of disciples has passed on what we now know about him. Like Socrates and Jesus, he never wrote a book. His students gathered his wisdom into a collection of sayings.

E. Confucius taught the importance of study and the way of moral instruction; he also taught his followers to be steadfast and to tell the truth.

V. Confucius believed that morality had to be founded in works of antiquity.

A. For Confucius, cutting oneself off from the past was leaving oneself without roots. Like a tree, a person without roots will topple over.

B. Confucius studied history and played a role in putting together and editing a historical chronicle.

VI. Confucius culled the poetry of China for 300 odes that he believed were crucial.

A. These odes were always sung. Confucius believed that music and the words of poetry put to music were essential to creating harmony in the soul. Confucius shared with Socrates the belief that the soul must be in harmony and that music was the outward expression of that harmony.

B. At first, the odes might seem unrelated to moral instruction; however, when properly interpreted, these seemingly meaningless messages told the truth.

C. For a whole Chinese civilization, these odes offered a means of speaking the truth. Odes were often used to convey a political or individual message.

D. No person could begin on the path to wisdom without knowing the odes, poetry that speaks to the soul.

E. The message of the odes is rooted in concrete knowledge of the past.

VII. Confucius believed in the importance of carrying out ancient rituals, for example, offering sacrifices and wearing certain kinds of clothes on specific occasions. He also believed that rituals must change to accommodate to new circumstances.

A. Confucius saw such civility as being important, but harmony was far more important. Carrying out certain formalities is a way to preserve the harmony around us.

B. Harmony derives from everyone knowing his or her place and knowing what is expected of him or her.

C. When asked why he did not return to government service, Confucius replied that by being a good father or a good son, he was doing the most he could do for his government.

VIII. The followers of Confucius were expected to follow the *Dao*—the way that is the truth. Confucius spent his life in pursuit of the truth. Confucius divided his life into a series of stages.

A. At the age of 15, he began his studies.

B. At the age of 30, he took his stand. By this he meant that he decided to devote his life to the search for truth.

C. At the age of 40, all his doubts were put aside, that is, he began to understand the way and knew that he must follow it.

D. At 50, Confucius understood what heaven had decreed for him.

1. Heaven had decreed that his proper place and destiny was to teach.

2. It is noteworthy that according to his students, Confucius never talked about the gods. The divine plays almost no role in his teachings; he believed that people can find their way without invoking the gods.

E. At 60, his "ears were properly attuned." At this age, he knew what he should be doing.

F. At 70, he was conscious that he was treading the path of truth.

IX. The way of truth is the way of benevolence.

A. For Confucius, the Golden Rule is the path of benevolence, the way of truth and harmony in the world.

B. The path of good is marked in our character by wisdom, courage, and justice.

1. Justice is doing unto others what you would have them do unto you.

2. Courage is steadfastness in truth and doing what needs to be done, unafraid of any consequences.

3. Wisdom—the ultimate goal of the teacher and seeker of truth—is knowing what needs to be done.

4. Moderation joins justice, courage, and wisdom together to ensure that they work in harmony.

X. It is possible to compare the three great teachers—Confucius, Socrates, and Jesus—who have been discussed in this course.

A. The virtues encouraged by Confucius are those that Socrates also extolled. Both men devoted their lives to teaching others the path of virtue.

B. Both Confucius and Socrates were philosophers who labeled themselves as searchers after truth. They both saw the search for wisdom as the way to truth. Jesus, who was recognized in his own day as a teacher, also engaged in this search for wisdom as the way to truth.

C. The word *education* comes from a Latin root meaning "to lead out from." Jesus, Socrates, and Confucius wanted to bring out from their students, or disciples, the truth that was already there but had been hidden by the falsity of the world. They sought to reroute the individual from wandering aimlessly through life to following the true path.

D. None of the three great teachers wrote a book because each was a true searcher after truth and knew that the search is a lifelong pursuit.

E. Jesus, Socrates, and Confucius were united in their messages. They believed that the true teacher is a moral guide and that the true purpose of education is to make the individual a better person. Confucius saw goodness in those who practiced truth and benevolence and treated others as they would wish to be treated; in doing so, these would be good citizens.

F. All three teachers believed that separating private morality from one's duty as a citizen is impossible. A good, moral individual would also be a good, moral citizen.

G. The three teachers also shared the notion of redemption. They believed that people can make many mistakes in life, but those who stay on the path will, in the end, be justified. They were willing to admit contradictions and give every individual a chance to change and learn. Both teachers and students must be willing to grow intellectually. For Confucius, the real key to life was encapsulated in his stages of learning.

H. All three teachers carried their messages into the world.

I. All three understood their own limits. They did not impart expertise but helped their students come up with their own ideas.

J. Jesus, Socrates, and Confucius were willing to give their lives for truth. When threatened with assassination, Confucius said that the would-be assassin could kill him but could not take away that truth that was in him.

K. The lives of these three teachers were their messages, and their lives epitomized the truth to which they wished to lead others.

Essential Reading:

Confucius, *The Analects*.

Supplementary Reading:

Yao, *Encyclopedia of Confucianism*.

Carrithers et al., *Founders of Faiths*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Confucius taught that a harmony must exist between our personal actions, our family life, and our government. Do you agree?
2. Do you think our politicians have or even should have the qualities that Confucius sought in a "good, benevolent" person and that were his qualifications for leadership?

Lecture Twenty-Four
Machiavelli, *The Prince*

Scope: Confucius taught the art of government as it should be. Machiavelli taught government as it is in fact. Written in 1513, *The Prince* might be called the handbook of modern politics and foreign policy. It is as applicable today as it was in the age of such Renaissance tyrants as Cesare Borgia, and it is as useful to corporate CEOs as it is to politicians. Machiavelli is concerned with power, how to get and how to keep it. Power is everything. It is the possession of power that matters, not using power for any good purpose. The ruler governs for his own benefit, not for the benefit of those he rules. His subjects are but sheep to be sheared or threats to be eliminated. Crassly spoken, ethics consists of one maxim: "Do others in before they do you in." For Machiavelli, his lessons are irrefutable, based on the examples of history. His historical examples are chosen to show that the most successful tyrants are frequently men of mediocre ability, who focus on power and are utterly ruthless in its pursuit. The lesson was not lost on Stalin or Hitler.

Outline

I. The previous lecture examined *The Analects* of Confucius. This collection of sayings expressed Confucius's belief that people must follow the path of truth. The lecture explored this work in terms of the theme of duty and how we live our lives, with specific regard to the significance this has for our ideals of government and justice. The lecture also compared Confucius with two other great teachers, Jesus and Socrates.

II. This lecture continues our theme of government and justice. It discusses one of the most influential figures in history, Machiavelli, and his great work, *Il Principe.*

- **A.** *Il Principe* is generally translated as "The Prince," but a better translation would be "The Leader."
- **B.** Machiavelli's "*il principe*" is a leader, and the book is about power.

III. Socrates was influential because he laid the foundation for the intellectual framework that we call the ideal of the university; Jesus laid the foundation for Christianity, and Confucius laid the framework for the civilization of China. Machiavelli did not transform people's thinking—he described people as they were. The lessons of Machiavelli are written throughout history.

- **A.** Machiavelli believed that power is what people want and that people will do anything to obtain it.

B. Machiavelli would say that the teachings of Socrates, Jesus, and Confucius are fine intellectually, but people do not actually behave that way. He would rewrite the Golden Rule as: "Do others in before they do you in." He believed that in the real world, an individual must live by the clear rules of power.

C. Hitler said that *The Prince* was the most influential work he had ever read and that he often turned to it for guidance.

IV. Machiavelli was born in Florence in 1469 and died in 1527.

A. Machiavelli lived during the time of the Renaissance in Italy. Florence was a free republic that valued its autonomy, liberty, and democratic form of government.

B. Machiavelli came from a family of some distinction. He received a good education, which focused on Latin classics. He came to believe that history could be used as a tool to understand the present.

C. Machiavelli entered bureaucratic service and rose rapidly, becoming a trusted agent of the republic of Florence. He went on diplomatic missions and traveled widely.

D. He was known for writing clear reports on his diplomatic activities, and in these reports, he mastered the Italian language. Although erudite books were commonly written in Latin in the 15th century, Machiavelli understood that the Italian language was a powerful vehicle.

E. Machiavelli sharpened his understanding of how politics works, how politicians operate, and what matters to them.

F. In 1512, a sudden change occurred in the politics of Florence. The mercenary armies of Pope Julius II conquered Florence, the Florentine government was forced to give up its republican constitution, and the de'Medici family was reinstated in a dictatorship.

G. Machiavelli was falsely accused of malfeasance, convicted of these trumped up charges, removed from political affairs, and banished to his small family farm, where he returned to studying. He began a "dialogue" with the men of the past and, from them, learned the truth about power and politics. He also wrote and completed a set of commentaries on Livy.

H. In *The Prince*, a small book, Machiavelli distilled all the lessons from his studies. He dedicated the work to the de'Medici family in hopes of being given a position in the new government; however, *The Prince* was too dangerous and told the truth too openly.

V. The theme of *The Prince* is power—how to get it and how to keep it. An individual can learn how to obtain and maintain power through the lessons of history—both immediate history and the histories of Greece and Rome.

A. The first decision that the individual must make is whether he really wants power, because a person who does not truly desire power should stay out of that arena. Those who seek power must be willing to do whatever is necessary to obtain it.

B. Those who seek power must understand what they want power over, the vehicles for exercising power, and the steps to maintaining power.

C. In this step-by-step instruction book for being a dictator, an important step is knowing what one wants to be a dictator of. A dictatorship, by its character, must be a monarchy, ruled by one person. The three types of monarchies are hereditary monarchies; mixed monarchies, in which the monarch expands an existing hereditary monarchy; and newly won monarchies that the monarch rules by himself as an innovator.

1. A hereditary monarchy is the easiest kind to rule. The would-be dictator should not introduce innovations, because they cause trouble. Change is an implicit criticism of what has gone before. Further, people do not really want innovation.

2. A mixed monarchy can evolve from merger or expansion. The monarch must avoid innovation in the existing territory but move ruthlessly to remove any possible danger in the new regions that have been conquered. This leader must be a shrewd judge of character to determine which people will truly support him and reward those who do so. All opponents must be removed early in the rule. People must be well treated or destroyed.

3. New monarchies are rare. Historical examples include those established by Moses, who created the people of Israel, and by Cyrus, who created the nation of Persia. The leader of this monarchy must be a warrior. A peace-loving ruler who attempts reform will get into trouble.

D. The person who wants to rule must have an army. A professional army is not loyal; its soldiers serve only for money, and the leaders are interested in protecting their investment, that is, their men. A militia of citizen solders will provide an army that is loyal to the ruler.

VI. Machiavelli also describes the rules for maintaining power.

A. The dictator does not want power so that he can do good things. He wants power for its own sake.

B. The leader must possess several characteristics.

1. He must be cunning, not wise. For the leader, understanding people and how they behave is worth all the lessons and philosophy in the world. The leader is not searching for ultimate truth; he is searching for what works.

2. The leader must be stingy. Machiavelli believed that if Caesar had truly been a good leader, he would have killed all who had opposed him at Pharsalus. Machiavelli believed that Caesar was

too lavish in gifts to the Roman people. The generous leader will ruin himself financially and will be unable to procure the means to maintain power. Power is about force and the money to buy that force and sustain it.

3. The leader must be cruel. Being hated and feared is better than being loved. People will not come to the aid of a loved leader unless it is convenient for them. If they fear the leader, they will come to his aid. The only way to make people fearful is by cruelty.
4. The ability to lie is a key to success. The leader should never keep a promise unless it is convenient. He should say whatever is expedient at the moment, then do as he pleases.

C. The selection of immediate supporters is also important. They must be capable, loyal, and under the leader's control. The followers must be flatterers, but the leader must be able to judge this flattery. Anyone who contradicts the leader in public or gives a frank opinion in public must be removed.

D. In giving examples, Machiavelli focuses on mediocrities.

1. Septimius Severus was emperor of Rome from 193 to 211 A.D. He was a man of mediocre ability, but he rose to power in Rome, held that power for 18 years, passed it to his son, and died in his old age. He accomplished this feat by recognizing his limitations and by practicing the qualities that Machiavelli cites. Septimius Severus was stingy, deceitful, cruel, and able to sniff out a threat.
2. Perhaps the most successful practitioner of the precepts of Machiavelli in the 20th century was Stalin. Stalin transformed his country into an atomic power and led it to victory in World War II, using cruelty and shrewdness. Trotsky, an opponent of Stalin, said, "Joseph Stalin is a mediocrity, but he is not a nonentity."

Essential Reading:

Machiavelli, *The Prince*.

Supplementary Reading:

Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.

Fears, *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. II, pp. 479–494.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you find it curious that the most successful book on politics was written by a failed politician? Can we say of Machiavelli that those who can do and those who can't teach?
2. Do you agree with Confucius or Machiavelli about the goal of government?

Timeline

B.C.

3000	Birth of civilization in the Near East and Egypt
2500	Pyramids of Giza in Egypt
2500	Indus Valley civilization in India
2000	Stonehenge
1760	Shang Dynasty in China, first historical dynasty, with writing and bronze artworks
1500	Aryan invasion of India
1295–1225	Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt; historical context for the Exodus
1250	Trojan War
1027–56	Zhou Dynasty in China, political context for Confucius (551–479)
1000	Beginning of Sanskrit literature
563–483	Buddha
550–531	Persian Empire rules the Middle East
490–404	Golden age of Athenian democracy
336–323	Alexander the Great
218–146	Rise of the Roman Empire
48–31	Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy in the Roman Empire

A.D.

31 B.C.–180 A.D.	Golden age of the Roman Empire
6	Birth of Jesus
312	Conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity, which became the official religion of the Roman Empire
476	Fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe

800	Charlemagne establishes what became the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation
1066	Norman Conquest of England
1194–1500	Gothic art and architecture dominate Europe
1215	Magna Carta
1304–1527	Renaissance
1517–1648	Reformation
1558–1603	Queen Elizabeth of England
1648–1789	Age of the Enlightenment
1775–1789	American Revolution and Constitution, "The Founding"
1789–1815	French Revolution and Napoleon
1860–1914	Golden age of the British Empire
1861–1865	American Civil War
1914–1918	World War I
1929–1953	Joseph Stalin rules the Soviet Union
1933–1945	Adolf Hitler rules Germany
1945–	Scientific and technological revolution
1990–	United States as the world's only superpower

Glossary

Akkad: The geographical term to describe the northern portion of ancient Mesopotamia. The Akkadians and their descendants, the Babylonians, spoke a Semitic language and were much indebted culturally to the neighboring Sumerians.

Aryan: A term derived from the Sanskrit word for "noble." *Aryan* was much used in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries to describe the Indo-European invaders of India, who conquered the peoples of the Indus Valley civilization and developed the literature and culture of classical India. The term was misused by the Nazis but still retains its value as a collective designation for use in discussing the early history of India.

Asia Minor: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

Birth of civilization: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advances occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

City-state: A term to describe a sovereign political unit based on a walled city and surrounding territory. *City-state* is frequently used to describe the political units of early Mesopotamia, Greece and Italy, Phoenicia, and medieval and Renaissance Italy.

Classical antiquity: The Greek and Roman world from roughly 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe).

Classics: Conventional term for the writings of classical antiquity, now used in general to describe great books from all periods and cultures.

Communism: An ideology maintaining that society should be constituted so that the means of production and subsistence are held in common and labor is organized for the common benefit of all. This ideal was maintained by Plato. However, as a modern political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all aspects of the individual, the society, and the economy to the control of the state.

Determinism: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequences of forces independent of the human will.

Enlightenment: Term to describe the epoch in European history from 1648 (Descartes and the end of the Wars of Religion) to 1789 (the French Revolution). The age of the Enlightenment was marked intellectually by faith in reason and progress and admiration for the legacy of classical antiquity.

Founders (Founding Fathers): Collective term for the American statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and established the Constitution.

Free will: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

Gentile: A non-Jew.

Gestapo: *Geheime Staatspolizei*, the secret state police of Nazi Germany.

Ideology: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. For example, democracy is the ideology of the United States.

Indo-European: A linguistic term to describe a number of related languages, ranging geographically from India to North and South America. These include Sanskrit and the derived languages of India (such as Hindi); Persian; Greek and Latin; the Romance languages, such as French and Spanish, derived from Latin; the Germanic languages, including English; the Slavic languages, including Russian; and the Celtic languages, including Irish. The original home of the Indo-European speakers seems to have been in southern Russia, from which they migrated east and west, beginning around 2200 B.C.

Law (Jewish): The complex code of laws and regulations, based on the Ten Commandments and elaborated in the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) and later Jewish tradition.

Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1893) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of modern communism.

Mesopotamia: "Land between the rivers." A geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period in European history between the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe (476) and the fall of the Roman Empire in the East at Constantinople in 1453.

National Socialism (Nazism): The ideology of Germany under Adolf Hitler, based on racism, nationalism, and socialism and espousing a totalitarian state in which the individual and all aspects of life were absolutely subordinate to the state.

Pharisee: Member of an influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. The Pharisees were trained in the Jewish law and insisted on a strict interpretation of that law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance ("rebirth") of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most historical designations, such as *Middle Ages*, it is difficult to define precisely the

chronological limits of the Renaissance. It began in Italy, then spread to Northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the career of the Italian poet and lover of antiquity Petrarch (1304–1374) to Martin Luther and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation (1517).

Roman Empire: The Roman world from 48 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term *Roman Empire* describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors to rule over territory ultimately stretching from Britain to Iraq. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer an overseas empire. Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic ruling the Roman Empire. The Roman people permitted Caesar and his successors, especially Augustus, to transform Rome from a republic into a monarchy in order to continue to rule this overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C., marked by political liberty and a balanced constitution.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of Jewish religion.

Semitic: Linguistic and cultural term used to describe certain related languages and cultures of the Middle East in antiquity and the modern world, including Babylonian, Hebrew, Phoenician, Syriac, and Arabic.

Socialism: A term that first appears in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, this communist state fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sumer: A nation composed of a number of city-sates in ancient Mesopotamia, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. The Sumerians influenced greatly the later history of the Middle East. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Third Reich: Name given by Hitler to Germany under National Socialism (1933–1945).

Biographical Notes

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–32 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato and founded his own university in Athens, the Lyceum. Far more than Plato, Aristotle focused on empirical studies, including natural science and history. He was perhaps the most profound mind of classical Greece as Plato was the most intellectual and Socrates the noblest. He was the tutor of Alexander the Great. Aristotle was the most influential intellectual figure in both the European and the Islamic Middle Ages. His *Poetics* is the first book on literary criticism to come down to us from classical antiquity. It provides us with a working definition of a great book as one that has a beneficent moral impact on its audience.

Augustus Caesar: Roman statesman (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career and rise to power (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the popular Julius Caesar, Octavian, at the age of 19, raised an army on his own initiative. With extraordinary political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning a decisive victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, social, and economic reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy and inaugurated two centuries of peace and prosperity throughout the Roman world. In 27 B.C., he marked the inauguration of the new order by adopting the name Augustus, which means "messiah." Augustus is rightly regarded as the greatest statesman in history, the model of the good Roman emperor. He was celebrated by Vergil in the *Aeneid*, and during his reign, Jesus was born. He is discussed at length in The Teaching Company course *Famous Romans* (Lectures Fourteen–Sixteen).

Brown, John: American opponent of slavery and terrorist (1800–1859). Born in Connecticut and Puritan in background, Brown was a failure in business. Deeply convinced of the immorality of slavery and profoundly influenced by the Bible, he took his sons to Kansas and Nebraska in 1845 in a violent effort to oppose the supporters of slavery. On October 16, 1859, funded by respected New England abolitionists, Brown, along with his sons, formed a small group that seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The goal, which failed, was to start a slave rebellion. Brown was captured, tried, and hanged for treason.

