Chapter One: Science and the Arts in the Humanistic Tradition
With Possible Political Implications

by Stuart Jordan

Who has science
And has art,
Has religion he.
Who has not science,
Has not art,
Let him religious be.

Goethe

Introduction

We frequently encounter the view that science is a "cold" unfeeling enterprise, one that ignores many of the beauties and passions that arise from our sensibilities and emotions.[1] The arts and religion are said to correct this situation. In fact, the sciences and the arts often march together, and some of the greatest and most passionate art is clearly quite secular. Hence the thesis of this essay. Humanity is better served by a vigorous and mutually reinforcing pursuit of the sciences and the worldly arts than by an uncritical focus on "otherworldly" matters.

This essay examines the arts and sciences in a number of historical cultures. In Part I, Science and Freedom as Foundations for Cultural Achievement , I have selected four examples in which avid pursuit of the sciences and the worldly arts by inspired groups of people led to major advances that have generally benefited all humanity. The first example reviews humanistic science and art in the classical period of Greece and Rome. The second explores

humanistic science and art in Renaissance Florence and in Portugal during the age of the major global explorations by sea. A third example considers humanistic art and science associated with the Enlightenment in England and France. The final example addresses how the Enlightenment contributed to the creation and development of the United States of America.

Part II, Cultures in Decline, examines the same four examples from a different perspective. As the full American story is yet to be written, the corresponding observations there will be very tentative.

Part I: Science and Freedom as Foundations for Cultural Achievement

Greece and Rome: In any discussion of classical civilization, one can start with Homer. The *Odyssey* is often regarded as the greatest adventure story of all time. The title itself has been used to describe any journey of discovery. But the *Odyssey* also gives a compelling description of what it is to be a human being, one employed by Martin Luther King in his most famous utterance during the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

The episode is Ulysses' encounter with the one-eyed giant Polyphemus on the Island of the Cyclops. Ulysses and his crew are captured and held captive in the giant's cave, to be devoured one by one at the monster's pleasure. Ulysses never prays for deliverance, but instead outwits Polyphemus, most notably by identifying himself as "Noman". Thus when the other Cyclops outside inquire who is with Polyphemus, blinded by Ulysses who is still in the cave, the answer given is "Noman" and the other Cyclops leave.

Eventually by further stratagem, Ulysses and his surviving men escape to their ship and set off. The blind Polyphemus hurls boulders at the ship, but soon it is out of range, though not beyond hearing. At this point, the fantastic adventure turns into a classical statement of

humanism.Calling out to the giant, Ulysses informs him, "Polyphemus! My name is not Noman. My name is Ulysses. And I am a man."

One book does not produce a culture, but may reflect it. The Greeks and Romans of the classical period loved life in this world. Even their gods were remarkably human. It would be tiresome to recount the great achievements of their arts and literature, but what about their science? Many people are familiar with how Thales of Militus predicted an eclipse of the Sun, how Aristotle urged experimentation to understand the natural world, and how Democritus and in Rome Lucretius expressed surprisingly modern ideas about nature. In fact, for the sheer beauty of the writing the introduction to Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things* still impresses modern readers.

What good was all this empirical science? While basic and simple, and often wrong by modern standards, the empirical – as opposed to a mystical – spirit that motivated it led directly to some of the most impressive engineering achievements in history. Even today, thoughtful people are impressed by the old Roman roads and aqueducts, built by the application of mechanical principles and clever techniques that worked only because this empirical approach was taken. When building something to work, engineers learned long ago that trial and error, though often necessary, may be slow, but prayer is useless.

Civilization generally followed these roads, and towns prospered because of the public facilities the Roman engineers provided. The decline would come in time, but it is sobering to recall that the classical period, especially if we begin with the maritime civilization of Crete, lasted well over one thousand years.

