

In This Issue

Laura Kicklighter, Lynchburg College

The *Agora* editorial board is proud to present the 2015 *Agora* Journal. Our entries this year present us with an remarkable blend of the literary, philosophical, and theological. As always, we are deeply impressed with the scholarly acumen of these students from across the liberal arts. The work in this edition examines texts and themes across diverse time periods and genres to develop fresh perspectives on core texts.

Our edition begins with the insightful work of **Sarah Barker** of the University of Minnesota, who examines the depiction of social class in Dickens' *Great Expectations*. This essay focuses on the problems experienced by Pip and Estella as they attempt to transcend social class with a focus on Dickens' view that social class and one's "inner self" are inherently linked.

The next essays explore the relationship between human relationships and divine love in literature and theology. First, **Hamsitha Dontamsetty** of Rhodes College explores the depiction of love and its relationship to misery and suffering in Western literature and theology. Her thoughtful work, "Divine Consolation," creates connections between Augustine, Virgil, Shakespeare, and Dostoyevsky. She concludes by emphasizing the harmony possible between interpersonal attachments and love of the divine. Continuing on the theme of the relationship between the interpersonal and divine, **J. LaRae Ferguson** of Hillsdale College analyzes the depiction of love and servitude in *Jane Eyre*. Ferguson's analysis centers on the title character's spiritual development over the course of the novel in relation to St. John Rivers and Mr.

Rochester. Her analysis deftly connects these characters' interpersonal connections to their relationship with the divine.

Following these literary examinations, we have three essays that delve more deeply into the philosophical and theological. In "Worldly Transcendence", **John Geddert** of Vancouver Island University analyzes the work of philosopher-theologians Meister Eckhardt and St. Augustine. Geddert's work seeks to determine whether these thinkers can be considered mystics based on their writings on the nature of the divine, human will, and the relationship of the temporal with the eternal. Taking a more directly philosophical turn, **Dylan Grant** of St. Thomas University uses the Aristotelian concept of justice to look at the *Iliad*. Focusing specifically on the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon in Book One, Grant asks whether Aristotle's notion of justice could help resolve the dispute and determine which character is in the right. Continuing with the themes of justice and the divine, **Alanna MacDonald** of St. Thomas University examines the theology and politics of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In "On Earth as it is in Heaven" MacDonald shows how Milton's poem reflects the political assumption that God's role as creator places all earthly realms under God's dominion.

Katrina Morris of the College of the Holy Cross presents the reader with a refreshing in-depth analysis of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* in her work "The Fall and Bow to Bliss". Morris' exploration of this rich text focuses on two stanzas and illustrates the depth of meaning and imagery that can be found in Spenser's poetry.

Lindsey Nemshick, also of the College of the Holy Cross, uses the notions of Kairos and comedy to delve into two Shakesperian plays. In "Kairos and Comedy in

Shakespeare,” Nemshick looks at how time is used in *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest*, both of which work through tragedy to comic endings.

Taking a turn toward the modern, the next essays concern themselves with human nature and our relationship to our surroundings. **Caitlin Pettman** of Rhodes College reads Huxley’s *Brave New World* in light of Sigmund Freud’s theory of the uncanny. Pettman’s work innovatively leads the reader to reflect upon his or her own reactions to the text of *Brave New World* while applying Freud’s analytical framework to the novel. Pettman concludes her essay by urging readers to be attuned to experiences of the uncanny and our own discomfort. **Helena Snopek** of Vancouver Island University examines the work of Utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill in her essay “The Social Nature of John Stuart Mill’s *Utilitarianism*”. Snopek discusses the link between the public and private in Mill’s philosophy of pleasure and how this leads to a depiction of humanity that is essentially social in nature. **Melissa Taitano** of Midwestern State University uses framework of ecocriticism to analyze Cather’s *My Antonia*. Taitano’s essay, “Landscape of Change”, emphasizes the importance of one’s environment, or landscape, to the human spirit.

Finally, **Daniel Whitten’s** work, “Estrangement, Dialectic, and Process,” is an innovative reading of Rousseau’s “Second Discourse” through the eyes of Marx and Engels. While Marx and Engels do not directly analyze this foundational text by Rousseau, Whitten is able to look at disparate references to the French philosopher throughout Marx and Engels’ work to create a probable interpretation of Rousseau.

The outstanding work of this year’s scholars would not be possible without dedicated mentoring by faculty. The *Agora* thanks Dr. Jason Ripley of St. Olaf College

(Barker and Dontamsetty), Dr. Joseph Garnjobst of Hillsdale College (Ferguson), Dr. Mark Blackell of Vancouver Island University (Geddert), Dr. Sara MacDonald of St. Thomas University (Grant, MacDonald), Dr. Virginia Raguin of the College of the Holy Cross (Morris), Dr. James Kee of the college of the Holy Cross (Nemshick), Dr. Rhiannon Graybill of Rhodes College (Pettman), Dr. David Livingstone of Vancouver Island University (Snopek), Dr. Todd Giles of Midwestern State University (Taitano), and Dr. Laura Penney of University of Kings College (Whitten).

We are pleased to present you with the twenty-fourth edition of the *Agora* Journal.

Laura A. Kicklighter, Ph.D.

Agora Editor

Lynchburg College

Lynchburg, Virginia