Cato, Marcus Porcius the Younger: Roman statesman and opponent of Julius Caesar (95–46 B.C.). Far more than Brutus, Cato was the noblest Roman. He loved liberty, which he defined as the political freedom of the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic. He saw Caesar as the preeminent threat to that liberty. Thus, Cato opposed Caesar at every step of the rise to power. Ultimately, Cato chose civil war rather than allow Caesar to become despot.

Defeated in that war, Cato chose suicide rather than accept the clemency of Caesar. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante paid tribute to his own love of political liberty by placing Cato as the guardian of the gates of Purgatory. Cato is discussed at length in *Famous Romans* (Lecture Twelve).

Gladstone, William Ewart: British statesman (1809–1898). Gladstone was four times prime minister of Britain during the golden age of the British Empire (1868–1874, 1880–1885, 1886, 1892–1894). He embodied the ideals of the Liberal Party. He believed in free trade and a broad franchise of voters. He believed in democracy, and he believed that democracy was only viable if ordinary citizens were educated and had economic opportunity. It was the role of the government to provide education and economic opportunity. Gladstone believed that the British Empire was a great force for good, but he was opposed to wars of aggression. He was much influenced by Lord Acton in his views of history and served as a model for Winston Churchill. For us, in addition, Gladstone is a model for how a statesman shaped his life and values around the lessons of the great books. Gladstone believed that all we need to know about ethics can be learned from Homer, and he himself wrote scholarly volumes on Homer and the historical context of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Hammurabi: Babylonian king (1728–1686 B.C.). Hammurabi is one of the most important figures in the early history of the Middle East. His reign marked the high point of Babylonian civilization and political power. He ruled over an extensive empire, including modern-day Iraq and parts of Iran and Turkey. Babylonian civilization reached new levels in astronomy and literature. The government was marked by a well-trained bureaucracy. Hammurabi issued a major code of laws that influenced the subsequent legal systems of the ancient Middle East, including the Old Testament. He is important both for our understanding of the historical background of the Ten Commandments and for the transmission of the Gilgamesh epic.

Hitler, Adolf: German dictator (1889–1945). Born an ethnic German in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Adolf Hitler was a failed artist who discovered the meaning of his life in World War I. Determined to lead Germany back to greatness after the defeat of 1918, Hitler became leader of the National Socialist Party. He transformed a fringe political group into the dominant force in the chaotic democratic politics of Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Weimar Republic. In jail, he wrote *Mein Kampf*, which stated clearly his determination to destroy the Jewish people of Europe and to begin another world war. He became chancellor of Germany in 1933 by legal means. He moved swiftly to establish a totalitarian system as complete and as evil as that of Stalin. True to his promise, he led the world into World War II. That war, as Winston Churchill said, would never have happened except for Hitler. In the name of his crackpot ideas of racism and nationalism, Hitler ordered the murder of more than 6 million people in concentration camps. The total number of people who died as a result of Hitler's war and policies is estimated at 50

million. He committed suicide in the last days of World War II, leaving his nation and Europe in ruins.

Julius Caesar: Roman statesman (100–44 B.C.). Julius Caesar is one of the most influential figures in world history and one of the most gifted individuals in history. Beginning his career as a rather shady politician, he grew into a figure who transformed history. A military genius, Caesar conquered Gaul (France), successfully invaded Britain, and defeated his rival Pompey, reputed to be the best general of the age. Caesar used this military success and the loyalty of the army to establish himself as dictator of the Roman Empire. He understood that a republic could no longer rule this empire and that the Roman people wanted authoritarian rule. He described his victories in Gaul and in the civil war against Pompey in *Commentaries*, which became the model for history and Latin prose. Such generals as Napoleon, Robert E. Lee, and George Patton have paid tribute to the military brilliance of Caesar. Caesar undertook a series of economic, political, and social reforms at Rome and in the provinces of the Roman Empire, which laid the foundation for the next 2,000 years of European history and civilization. Jealousy of Caesar and his own lack of patience led to Caesar's assassination by a conspiracy of 63 senators, headed by Brutus and Cassius. Among the great books we study, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* all pay him tribute.

King, Martin Luther, Jr.: American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to U.S. citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. His political and social views evolved into a strong resistance to the American war in Vietnam and an increasing focus on economic reform. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery. King was profoundly influenced in his beliefs by the Bible, Thoreau, and Gandhi, as well as a number of great books, which he quoted in his profoundly moving *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (discussed in *A History of Freedom* [Lecture Thirty-Five]).

Lenin, Vladimir: Soviet Russian revolutionary and dictator (1870–1924). Lenin was a convinced follower of Karl Marx who instituted one of the most brutal tyrannies in history in order to transform the Russian Empire into a Marxist state. Lenin came from a middle-class background and was well educated. His plots against the tsarist regime forced him into exile. By the agency of the German government, he returned to Russia in 1917 at a critical moment in the beginning of the revolution. Lenin had a powerful intellect and an utterly ruthless drive for power. He masterminded the Bolshevik seizure of power and victory in the civil war. He crushed all opposition and established the main features of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet Union, including the use of terror as a state policy and the concentration camps. In addition to his political leadership, Lenin also made fundamental contributions to Marxist theory, and

subsequent generations of communists all over the world have called their ideology Marxism-Leninism.

Marx, Karl: Economic thinker and intellectual founder of communism (1818–1883). Marx was one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. Born in Germany, he was educated in philosophy and the classics. He developed an all-encompassing philosophy based on economic determinism. He believed that ideas were the product of economic conditions. He was a political activist who sought to drive the workers to revolution through such publications as *The Communist Manifesto*, written with his close collaborator Friedrich Engels. Marx spent his last years in London, writing his massive work *Das Kapital*. Marx is important to us to show the different lessons that can be drawn from a study of the great books. He is also one of the preeminent examples to contradict his own view. Marx shows that history is indeed made by ideas, as the long and unfortunate history of the Soviet Union, communist China, and other communist regimes has shown.

Sophocles: Athenian writer of tragedies (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three greatest playwrights of the golden age of Athenian tragedy. Aristotle considered his *Oedipus the King* to be the perfect tragedy. He is discussed at length in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Four) and *Famous Greeks* (Lecture Fourteen).

Stalin, Joseph: Dictator of the Soviet Union (1879–1953). Born a Georgian in the Caucasus, Stalin's birth name was Iosif Dzhugashvili. He took the name Stalin during his early career as a political activist for Marxism and the overthrow of the regime of the tsar in Russia. Stalin means "man of steel," and Stalin was one of the hardest and most ruthless figures in history. A protégé of Lenin, he played an important role in the Russian Revolution and the civil war of 1917–1924. After Lenin's death, Stalin secured by brute force and cunning absolute mastery of the Soviet Union. From 1929–1953, he ruled by terror the most complete despotism the world has ever seen. Some 20 million of his own citizens died in his concentration camps. Despite this terror, he was genuinely loved by millions of Russians and was hailed as the savior of his country for the victory over Germany in World War II. Stalin is the model for Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984.* Stalin is discussed in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Thirty-Four).

Thucydides: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides was an admirer of Pericles. During the Peloponnesian War, he was exiled by his fellow Athenian citizens for his failure on a military assignment. This left him with an abiding hatred of democracy but gave him the time and opportunity to write his monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War*. This is one of the most influential works of history ever written. The Founders of the United States regarded Thucydides as a guide for political decision making in the new republic. Thucydides and his history are discussed at length in *Famous Greeks*

(Lecture Fifteen). He is important in this course as our source for the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles.

Tolkien, John Robert Reuel: British author (1892–1973). J. R. R. Tolkien was the creator of a fantasy world based on the ideals and values of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian heroic age of the early Middle Ages. He was a scholar of medieval English literature and a specialist on *Beowulf*. He was professor at Oxford University from 1925–1959. But he is remembered and important for his novels, above all *The Lord of the Rings*, which continues to grow in popularity and has been the source of one of the most successful and critically acclaimed series of films in movie history.

Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus on the books we are discussing. I have recommended editions that are available and offer guides to further reading on the book and the author. I have recommended as Supplementary Reading books that put our works into a broader context or that I find especially useful in understanding the text. This means that on several occasions, I recommend books and essays that are older and more traditional simply because I think they will be more useful than the most recent scholarship on our book and author.

Essential Reading

Aeschylus. *Oresteia.* R. Lattimore, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, numerous reprints. The best translation of this compelling tragedy.

———. *Prometheus Bound, The Suppliants, Seven against Thebes, The Persians*. P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1961, numerous reprints. A convenient and good translation.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. W. Fyfe and W. Roberts, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932, numerous reprints. A good translation and valuable for its inclusion of other classical works on literary criticism.

Beowulf. S. Heaney, trans. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Girard, 2000. A brilliant translation by a highly regarded modern poet.

Bhagavad Gita. J. Mascaro, trans. London: Penguin, 2003. An accurate and sensitive translation.

Bible. I prefer the majesty of the King James Version. Of the modern revised versions, the best, for translation and notes, is the New Revised Standard Version of the New Oxford Annotated Bible, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. A moving testimony to the courage under trial of a remarkable intellectual and man of action.

Churchill, Winston S. *My Early Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. A recent and in-print edition of Churchill's autobiography, written in 1930, when the British political world and the press thought he was finished.

———. *Painting as a Pastime*. Delray Beach: Levenger Press, 2003. Churchill's masterly essay on how to stay young, giving unique insights into the paintings of Churchill, which themselves give unique insight into Churchill the statesman.

———. *The Second World War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986. A masterpiece of historical writing, filled with the lessons of history for our own day.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Duties (De Officiis*). W. Miller, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913, numerous revisions. By far the best translation, in print, of this fundamental work on education and morality.

Confucius. *The Analects*. D. C. Lau, trans. New York: Penguin, 1979. The best translation into English, with a valuable introduction.

Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. R. Sinclair, trans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961. Of the many English translations, I prefer that of Sinclair for accuracy and for the clarity of its notes. .

Euripides. *Bacchae.* P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1972, numerous reprints. A convenient translation of this last tragedy of Euripides.

Fears, J. Rufus. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. I, *Essays in the History of Liberty*. Indianapolis: LibertyClassics, 1985. Part of a three-volume edition, the most complete collection of the writings, published and unpublished, of this seminal figure in the liberal tradition and in the great books tradition.

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Gilgamesh. B. Foster and D. Frayne, trans. New York: Norton, 2001. A good. recent translation, with useful supplementary material.

Goethe, Johann Wolgang von. *Faust: A Tragedy*. W. Arndt, trans. New York: Norton, 2000. A convenient edition and translation, with useful supplementary material.

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Koran. The best translation is that of A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Lincoln, Abraham. *Speeches and Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1974. The fullest collection of Lincoln's words and, of course, containing the Gettysburg Address (vol. II, p. 536).

Machiavelli, Nicolo. *The Prince*. New York: Penguin, 2003. A convenient translation of this fundamental work in the great books tradition.

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Vergil. *Aeneid*. R. Fitzgerald, trans. New York: Knopf, 1990. The best translation into English, done by a noteworthy American poet. More than other versions in print, Fitzgerald's edition has a feel for the poetry of the Aeneid.

Supplementary Reading

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Adler, Mortimer. *How to Think About the Great Ideas: From the Great Books of Western Civilization*. Chicago: Open Court, 2000. A traditional defense of the great books.

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Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life

Part III

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

THE TEACHING COMPANY ®

J. Rufus Fears, Ph.D.

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Professor Fears holds a Ph.D. from Harvard University. He has been a Danforth Fellow, a Woodrow Wilson Fellow, and a Harvard Prize Fellow. He has been a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, a Guggenheim Fellow, and twice a Fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His research has been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, the American Council of Learned Societies, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Kerr Foundation, and the Zarrow Foundation. He was chosen as Indiana University's first Distinguished Faculty Research Lecturer. He is listed in *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who in the World*.

Professor Fears is the author of more than one hundred articles, reviews, and historical plaques on Greek and Roman history, the history of liberty, and the lessons of history for our own day. His books and monographs include *Princeps A Diis Electus: The Divine Election of the Emperor as a Political Concept at Rome*, *The Cult of Jupiter and Roman Imperial Ideology*, *The Theology of Victory at Rome*, *The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology*, and *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*. He has also lectured widely in the United States and Europe, and his scholarly work has been translated into German and Italian. He is very active in speaking to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for today have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad. Each year he leads study trips to historical sites in the United States and Europe.

On 21 occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, students chose him as the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year. In 2003 he received the Excellence in Teaching Award from the Great Plains Region of the University Continuing Education Association. In 2005 he was named the national winner of the Excellence in Teaching Award from the University Continuing Education Association. His Senior Citizen Great Books Course, which he teaches at the University of Oklahoma, was cited prominently in this National Excellence in Teaching Award.

Books That Have Made History—Books That Can Change Your Life is the fifth course Professor Fears has produced with The Teaching Company. His other courses include *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, *A History of Freedom*, and *Churchill*.

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Books That Have Made History:
Books That Can Change Your Life

Scope:

This course, *Books That Have Made History: Books That Can Change Your Life*, is a companion to my earlier Teaching Company courses: *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*. Like these courses, *Books That Have Made History* rests upon the conviction that history is made by great individuals, great events, and great ideas. This course explores these great ideas through a discussion of some of the most seminal writings in history, books that have shaped the minds of great individuals and events of historic magnitude.

Our earlier courses, *A History of Freedom*, *Famous Greeks*, *Famous Romans*, and *Winston Churchill*, have all discussed some of the great books that have made history. In those contexts, we have studied such works as the *Apology* of Socrates, *Oedipus the King*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and the magisterial histories of Herodotus, Thucydides, Polybius, Gibbon, and Churchill. We will return to some of these treasured books from entirely new perspectives, but for the most part, we will strike off on new paths with new books.

The books we will discuss range in time from the 3rd millennium B.C. to the 20th century. Our geographical scope will carry us from Mesopotamia and China to Europe and America. It is the ideas that are important, and our course will be organized thematically around eternal questions that endure throughout history and that every thoughtful person must seek to answer. Either by conscious choice or by omission, nations, groups, organizations, and corporations, as well individuals, answer these questions:

- Question 1: God. Does God or do gods exist? What is the nature of the divine? Does God or do the gods care about humans and their actions? This is the first question with which every thoughtful person must come to grips. The other questions and some of the answers will flow from it.
- Question 2: Fate. What is fate? Do events, great and small, happen because they are predetermined by divine will or simply by chance and random occurrence? Do humans have free will? Do you determine your life, or is it already predetermined? Are you free to choose, or has your DNA already made the choice for you?
- Question 3: Good and evil. What do we mean by good and evil? Are there consequences for our actions, whether freely chosen or predetermined? If there are consequences for our actions, does this mean that there are standards by which to judge these actions? Who or what determines those standards? Are those standards enduring for all time? Or are there no

absolute standards? Do circumstances determine what is right and wrong at any particular moment and for any particular individual, group, or nation? Does evil exist? Can we speak of evil as a real force that affects events and lives?

- Question 4: How should we live? Our answers or failures to answer or even to ask these questions have consequences. They determine how we, individuals, groups, nations, live our lives. They give us the values or absence of values to determine how we act toward others. Our great books course examines our actions under the following eternal human conditions, emotions, and challenges:
  - The meaning of life
  - Truth
  - Duty and responsibility
  - Law, government, and social justice
  - Love, jealousy, and hate
  - Courage, honor, and ambition
  - Beauty
  - Nature
  - History and the past
  - Education.

These themes will provide the context in which we discuss the books that have made history and books that can change our lives. It is the hallmark of a great book that it may offer us insights into many of these conditions and emotions. Thus, the same great book may be brought into our exploration of several of these themes.

We have repeatedly used the term *great book*. What do we mean by a great book? Can we even speak of great books?

The answer is yes. *Great book* is an unfashionable, even controversial term today, because it implies value judgments. As a society, we do not wish to make value judgments. *Judgmental* is an expression of reproach. However, great books are great precisely because they challenge us to make value judgments.

A great book has the following three essential qualities:

- Great theme. A great book is concerned with themes and issues of enduring importance.
- Noble language. Great books are written in noble language, language that elevates the soul and ennobles the mind. It is not the specific language, say Latin or English, that is noble. Any language can be used in such way that it conveys ideas and emotions powerfully and memorably.
- Universality. A great book is “a possession for all time” (Thucydides). It speaks across the ages, reaching the hearts and minds of men and women

> far removed in time and space from the era and circumstances in which it was composed. Thus, a great book summarizes the enduring values and ideas of a great age and gives them as a legacy to generations to come.

For us, in this course, what ultimately makes a great book is its ability to speak to you as an individual. You can read a great book many times, and each time, you read it with new eyes. At each stage of your life, you will find new messages to address new concerns. A great book gives you the personal wisdom to be better, better as an individual and better as the citizen of a free nation, empowered with the awesome responsibility of self-government.

Ultimately, great books are an education for freedom.

Lecture Twenty-Five
Plato, *Republic*

Scope: Plato's *Republic* might be called the greatest book on politics, on education, and on justice ever written. As the *Divine Comedy* embodies the values of the Middle Ages and the *Aeneid* embodies the ideals and values of Rome, the *Republic* embodies the ideals and values of classical Greece. In the dialogue, Socrates raises a supreme question for us in this course: What makes a person happy? To prove that only a just person and, thus, a good person is happy, Socrates leads us to explore the meaning of justice, what sort of political organization can achieve justice, and how we can educate citizens for justice. These questions are as relevant for our democracy as for the democracy of Athens.

Outline

I. This lecture continues the theme of government and justice, especially the moral values that are essential to a good government. The model of Socrates, who insisted that terms be defined, can guide us through the great books. What do we really mean about the nobility of dying for one's country? How can *nobility* be defined?

- **A.** Socrates, through Plato, would say that nobility is related to justice and to defining the concept of justice. Justice is one of a number of essential qualities, or virtues, that every individual should have. Socrates explored these qualities in his discussion of the immortal soul in the *Phaedo.*
- **B.** These qualities are found in a variety of cultures and are reflected in such diverse literature as the *Bhagavad Gita* and in Confucius.
- **C.** These qualities include wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation.
  - **1.** Courage is, of course, essential for those who go to war.
  - **2.** An individual must have the wisdom to understand the difference between courage exercised in a just war and courage exercised in an unjust war. Without the wisdom to understand that a nation is fighting for justice, courage is nothing more than brutality.
  - **3.** Moderation links the virtues. When any quality—even courage—is carried too far, it becomes unjust.
  - **4.** Courage, moderation, and wisdom—working together—produce true justice. That is the theme of Plato's *Republic.*

II. Plato's *Republic*, which is a magisterial discussion of what makes a good state, was probably composed during the 380s B.C.

A. Plato was a pupil of Socrates and paid his teacher the greatest of compliments by putting all his own ideas into the mouth of Socrates, thereby indicating that none of his thinking would have existed without Socrates.

B. Although Plato is called a philosopher, he was an intellectual. Philosophers, such as Confucius and Socrates, live their wisdom; intellectuals talk about ideas and try, from time to time, to put them into action.

1. Plato, for example, went to Sicily and tried to help educate the young tyrant Dionysius. This attempt was a failure.

2. Plato's contribution, in addition to his writings, was to create in Athens a university where lectures were held and young people were trained. Through this university, the ideas of Socrates were institutionalized.

C. Alfred North Whitehead said, "All philosophy is but a series of footnotes to Plato."

III. The greatest of Plato's works is the *Republic*.

A. Like *The Divine Comedy*, Plato's *Republic* is a difficult book to read.

B. Like *The Divine Comedy*, it summarizes the values of a civilization at its apex. That civilization is the world of the *polis*, the city-state of classical Greece.

IV. Plato's *Republic* is concerned with how to create a constitution that ensures justice for all citizens. Plato puts this discussion into the form of dialogues.

A. When the *Republic* begins, Socrates is returning from a religious festival in honor of the goddess Artemis. He stops to visit his friend Cephalus, who wonders about the afterlife, whether he has an immortal soul, what will happen to his soul, and whether good and bad behavior will have consequences. The two then begin to discuss justice.

B. The discussion starts with the conventional definition of justice, that is, rewarding friends and punishing enemies. Socrates, in the dialogues of Plato, often begins with a statement that everyone can accept.