The "Dark Ages" and the Renaissance: It is sometimes argued that the period following the classical era was not

really "dark" when examined in detail. I might agree on some particular aspects of medieval life. People are remarkably adaptable, even when times are demonstrably bad, so probably no era is totally lacking in cultural achievement. But it cannot be denied that on the whole the period contributed substantially less to advancement in science and high achievement in the arts and literature than the preceding or subsequent eras.

At any rate, all historical studies point to a change in attitudes and a spirit of optimism about life in this world that swept the western world in the early second millennium of the current era. Two particularly striking examples of this change are how the small Republic of Florence and the almost equally small nation of Portugal made major contributions to ushering in the modern era. In both cases, one can ask what conditions inspired a comparatively small population to explode on the world scene and, for a while, surpass the great majority of humankind in achievement? For unless we assume that the people in these and adjacent regions were intrinsically superior to people elsewhere, we must search for special circumstances and attitudes surrounding these examples, which seem to have contributed directly to their success.

Most people, if asked to name some great figures of the Italian Renaissance, would probably start with Galileo, Michelangelo, and Leonardo. If they have some familiarity with literature, they would probably name Boccaccio, Dante, and, for political writing, Machiavelli. Those who appreciate painting would add at least Botticelli and Correggio, and historians would note the important role of the Di Medici banking family. Where all could agree is that these famous Italians were among the greatest figures of the Renaissance. However, except for historians, few others would know that all of these famous Renaissance figures lived in, or did much of their best-known work while living in, Florence. One naturally asks why.

There were undoubtedly many contributing factors. Nevertheless, there is general agreement on one. That was the freedom to experiment that swept through much of northern Italy during the Renaissance, before the Reformation polarized both of the great Christian divisions. We know this freedom was compromised in many ways. The Catholic Church continued to insist on formal recognition of its supreme authority, but was otherwise relatively tolerant. The Medici family compromised the Florentine republican form of government and dealt severely with their political enemies, but also encouraged scientific and artistic experimentation and generously funded recognizable talent. Overall, when compared to the iron rule of the Church during the middle ages, the Renaissance was a time of remarkable freedom and worldly achievement.

Let us now move on to Portugal during the first epoch of successful global exploration by sea.[2] Records suggest that the population of Portugal during the period 1450-1550 was approximately one million. That is a tiny number by today's standards, but it is also a small number by the standards of that time, when the much larger European populations in England, the "Holy Roman Empire" and especially France are considered. Other nations contributed to the success of these voyages of discovery. The Dutch provided some fine cartographers, Columbus was Genoan (or according to one recent investigation, Catalonian), and the Medici family, with their remarkable talent for shrewd investment, provided some of the initial funding. England had previously played an important role in helping the Portuguese establish their independence from their much larger neighbor, Spain, which gave the Portuguese of that era the high level of self-esteem usually needed for major achievements.

Nevertheless, it was the Portuguese who integrated all of these elements and added critical inventions of their own, including the caravel, a ship that could tack against the wind, and navigational instruments superior to the others then available. For almost one hundred years, thanks to the profits

from these increasingly daring ventures, Portugal was the richest nation in Europe. Even Columbus learned his navigation in Lisbon, and Magellan (who in the view of American naval historian Samuel Elliot Morrison was the greatest navigator in history) too was Portuguese, and worked for his own king before completing his famous – and fatal – final voyage for the Spanish.

While the confidence born of achieving their independence from first the Spanish and then the Moors undoubtedly provided part of the stimulus for these explorations, there was also the prospect of profitable commerce. Good ports on the Atlantic helped, but the Portuguese were not the only European country that enjoyed this advantage, nor the largest. We might ask what else was involved. Some credit must be given to religion, the desire to proselytize. Yet the Portuguese kings had wisely transformed the Knights Templar of Portugal into a more secular order that served their king, and through him Portuguese commercial aspirations. Like the later British Empire and the largely secular Romans before them, the Portuguese were attracted to an adventurous way of accumulating wealth.