C. Socrates then asks how a just man can do unjust things, even to his enemies. Socrates shows that the original definition is wrong. No good man would do harm to another.

D. One of the participants in the dialogue is Thrasymachus, a Sophist.

1. The true Sophist in Athens educated their students to argue either side of an issue.

2. To argue either side of a case successfully, an individual must be believe that the position is true. Therefore, the Sophist does not believe in absolute values.

3. For the Sophist, unlike for Socrates, truth is whatever is expedient at the moment.

E. Thrasymachus argues that justice is power. Justice is what the powerful can get away with, and laws are what the powerful put in place to serve their own interests; thus, no such quality as justice can exist.

1. This idea was accepted in Athens. Athenian foreign policy during the war with Sparta rested on the belief that might makes right.

2. For example, in 416 B.C., Athens had demanded that the neutral nation of Melos join the Athenian coalition. When Melos refused, Athens launched a preemptive attack, captured it, put its men to death, and sold its women and children into slavery. Athenians justified the destruction of Melos by claiming that Athens had power and that Melos could choose to join Athens and live or resist and die. When Melos appealed to the Athenian idea of justice, the Athenians said that justice did not exist.

F. Socrates attempts to help Thrasymachus understand that if justice is whatever the strong can do, unjust acts will make weaker people hate them. Eventually, the weaker groups will band together and overthrow those in power. Therefore, it is expedient for those in positions of power to act justly.

G. Socrates says that to define justice, the idea should be examined in a larger unit, such as the state, or *polis*.

1. Machiavelli was the first to use the term "state" (*il stato*) in its modern sense as a political unit separate from the people.

2. As a true democracy, the Athenian government cannot be separated from the idea of the people.

H. Socrates said that the city is a collection of individuals, each of whom has certain qualities that reflect absolute values. In the transcendent world, absolute wisdom, courage, and moderation exist. These qualities, working together, will create true justice.

I. Socrates next asks how to bring these qualities together in the proper blend to make the *polis* just.

1. Each person has a characteristic virtue, such as courage, moderation, or wisdom.

2. A community in which every individual is able to exercise his or her characteristic virtue intelligently in the service of the *polis* will be a just *polis* that exists for the good of all.

3. The state exists to serve the people, but the people must understand how the right kind of service is rendered.

J. Education is the means to bring about morality and to achieve the ideal government. Children must be examined at the earliest possible age to determine the qualities that they possess. They can then be educated. True education brings forth and cultivates the appropriate virtue of each citizen, educating each to suitable work in life.

1. The strongest quality that most people possess is moderation. Those who possess moderation will form the basis of a

community. They should be taught reading and writing, and they must understand that they should do whatever they do best and not aspire to other roles.

2. The people who are warriors at heart should be soldiers. They must be taught poetry to awaken the soul and gymnastics to train their bodies.
3. A few people have the ability to lead. These guardians should have a long and elaborate education. Mathematics is an essential subject for these leaders, because they must keep their eyes fixed on absolute truth and justice. Numbers and geometry are ways to perfection.

K. Thus, the ideal republic rests on absolute values: absolute truth and absolute right and wrong. Absolute wisdom and absolute ignorance exist, as do absolute justice and injustice, absolute courage and cowardice, absolute moderation and intemperance.

L. Plato concludes his magnificent work on justice with the myth of Er, who could be Everyman.

1. Er was killed in battle but was found alive 10 days later.
2. He explained that his soul had left his body and gone to heaven, where he saw the afterlife and the souls of those who had done evil cast into the deepest pit, from which they would never be free. He saw others who could be redeemed. After paying their penalties, these souls came before the Fates, received a new life, drank from the River of Forgetfulness, and returned to this world.
3. These souls made a choice through their free will about how to live their lives.
4. Socrates ends his treatment of a just city with the belief in the immortality of the soul as the foundation of everything.

Essential Reading:

Plato, *Republic*.

Supplementary Reading:

Barker, *Greek Political Thought*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why does Socrates end his treatment of the ideal government with a discussion of the immortality of the soul?
2. Would you want to live in Plato's Republic?

Lecture Twenty-Six
John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

Scope: Published in 1859, Mill's *On Liberty* is the classic statement of the liberal ideal of democratic government and social justice. This is the philosophical statement of the ideas of government put into effect by the great British Prime Ministers William Gladstone and Winston Churchill. For Mill, government exists to serve the individual. Individual liberty is the end of government, not a means to an end. Liberty is defined as the freedom of the individual to live as he or she chooses, unrestrained by government regulations as long as no harm is done to others. For Mill, the essence of true freedom lies in the individual's liberty, not in majority rule. Education, justice, economics must all be determined by how well they foster the freedom of the individual. Mill's themes remain as vital today as they were a century and a half ago. It is the eternal question of how much government regulation is necessary to secure these individual rights and whether the individual or the majority is the best judge of what is right.

Outline

I. The previous lecture continued the discussion of the ideals of government and justice and what is it means to be a good citizen or, in the words of Socrates, a just citizen. In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates defines the idea of justice to the individual in the framework of the larger concept of the state.

II. Much in Plato worried 19th-century thinkers, including John Stuart Mill.

- **A.** To people like Mill, Plato was disturbing because he reduced the ordinary citizen to the subjugation of the state; the state, in turn, might mislead the ordinary citizen in the name of a higher good that was determined by only a few people.
- **B.** As a student of Socrates, Plato understood the role of irony. Socrates frequently used irony to make people think.
- **C.** Sophists were guardians of the truth and had open minds. They sometimes challenged convention in the name of educating their students. However, the irony with which Socrates depicted Sophists led them to be discredited into the 19th century.
  - **1.** Socrates's students were so embittered by Socrates's death that they portrayed Athenian democracy as the worst possible form of government.
  - **2.** Plato traces the degeneration of the ideal state into an Athenian-type democracy, in which each individual is free to live as he chooses without any restraint. In judging this depiction of democracy run amok, we must consider Socrates's use of irony.

D. The benefits of Athenian democracy were first recognized in the 19th century by British Liberals such as John Stuart Mill. Mill would argue that Athens was the first government to be based on the ideal of the greatest good for the greatest number and that it was a model form of government because of its concern for individual freedom.

III. *On Liberty*, published in 1859, was one of the culminating points in the life of a great intellectual.

A. The father of John Stuart Mill, James Mill, was closely associated with Jeremy Bentham and the Utilitarian movement.

1. Utilitarianism sought to reform politics in England, to increase the number of English voters, and to create a democracy that rested on the rights of the individual.

2. Utilitarians believed that the purpose of government was to achieve the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens; a government should be of, by, and for the people.

3. Utilitarians believed that the test for any quality, virtue, or ethical principle was how well it worked, its usefulness.

B. James Mill wanted his son to be an intellectual who followed his father's philosophical ideas, and put his ideas into practice by becoming a civil servant.

C. John Stuart Mill described his education in his *Autobiography*, the story of his intellectual progress—both his failures and his success.

1. In his *Autobiography*, Mill says that we should keep growing intellectually throughout our lives.

2. By the time Mill was 3 years old, according to his *Autobiography*, he could read Greek.

3. By the age of eight, he had read much classical literature and helped his father by summarizing his father's writing. He believed that one of the best ways to shape the mind was to summarize.

4. By the time he was in his teens, Mill was actively helping his father write.

5. At the age of 20, Mill suffered a complete nervous breakdown, which he later saw as a failure of will. A mundane book gave him the insight to understand what was going on and set him back on the track that he wanted to follow.

D. Mill turned political reformer. He worked in the civil service and became one of the leading intellectual lights of 19th-century England.

1. He wrote works on logic and on political economy.

2. He married Harriet Taylor, who was his true intellectual companion and who assisted him in his writings.

IV. In *On Liberty*, Mill defines *liberty* as the belief that every individual should be free to live his life untrammeled by other constraints, as long as he does

not harm anyone else. The state has a right to interfere with an individual's life only when that individual is doing concrete harm to someone else.

A. This idea is the traditional concept of liberty.

B. Mill built on this concept an idea of a state and the relationship between the state and the individual. Mill believed that the individual is above the state and that the state exists to serve the individual.

1. Confucius, in contrast, believed that the government and its leaders should exercise benevolence toward ordinary people and that the state should play an important role in elevating ordinary people to morality. Confucius believed that few people were capable of being leaders and that they should be educated for that leadership role. The state should tax people in a fair fashion, and people were to live their lives under the beneficent rule of the state.

2. Machiavelli believed that people existed to serve the state and the leader. The qualities of leadership that Machiavelli described were necessary for the peace and prosperity of a nation. According to Machiavelli, the main goal of the leader should not be to help people but to maintain his power. In maintaining power, the leader would give the people reasonably prosperous lives. Machiavelli also believed that only a few people were qualified to be leaders.

3. In Plato's *Republic*, ordinary citizens possess the quality of moderation. Only a well trained few are capable of leadership.

4. Mill disagreed with all these ideas. He believed that the state should be as uninvolved in the lives of citizens as possible.

C. Mill believed that absolute freedom should rest on absolute freedom of thought and discussion. There must be complete freedom of the press, along with complete and unrestricted freedom of speech.

D. Mill believed that although words have the power to cause harm, state regulation can create far more serious problems. Regulation cannot be based on what a community believes to be appropriate or inappropriate. Mill cites the examples of Socrates and Jesus, who were put to death because they outraged public opinion. Although Socrates and Jesus went against public opinion, their beliefs did not harm people. Mill believed the individual should be free to expound ideas. The state could punish a crime, but not the idea that motivated the crime.

V. Many of Mill's ideas have relevance today.

A. Mill believed that society must be willing to tolerate eccentricity as long as it does not harm others. Mill asks where governmental intervention will stop after it begins.

B. He believed that governmental involvement in education presented a great danger to a free society. All education, he believed, should be private and should be the responsibility of the parents.

1. He believed that the only purpose of compulsory education by the state was to train citizens to do the bidding of the state: State education will not develop a conscience in its citizens and will remove conscience and values imparted by parents.
2. Although Mill did not support compulsory education, he believed that all people should read and write and that parents might be required to teach reading, writing, mathematics and certain facts.
3. According to Mill, government involvement in education means that the state will impose its values, perhaps in the form of national educational standards that ensure that every student knows the same things. By controlling educational credentials, the state effectively controls all aspects of education.

C. Mill opposed state regulation of drinking. A state mechanism to limit the drinking age had the potential for expansion. Mill believed that the state's ultimate aim is control, and any implement to achieve that control could create a police state.

D. Mill believed that taxes are dangerous. Taxes establish a mechanism that enables the state to control private life.

E. Mill believed that true liberal democracy will limit the role of government as far as possible. It will intervene to protect an individual who is being physically harmed and will have courts to ensure justice for those who are harmed, but giving the state the ability to intervene in the life of individual citizens is dangerous.

F. For the same reason Mill believed that allowing government to intervene in health matters is dangerous

G. Mill would argue that the reason we accept state intervention in our lives has to do with compulsory education which is designed to produce dutiful citizens. The state does not educate people in some noble, abstract, and eternal ideal of justice but in the name of government convenience.

H. Mill was opposed to Machiavelli and Plato in his defense of the right of the individual to live exactly as he chooses—in defense of what contemporary Americans view as the ideal today.

VI. *On Liberty* is a work of compelling intensity, which speaks across the ages.

Essential Reading:

Mill, *On Liberty*.

Supplementary Reading:

Mill, *Autobiography*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does Mill's *On Liberty* fit into your definitions of *liberal* and *conservative*?
2. How do you think Mill would respond to some of our current debates, for example, on a national health care or abortion?

Lecture Twenty-Seven
Sir Thomas Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*

Scope: The totalitarian society of *1984 d*enies human love. Yet love, along with religion, may be the deepest wellspring of human feeling and the inspiration of its noblest literature and art. This was certainly true of medieval Europe. In both secular and religious life, love was elevated into a cult. Religious and carnal love, history and myth came together in the literary cycle of King Arthur and the search for the Holy Grail. King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table, the love of Lancelot and Guinevere, and Sir Galahad and the Grail brought together the themes of chivalry, courtly love, and religious mysticism. Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* captures the passion, consequences, and contradictions of romantic and spiritual love. One of the first great works of English prose, it summarizes the civilization of medieval chivalry in its ideal form. The *Morte d'Arthur* has inspired poets as diverse as Alfred, Lord Tennyson and T. S. Eliot.

Outline

I. The lecture on John Stuart Mill concluded our discussion of the theme of government, justice, and the duty of a citizen toward that government.

A. Our discussions of the role of government have ranged from the classical China of Confucius to the Renaissance Italy of Machiavelli, the England of John Stuart Mill, and the Athenian democracy of Plato's *Republic.*

B. The lectures have described a fundamental dichotomy in how great books and great thinkers have approached the question of whether the individual exists to serve the state or whether the state exists to serve the individual. Profound minds are on both sides of the question.

1. In the *Republic*, Plato says that the state exists to serve the individual, to make the individual just, but that the state must exercise control to achieve its aim.

2. These lectures have tested whether a set of values exists to determine the character of a citizen who serves the state or is served by the state. Both Confucius and Socrates spoke of fundamental values of wisdom, justice, moderation, and courage. John Stuart Mill presented a radical defense of the freedom of the individual and absolute refusal to accept any form of control.

C. We now turn to what is perhaps the most radical of individual decisions. We leave the harsh strains of war and politics and move to the softer side of human nature, to the theme of love. Although Lord

Acton asserted that religion and liberty were the causes for the greatest and worst acts in history, we might argue that love is really the cause.

II. Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, or "*The Death of Arthur*," summarizes the values of the Middle Ages.

A. Malory was an English knight who served with distinction in the Hundred Years' War with France and was elected to Parliament.

B. In 1459, he and a group of fellow knights beat up and robbed some monks.

C. Malory was sentenced to jail, where he died in 1471.

D. Malory used his time in jail to come to grips with the question of love and to write *Morte d'Arthur*.

III. *Morte d'Arthur* meets the definition of a great book.

A. The theme, love, works on two levels; it deals with love and with the distinction between lust and true spiritual love.

B. The work is written in noble language. It is the first long work of prose fiction in the English language.

C. The story is a universal one. Each generation has new movies, new novels, and new comic books about King Arthur.

D. *Morte d'Arthur* summarizes a culture—the world of the Middle Ages—at its apex.

1. Dante's *Divine Comedy*, also written during the Middle Ages, focuses on love, but in the *Divine Comedy*, God's love, which will redeem Dante, is the true theme.

2. For medieval society at the spiritual level, Christianity was the great religion of love. Gothic cathedrals, as previously mentioned, are a symbol of this idea of divine love. Malory composed *Morte d'Arthur* at the height of the Gothic era.

IV. King Arthur embodied the values of the Middle Ages, an era of great religious faith and marked by a code of chivalry and feudalism.

A. The notions of trust and obligation were strong. Honor defined relations between people. Honor was a complex concept in which one had to have a reputation and a commitment to integrity and courage.

B. This age was an era of courtly love. The object of love was frequently someone that the lover could not have; she was worshipped from afar. This ideal gives a sacred character to the courtly love of the Middle Ages. However, in reality, there was much seduction and infidelity. Carnal love plays a role in the story of King Arthur.

C. King Arthur was a hero who came to epitomize England of the 15th century. In the story, he is a king who ruled the British Isles and became the emperor of Europe as well. In these tales, King Arthur and

the Knights of the Round Table brought an age of justice and glory to England. This golden age was symbolized by the palace at Camelot.

D. The story of King Arthur spread throughout Europe. Malory borrowed heavily from French works in his story of the death of King Arthur.

V. King Arthur actually existed.

A. Arturus was a war leader in Britain in the dark days following the collapse of Roman rule, around 500 A.D.

B. The Romano-Celtic population of Britain was being driven to the west by the Anglo-Saxons.

C. For a brief period, the Roman Britains rallied and stopped the tide of the Anglo-Saxons in a series of battles.

D. Arthur won a mighty battle over the Angles and Saxons at Mount Badon.

E. A group of tales about King Arthur was kept alive by Celtic-speaking peoples. These legends began in Wales. Around King Arthur clustered a series of marvelous figures, including the magician Merlin, and wondrous events, including the story of the Holy Grail, an embodiment of salvation, which had been brought to England by Joseph of Arimathea.

VI. In *Morte d'Arthur,* Malory developed the story of the King Arthur of legend.

A. King Arthur is the son of Uther Pendragon, a mighty ruler over the western part of the British Isles. He becomes infatuated with Igraine, the wife of the Duke of Tintagel. Merlin arranges for Uther Pendragon to assume the form of the duke of Tintagel and to be transported to the duke's castle. The duke is killed in battle, and Igraine marries Uther Pendragon. Their son is King Arthur, who is accepted as legitimate. Uther Pendragon dies.

B. Arthur rides to an assembly in London. Word has gone out that the next king will be the man who can draw a great sword from a stone. Only the young Arthur can do so. The nobles agree that Arthur should be the king of England.

C. A strange woman in a lake gives the sword Excalibur to Arthur. With that sword and his innate goodness, Arthur unifies Britain and the whole of Europe into one kingdom, with himself as emperor.

VII. Knights come to serve King Arthur at his capital city at Winchester, or Camelot. The knights sit at a round table because everyone is equal. King Arthur weds Guinevere. The knights serve the cause of good.

A. The greatest of all the knights is Lancelot, who is brave, courteous, and bold. His only flaw is that he loves Queen Guinevere—and she loves him. Lancelot stays unwed to remain pure.

B. On a journey, Lancelot arrives at the castle of King Pelleas, who says that he is a cousin of Joseph of Arimathea, the man who brought the Holy Grail to England. King Pelleas asks Lancelot to sleep with his daughter Elaine so that he will sire a son who will be the perfect knight. When Lancelot refuses, Pelleas changes his daughter's appearance so that she looks like Guinevere. Lancelot sleeps with Elaine and sires Galahad.

C. Galahad truly is the perfect knight. He is raised by nuns, who eventually lead him to Camelot. He comes to the round table and moves to the one seat that has never been filled, the *Siege Perilous.* That seat had been designated for the person that God chose to find the Holy Grail. Anyone else who attempts to fill that seat will be struck dead immediately, but when Galahad sits in it, a chalice appears.

D. The knights decide that a young boy should not seek the Holy Grail by himself, and the entire Round Table sets off. Arthur is distraught. He believes that many of these men of honor, courage, and faith will die on this lonely journey.

E. After many months of travel, Lancelot comes to a tiny chapel in a far-off place and sees once again the vision of the chalice in his sleep. Lancelot's carnal love for Guinevere will prevent him from ever possessing the Holy Grail.

F. Galahad has remained pure, and with his friends Sir Perceval and Sir Bors, he continues his quest to find the Holy Grail. When they find it, they travel to Sarras, the city from which Joseph of Arimathea came, to return it.

G. Content to have achieved this goal, Galahad dies peacefully. Perceval stays with him and joins him in death. Sir Bors, after performing many wondrous deeds against the infidels, makes his way back to tell Arthur and Lancelot of these events and about Galahad's immediate ascension to heaven for his goodness.

VIII. In Camelot, as King Arthur foresaw, all is coming to ruin. Lancelot and Guinevere have been overcome by lust, and their affair is an open secret in the court. Arthur shuts his ear to these rumors.

A. Close advisers, such as Sir Modred, tell Arthur that he must show the world whether Guinevere is innocent or adulterous. Modred tells Arthur to test Lancelot by arranging a hunting trip. When Lancelot returns to Guinevere at nightfall, Arthur sees the truth. Guinevere and Lancelot go to Lancelot's castle, the Joyous Gard. Arthur, who has been shamed, must wage war against Lancelot. Lancelot leaves Britain.

B. Arthur, without Lancelot, faces the forces of revolt led by Modred. In a great battle between the forces of good, led by Arthur, and the forces of evil and rebellion, both Arthur and Modred are slain. As he is dying, Arthur requests that a knight throw his sword into the lake. When Arthur is told that a woman's hand reached up to take the sword, Arthur says that he can die.

C. According to Malory, many people believed that Arthur was taken away by queens to islands in the west, where he awaits the time when Britain needs him and he will return.

D. Lancelot and Guinevere regret all the misfortune their carnal love has caused. Guinevere becomes a nun and Lancelot, a monk, fasting and serving God until Lancelot learns that Guinevere has died. Lancelot can no longer eat or drink, and he wastes away and dies. He is buried by knights who fought beside him.

IX. This story of love, the search for the Holy Grail, becomes a story of redemption. Sinners, such as Lancelot and Guinevere, bring destruction to those they love. But God can take away their sin so that they die in peace. *Morte d'Arthur* is a great love story and a great religious story. The book speaks to the values of the Middle Ages—an era remote from us in both time and spirituality.

Essential Reading:

Malory, *Morte d'Arthur*.

Supplementary Reading:

Huizinga, *Waning of the Middle Ages*.

Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*.

Matthews, *King Arthur, Dark Age Warrior, Mythic King*.

Questions to Consider:

1. In the *Morte d'Arthur* is love portrayed as a positive or negative force? Is the difference that of pure, divine love or carnal love? How would you distinguish the two?
2. Do you regard love as one of the strongest forces motivating humans? Can you think of other instances, besides Marc Antony and the Duke of Windsor of public men or women who have thrown away everything for love? Does this have any relevance in your life?

Lecture Twenty-Eight

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, Part 1

Scope: Goethe ranks with Shakespeare and Dante as one of the three supreme geniuses of European literature, comparable to Homer and Vergil from classical antiquity. Goethe's genius was the most far ranging of all: poet, novelist, statesman, philosopher, and natural scientist. Throughout his long and highly productive creative life, Goethe grappled with the figure of Faust, the medieval searcher for wisdom who sold his soul to the devil. The first part of *Faust* was published in 1808. In it, Dr. Faust appears like the Oedipus in Sophocles's tragedy *Oedipus the King*. Faust is man intent upon knowledge at any cost. He will explore the whole of human experience, moving beyond all ordinary constraints of morality and religion. He will become like God, "knowing good and evil." His tragic destruction of Gretchen is the triumph of supreme egotism over conscience.

Outline

I. Love—both spiritual and carnal—is the theme of *Morte d'Arthur* by Thomas Malory.

- **A.** *Morte d'Arthur* epitomizes the ideals of the Middle Ages. It was published after the death of Malory, in 1471. William Caxton, the first major figure in English publishing, was its editor.
- **B.** The theme of love is crucial to any discussion of great books and great themes. Love is a power that rules everyday affairs.
  - **1.** Early Greek thinkers believed that the force of love brought the world into being.
  - **2.** Dante concludes *The Divine Comedy* by referring to the love that moves the universe.
  - **3.** In *Morte d'Arthur*, Lancelot allows his love for Guinevere to distract him from his great goal, seeking the Holy Grail. The work asks whether we sometimes pursue what is irrelevant and let slip our great missions in life. *Morte d'Arthur* also has a theme of redemption: Lancelot made mistakes but was redeemed, although England was destroyed and King Arthur's Camelot was gone.
  - **4.** Love is also a theme in *Faust*, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

II. Goethe, who lived from 1749 to 1832, is the genius of German literature. He is seen as the embodiment of the Age of Enlightenment, as well as the Romantic Age that followed it.

- **A.** Goethe was well educated and fluent in Greek and Latin. He showed the love of classics that was a hallmark of the Enlightenment.

B. Europeans of the 18th century believed that Europe was freeing itself from the shackles of the wars of religion and the Middle Ages.

C. Enlightenment thinkers believed that the man was a rational creature, and reason was key to man's advance. The idea of progress was the hallmark of the Enlightenment.

D. The era was an age of enlightened despots, such as Maria Theresa of Austria. A well-intentioned absolute ruler, it was believed, could give his or her subjects the greatest benefits and ensure true freedom for individuals to live their lives as they chose.

E. The spirit of the Enlightenment is embodied in the U.S. Constitution, which is a rational document and does not mention God.

F. Many thinkers of the Enlightenment believed that God had made the world, but men and women made their own destinies.

III. Goethe became the supreme representative of the Enlightenment.

A. He was a notable and influential civil servant of the duke of Weimar.

B. He was a scientist who conducted original research into the theory of color.

C. He was traveler, who wrote his observations, for example, on Italy.

D. He was also a poet of supreme lyrical ability, as well as a playwright.

E. He was the most admired intellectual of his day, in an era that lionized intellectuals.

IV. Throughout his life, Goethe grappled with the story of Dr. Faustus.

A. Dr. Faustus was a real person who lived in Germany at the time of Martin Luther, probably between 1480 and 1540.

B. Dr. Faustus had a reputation for not just wisdom but magical wisdom.

C. A legend grew that he had sold his soul to the devil to acquire knowledge.

D. He was portrayed in Punch-and-Judy–type shows that featured him in fights with the devil. These shows also dealt with the theme of ambition and the desire for knowledge.

V. The first part of Goethe's *Faust*, the subject of this lecture, was published in 1808.

A. Like the biblical Book of Job, *Faust* begins in heaven with God and the devil. The devil is an erudite man of the world who pays reverence to God. God tells the devil that he has given humanity free will, which enables people to make choices. The devil questions this freedom and gains God's permission to take possession of Faust's soul if he succeeds in tempting Faust.

B. In the next scene, we meet Faust, a professor of great repute, learned in theology, medicine, law, Greek, and Latin. He laments that all he has learned in his studies is that man knows nothing. He would give anything for true wisdom.

C. Faust rejects the biblical concept "In the beginning was the word." For him, the act, not the word, was the beginning.

D. Faust decides that the only act that has meaning to him is suicide, but he defers his suicide when he hears the bells of Easter.

E. The next day, Faust and Wagner, his research assistant, are out walking and encounter a poodle. When Faust and the poodle return to Faust's study, the poodle transforms into a scholar. He announces that he is the devil and says that he can bring meaning to Faust's life.

F. Faust declares that he wants really to live. Instead of studying, he wants money and women. The devil makes the bargain for Faust's soul in return for giving the professor everything that he wants; he has Faust sign a contract in blood.

G. After a visit to a wine cellar, Faust wishes for true love with a woman who loves him in return. He has set his eye on Margaret, or Gretchen, a pure young woman. The devil encourages Faust to seduce Gretchen and plants jewels in her room. Gretchen keeps the jewels although she knows that she should not.

H. The devil gives Faust a sleeping potion for Gretchen's mother, to get her out of the way while Gretchen and Faust make love. Gretchen gives the sleeping potion to her mother, but the potion kills her.

I. Gretchen's brother returns, and the devil kills him.

J. The devil advises Faust to abandon the pregnant Gretchen.

K. While Faust and the devil are celebrating at a wild revel, Gretchen is imprisoned on charges of murdering her mother and the baby.

L. Faust wants to return to Gretchen, but the devil insists that Faust is powerless to prevent her death and has no responsibility in the matter.

M. Faust returns to Gretchen, who has become insane. The devil tells Faust that he is guilty as an accessory to the murder of Gretchen's mother, baby, and brother. He reminds Faust of the contract and that Faust will die a sinner. Faust leaves with the devil and Gretchen is executed.

Essential Reading:

Goethe, *Faust*, Part I.

Supplementary Reading:

Sharpe, *Cambridge Companion to Goethe*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Would you sign a pact with the devil?
2. Does Gretchen deserve any blame?

Lecture Twenty-Nine

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust,* Part 2

Scope: Goethe stood at the center of two great cultural currents of modern Europe: the classicism of the 18th century and the romanticism of the 19th century. The second part of *Faust*, completed in 1831, explores the meaning of art for Goethe, the German nation, and his age. Can the art and literature of classical Greece provide the absolute model for Europe? Are the classical canons and forms absolute standards by which we measure our own cultural achievements? Is it the purpose of art to appeal to human reason? Or is it the purpose of art to appeal to our feelings and emotions, and must each new age and each people finds its own way, its own standards and criteria of beauty? The question of the role of beauty and cultural standards is one that every thoughtful person must decide on his or her own terms. We explore these themes against the backdrop of the moral growth and ultimate redemption of Dr. Faust.

Outline

I. As previously mentioned, the first part of Goethe's *Faust* was published in 1808, and the second part was published in 1831

- **A.** The poem is about both love, ambition, and wisdom. In the first part of *Faust*, the professor gave his soul to gain knowledge but lost wisdom in the process. The second part of the work shows how Faust reclaims wisdom.
- **B.** *Faust* is ultimately about redemption. To Goethe's admirers, the conclusion of the work was a surprise, because they saw in Goethe a mind of the age of Enlightenment, unfettered by religion.

II. Goethe lived from 1749 to 1832, a period that encompassed the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the age of Napoleon, and the revolutions that shook Europe in 1830.

- **A.** Goethe was educated in the values of the Enlightenment.
  - **1.** Chief among Enlightenment values was admiration for the classical cultures of Greece and Rome. People believed that the Greeks and Romans could be emulated but not surpassed; the models were the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid.*
  - **2.** The Enlightenment was also an age of universality. Europeans believed that Europe was one unified culture and civilization. This culture moved across boundaries. France was seen as the great modern example of culture, and cultivated people, including Goethe, frequently wrote and spoke in French.

3. Thus, both the classical culture, with its models, and the contemporary world formed a unified cultural outlook.

B. These attitudes of the Enlightenment were shattered by the French Revolution and Napoleon, both of which preached doctrines of liberty and equality but brought despotism.

1. The Germans, Italians, and Spanish came to understand that they had unique cultures.
2. The finest minds of the day, including Fichte and Hegel, put forth the belief that every civilization was unique and that each people, having defined itself as a nation, should develop its culture in its own way. This belief was strongest in Germany.

C. With this new thinking came revulsion at some of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which had taught that men and women were creatures of reason.

1. From the new perspective of romanticism, men and women were creatures of impulse; the irrational plays an important role in human life. People can try to suppress their emotions under a veneer of reason, but the emotions will break free.
2. While the Enlightenment sought to control nature, romanticism celebrated nature as uncontrollable and saw it as a source of eternal renewal for humanity.
3. The Enlightenment had celebrated classical Greece and Rome, but romanticism believed that the Middle Ages, when France and Germany had come into being, had been a time of true enlightenment.
4. Christianity took on new meaning during the Romantic era. The life and the suffering of Jesus were idealized. Some people turned back to the Catholic Church as a repository of faith and wisdom.

D. Goethe observed and absorbed the ideas of both the Enlightenment and romanticism. He is unique and stands in neither age.

III. The second part of *Faust* examines the issue of whether a unique set of values exists for each nation, and whether standards of absolute beauty exist forever, or each individual must judge beauty for himself.

A. The second part of *Faust* opens in the wilds of nature in the spring. Faust, shattered by the death of Gretchen and his own abandonment of her, is with his comrade, the devil. At the opening of Part II of *Faust*, elves, the helpers of mankind, have pity on the man of sorrows, whether he is good or evil.

1. In Part I, Faust draws back from suicide at Easter. It is no coincidence that Dante carries *The Divine Comedy*, his story of redemption, through Easter week. Orwell's *1984* begins the story of Winston Smith in April.

2. The two parts of Faust are linked by spring and the renewal of the earth. At this time of year, the man of sorrows—both Christ and Everyman, whether he is good or evil—can be pitied and helped.
3. Faust can renew himself, take charge of his life, and become responsible again. The devil asks him what he is doing, and Faust replies that he is gaining strength from nature.

B. The devil tells Faust that they must make a living and suggests that they go to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor.

1. Until 1806, when Napoleon abolished the Holy Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Emperors saw themselves as a direct continuation from the Emperor Augustus; their line had been renewed by the Emperor Charlemagne and had ruled over most of Europe.
2. By the time that *Faust* was written, the Holy Roman Emperor was essentially a figurehead, who in theory, ruled over the 365 independent principalities of Germany.
3. In *Faust*, the Holy Roman Empire is a shadow of Rome and the ancient world and is testimony to how the modern world has allowed the shadow of antiquity to overwhelm and oppress it. *Faust* is a statement that contemporary people must break that tie and create something new.
4. When Faust and the devil arrive at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, the devil assumes the role of court fool. The emperor has no funds, and no one is taking the government seriously.
5. The devil and Faust have an answer to this problem: Because the emperor owns everything under the ground, he can issue currency backed by theoretical buried treasure. As long as people accept the funds in transactions and as long as this method makes the economy work, it is valid.
6. The emperor puts Faust in charge of court ceremonies. The court wants to see a reenactment of classical antiquity. Faust and the devil invoke classical antiquity and the court sees that the classical world is not ideal; Paris is not as handsome as he is reputed to be, nor is Helen as fair.

C. Faust returns to his study. His former research assistant, Wagner, now a professor, has created artificial life in the form of Homunculus, a tiny man in a test tube. Another student informs Faust that his education did nothing for him and only real life has taught him anything.

D. Homunculus goes with Faust and the devil to the Mediterranean to discover the roots of classical antiquity.

1. The devil conjures up the mythological world and creates a wild night of revelry in classical antiquity.
2. Homunculus explodes; the being created without love could neither survive nor experience real emotion.

3. Faust wants to possess power and the most beautiful woman who ever lived.
4. Faust recreates a new kingdom in Sparta that is a blend of the medieval Germanic world of knights and the classical world. Faust weds Helen. Their child, Euphorion, is a blend of the world of Germany and the world of the classical past.
5. Helen and Euphorion die because an artificial culture created from this blend of classical and romantic civilizations cannot survive. This is Goethe's statement that each age and nation must set its own standards of beauty and establish its own way in art, literature, philosophy, and wisdom.
6. Faust's attempt to return to the classical past has failed.

E. Faust returns to Germany and the Holy Roman Emperor.

1. The imperial economy has collapsed, and the empire is about to be overrun.
2. Faust, aided by the devil, creates a phantom army that drives out the enemy and saves the empire.
3. As a reward, Faust wants a new kingdom, a land bordering on the sea, in which to create a new world.
4. Faust rules over a vast domain. He has drained the sea and created new land. People labor on his behalf, but they enjoy peace and prosperity because he protects them. He feels that his life has been rewarded. He realizes that he wanted power to do good things.
5. Faust hears a church bell and asks the devil to destroy the chapel where the bell is housed. The devil, with some henchmen, burns the chapel and kills the people who lived there. Faust realizes that his request has caused their deaths.
6. The devil informs Faust that his death is approaching. Faust reminds the devil that his contract states that he can live until he says that everything is perfect, which he is unwilling to do, but he sees beauty in human striving.
7. The devil claims Faust.
8. A chorus from heaven is heard, and a shower of roses (a symbol of love) appears. Gretchen is praying to Mary for the salvation of Faust's soul.
9. Faust is saved, the devil loses his prey, and Faust ascends to heaven.
10. The chorus sings, "It's a mystery, we can never understand life; …all we can say is that the eternal feminine raises us to heaven."

Essential Reading:

Goethe, *Faust*, Part II.

Supplementary Reading:

Sharpe, *Cambridge Companion to Goethe*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you interpret the religious ending of *Faust*?
2. Can the character of Faust be taken in any sense as an allegory for each and every human life?

Lecture Thirty

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Scope: Every thoughtful person must come to terms with nature, with the natural world around us. Is nature a source of wonder and revitalization for the soul, or is nature the servant of humans to be conquered and exploited? Are we one with nature or above it? The classical vision brings nature under control, order out of chaos. The Romantic reveres nature, untrammeled and untouched. Thoreau, the most American of thinkers, is an unabashed Romantic. *Walden* is the journal of his recovery of self-meaning and independence by his return to nature. It began significantly on July 4, 1845. Thoreau studies the life of nature with intense sympathy. Out of this comes a deeper understanding of the meaning of his own life. *Walden* is a profoundly individual story. I have found my own way, Thoreau says to us. Now you must find your way.

Outline

I. The previous lecture completed the discussion of Goethe's *Faust*, a magnificent epic poem in two parts.

- **A.** The theme of the first part of *Faust* was love, a romantic love that can destroy. Faust seduced and abandoned Gretchen, who caused the death of her mother and child.
- **B.** In the second part of *Faust*, the professor followed his ambition to its limits but was redeemed by divine love through the Virgin Mary and Gretchen herself, praying for him.

II. This course has examined several epic poems: the *Iliad*, *Gilgamesh*, *Beowulf*, the *Aeneid*, and *The Divine Comedy.* The epic has been the vehicle for some of the noblest ideas in literature.

- **A.** Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is an epic; although it is not written in poetry, it deals with epic material in magisterial prose.
- **B.** Like *The Divine Comedy*, *Faust*, and the *Aeneid*, *Morte d'Arthur* is a story of redemption. Contemporary society does not allow people to forget their mistakes, nor does it seem to allow redemption, although the concept of redemption lies at the center of Christianity and Islam, and redemption is also central to the *Bhagavad Gita.*
- **C.** Epic poetry has been a source of great inspiration, as have philosophers, or searchers after truth, such as Socrates, Jesus, and Confucius. Socrates believed that epic poets were not philosophers, because they could convey great ideas but could not analyze them.

III. Thoreau spoke out against conformity in the United States at a time when

Americans thought they were moving forward to becoming the greatest nation in the world.

A. Melville, a contemporary of Thoreau, said, "We are the bearers of the ark of liberty to the entire world."

B. The Declaration of Independence had enshrined the values of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and had taken democracy to much of North America. The United States was becoming a leading industrial power, and Americans believed in progress and democracy.

IV. Henry David Thoreau was an eccentric.

A. Thoreau went to Harvard, where he studied Greek, Latin, and natural and moral philosophy. He taught for a while, but realized that as a teacher, he never had an opportunity to learn. He then tried writing, but no one wanted to publish his material.

B. On July 4, 1845, when he was 28 years old, Thoreau celebrated his independence by going out to Walden Pond near Concord.

C. Thoreau considered himself a transcendentalist, as were several of his friends in Concord, including Emerson and the Alcotts. To transcendentalists, ideas were most important. This belief was similar to Socrates's belief that ideas shaped everything—a philosophy opposed to that of most Americans, who believed in practical, empirical information.

D. Thoreau considered himself a mystic, that is, someone who is cut off from the factual reality of the world.

V. Although Thoreau read and took seriously German philosophy, particularly Kant, and knew Plato, he wanted, above all, to think for himself.

A. He wished to cut himself off, as much as possible, from contemporary life and give his eccentricity full rein. He was not a hermit, however; people visited him, and he was a genial host.

B. Thoreau believed that material possessions are fetters that bind us.

C. Thoreau recognized that if he was going to achieve fulfillment, that is, develop his inner self, or soul, he would have to be selfish.

D. Thoreau found he needed little to live. He discovered that all that was necessary was some kind of covering and something to eat, which he could produce himself. Although he was not a skilled craftsman, he built a small cabin, and grew his own food.

E. In so doing, he discovered how much fulfillment he could get from independence. His time was truly his own. The *Bhagavad Gita*, one of Thoreau's favorite books, teaches that to do someone else's work is slavery, but to do one's own work is freedom.

F. Thoreau would sometimes spend an entire day baking bread and watching it in the oven—or watching the grass—and contemplating. He found himself in a world filled with information. He believed that some people turned information into knowledge, but almost no one took time to contemplate and turn knowledge into wisdom.

VI. For contemporary Americans, *Walden* is a magnificent examination of nature.

A. During the Enlightenment, people believed that they should control nature. During the Romantic age, people saw nature as an overwhelming force that gave renewal. People of the 21st century believe that nature should be controlled. Contemporary Americans isolate nature in national parks.

1. Thoreau wanted to subordinate himself to nature so that he could understand it; the routine of life on Walden Pond, where he stayed for two years, held profound meaning for him.

2. Thoreau was a self-trained natural philosopher who immersed himself in nature out of a belief that nature is sacred and that humanity is a part of it.

B. Thoreau developed reservations about eating meat and fish. He found that he could obtain everything he needed to eat from his garden.

C. Thoreau's friends were concerned that he was not getting on with the work of his life, but he believed that learning to know *himself* was indeed the work of his life.

D. When spring came to Walden Pond, Thoreau saw it as he had never seen it before. He saw the world coming alive. He found in the renewal of spring the same mystic sense of redemption of the great epic poets.

1. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante begins his journey to save his soul at Easter.

2. Faust was rescued from suicide by spring and Easter.

3. Spring was also the time of year when Athenians put on tragedies, which were focused on redeeming oneself through understanding suffering, and gaining wisdom from the lives of others.

4. Thoreau believed that spring was a mystical time and that God, inside him, was renewing the world.

5. Thoreau believed that God was more present in trees coming back to life than in cathedrals built by man.

6. Thoreau announced that he forgave everyone. He believed that brooding over wrongs done to him allowed others to control him.

7. He believed that in spring, the time of renewal, all debts should be forgiven.

VII. Thoreau asked difficult questions that reveal his eccentricity.

A. He asked, for example, how many letters are truly worth the postage. He wondered how many letters transform a person's life and are good for the soul. His solution was to stop reading mail.

B. Thoreau did not read newspapers. His friends were concerned that he was not being a responsible citizen and was not staying informed. Thoreau believed that newspapers contain a rehash of past events, with names and locations changed. By reading newspapers, people destroy their ability to commune with themselves. So many impurities enter the self from the outside world that the individual can never break free and loses forever the chance to save his soul.

VIII. After two years, Thoreau left Walden Pond; he had other paths to follow.

A. As individuals, we do not have to stay at the same thing or have the same ideals for all our lives. We should not be afraid to contradict ourselves. Thoreau stated that he had only started to explore himself and that he could continue to do so wherever he was.

B. Thoreau believed that the beauty of nature could not be surpassed by a work of art in a museum.

C. The *Bhagavad Gita* points out that the sun is the morning star and that every morning is new, allowing the individual to begin again. The idea that the sun is a morning star concludes *Walden.*

IX. Thoreau believed that American democracy was not perfect. Slavery was a stain on all of America. Boston merchants, for example, depended too much on trade with the South to truly want to abolish slavery. The soul of the South was too corrupt to rid itself of slavery.

A. Thoreau decided that he would not pay taxes to support a country that supported slavery. He believed that in a country with true freedom, people should have the freedom not to pay taxes.

B. Thoreau greatly admired John Brown. His essay on Brown states that Brown was a man of conscience who had come to understand that slavery was a great wrong and could be abolished only through bloodshed and civil war. If you want to be a person of the world, Thoreau said, do it the way that John Brown did: Fight and die for something with true meaning—freedom.

X. Thoreau's legacy is to encourage people to love nature, because in nature, the individual can find a way to truth.

Essential Reading:

Thoreau, *Walden*.

Supplementary Reading:

Thoreau, *Political Writings*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Where might you find your own Walden?
2. Contrary to Thoreau, it might be argued that all human progress is based on the conquest of nature. What do you think? We might start by asking what we mean by *progress*. That is what Thoreau challenges us to do.

Lecture Thirty-One

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

Scope: If we are concerned with the meaning of our own lives, we must ponder deeply the meaning of history, for our personal lives are but a microcosm of the larger story of history. In these terms, we must address two primary questions: Do we study history simply to learn about past events, or do we learn history to apply its lessons to our own day? Second, is history nothing but a series of random encounters, leading nowhere, or is history a story that moves forward, even in fits and starts, toward a better world for the human race? Most academic historians today would scorn both questions. We take them very seriously. Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the greatest history written in the English language. In the Teaching Company course *A History of Freedom*, we explored Gibbon in the context of the ideas of freedom in the American Revolution. Here, we look at him and his history as a statement of "a philosophical historian," who searches the past for laws to guide us in the future.

Outline

I. The previous two lectures, on the second part of Goethe's *Faust* and on Thoreau's *Walden*, explored the themes of the ideal of beauty and the ideal of nature. Do absolute standards for beauty exist? Can we say, as Socrates does, that in heaven, there exists perfection of beauty and that everything on earth is a reflection of it? Are there absolute standards, which are based on the ideal of beauty, by which we can judge works of art? Can we teach these ideal values to students?

- **A.** The democracy of Athens would have answered in the affirmative to these questions. The Athenians believed that Greek temples could achieve perfection. The Athenian democracy set out to build the Parthenon and make it perfection.
- **B.** The contemporary United States would answer in the negative to these questions. Americans do not believe in absolute standards. Americans accept ugliness that would have appalled an Athenian.
- **C.** Thoreau brings to our mind the concept of nature. For Thoreau, nature is the great source of renewal for the thoughtful individual. A truly thoughtful society should do all that is possible to preserve that beauty and engage itself with a natural rhythm that is part of that beauty.

II. History, the past, is another topic that every thoughtful individual must consider. What is our relationship with the past, and does it have any meaning for us today?

A. The *Iliad* is about preserving the past. It tells the Greeks of 800 B.C. about their great past and its warriors.

B. Confucius believed that one of his most important tasks was to teach his students about antiquity.

C. Our era is essentially ahistorical. Many historical works and biographies are published, but we lack a criterion for studying and relating ourselves to the past that the age of Enlightenment, the era of the founders of our country, called a *philosophical view of history*. In this view, history is a means of understanding the present and looking into the future.

1. The founders of the United States were influenced by the past. When they wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, they studied classical antiquity for models of how republican and democratic governments had worked in the past.

2. They believed that history was a tool and that no society was immune to the process of historical decay. They also believed that all nations would eventually pass away.

D. The Romans of the 2nd century A.D. believed that Rome was eternal, as the emperors told them. For individuals in the Enlightenment—including Goethe, the Founding Fathers, and Gibbon—the story of how and why the Roman Empire had passed away was of compelling importance.

III. Edward Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the most influential historical work written in English.

A. It ranks—along with the works of Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and Tacitus—as one of the five greatest histories ever composed.

B. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* was published between 1776 and 1789, the time of the Declaration of Independence, the War of Independence, and the Constitution of the United States.

C. For part of the time between 1776 and 1789, Gibbon was a member of Parliament. He later said that his time in Parliament was a school of civic virtue and patriotism, the first qualities that a historian needs.

IV. *The Decline and Fall* is a long, sad commentary on the history of a nation that gave up political liberty to become a superpower.

A. Under the republican constitution that the Founding Fathers admired and Gibbon describes, Rome enjoyed a balance between the senate and the people, with a strong executive commander-in-chief.

1. Rome rose from a tiny city-state to master of its world.

2. By the 1st century B.C., Rome's multicultural and diverse empire resulted in tremendous affluence.

3. This affluence corrupted every aspect of the republican political system; elections were openly bought and sold, and political factions were so strong that the Roman senate was gridlocked.
4. Finally, the Roman people lost confidence in their government and in the republican way of life. They wanted peace and order.
5. The Roman people gave up their political liberty and transferred all real power to a military dictator, their emperor. The first emperor was Julius Caesar, who was followed by the great statesman Augustus. Caesar and Augustus created a new order that brought peace and prosperity to their world.
6. The Roman Empire reached its apex in the 2nd century A.D. It stretched from the North Sea to the Sahara and from Scotland to Iraq. The inhabitants were joined in common allegiance to Rome.

B. Gibbon begins his story of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire in the 2nd century A.D., in the age of the Antonines.

V. Gibbon was born in England to a family of wealth and standing.

A. He went to Oxford for a short time but found it uninspiring. His conversion to Roman Catholicism while at Oxford led his father to send him to a private tutor, a minister, in Lausanne, Switzerland. There, Gibbon converted nominally to Protestantism, learned Greek and Latin, developed a love for history, and became fluent in French.

B. He returned to England and served briefly in the Hampshire Militia. He believed that this experience was not insignificant for a historian of the Roman Empire, because he learned about military tactics.

C. Gibbon then traveled in Europe. He had decided that he wanted to make a name for himself by writing a history and began to search for a theme. He became engrossed by the concept of liberty and considered writing about the Florentine republic or the cantons of Switzerland.

D. In Rome in October 1764, sitting on the Capitoline Hill looking out over the Forum, which had become a cow pasture, Gibbon pondered the downfall of Rome. He decided that his topic would be the decline of the Roman Empire: why the grandeur of the empire "collapsed before barbarism and superstition and why Christian monks and German barbarians came to rule Rome."

E. He had a broad vision that the culture of the Roman Empire was as important as its political history.
1. His treatments of the Middle East and Muhammad are superb and fair-minded.
2. His treatment of Christianity as a historical phenomenon got him into trouble.

F. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* shows broad vision, a superb knowledge of sources, and magnificent use of the English language.

G. Gibbon's work describes the death of the ancient world and the birth of modern Europe. The Franks, the Germanic tribes, and the Angles and Saxons had all taken the place of the Romans. After centuries, these new people "restored a manly spirit of freedom and laid the foundation for the progress of our own age."

H. Gibbon was convinced that history is a story of progress and that one of the greatest signs of progress was America.

1. In Parliamentary debates about the American Revolution, Gibbon said nothing.

2. Because Lord North offered Gibbon a sinecure to sit on the board of trade, Gibbon always voted on North's side.

3. In letters, however, Gibbon clearly indicated that England was making a grievous mistake. In the pages of his history, he made oblique comparisons between the fall of Rome and what he perceived to be the decline and fall of the British Empire.

I. The first volume of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* appeared in 1776, became a runaway bestseller, and was immediately recognized as a masterpiece. Gibbon became independently wealthy.

J. When the government of Lord North collapsed, Gibbon retired to Lausanne, Switzerland, to write the final volumes of his work.

K. Gibbon also wrote a charming autobiography, in which he said that as an individual reaches the end of life, he can take consolation in going to heaven, or in his children, or in knowing that he set out to do something great and did it.

VI. Gibbon's history still speaks to us today, because Gibbon saw eternal lessons in the fate of Rome.

A. The Roman Empire was the only superpower in history until the United States.

1. A superpower is defined as a nation that is absolutely dominant, militarily, politically, economically, and culturally.

2. Like Rome, our culture is derivative. Greek culture provided the common cultural cement of the Roman Empire. European civilization provides this for the United States.

B. Gibbon shows us that Rome collapsed because of its involvement in the Middle East and its failure to solve the problems there.

1. In the 3rd century A.D., Iran experienced a tremendous revival of fundamentalist religion.

2. Eight hundred years earlier, the prophet Zarathustra had proclaimed his religion centered on the Lord of Truth, who was in constant struggle with the lie. This religion was one of ethical righteousness in which a person would go to paradise if he chose the Lord of Truth, fought for the Lord of Truth with fire and sword, and spread his religion.

3. The Iranians swept into the borders of the Roman Empire, and Rome never recovered from the devastation of the 3rd century A.D.
4. The Middle East had come to absorb all the attention of the Romans. Rome had been involved in nation-building for three centuries in the Middle East and had poured vast wealth into the region. However, it also kept large numbers of troops there, which alienated the population.
5. The civil war, expenses, and loss of manpower were a constant drain on the Roman Empire. In addition, the Romans were distracted and underestimated the potential danger in Central Europe, including the growing power of Germanic barbarians along the Danube and the Rhine Rivers. In the 3rd century A.D., these northern barbarians crashed through the Roman frontiers.
6. The failure of the Romans to solve the problems of the Middle East resulted in military, political, and economic.
7. Roman politics was disrupted because the constant war with the Iranians led to the collapse of the ordered government of the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D.
8. Rome emerged as a bureaucratic, totalitarian state that was incapable of solving the problems of the Middle East.
9. Gibbon speaks with profound relevance to us in the 21st century.

Essential Reading:

Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Supplementary Reading:

Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life and Writings*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would you say the American experience in the Middle East confirms or contradicts Gibbon's view that similar circumstances will always produce similar events?
2. In weighing objectively the impact of Christianity on the Roman Empire, Gibbon points out the deleterious effect on national unity of the orthodox Christian persecution of heretics. What, if anything, in the Christian religion justifies the persecution of heretics?

Lecture Thirty-Two
Lord Acton, *The History of Freedom*

Scope: Lord Acton believed that history was the story of the march of liberty. It is a message of supreme importance to us today, citizens of a superpower, engaged in bringing democracy to the world. Acton never wrote his planned history of liberty. But in numerous essays and unpublished notes, he left behind a legacy of historical thought. Acton taught that thinking historically was more important than knowledge of historical facts. His was a "liberal" vision of history, as John Stuart Mill had a liberal vision of political thought and Winston Churchill, a liberal vision of political action. Acton was deeply religious. He defined liberty as "the reign of conscience." True liberty would be achieved when every individual is free to follow the dictates of his or her individual conscience. Classical antiquity, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and Reformation, the age of Enlightenment, and our modern age have each contributed to the march of liberty.

Outline

I. The previous lecture began the discussion of the theme of history. Is the past meaningful? Does the past tell us anything about the present or the future? Is there a point to history, or is it a random collision of events?

- **A.** The question of whether history has a purpose lies behind the first known historical work composed. In his histories of the Persian war, Herodotus attempted to discover what was permanent behind all the passing empires.
- **B.** Gibbon also explored the reasons that empires passed away. He was a philosophical historian, one who sought laws of history, which would—like laws of science—apply forever. Gibbon also believed that the historian had a duty to pass moral judgment.
- **C.** Historians today dispute the claims of Gibbon. They do not believe that history is a guide to the present or the future, and they would say that the historian must be careful about passing historical judgments, because no universal set of values exists. This coincides with the ideas of Machiavelli, who says that nations are not bound by any moral strictures and that a nation exists only to serve itself. This view became the realpolitik of Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries.

II. Lord Acton stood out boldly against the idea that morality can be separated from history.

- **A.** Acton is a great spokesperson for moral judgment in history, laws in history, and the idea that history has a grand theme.

B. Acton believed that the theme of the progress of history is liberty. In this belief, he agrees with the tradition of historians going back to Herodotus.

III. Lord Acton had an unusual upbringing.

A. He was born in 1834 to a distinguished family of English and continental aristocrats. Acton was a baronet, the lowest level of English nobility.

B. Acton's family was Roman Catholic, which in early 19th-century England still carried some liabilities, including ineligibility to attend Oxford or Cambridge.

C. The grandfather of Lord Acton had lived most of his life in Europe and had served at the court of the king of Naples.

D. Denied admission to Cambridge because of his Catholicism, Acton was sent by his family to study in Germany under the Catholic theologian and priest Johann Ignaz von Doellinger, who was a historian of the church. Acton, like Gibbon, never received a university degree.

E. Under Doellinger, Acton developed a sense for 19th-century progressive history, which focused on the use of documents.

IV. After his return to England, Acton sought to use his skills as a journalist to take an active role in the reform of the Catholic church, a movement in which Doellinger was involved. The purpose of this movement was to bring the Catholic Church into the 19th century.

A. Although Acton was a devout Catholic who accepted the doctrine of the church, he believed that the church had to be brought into agreement with the liberal currents sweeping Europe.

B. Acton believed that instead of supporting autocratic governments, the Catholic Church should support democratic governments and accept scientific thought. He saw no contradiction between the truth of God and the truth of science.

C. At that time, the Catholic Church was becoming more reactionary, fearing the loss of political authority over the Papal States and the temporal power of the pope.

D. Acton had already developed a central theme in his life, the idea of the educated conscience, which was the most important guarantee of individual freedom. He called liberty the reign of conscience and said that true freedom would exist in the world when every individual was free to exercise his or her conscience.

E. Acton believed that papal infallibility stood in opposition to the idea of freedom of conscience, because people were not allowed to question the pope's actions. Through his study of history, he learned that papal

infallibility contradicted the teachings of the church. Church councils had historically played a powerful role in setting doctrine.

F. Acton took an active part in the debate on papal infallibility, traveling to Rome when the ecumenical council was called to debate the question.

G. Acton was absolutely defeated. He saw that high officials who had opposed the doctrine denied their consciences and went along with the majority.

H. Acton was almost excommunicated. He remained a Roman Catholic but subsequently played no role in the church. He believed that the church had lost its chance to support progressive governments around the world.

V. The second great disappointment for Lord Acton was the defeat of the Confederacy.

A. Acton was one of the first people in England to recognize that the United States had a great political literature in the *Federalist Papers*, and he compared the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to the writings of Plato.

B. Acton wrote learned articles for the British government explaining what the American Constitution was about and why the idea of states' rights was so important.

1. At that time, the British believed that American democracy had the same flaws as the Athenian democracy and that it was a radical democracy with no check on the will of the people.

2. Acton argued that states' rights served as a balance in America and resulted in a check on a centralized, radical democracy.

3. Acton believed that a radical democracy is imperialist abroad and despotic at home. In the Athenian democracy, the conscience of the individual was subordinated to the will of the majority. For Acton, the Athenian democracy was immoral and amoral.

C. In 1861, the Civil War began in the United States. Although the British government did not approve of slavery, it favored the Confederacy and hoped that the defeat of the Union would lead to further dissolution of the United States.

D. Acton wrote papers for Gladstone and the British government, delineating the issues of the Civil War. His research showed that the finest Confederates, including Robert E. Lee, were morally opposed to slavery and that Southern states would eventually end slavery. Acton saw a risk in the intervention of the federal government, which might destroy states' rights on the pretense of ending slavery.

E. With the defeat of the Confederacy at the Battle of Gettysburg, Acton again lost.

F. He believed that the United States had had a chance to become a beacon to the world but would instead become a despotic democracy without any regard for the rights of individuals, that it would control all aspects of the lives of its citizens, and that it would become fiscally irresponsible in its expansion.

G. Acton admired Robert E. Lee. He wrote to Lee and asked him his feelings about the war. Lee replied that he had seen in states' rights the only hope for avoiding the course of every democracy, including that of Athens. He believed that these democracies had destroyed the rights of the individual in the name of the majority.

VI. The defeat of the Confederacy was also the defeat of the federal idea. Acton believed that federalism, not centralization, was the hope for a guardian of liberty.

A. Acton saw that the United States was no longer a federal republic but a unified country.

B. Federalism was also being discredited in Europe. Germany and Italy united, not as confederations of semiautonomous states, but as centralized nations.

VII. Since the time of his studies with Doellinger, Acton had planned to write a *History of Liberty*.

A. This work would describe the history of liberty from its earliest days to the present. It would be based on the concept that ideas make history and that historical thinking is more important than historical knowledge.

B. *The History of Liberty* would apply the lessons of history to Acton's time. Acton believed that learning from the examples of the past was the greatest way to shape one's conscience. Great events, individuals, and economic and social forces—all of these are shaped by ideas. He believed that the greatest of these ideas is liberty.

C. Acton began to compile a library, which ultimately included 70,000 volumes.

D. He took notes on slips of paper, wrote down his own ideas, penned aphorisms about liberty, corresponded with other historians, engaged in debates in English historical journals about such questions as moral judgment in history, and gave lectures based on his work. But he never actually wrote the book.

E. Acton finally explained to two people why he never wrote this great work.

1. To Mary Gladstone, he explained that no one agreed with him about what liberty truly is and about the importance of moral judgment.

2. To Doellinger, he indicated that Doellinger did not agree with his idea of moral judgment. Acton believed that there could be no separation between public morality and private morality. A statesman should be judged by the same moral code used to judge an ordinary citizen. Murder is murder, whether committed by the state or by a criminal. Acton said that much of history is the justification of the actions of such murderers as Alexander the Great.

F. Acton wrote to Bishop Creighton: "All power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Very few great men are good men."

G. Acton's financial situation degenerated. Gladstone intervened, and Andrew Carnegie bought Acton's library but allowed him to use it for the rest of his life.

H. Acton was a man of great moral courage, fortitude, and purity.

I. Acton's *History of Liberty* was falsely derided as "the greatest book never written."

VIII. In fact, Acton's ideas, as evidenced by his notes and occasional papers, still speak with compelling immediacy.

A. Acton understood the dangers of nationalism and socialism.

B. Acton was not a conservative, but his legacy has been usurped by conservatism. He believed that conservatism was about not educating the conscience.

C. Acton admired Gladstone and his ideal of democratic liberty. He supported Gladstone's idea of beginning a welfare state. Acton, Gladstone, and Churchill all believed that there must be basic welfare for all citizens if a democracy is to flourish.