What was the effect on the arts in this small country? It was electric. A new, somewhat nautical style of architecture, the Manueline, was developed. The monastery of Jeronimos in Lisbon was built immediately following Vasco da Gama's successful voyage to the Orient by a route that was then more profitable than the one Columbus pioneered. Along with Batalha, built to commemorate the victory over Spain that gained Portuguese independence, it is one of the most elegant and elaborate churches in the world. Perhaps above all, the greatest writer in their history, Luis de Camões, wrote the classic of Portuguese literature, the *Luciads*. Modeled largely on Virgil's *Aeneid*, the *Luciads* is an imaginative narrative history of the Portuguese explorations. It tells the story of their discoveries, enriching the account with a terrifying but engaging monster who guards the Cape they

must sail around, and a paradisiacal island where the weary mariners are finally rewarded for their trials with comely wives.

The Enlightenment: In spite of, and perhaps partly because of, the savage persecutions prompted by the split in the Christian religion as the Renaissance came to an end, rational voices were raised to suggest that a better way might lie ahead. In France, the essays of Montaigne were noteworthy for their moderation, while across the Channel the empirically oriented English, less affected by Continental intellectual traditions that tended to disparage experiment, began to set the stage for an empirically based modern science. Some writers like Leibniz and Voltaire tried to synthesize both traditions, but scientific attitudes often competed with religious ones, even in the same person.

All of this eventually took effect. The empirical approach to scientific questions led to Newton and, in a dying atmosphere of toleration in Italy, Galileo. The great Italian was a contemporary of the English philosopher Hobbes and enjoyed philosophical conversations with him. In France, thanks to their own native thinkers and inputs from notables of other lands, it led to the Enlightenment.

Excepting the earlier Hundred Years War with France, England was normally not a major power in European politics until it threw off the yoke of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. Notwithstanding the brutal excesses of Henry VIII, this liberation was the beginning of the great era in English history, marked by the triumph of England against the Armada under his daughter Elizabeth and culminating in the works of Milton, Shakespeare, Newton, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and other notables who followed. This transformation of English society was characterized by an increasingly empirical approach to life's challenges, relatively free from the ideological constraints imposed by dogmatic religion. The success of this approach, fully implemented in modern science and its applications, led to the Industrial Revolution.

The Enlightenment in "rationalist" France was also strongly influenced by this empirical approach. Voltaire spent many years in England and returned with admiration for the efforts of the pragmatically minded British. In addition, sophisticated Paris was a magnet for many of Europe's leading intellects of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The reputation of France for creative achievement in the arts arguably reached its zenith during this period. However, in one way the French were arguably less fortunate than the English in their failure to achieve a more peaceful accommodation between the two major branches of Christianity. When freethinkers in France determined to throw off the influence of the Church in civil affairs, the result was a not an evolutionary reform but a violent revolution that eventually degenerated into Napoleon's dictatorship.

Nevertheless, with Napoleon's final defeat democracy made episodic if uneven progress in France and other parts of Europe. Thanks largely to the power conferred on modern nations by science and technology, Europe came to dominate much of the globe during the nineteenth century.

The gradual accumulation of wealth supported a high culture in the arts over much of Europe, including Russia. Some of this art supported progress, often in subtle ways. As early as the seventeenth century, the dramatist Molière, creator of the Comedie Francaise, arguably fooled the autocratic King Louis XIV in his play *Tartuffe* , excoriating religious hypocrisy and gaining support from the king by cleverly having Louis himself punish the hypocrite and set things right. For the first time in a thousand years, serious thinkers rejected the idea, universal in the West during the middle ages, that the classical civilizations represented the epitome of human development and that humanity had since degenerated. The idea of progress was once again popular in scholarly thought.[3] The music of Mozart and Beethoven, the art of Goya and Delacroix, and the writings of the French

philosophes all contributed to the hope that progress and democracy would win in the end. Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro*, based on a controversial play by Beaumarchais, was quite revolutionary for its time. In it, a lustful aristocrat is outwitted by his manservant and the latter's even more clever bride to be. In Beethoven's opera *Fidelio* the loyal Leonore frees her lover Floristan from the murderous intent of a depraved Spanish governor, and the people celebrate in the end as the victorious pair emerge from the darkness of the dungeon into the "light" of freedom. (Note how the real heroes in these operas are heroines!)