D. Acton believed that uncontrolled capitalism was a force of evil. For Acton, the idea of a free-market economy is a form of determinism, and he hated all forms of determinism.

E. Acton believed that racism was evil because it denied the ability of conscience to redeem the individual.

F. Nationalism, Acton thought, was a primitive idea that represented the worst kind of racism. He believed that nationalism, which most people thought to be progress, would lead to ethnic cleansing.

G. According to Acton, socialism would help nationalism along. He saw socialism as determinism that reduces people to economic objects. The notion that ideas are products of economic and social forces destroys the conscience of mankind.

H. Acton believed that dismissing the idea of federalism was wrong. Federalism was a way to bring various units together, while

maintaining their uniqueness and resisting the soulless destructive power of a centralized, bureaucratic government.

I. Acton distinguished between British liberals, such as Gladstone—who believed in God, conscience, and the individual—and liberals of the continent, such as Cavour, who believed not in the individual but in the state. These European liberals argued that the state should intervene in every aspect of human life.

J. It is perhaps no coincidence that the National Socialist Party brought Europe to ruin, but federalism delivered Europe.

K. In 1948 in Zurich, Winston Churchill said that Europe would rise from the ruins and that France and Germany would lead Europe into a federal nation, a United States of Europe.

L. In his aphorisms, unpublished works, and essays, Acton left a compelling legacy of the importance of history, our duty to do what is right and just in the present, and a vision of how a better future can be created.

Essential Reading:

Fears, ed. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. I, pp. ix–xxvii and 5–85; 216–279; 409–458.

Supplementary Reading:

Fears, ed., *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vols. II and III.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you reconcile the fact that Acton was both a great lover of liberty and a supporter of the Confederacy?

2. Acton distinguished between the British liberal, who believed in limited government, and the continental liberal, who believed in big government. Gladstone, for Acton, represented the British ideal liberal. The Italian statesman Cavour represented the ideal continental liberal. Can the two ideals be reconciled?

Lecture Thirty-Three

Cicero, *On Moral Duties* (*De Officiis*)

Scope: In the Teaching Company course *Famous Romans*, I called Cicero my favorite Roman. In this course, we rank him with Gandhi and Churchill as models of the whole person, a person shaped by the great books, a person of thought and action, who lived and died for his ideals. His book *On Moral Duties* is one of the most influential works on education ever written. It directly contradicts the view that might makes right. Cicero also contradicts what seems to be the lesson of the world. He tells us that, in spite of appearances, an immoral act can never be expedient.

Outline

I. The next three lectures discuss three men who wrote great books. Each of these men made history, and each of them lived a life that can serve as a model to us. Our theme is education and the path we can take to foster what is best for ourselves and others.

II. In 44 B.C., on the Ides of March, Julius Caesar was assassinated. His assassins, Brutus and Cassius, as well as most of the conspirators, fled Rome.

- **A.** Rome was in the hands of Marc Antony, who was underestimated. Many considered him to be a drunkard and a gambler, but he had gathered all Caesar's power.
- **B.** Much of the Roman senate was cowed by Antony's ruthless exercise of power.
- **C.** One elderly man, who could have enjoyed a quiet retirement, spoke out for the free republic and for liberty, knowing that doing so might cost him his life. That man was Marcus Tullius Cicero.
  - **1.** In a series of ringing orations, Cicero attacked the character, policy, and intentions of Marc Antony. These powerful orations are called the *Philippics.*
  - **2.** Cicero's attempt failed. Antony joined forces with Caesar's nephew, who was later known as Augustus, and together, they eliminated all opposition. Cicero was included on the list of those proscribed and was struck dead in 43 B.C.
- **D.** In the last part of his life, beginning in 46 B.C., Cicero refused the high government position that Caesar offered him, opting for retirement. During his retirement, he embarked on a search for truth so that he could base his politics on what was morally good in his effort to preserve freedom in Rome.

III. In searching for truth, Cicero wrote *De Officiis*, or *On Moral Duties*, which Frederick the Great of Prussia called the best book on morality and ethics ever written.

A. Cicero wrote *De Officiis* to educate his son, who was spending his "junior year abroad," studying philosophy in Athens. At that time, philosophy was not an arid academic discipline. It was the crowning accomplishment of a general education. Students who could afford the expense went to Athens to study under one of the great philosophers.

B. Cicero wrote *De Officiis* in the form of a letter to his son to enable the young man to learn from Cicero's experience.

IV. During Cicero's career as an attorney, he demonstrated that a person could be successful and wealthy, as well as a man of integrity. He took difficult and dangerous cases, defending the poor and those in political trouble.

A. Cicero realized that the highest calling was public service. He set out to prove that he could be an honest and successful politician.

B. He held high political office and was consul of Rome.

C. In 63 B.C., a faction, led by Catiline, sought to destroy the constitution. Cicero took a firm stand, although others warned him that he was following a dangerous course. Cicero put the salvation of his country, its constitution, and its liberty before his own needs. He broke up the conspiracy and took responsibility for having the conspirators put to death.

D. For a brief while, Cicero was exiled, but he was brought back.

E. When Caesar triumphed, Cicero took a stand against Caesar. Cicero believed that Caesar had enormous ability but that he sought to destroy the liberty of Rome for the sake of his own ambition.

V. Cicero tried all his life to follow the moral course. He believed that all morality was founded on the idea of natural law.

A. Natural law is the belief that God exists and is revealed in the reason of nature. The entire universe is a place of reason, and the entire universe reveals the hand of God.

B. Like Plato, Cicero believed that God had established a set of absolute values, including wisdom, justice, courage, and moderation. These values exist even if they are denied in everyday life. An individual can be good as well as successful. No dichotomy exists between morality and expediency. An immoral act, such as lying or cheating, can never be helpful. No separation exists between the private and public selves. The highest possible calling for an individual is public duty.

C. Wisdom is found in knowing the truth, understanding absolute values, and knowing how to apply these values to one's life.

1. At the beginning, the individual needs facts and information, but later in life, he can weave these facts into a broader set of knowledge.
2. Knowledge is worthless unless it is used to find and apply in life what is good. In the search for wisdom, the individual must avoid becoming a pedant, studying the insignificant, or retiring from the world to become a scholar.
3. Wisdom consists of knowing how to apply the good to life.

D. Justice is the single most important quality that a person can possess. Each individual's life should be guided by justice.

1. Justice consists of never doing harm to anyone else—either to another's person or property. The essence of justice is founded in respect for private property.
2. One great fault is passive injustice, which is to stand by and allow another person to be wronged. Passive injustice occurs when we remain silent because of our own needs or through preoccupation.
3. Justice can even be extended to those who have wronged someone else by avoiding excessive retribution. Except for those who have committed the most heinous crimes, such as parricide, even the guilty deserve an attorney's best effort.
4. Part of justice is generosity, but an individual should never give more than he or she can afford. We should not ruin ourselves by giving, and we should give with a sense that our generosity will truly help.
5. Morality is built on keeping one's word, or *fides.* The Romans believed that the empire was built on integrity. However, the individual must be practical. At times, keeping one's word is wrong.

E. Courage is essential to living a life of justice. An individual must have the courage to stand up for what is right. Wisdom is essential to courage. The individual must have the wisdom to know what he should defend. Bravery in the service of evil is savagery.

F. Moderation is the fourth quality of goodness. Nothing should be pushed so far that it becomes a wrong. Moderation is a guide for living life and letting the individual know what is right.

G. In selecting a career, an individual must know, in terms of moderation, his or her capabilities.

1. Sometimes people enter an occupation because they inherit it, because of connections, or on a whim. Each person should step back and ask what career he or she is best suited for before making a decision.
2. The highest calling is public service. Those who would pursue a career in public service must be certain they possess the qualities for leadership of the nation. A good leader is not vindictive and

does not enter public service for self-interest, self-aggrandizement, or partisanship. Public service should be a noble and pure undertaking. The public servant must always act with moderation.

H. How do we put these theoretical underpinnings into practice?

1. We must recognize that immoral acts are never expedient.

2. The essence of justice is keeping one's word.

3. Active and passive injustice are both wrong.

4. Cicero suggests as a model Marcus Atilius Regulus, a Roman senator who was taken prisoner by the Carthaginians. Regulus was sent back to Rome with a proposal for a prisoner exchange, but it was against Roman policy to release prisoners. Although Regulus was threatened with torture and death if he was unable to arrange the exchange, he urged the senate to vote against the Carthaginian terms. Regulus then returned to Carthage, where he was tortured to death.

VI. The advice in *De Officiis* did not work for Cicero's son, who was a drunkard, sold his services to Augustus, and lent his name to the new order of Augustus. Although Cicero's son did not follow the advice given in *De Officiis*, Cicero left future generations this enduring statement of moral justice.

Essential Reading:

Cicero, *On Moral Duties* (*On Moral Obligation* or *On Responsibility*).

Supplementary Reading:

Everitt, *Cicero: The Life and Times of Rome's Greatest Politician.*

Questions to Consider:

1. Contrast Machiavelli and Cicero in their concepts of success. Do you believe that there is never a dichotomy between morality and expediency?

2. Can you give practical examples of Cicero's view of the relationship between the cardinal virtues and, thus, all morality?

Lecture Thirty-Four
Gandhi, *An Autobiography*

Scope: To many, including Winston Churchill, the British Empire was a great force for good. To an unprepossessing Indian lawyer, the British Empire, which saw itself as the bastion of liberty, was evil, for it rested on a lie. It denied to many of its subjects the very equality that was the essence of freedom. But no less evil for Mohandas Gandhi would be the use of force to overthrow it and gain independence for India. Drawing on the traditions of Indian thought and reading the *Bhagavad Gita* daily, Gandhi made his own path. Strong in the truth, he used moral power to bring a great power to its knees. His autobiography eschews many of the traditional elements in a life story. Gandhi focuses on his entire life as a search for truth, teaching us that there are many roads to wisdom and many ways to fight the battles of life.

Outline

I. The previous lecture discussed Cicero's *De Officiis*, or *On Moral Duties*.

- **A.** The theme of *De Officiis* is that the basis of all morality and good actions is doing what is true and just and right; no dichotomy exists between doing what is good for oneself and doing what is right, because the individual can never profit from doing wrong.
- **B.** This great book changed history. Through the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment, Cicero was the most influential intellectual figure from Greece or Rome. *De Officiis* was held up as the epitome of what a pagan could achieve in ethical thought, and Cicero was regarded as a pagan Christian.
- **C.** Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* in an attempt to refute Cicero. Machiavelli wanted to show that it is often expedient to do evil.
- **D.** To his own generation, Cicero was considered a failure. He had defended the free republic and had been killed. The free republic was never restored, and Augustus established a military dictatorship that was far more efficient than Caesar had achieved. That new order brought peace and prosperity to a world that had been badly governed.
- **E.** Theodor Mommsen, the most influential Roman historian of the modern era, also viewed Cicero as a failure and a detriment to his country. He believed that Cicero had delayed the progress of the new order of Caesar and Augustus. He viewed Cicero's writings as journalism of the worst sort, because they were not serious philosophical treatises; instead, they attempted to make philosophy comprehensible to ordinary people.
- **F.** Cicero was a success because he was true to himself.

G. The last three lectures in this course offer the following lessons: Be true to yourself, do what you know to be right, and never give up.

II. In 1893, a 24-year-old barrister, Gandhi, was representing an Indian company in South Africa. Although he had a first-class train ticket, he was not allowed to remain in the first-class seating compartment and was thrown off the train. A stagecoach driver also refused to let him sit with the other passengers. This was Gandhi's introduction to the morality of the British Empire and its legal system.

A. The British raj was theoretically based on liberty and equality for all subjects. In reality, one standard of liberty and equality existed for white subjects and another standard existed for those of color. Even science, as taught in many universities, proclaimed the superiority of the white race.

B. Gandhi decided to take on the scientific establishment, the legal system, and the power of the British Empire. Armed only with his belief in the truth and his concept of *satyagraha*, "steadfastness in truth," Gandhi took on the empire and led his nation to independence.

C. Gandhi's life is an example of what one individual can achieve if he or she believes in the truth.

III. The story of Gandhi's life is captured in *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with the Truth.*

A. Gandhi's autobiography was published in two installments, in 1925 and 1927. It is written in Gujarati, an Indian language, because Gandhi believed that the culture of India was his culture.

B. The subtitle of Gandhi's autobiography conveys his understanding that we are always making our way toward the truth.

C. Gandhi had a profound belief in God. He was greatly affected by the *Bhagavad Gita* and believed that God is truth, but more important, he believed that truth is God and should be worshipped. Truth is in God, and God will progressively reveal wisdom to the searcher for truth.

D. In his *Autobiography*, Gandhi does not hesitate to point out his mistakes

E. Gandhi was born in 1869. He begins his *Autobiography* by describing his family and the caste to which they belonged. Gandhi later struggled against the caste system of India.

1. Gandhi's formal schooling had little impact on him. He believed that the teacher should be the textbook, and the teacher and the teacher's moral qualities should be what the student retains.

2. At the age of 13, Gandhi was married to a younger girl. At age 35, Gandhi took a vow of celibacy and saw his wife as a creature of pure love.

3. After finishing high school and passing his examinations, it was decided that he should become an attorney.
4. In England, Gandhi gradually began to understand how unique his native country was. He met English people who were interested in mystical religions and encouraged him to read the *Bhagavad Gita* in English, and it became a part of him. The *Bhagavad Gita* celebrates God as truth and teaches us to follow the path that God has laid out for us. It also says that doing the work of someone else is slavery, but doing the work of God is true liberation. The philosophy of the *Bhagavad Gita* began to shape Gandhi's thinking.
5. Gandhi passed his examinations at the age of 21. He found that becoming a barrister was easy. He had to attend 12 dinners, study outline notes, and pass the examinations.

F. Gandhi returned to India, obtained a job, and left his wife at home while he went to South Africa.

1. In South Africa, Gandhi realized that God was telling him not to be afraid, to stand up and recognize the injustice around him as injustice to God, and to put an end to injustice.
2. Gandhi began to teach his fellow Indians that they should not let anyone treat them unjustly, that they should not harm anyone, that they should stand fast in the truth, and that they should struggle for their rights.
3. Gandhi came to the idea of *ahimsa*, "nonviolence." This was not a passive idea. Great moral courage is needed to be nonviolent.
4. Gandhi began working with Indians in South Africa. He not only fought for their legal rights but also began a movement for education.

G. First in South Africa, then in India, Gandhi opened commune schools and began to educate his students in *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*.

1. The teachers in Gandhi's schools were parents. Gandhi believed that parents should be the source of education for their children.
2. At one point, an untouchable family came to the commune. The members of Gandhi's ashram believed that the untouchables would pollute the commune's well. Gandhi asked the meaning of his teachings, because he taught that all people were equal in the sight of God. Other commune members said that they believed in equality but did not want the untouchable family there. When Gandhi threatened to leave and return to practicing law, the members of the commune agreed to let the untouchables stay.

IV. Gandhi then moved to an even larger sphere—he stood up to the British Empire itself.

A. Gandhi had begun to understand that his God-given mission was to help establish an independent India in which Muslims, Hindus, and

Christians could live together in unity. This nation would be an India for the Indians.

B. Gandhi abandoned European clothes and wore simple Indian dress. He took up spinning.

1. Indians had been required to buy cloth made in Britain. The cotton was grown in India, but it was shipped to England and made into cloth, then shipped back to India. Gandhi held mass demonstrations in which European-style clothes and cloth brought from England were burned.

2. The spinning wheel became a symbol of liberation—the wheel of life and a sign of God, with no beginning and no end.

C. The British had a monopoly on salt. Gandhi believed that the tax on salt was unjust; it supported oppression.

1. Gandhi said that Indians should not pay the tax on salt; they could obtain salt by marching to the sea.

2. The English could beat the Indians but could not stop them. Gandhi, also called the *Mahatma*, or "great-souled one," taught his followers to do nothing violent but to keep coming back.

D. World opinion began to focus on Gandhi.

1. Indians—Muslim as well as Hindu—saw in the figure of Gandhi the symbol of their struggle for liberation and enlightenment. They began to recognize that England and Europe were not the only sources of culture and that India had its own set of ideas that were foreign to the West.

2. Gandhi believed that the culture of England was based on war, struggle, and violence and that capitalism is a form of violence, because it steals from the poor to benefit the rich. Capitalism carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. For Gandhi, the Indian way was the way of God, truth, and nonviolence.

E. Gandhi was imprisoned many times. He found in prison new sources of strength.

1. He read *Unto This Last*, by John Ruskin, which taught him three crucial lessons. First, the good of all is encompassed in the good of one individual. Harm to one individual is harm to everyone. Second, every form of work has its own dignity. A barber is as worthy of respect as an attorney. Third, the noblest form of work is to farm and make something with your own hands.

2. Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God Is within You* opened a new world to Gandhi. According to Tolstoy, Jesus was not God but taught that everyone has a God within himself. A similar teaching also appears in the *Bhagavad Gita.*

3. Gandhi's readings showed that unfamiliar books, in addition to great books, can touch the soul.

F. Gandhi used self-imposed hunger strikes to protest British actions or the actions of his followers when they refused to follow his path of truth and nonviolence. When Gandhi went on a hunger strike, the British raj feared that he might die and would give in.

G. Gandhi thus harmed no one in his fight for the truth.

H. Gandhi's moral authority played a decisive role in Britain's decision to give India its freedom and in the decision of many Indians to form political parties that could achieve freedom under a constitutional government.

1. Gandhi was bitterly disappointed in 1947 when India gained its independence but allowed itself to be divided into a largely Muslim Pakistan and a largely Hindu India.

2. Gandhi believed that this partition contradicted his teaching that God had fashioned many roads to truth and that all religions teach the same fundamental values.

I. When civil war broke out over disputed territory and thousands were killed, the elderly Gandhi walked from village to village trying to bring people together.

J. The moral authority of Gandhi had become a threat. Radicals who wanted a truly separate Hindu India set out to assassinate Gandhi, and he was shot.

K. With his last word, "Ram," Gandhi invoked the name of God. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, "He who dies with my name upon his lips is freed forever from the cycle of life and joins me in bliss."

Essential Reading:

Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with the Truth*.

Supplementary Reading:

Brown, *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Expound on your understanding of Gandhi's ideal that "it is more important to believe that truth is God than that God is truth."

2. What would Gandhi have said to Dietrich Bonhoeffer regarding the plot to assassinate Hitler?

Lecture Thirty-Five

Churchill, *My Early Life*, *Painting as a Pastime*, *The Second World War*

Scope: In the spirit of Greek tragedy, we believe that we learn the wisdom to live our lives from the study of the successes and failures of the truly great. In the Teaching Company course *Churchill*, we saw why this statesman might well be called the greatest figure in the 20th century. Here, we look at three of the books by this Nobel Prize–winning author and find wisdom to guide us in drawing fundamental lessons for our lives: Our lives are never over and we are never failures as long as we strive in a good cause. Take time for yourself and renew your spiritual being. You have a destiny. Find it. Evil is real and you must resist it where you find it. But ultimately, be optimistic, for the world is becoming better and freedom will one day triumph.

Outline

I. This lecture closes our discussion of three great individuals who made history and wrote books that can be read today for their wisdom and guidance. We have discussed Cicero, Gandhi, and now, Winston Churchill.

II. Churchill played a role in the parliamentary debates of the 1920s and 1930s about Indian independence and whether India should receive dominion status. Gandhi had brought the British Empire and its government to a halt and forced the government to accede to his demands.

- **A.** Churchill called Gandhi "a fakir of a type well-known in the East. He further said that the sight of Gandhi "striding half-naked up the steps of the Viceregal palace" was "nauseating" and an "encouragement to all the forces that are hostile to the British authority."
- **B.** Churchill's stand was opposed by the British Liberal Party, as well as by most members of his own party, the Conservative Party.
  - **1.** Churchill was convinced that the British Empire was a great force for good and liberty under the law.
  - **2.** Churchill believed that India could never govern itself.
  - **3.** He said that concessions to Gandhi were a symbol of the lack of moral fiber that was eroding Britain and its government and would ultimately destroy its empire, as well as its liberty.

III. Many believe that Churchill was the greatest man of the 20th century, perhaps the greatest man of all history. Although Gandhi and Churchill were different in many ways, both wrote books that touch us. Churchill wrote good books, not great books, but good books can teach a person to love great books and can give profound insights.

IV. By 1930, when Churchill was 56, he had fallen from power and was thought to be finished in British politics. He then wrote *My Early Life.*

A. This autobiography, called *A Roving Commission* in its American edition, is very different from Gandhi's *Experiments with the Truth.* In *My Early Life*, Churchill, knowing that his public career was over, looks back on his experience with insight.

B. Both Churchill and Gandhi found their compulsory education not only worthless but counterproductive.

1. Churchill pondered whether great books should be given to young people. He believed that life experiences were necessary and that exposure to great books would only make students hate literature.

2. Churchill was a failure in school and was last in his class.

3. Churchill was accepted at Sandhurst. There, he did credibly and finished eighth in his class, which showed that he could learn when he felt the material was worth learning.

4. Churchill favored a good, practical education that goes along with what the child learns best.

C. Churchill loved the army because it satisfied his search for glory. He wanted to be famous and known for his bravery.

D. *My Early Life* describes Churchill's election to Parliament.

E. The book also describes, in touching terms, Churchill's relationship with his father. Although his father believed that he would never amount to anything, by the age of 26, Churchill had become a bestselling author, a millionaire from the proceeds of his writings and lectures, a war hero, and a member of Parliament.

F. In 1915, Churchill was dismissed from government because he was blamed for the destruction of the British forces at Gallipoli.

V. After his dismissal, Churchill took up painting. In 1932, he wrote a magazine article, which he later expanded into *Painting as a Pastime.*

A. In this book, Churchill says that at every stage of life, the individual must be willing to try something new. The greatest relief from stress is to take up a vocation that is different from one's ordinary activities.

B. Churchill describes the sheer joy of translating nature from the eye to the canvas and raises the question of how we relate to nature. He worshipped nature, traveling as far as Morocco to paint landscapes.

C. Churchill was a successful artist. In 1924, only eight years after taking up painting, he won prizes for works submitted anonymously.

D. The paintings give us insight into the character of this statesman. An autobiography can be crafted, but Churchill's paintings offer a glimpse into his soul—a soul of great optimism. Optimism also percolates through *My Early Life*, despite Churchill's failures to that time.

VI. Britain turned to Churchill again in 1940. On June 4, 1940, he delivered a stirring oration in Parliament, in which he declared, "We shall never surrender." As we know, he was turned out of office after he led his country to victory and then wrote *The Second World War*.

A. This work won the Nobel Prize and made history. It shows World War II as Churchill saw it. The first volume is a lesson for us today. It shows us a soul that has greatness.

B. Churchill's motto for the book—"You should be resolute in defeat and magnanimous in victory"—is a statement of Cicero's moral qualities.

C. Churchill called World War II the "unnecessary war." He believed that it would never have happened if Britain had shown the moral resolve to make the proper peace at the end of World War I. Instead, excessive reparations were exacted from Germany, and it was allowed to regain its power after being dishonored and humiliated.

D. Step-by-step, Churchill traces how failure to meet Hitler's aggression led to World War II.

1. Britain's acceptance of Hitler's rise to power came back to haunt the nation. Like Gandhi and Cicero, Churchill believed in absolute evil in a struggle with absolute good. For Churchill, Hitler was absolute evil.

2. Churchill realized that passive injustice was as wrong as active injustice. Before the war, Britain lacked the moral fiber to take up the fight. If the Conservative Party stood up to Hitler, it would have to raise expenditures, and a balanced budget was essential for the party to stay in power. Thus, passive injustice and the false notion of British self-interest allowed Hitler to gain power.

3. Britain did not understand the value of bringing large and small powers together into a working coalition that would have the moral authority and strength to overthrow Hitler. The British initially dismissed the possibility of coalition. With the collapse of France, Britain was alone.

4. Britain allowed Hitler to move into the Rhineland, considering this action to be in its own self-interest. After all, Hitler was only moving into his own backyard.

5. Britain's false conception of where its interests lay proved ruinous. Self-interest, Churchill says, is always in doing what is right.

6. When Hitler threatened Czechoslovakia, Britain moved from passive to active injustice. Without allowing Czechoslovakia at the bargaining table, Britain, France, Italy, and Germany decided its fate.

E. The British progressed from allowing wrongs to be done to actively doing wrong themselves, because they lacked a sense of true justice. According to Churchill, the concept of true justice harks back to

Cicero. It consists of keeping one's world; it is the *fides*, the honor of a nation.

1. *The Second World War* breathes an air of old-fashioned honor. The generation of the 1940s did not understand the concept of honor, and Churchill seemed to be a relic of a bygone age. As Cicero, Gandhi, and Churchill understood, honor is at the heart of justice, because it rests on integrity and courage. Justice and courage were fundamental to Churchill's view of history and the world.
2. Churchill also exhibited moderation. No one was more resolute in pursuit of the war than Churchill, and no one was more willing to rebuild Germany at the end of the war.

F. Churchill showed wisdom gained not in school and not from a series of great books. He read few books but absorbed those that he read. Churchill's writing, for example, reflects the power of Gibbon's prose. He made the books that he read part of himself—and therein lies true wisdom.

VII. Churchill approached life always willing to change. Like Gandhi, his life was a series of experiments with the truth. He was never afraid to say that he had been wrong or to seek redemption. For Gandhi, Cicero, and Churchill, the ultimate lesson is to never give in.

Essential Reading:

Churchill, *My Early Life*.

———, *Painting as a Pastime*.

———, *The Second World War*, vol. I.

Supplementary Reading:

Manchester, *Churchill*, vols. I and II.

Questions to Consider:

1. Churchill thought that great books are frequently wasted on the young. College students do not have the life experience to appreciate these books. Do you agree?
2. Churchill disliked Gandhi in life. Do you think, upon reflection, he would appreciate the comparison?

Lecture Thirty-Six
Lessons from the Great Books

Scope: A great book can lead us from information and facts to knowledge and on to wisdom, the ability to apply information and knowledge to living our lives. That has been the purpose of our course. In the first place, we have explored some of the greatest and most influential works ever written. We have learned facts about their authors and the times in which they were written. We have gained knowledge about what these books say. But our ultimate goal has been the search for wisdom. Can we find in these books wisdom to understand and change our individual lives? This gives us our true definition of a "great book." It is a book of good ideas. It is book not just to read but to ponder. It is a book with ideas that makes us better, better as individuals and better as citizens of a democracy. This is a definition as true and vital today as it was in the age of Socrates and Cicero.

Outline

I. As we approach the conclusion of this course, we must ask ourselves why we should read great books.

- **A.** At the beginning, this course defined a great book as having a great theme, being written in noble language that elevates the soul, and speaking across the ages, that is, possessing universality.
- **B.** Any discussion of great books must involve values. People cannot learn from great books unless they are willing to enter sympathetically into the mind of the author.

II. This course has discussed books that made history.

- **A.** One example, of course, is Machiavelli's *The Prince*.
  - **1.** Lord Acton argues that the modern world began with Machiavelli's idea that the state has no sense of moral judgment and politics has no moral dimension whatsoever.
  - **2.** Machiavelli believed that Socrates and Cicero were wrong. A state and its leaders are judged by different criteria than those used for private individuals. There is a complete separation between public and private morals.
  - **3.** In addition to *The Prince*, several other works discussed in this course reveal the soul of a tyrant.
- **B.** *Beowulf*, *Gilgamesh*, and the *Iliad* all discuss ambition and the desire to leave behind a reputation that will be remembered forever. In the epic of *Gilgamesh*, for example, Gilgamesh recognized that he would not

live forever; however, he had built the walls of Uruk, and men would talk about them forever.

C. *The Divine Comedy* is a story of redemption, but it also clarifies ideals that led people from across Europe to take up the Cross and go to the Holy Land to wage war against the infidel. The justification for the crusades can be found in the ideals of the *Divine Comedy*. Although it is a story of divine love, that love must be spread by the sword and by men who believe that they are undertaking the work of God.

D. John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty* looks back at the founders of the United States. Mill represents the continuation of ideas found in the Declaration of Independence. Lord Acton says that the American Revolution is the only revolution in history that was fought for a principle, liberty. Mill's work embodies ideals that led Churchill to stand up and say, "We shall never surrender."

E. The Book of Exodus is still alive in newspapers today. It propounds the idea that one religion has its sanction in a holy book and that sanction must be worked out politically and militarily.

F. The Koran, like the Book of Exodus, made spiritual and political history. It presents a worldview that is total and complete.

III. Some books we have read in this course have made spiritual history.

A. The Gospel of Mark is one such book.

B. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Gandhi found a statement that truth is God and is the salvation of a soul.

C. Confucius is both a spiritual and a political guide who laid the foundation for more than 2,000 years of Chinese history.

IV. Can these books change our lives today?

A. Many of these values seem irrelevant to contemporary Americans.

1. The *Iliad* embodies values of a heroic age of honor, in which warfare was significant. That era was an age of the duel. The concept of honor cannot exist in a society that lacks the duel. Honor may be an outmoded concept.

2. The age of Dante believed that all of life is preparation for death.

3. Goethe's *Faust* asks whether absolute standards of beauty exist. For contemporary Americans, the answer is that they do not.

4. *Walden* deals with nature and the environment, which are certainly major concerns today. Contemporary Americans, however, have difficulty taking seriously the values of a man who left everything behind and ignored correspondence with others.

B. The values embodied in these great books can change the lives of people today.

1. The Koran changes lives every day, winning converts to Islam.

2. The Book of Mark still speaks and changes people's lives, as does the *Bhagavad Gita*.

V. One of the first people to grapple with the question of what makes a great book was Aristotle.

A. Aristotle died in 322 B.C. He was the tutor of Alexander the Great and a pupil of Plato. He was a professor who was interested in science, the natural world, politics, and empirical evidence.

B. Aristotle wrote *Poetics,* which has been called the only work of literary criticism that is absolutely indispensable.

C. Aristotle asserted that a great book should be judged by its moral impact. Thus, a tragedy arouses fear and pity and achieves a catharsis.

VI. In *What Is Art?* Tolstoy says that a great book can be judged not only by the feelings that it arouses but by the quality of those feelings.

A. To take the most obvious example, *Mein Kampf*, although written after the time of Tolstoy, appeals to all that is evil in human emotions. On the other hand, a work such as Dostoyevski's *Notes from the Underground*, which is about the soul in prison, is horrifying to read but imparts the message that even in the midst of terror, torture, and suffering, what is good in people lives on.

B. For Tolstoy, Goethe's *Faust* is not a great book because it is too complicated for ordinary people to read, too much a product of its own time, too full of allusions to Greek and Roman mythology, and too full of philosophical allusions. If a reader has to spend much effort trying to understand what the author is saying, his emotions are not touched.

C. However, others believe that such books as the *Aeneid*, *The Divine Comedy*, and Goethe's *Faust* are worth the struggle. After deciphering the obscure references, the reader sees that these are soul-elevating works. That is why it is worth reading to *Gilgamesh*, with its complicated references to Mesopotamian religion, or the *Iliad*.

VII. Aristotle and Tolstoy's requirement that a great book must arouse good moral feelings begs the question of whose morality is important. One lesson of this course is that a universal set of values exists and that these values can be found throughout these great books.

A. Books from China (*The Analects*), India (the *Bhagavad Gita*), the Christian Middle Ages, and pagan classical Greece, along with the Koran and *1984*, all reveal a belief in the common set of values defined by Socrates: wisdom, justice, moderation, and courage.

1. Confucius said that he was happy to meet a good man, a man who practices justice, moderation, and courage.

2. In the Koran, the Book of Exodus, and the Book of Job, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Some great books link wisdom with belief in God.
3. Although Cicero understands that natural law must be founded in God, he describes his moral approach to life in purely practical terms. He believes that the person who practices justice, moderation, and courage based on wisdom will be successful and morally good. Some books teach that even without a belief in God, the individual can still lead a moral life.

B. We may not want to accept this universal set of values, but in reading great books, we learn that such a set of values exists.

VIII. How do these books touch our lives? They touch us only if we are willing to use the wisdom that comes from these books to live our lives. That wisdom is broader than a set of values. It is an education for freedom; these great books educate us to live our lives freely and responsibly.

IX. What role does reading play in today's society?

A. A movie or video game has a more attractive and compelling appeal than a book today.

B. We may be entering an age that is radically different from the previous 5,000 years. The invention of writing transformed the mind because knowledge could be stored and transmitted in a different fashion.

C. The past 25 years have seen another radical transformation. The printed word in a book has been replaced by a computer screen, video games, and movies.

D. These innovations might transform the character of education.

X. What is the meaning of "education for freedom"?

A. As previously mentioned in this course, *education* comes from a root meaning "to lead out from yourself."

B. Education is a three-stage process.
1. Education begins with information—a collection of facts and data. Our era is so overwhelmed with facts and data that we scarcely have time to think.
2. The next step is to weave these facts and data into knowledge. Knowledge is the ability to see the pattern in a particular subject.
3. The next step is to apply that pattern, to live one's life by it. This step is what Socrates, Cicero, Dante, and Goethe all meant by wisdom.

C. Wisdom is ultimately an act of meditation. We can come to wisdom only by sitting alone and thinking about what we have learned.

1. The contemplative life was considered the highest calling in the Middle Ages. The monk would cut himself off from human society to devote his mind to the contemplation of God.
2. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, the highest calling is seen in those who devote themselves to meditation.
3. Gandhi talks about those who have the freedom to cut themselves off from all human ties to meditate as a way to achieve wisdom.
4. Although meditation is essential in transforming knowledge into wisdom, contemporary Americans lack the ability and the time to meditate.
5. Reading a great book means sitting down with the book and allowing it to speak. It will speak to us only if we open our minds, which we can do only through meditation—the final step to wisdom.
6. Wisdom is ultimately a source of freedom. As long as people read great books, they can have insights that lead them to freedom.

D. In a commencement address at Harvard, Solzhenitsyn pointed out a danger. People today are flooded with such a wealth of books and information that they are in danger of losing the truth. A great thinker may have ideas that can save the country, but unless that work is picked up by the media or a publishing house, people will remain unaware of it.

E. Some great books have been written and ignored until times and values changed and people were willing to return to them.
1. *Walden* created little stir when first published. After about 100 years, people began reading it and saw in Thoreau's love of nature a challenge to our destruction of the environment.
2. Although Gandhi was well known, Martin Luther King first learned about Gandhi in a theological seminary. He recognized that Gandhi's *satyagraha*, his steadfastness in truth, was key to overthrowing an evil system that had paralyzed the moral fiber of this country. Martin Luther King, like Gandhi and Solzhenitsyn, exhibited the sense of justice, moral fortitude, and moderation that comes from wisdom to transform society.

XI. We can all change our lives in small ways and in grand ways as long as we accept the fundamental premise that life is about the individual and as long as we are willing to learn, are willing to make mistakes and admit them, exhibit the ability to redeem ourselves—in an individual sense, not in a theological sense—and never give up. The ultimate lesson of the great books is to never give up. The individual must live his or her life and realize—as both Homer and Thoreau say—that every day offers an opportunity to begin again.

Essential Reading:

Aristotle, *Poetics*.

Supplementary Reading:

Leo Tolstoy, *What Is Art*?

Questions to Consider:

1. How, at the end of our course, would you define a great book?
2. Which of the books we have discussed would you say was once a great book but now no longer speaks to us or our moral values?

Timeline

B.C.

3000	Birth of civilization in the Near East and Egypt
2500	Pyramids of Giza in Egypt
2500	Indus Valley civilization in India
2000	Stonehenge
1760	Shang Dynasty in China, first historical dynasty, with writing and bronze artworks
1500	Aryan invasion of India
1295–1225	Ramses II, pharaoh of Egypt; historical context for the Exodus
1250	Trojan War
1027–56	Zhou Dynasty in China, political context for Confucius (551–479)
1000	Beginning of Sanskrit literature
563–483	Buddha
550–531	Persian Empire rules the Middle East
490–404	Golden age of Athenian democracy
336–323	Alexander the Great
218–146	Rise of the Roman Empire
48–31	Julius Caesar and Augustus establish monarchy in the Roman Empire

A.D.

31 B.C.–180 A.D.	Golden age of the Roman Empire
6	Birth of Jesus
312	Conversion of the Roman emperor Constantine to Christianity, which became the official religion of the Roman Empire
476	Fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe

800	Charlemagne establishes what became the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation
1066	Norman Conquest of England
1194–1500	Gothic art and architecture dominate Europe
1215	Magna Carta
1304–1527	Renaissance
1517–1648	Reformation
1558–1603	Queen Elizabeth of England
1648–1789	Age of the Enlightenment
1775–1789	American Revolution and Constitution, "The Founding"
1789–1815	French Revolution and Napoleon
1860–1914	Golden age of the British Empire
1861–1865	American Civil War
1914–1918	World War I
1929–1953	Joseph Stalin rules the Soviet Union
1933–1945	Adolf Hitler rules Germany
1945–	Scientific and technological revolution
1990–	United States as the world's only superpower

Glossary

Akkad: The geographical term to describe the northern portion of ancient Mesopotamia. The Akkadians and their descendants, the Babylonians, spoke a Semitic language and were much indebted culturally to the neighboring Sumerians.

Aryan: A term derived from the Sanskrit word for "noble." *Aryan* was much used in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries to describe the Indo-European invaders of India, who conquered the peoples of the Indus Valley civilization and developed the literature and culture of classical India. The term was misused by the Nazis but still retains its value as a collective designation for use in discussing the early history of India.

Asia Minor: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

Birth of civilization: Rise of complex political structures, writing, monumental architecture, and use of metal. These advances occurred simultaneously in Egypt and Mesopotamia.

City-state: A term to describe a sovereign political unit based on a walled city and surrounding territory. *City-state* is frequently used to describe the political units of early Mesopotamia, Greece and Italy, Phoenicia, and medieval and Renaissance Italy.

Classical antiquity: The Greek and Roman world from roughly 800 B.C. (Homer) to 476 A.D. (fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe).

Classics: Conventional term for the writings of classical antiquity, now used in general to describe great books from all periods and cultures.

Communism: An ideology maintaining that society should be constituted so that the means of production and subsistence are held in common and labor is organized for the common benefit of all. This ideal was maintained by Plato. However, as a modern political system, communism has been marked by the creation of the totalitarian state and party apparatus to subordinate all aspects of the individual, the society, and the economy to the control of the state.

Determinism: The antithesis of free will, determinism argues that humans have no control over decisions, actions, and events, which are the inevitable consequences of forces independent of the human will.

Enlightenment: Term to describe the epoch in European history from 1648 (Descartes and the end of the Wars of Religion) to 1789 (the French Revolution). The age of the Enlightenment was marked intellectually by faith in reason and progress and admiration for the legacy of classical antiquity.

Founders (Founding Fathers): Collective term for the American statesmen who signed the Declaration of Independence, waged the Revolutionary War, and established the Constitution.

Free will: The idea that humans make their own choices, unconstrained by necessity or external circumstances.

Gentile: A non-Jew.

Gestapo: *Geheime Staatspolizei*, the secret state police of Nazi Germany.

Ideology: A complex set of ideas and values that unifies a community, directs its actions, and validates its decision making. For example, democracy is the ideology of the United States.

Indo-European: A linguistic term to describe a number of related languages, ranging geographically from India to North and South America. These include Sanskrit and the derived languages of India (such as Hindi); Persian; Greek and Latin; the Romance languages, such as French and Spanish, derived from Latin; the Germanic languages, including English; the Slavic languages, including Russian; and the Celtic languages, including Irish. The original home of the Indo-European speakers seems to have been in southern Russia, from which they migrated east and west, beginning around 2200 B.C.

Law (Jewish): The complex code of laws and regulations, based on the Ten Commandments and elaborated in the first five books of the Old Testament (the Pentateuch) and later Jewish tradition.

Marxism: An ideology based on the ideas of Karl Marx (1818–1893) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) and the intellectual foundation of modern communism.