America: This brings us to our own country. It is hard to imagine circumstances more favorable for development and progress than this country enjoyed during the first three centuries of its existence. While there were undeniably hardships in creating the United States, one searches in vain for another example of a people trained in the best techniques of the day for making a living, coming by stages into effective possession of a huge under-populated continent rich in natural resources, and enjoying a largely benevolent climate.

Yet, in addition to all the aforementioned advantages enjoyed by the United States in its early years, one can rightly call the United States "the child of the Enlightenment".[4] The most formative years for American democracy coincided with the culmination of over two centuries of European development of the ideas of democracy, human rights, and progress. The English philosopher Locke provided some of the basic ideas Jefferson incorporated into the Declaration of Independence. The Constitution of the United States was strongly influenced by the magisterial *Spirit of the Laws* written by the French philosophe Montesquieu. Our Bill of Rights, perhaps the most eloquent statement of human rights to have largely stood the test of time, reflects the emphasis Jefferson and Madison put on principles of government derived from their deep knowledge of European history. The provision for

separation of church and state that Jefferson considered the most important feature of our new government was inspired by his knowledge of the pernicious effects of the murderous religious wars in Europe, and a corresponding determination to prevent a similar disaster from occurring in America.

There is no need to review more recent American history, and how the sciences and the arts have advanced here. Thanks to a pragmatic approach to solving material problems and an entrepreneurial spirit that has been only loosely regulated to date, the nation has prospered and advanced to world leadership. The arts have gradually freed themselves from domination by European traditions, while learning from them, to produce some uniquely American, and especially African-American, forms. Jazz and the blues are 20th century examples. Yet for all its power, America is still a young nation. The crucial question is how this power will be used in the future. That question will be raised at the end of Part II.

Part II: Cultures in Decline

The end of classical civilization and Europe's disintegration into the medieval period has been so well studied, and involves so many possible causes, that any simple explanation is almost certainly wrong. The many theses that appear in Gibbon's oft-cited *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*[5] have been picked over by an army of professional historians. In this brief account I will consider only one alleged contributing cause, without suggesting it may have been the dominant one (though Gibbon himself thought it of great weight). This is the role of near-Eastern religions, and especially of Christianity, in subverting classical civilization.

Clearly, this is a highly controversial position. Today, few would argue that all features of classical civilization were superior to some of the reforms Christianity introduced.

People of talent might have thrived under Roman law, but the lot of ordinary people was hard and many Roman practices were cruel by later standards. Gibbon chooses to concentrate instead on how Christianity and other "otherworldly" cults from the near-East gradually undermined the traditional priority the earlier Romans – and before them the Greeks – placed on enhancing life in this world, especially for people of vigor and talent. The gods of the classical period were keenly interested in worldly affairs of state. In contrast, the near-Eastern religions, and Christianity in particular, exhibited a more neutral attitude toward the state, giving priority to supernatural considerations that had an obvious appeal to the poor and the downtrodden. Gibbon argued that this change in attitudes and values undermined civic virtue and so contributed to the Roman decline.

We can ask if this claim is reasonable. One historical account suggests it may have merit. Marcus Aurelius, honored in a recent film, *The Gladiator*, is often considered one of the greatest Roman emperors. History generally accords this "philosopher-king" high marks for wisdom, judgment, forbearance, and strong but compassionate leadership. His *Meditations* are read today as one of the best examples of Stoic philosophy. Yet we read that Marcus Aurelius did not like Christianity, and is said to have condoned the persecution of its adherents. If this otherwise allegedly compassionate man could so despise the early Christians, one can conjecture he must have considered them subversive to the Roman State as he knew it.