Mesopotamia: "Land between the rivers." A geographical term used historically to identify the region, now largely in Iraq, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Location of early civilizations of Sumer, Akkad, and Babylonia.

Middle Ages (medieval period): The period in European history between the fall of the Roman Empire in Western Europe (476) and the fall of the Roman Empire in the East at Constantinople in 1453.

National Socialism (Nazism): The ideology of Germany under Adolf Hitler, based on racism, nationalism, and socialism and espousing a totalitarian state in which the individual and all aspects of life were absolutely subordinate to the state.

Pharisee: Member of an influential Jewish group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. The Pharisees were trained in the Jewish law and insisted on a strict interpretation of that law. Their role in society might be compared to that of professors in our own day.

Renaissance: The beginning of the modern age, marked by the Renaissance ("rebirth") of interest in classical antiquity. As is true of most historical designations, such as *Middle Ages*, it is difficult to define precisely the

chronological limits of the Renaissance. It began in Italy, then spread to Northern Europe. Defensible dates are from the career of the Italian poet and lover of antiquity Petrarch (1304–1374) to Martin Luther and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation (1517).

Roman Empire: The Roman world from 48 B.C.–476 A.D. Used in this way, the term *Roman Empire* describes the political system of monarchy established by Julius Caesar and his successors to rule over territory ultimately stretching from Britain to Iraq. However, starting in 246 B.C., long before Caesar, the Roman Republic began to conquer an overseas empire. Thus, historians commonly, if confusingly, speak of the Roman Republic ruling the Roman Empire. The Roman people permitted Caesar and his successors, especially Augustus, to transform Rome from a republic into a monarchy in order to continue to rule this overseas empire.

Roman Republic: Rome from 509–48 B.C., marked by political liberty and a balanced constitution.

Sadducees: Members of an influential group in Judaea at the time of Jesus. Sadducees tended to be wealthy and insisted on the Temple as the focus of Jewish religion.

Semitic: Linguistic and cultural term used to describe certain related languages and cultures of the Middle East in antiquity and the modern world, including Babylonian, Hebrew, Phoenician, Syriac, and Arabic.

Socialism: A term that first appears in English in 1832 to describe an ideology opposing laissez-faire economics in favor of some form of communal ownership of productive assets.

Soviet Union (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics): The political entity that in 1922 replaced the Russian Empire. In 1991, this communist state fragmented into numerous nations, including the Russian Federation.

Sumer: A nation composed of a number of city-sates in ancient Mesopotamia, speaking the same language and sharing the same culture. The Sumerians influenced greatly the later history of the Middle East. The Sumerian language seems to be unrelated to any other known language.

Third Reich: Name given by Hitler to Germany under National Socialism (1933–1945).

Biographical Notes

Aristotle: Greek philosopher (386–32 B.C.). Not an Athenian by birth, Aristotle spent much of his life teaching in Athens. He was the pupil of Plato and founded his own university in Athens, the Lyceum. Far more than Plato, Aristotle focused on empirical studies, including natural science and history. He was perhaps the most profound mind of classical Greece as Plato was the most intellectual and Socrates the noblest. He was the tutor of Alexander the Great. Aristotle was the most influential intellectual figure in both the European and the Islamic Middle Ages. His *Poetics* is the first book on literary criticism to come down to us from classical antiquity. It provides us with a working definition of a great book as one that has a beneficent moral impact on its audience.

Augustus Caesar: Roman statesman (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great-nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career and rise to power (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the popular Julius Caesar, Octavian, at the age of 19, raised an army on his own initiative. With extraordinary political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning a decisive victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, social, and economic reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic into a monarchy and inaugurated two centuries of peace and prosperity throughout the Roman world. In 27 B.C., he marked the inauguration of the new order by adopting the name Augustus, which means "messiah." Augustus is rightly regarded as the greatest statesman in history, the model of the good Roman emperor. He was celebrated by Vergil in the *Aeneid*, and during his reign, Jesus was born. He is discussed at length in The Teaching Company course *Famous Romans* (Lectures Fourteen–Sixteen).

Brown, John: American opponent of slavery and terrorist (1800–1859). Born in Connecticut and Puritan in background, Brown was a failure in business. Deeply convinced of the immorality of slavery and profoundly influenced by the Bible, he took his sons to Kansas and Nebraska in 1845 in a violent effort to oppose the supporters of slavery. On October 16, 1859, funded by respected New England abolitionists, Brown, along with his sons, formed a small group that seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry. The goal, which failed, was to start a slave rebellion. Brown was captured, tried, and hanged for treason.

Cato, Marcus Porcius the Younger: Roman statesman and opponent of Julius Caesar (95–46 B.C.). Far more than Brutus, Cato was the noblest Roman. He loved liberty, which he defined as the political freedom of the balanced constitution of the Roman Republic. He saw Caesar as the preeminent threat to that liberty. Thus, Cato opposed Caesar at every step of the rise to power. Ultimately, Cato chose civil war rather than allow Caesar to become despot.

Defeated in that war, Cato chose suicide rather than accept the clemency of Caesar. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante paid tribute to his own love of political liberty by placing Cato as the guardian of the gates of Purgatory. Cato is discussed at length in *Famous Romans* (Lecture Twelve).

Gladstone, William Ewart: British statesman (1809–1898). Gladstone was four times prime minister of Britain during the golden age of the British Empire (1868–1874, 1880–1885, 1886, 1892–1894). He embodied the ideals of the Liberal Party. He believed in free trade and a broad franchise of voters. He believed in democracy, and he believed that democracy was only viable if ordinary citizens were educated and had economic opportunity. It was the role of the government to provide education and economic opportunity. Gladstone believed that the British Empire was a great force for good, but he was opposed to wars of aggression. He was much influenced by Lord Acton in his views of history and served as a model for Winston Churchill. For us, in addition, Gladstone is a model for how a statesman shaped his life and values around the lessons of the great books. Gladstone believed that all we need to know about ethics can be learned from Homer, and he himself wrote scholarly volumes on Homer and the historical context of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Hammurabi: Babylonian king (1728–1686 B.C.). Hammurabi is one of the most important figures in the early history of the Middle East. His reign marked the high point of Babylonian civilization and political power. He ruled over an extensive empire, including modern-day Iraq and parts of Iran and Turkey. Babylonian civilization reached new levels in astronomy and literature. The government was marked by a well-trained bureaucracy. Hammurabi issued a major code of laws that influenced the subsequent legal systems of the ancient Middle East, including the Old Testament. He is important both for our understanding of the historical background of the Ten Commandments and for the transmission of the Gilgamesh epic.

Hitler, Adolf: German dictator (1889–1945). Born an ethnic German in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Adolf Hitler was a failed artist who discovered the meaning of his life in World War I. Determined to lead Germany back to greatness after the defeat of 1918, Hitler became leader of the National Socialist Party. He transformed a fringe political group into the dominant force in the chaotic democratic politics of Germany in the 1920s and early 1930s, the Weimar Republic. In jail, he wrote *Mein Kampf*, which stated clearly his determination to destroy the Jewish people of Europe and to begin another world war. He became chancellor of Germany in 1933 by legal means. He moved swiftly to establish a totalitarian system as complete and as evil as that of Stalin. True to his promise, he led the world into World War II. That war, as Winston Churchill said, would never have happened except for Hitler. In the name of his crackpot ideas of racism and nationalism, Hitler ordered the murder of more than 6 million people in concentration camps. The total number of people who died as a result of Hitler's war and policies is estimated at 50

million. He committed suicide in the last days of World War II, leaving his nation and Europe in ruins.

Julius Caesar: Roman statesman (100–44 B.C.). Julius Caesar is one of the most influential figures in world history and one of the most gifted individuals in history. Beginning his career as a rather shady politician, he grew into a figure who transformed history. A military genius, Caesar conquered Gaul (France), successfully invaded Britain, and defeated his rival Pompey, reputed to be the best general of the age. Caesar used this military success and the loyalty of the army to establish himself as dictator of the Roman Empire. He understood that a republic could no longer rule this empire and that the Roman people wanted authoritarian rule. He described his victories in Gaul and in the civil war against Pompey in *Commentaries*, which became the model for history and Latin prose. Such generals as Napoleon, Robert E. Lee, and George Patton have paid tribute to the military brilliance of Caesar. Caesar undertook a series of economic, political, and social reforms at Rome and in the provinces of the Roman Empire, which laid the foundation for the next 2,000 years of European history and civilization. Jealousy of Caesar and his own lack of patience led to Caesar's assassination by a conspiracy of 63 senators, headed by Brutus and Cassius. Among the great books we study, Vergil's *Aeneid*, Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* all pay him tribute.

King, Martin Luther, Jr.: American civil rights leader (1929–1968). A minister and son of a minister, King was a man of profound faith and courage. He stood up against a corrupt social and political system in the American South, which denied to U.S. citizens their constitutional rights on the basis of race. King led nonviolent resistance to segregation that resulted in major legislation and the collapse of segregation. His political and social views evolved into a strong resistance to the American war in Vietnam and an increasing focus on economic reform. His assassination in 1968 remains a mystery. King was profoundly influenced in his beliefs by the Bible, Thoreau, and Gandhi, as well as a number of great books, which he quoted in his profoundly moving *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* (discussed in *A History of Freedom* [Lecture Thirty-Five]).

Lenin, Vladimir: Soviet Russian revolutionary and dictator (1870–1924). Lenin was a convinced follower of Karl Marx who instituted one of the most brutal tyrannies in history in order to transform the Russian Empire into a Marxist state. Lenin came from a middle-class background and was well educated. His plots against the tsarist regime forced him into exile. By the agency of the German government, he returned to Russia in 1917 at a critical moment in the beginning of the revolution. Lenin had a powerful intellect and an utterly ruthless drive for power. He masterminded the Bolshevik seizure of power and victory in the civil war. He crushed all opposition and established the main features of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet Union, including the use of terror as a state policy and the concentration camps. In addition to his political leadership, Lenin also made fundamental contributions to Marxist theory, and

subsequent generations of communists all over the world have called their ideology Marxism-Leninism.

Marx, Karl: Economic thinker and intellectual founder of communism (1818–1883). Marx was one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. Born in Germany, he was educated in philosophy and the classics. He developed an all-encompassing philosophy based on economic determinism. He believed that ideas were the product of economic conditions. He was a political activist who sought to drive the workers to revolution through such publications as *The Communist Manifesto*, written with his close collaborator Friedrich Engels. Marx spent his last years in London, writing his massive work *Das Kapital*. Marx is important to us to show the different lessons that can be drawn from a study of the great books. He is also one of the preeminent examples to contradict his own view. Marx shows that history is indeed made by ideas, as the long and unfortunate history of the Soviet Union, communist China, and other communist regimes has shown.

Sophocles: Athenian writer of tragedies (496–406 B.C.). Along with Aeschylus and Euripides, Sophocles was one of the three greatest playwrights of the golden age of Athenian tragedy. Aristotle considered his *Oedipus the King* to be the perfect tragedy. He is discussed at length in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Four) and *Famous Greeks* (Lecture Fourteen).

Stalin, Joseph: Dictator of the Soviet Union (1879–1953). Born a Georgian in the Caucasus, Stalin's birth name was Iosif Dzhugashvili. He took the name Stalin during his early career as a political activist for Marxism and the overthrow of the regime of the tsar in Russia. Stalin means "man of steel," and Stalin was one of the hardest and most ruthless figures in history. A protégé of Lenin, he played an important role in the Russian Revolution and the civil war of 1917–1924. After Lenin's death, Stalin secured by brute force and cunning absolute mastery of the Soviet Union. From 1929–1953, he ruled by terror the most complete despotism the world has ever seen. Some 20 million of his own citizens died in his concentration camps. Despite this terror, he was genuinely loved by millions of Russians and was hailed as the savior of his country for the victory over Germany in World War II. Stalin is the model for Big Brother in George Orwell's *1984.* Stalin is discussed in *A History of Freedom* (Lecture Thirty-Four).

Thucydides: Athenian historian (died c. 400 B.C.). Thucydides was an admirer of Pericles. During the Peloponnesian War, he was exiled by his fellow Athenian citizens for his failure on a military assignment. This left him with an abiding hatred of democracy but gave him the time and opportunity to write his monumental *History of the Peloponnesian War*. This is one of the most influential works of history ever written. The Founders of the United States regarded Thucydides as a guide for political decision making in the new republic. Thucydides and his history are discussed at length in *Famous Greeks*

(Lecture Fifteen). He is important in this course as our source for the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles.

Tolkien, John Robert Reuel: British author (1892–1973). J. R. R. Tolkien was the creator of a fantasy world based on the ideals and values of the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian heroic age of the early Middle Ages. He was a scholar of medieval English literature and a specialist on *Beowulf*. He was professor at Oxford University from 1925–1959. But he is remembered and important for his novels, above all *The Lord of the Rings*, which continues to grow in popularity and has been the source of one of the most successful and critically acclaimed series of films in movie history.

Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus on the books we are discussing. I have recommended editions that are available and offer guides to further reading on the book and the author. I have recommended as Supplementary Reading books that put our works into a broader context or that I find especially useful in understanding the text. This means that on several occasions, I recommend books and essays that are older and more traditional simply because I think they will be more useful than the most recent scholarship on our book and author.

Essential Reading

Aeschylus. *Oresteia.* R. Lattimore, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953, numerous reprints. The best translation of this compelling tragedy.

———. *Prometheus Bound, The Suppliants, Seven against Thebes, The Persians*. P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1961, numerous reprints. A convenient and good translation.

Aristotle. *Poetics*. W. Fyfe and W. Roberts, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932, numerous reprints. A good translation and valuable for its inclusion of other classical works on literary criticism.

Beowulf. S. Heaney, trans. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Girard, 2000. A brilliant translation by a highly regarded modern poet.

Bhagavad Gita. J. Mascaro, trans. London: Penguin, 2003. An accurate and sensitive translation.

Bible. I prefer the majesty of the King James Version. Of the modern revised versions, the best, for translation and notes, is the New Revised Standard Version of the New Oxford Annotated Bible, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *Letters and Papers from Prison*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997. A moving testimony to the courage under trial of a remarkable intellectual and man of action.

Churchill, Winston S. *My Early Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996. A recent and in-print edition of Churchill's autobiography, written in 1930, when the British political world and the press thought he was finished.

———. *Painting as a Pastime*. Delray Beach: Levenger Press, 2003. Churchill's masterly essay on how to stay young, giving unique insights into the paintings of Churchill, which themselves give unique insight into Churchill the statesman.

———. *The Second World War*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986. A masterpiece of historical writing, filled with the lessons of history for our own day.

Cicero, Marcus Tullius. *On Duties (De Officiis*). W. Miller, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913, numerous revisions. By far the best translation, in print, of this fundamental work on education and morality.

Confucius. *The Analects*. D. C. Lau, trans. New York: Penguin, 1979. The best translation into English, with a valuable introduction.

Dante. *The Divine Comedy*. R. Sinclair, trans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1961. Of the many English translations, I prefer that of Sinclair for accuracy and for the clarity of its notes. .

Euripides. *Bacchae.* P. Vellacott, trans. Baltimore: Penguin, 1972, numerous reprints. A convenient translation of this last tragedy of Euripides.

Fears, J. Rufus. *Selected Writings of Lord Acton*, vol. I, *Essays in the History of Liberty*. Indianapolis: LibertyClassics, 1985. Part of a three-volume edition, the most complete collection of the writings, published and unpublished, of this seminal figure in the liberal tradition and in the great books tradition.

Gandhi, Mahatma. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with the Truth.* Boston: Beacon, 1993. A recent edition of the autobiography of a great and original man of action and thought. The biography is as idiosyncratic—I use the word in a most positive sense—as was Gandhi himself.

Gibbon, E. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. New York: Random House, 2000. This complete edition in three volumes is to be preferred to the various abridged versions in print.

Gilgamesh. B. Foster and D. Frayne, trans. New York: Norton, 2001. A good. recent translation, with useful supplementary material.

Goethe, Johann Wolgang von. *Faust: A Tragedy*. W. Arndt, trans. New York: Norton, 2000. A convenient edition and translation, with useful supplementary material.

Homer. *Iliad.* R. Lattimore, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951, numerous reprints. This has rightly been called "the finest translation of Homer ever made into the English language."

Koran. The best translation is that of A. J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Lincoln, Abraham. *Speeches and Writings*. New York: Library of America, 1974. The fullest collection of Lincoln's words and, of course, containing the Gettysburg Address (vol. II, p. 536).

Machiavelli, Nicolo. *The Prince*. New York: Penguin, 2003. A convenient translation of this fundamental work in the great books tradition.

Malory, Thomas. *Morte d'Arthur*. New York: Norton, 2003. An excellent edition, with useful supplementary material, of this work, celebrating the central medieval values of loyalty, chivalry, love, and religion.

Marcus Aurelius. *Meditations*. M. Staniforth, trans. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964. A good, convenient translation of this enduring guide to how to live your life with Stoic courage.

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. New York: Penguin, 1974. One of the seminal books on the history of liberty.

Orwell, George. *1984*. New York: Penguin, 2003. The masterpiece of insight into the mentality of totalitarianism.

Plato. *Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, and Phaedrus*. Harold North Fowler, trans. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990. A good translation of the dialogues focusing on the trial and death of Socrates.

———. *Republic*. D. Lee, trans. New York: Penguin, 2003. A convenient and accessible translation of this book, which we have called the embodiment of the values and ideals of classical Greece.

Remarque, Erich Maria. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. A. W. Wheen, trans. New York: Spark, 2003. The brilliant novel of World War I that is a powerful indictment of the folly of modern wars.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986. This is a superb complete edition.

———. *Julius Caesar*. New York: Penguin, 2000. A convenient edition with good notes, part of the Penguin Shakespeare Series.

———. *Othello, the Moor of Venice*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004. An excellent edition of the single play, valuable for its explanatory notes. Part of the Folger Shakespeare Series, from the famous library in Washington, D.C.

Solzhenitsyn, Aleksandr. *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918–1956: An Experiment in Literary Investigation*. New York: Harper and Row, 1974–1978. The massive indictment of Soviet communism by the Noble Prize-winner and survivor of the labor camps of Stalin.

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden and On Civil Disobedience*. New York: Penguin, 2004. A convenient edition of these classic works by one of America's most original thinkers.

Thucydides. *The History of the Peloponnesian War*. Rex Warner, trans. New York: Penguin, 1954, numerous reprints. The monumental work of history; contains the *Funeral Oration* of Pericles.

Vergil. *Aeneid*. R. Fitzgerald, trans. New York: Knopf, 1990. The best translation into English, done by a noteworthy American poet. More than other versions in print, Fitzgerald's edition has a feel for the poetry of the Aeneid.

Supplementary Reading

Achtemeier, P. "Mark, Gospel of." In *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, D. Freedman, ed., vol. IV, pp. 541–557. New York: Doubleday, 1992. A useful introduction to contemporary views on the composition and context of the Gospel of Mark.

Adler, Mortimer. *How to Think About the Great Ideas: From the Great Books of Western Civilization*. Chicago: Open Court, 2000. A traditional defense of the great books.

Andrewes, A. *The Greek Tyrants*. New York: Harper and Row, 1963, numerous reprints. The best study of tyranny among the Greeks and of the intellectual and political context in which the audience of Aeschylus responded to *Prometheus Bound.*

Barker, E. *Greek Political Thought: Plato and His Predecessors*. London: Methuen, 1960. This remains the best introduction to Plato for the general reader.

Barth, K. *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. New York: Harper, 1957. An extremely influential and provocative approach to reading and understanding the Bible.

Bethge, E. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Man of Vision, Man of Character*. New York: Harper and Row, 1970. The best biography of Bonhoeffer, by a close friend and confident.

Brooke, Rubert. *Rupert Brooke and Wilfred Owen: Selected Poems*. New York: Sterling, 2003. Poets of World War I who help us understand the impact of *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Brown, J. *Gandhi: Prisoner of Hope*. New Haven: Yale, 1991. A standard and good biography of Gandhi.

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