Perhaps such questions are too difficult for history to settle. In my opinion, these conjectures should remain speculative possibilities on which other examples from other times might shed more light.

Fortunately we do have two much clearer examples of where religious rigidity led rather directly to the decline of two great, if brief, epochs in Western development. We return to Florence and to Portugal.

Galileo's trial is well known. Fairness demands that we consider the efforts of the Catholic Church to quietly acknowledge the correctness of Galileo's insistence that the Sun, not the Earth, is the central attracting body of our planetary system, around which the various planets, including the Earth, move. In exchange, Galileo was admonished to remain silent about his claim, at least until such time as great numbers of people could receive it without questioning the "immutable truths" of Catholic doctrine. The Church had enormous responsibilities to people in the western world at that time, and the case was made that new and potentially revolutionary ideas must be presented to the general population gradually in the interest of social order. While this argument cannot be ignored, one should recall that this is a standard refrain of those who wish to postpone change indefinitely.

What is not conjecture, but history, is that after the Catholic Church's infamous proclamation charging Galileo with heresy, science in Florence and the rest of Italy dried up very quickly. The European people who had started the Renaissance began a long secular decline in science in relation to the rest of Europe. Even in the arts, where the Italian city-states had reigned supreme for centuries, other Europeans would first copy, then equal, and in some cases surpass the great artistic achievements of Italy.

If the decline of Renaissance Florence and much of Italy was rapid compared to the more leisurely decline of classical civilization, the loss experienced by the Portuguese was precipitous. This may be history's most compelling example of where the acts of an incompetent ruler who was also a religious fanatic can bring an entire people to ruin quickly.

When King Sebastian assumed the throne of Portugal it was the richest nation in Europe, thanks to the spices and other exotic products brought back from India and points further east. Unfortunately for his country, Sebastian appears to have been less able than his Manueline predecessors. In

addition he was deeply religious, and decided that God had given him the duty of penetrating into North Africa to conquer and, presumably, convert the Moors. Leading a Portuguese army that included a large fraction of that nation's aristocracy, he was lured into a situation favorable to his opponents. There his army was destroyed in the battle of Alcáçer-Quibir, more generally known as the Battle of Three Kings. All three kings present succumbed. Legend has it that one Moorish king fell off his horse and drowned in a wadi, while the other cried charge and fell dead of a heart attack. At least King Sebastian died fighting.

What is certain is that the Moors, who had the option of killing their captives or ransoming them, decided for ransom. Since much of the wealth of Portugal was in the hands of the aristocracy – as elsewhere at that time – paying these ransoms, along with other losses associated with this battle, virtually bankrupt the country. Not long thereafter the expansionist King Phillip the Second of Spain (the same who set off the Armada) absorbed his weakened smaller neighbor, beginning another eighty years of domination of Portugal by Spain. Not surprisingly other European powers quickly divided up most of the former Portuguese trading posts in the East. At approximately that time Camões contracted a fatal infection and on his deathbed noted sadly "I will die with my country". The epoch of the *Luciads* was over.

It was an incredible epoch, if short-lived, and a remarkable example of what a small number of people can accomplish, if properly inspired. The Portuguese of today exhibit both an understandable pride in their history and also a nostalgic sadness about it. Examples can be found in the work of their best-known twentieth century author Fernando Pessoa, and in the music of the *fado* (derived from the Latin for "fate"), which is infused with romantic longing. Contemporary Portuguese may well ask themselves "How could we have done all that? And yet, we did!" And a further question. "What happened?"

Perhaps the Iberian-American writer John Dos Passos has the answer. I will close this section with a quote from his book *The Portugal Story*.[6]

> "On the flank on the high ridge of the Sierra da Arrábida that rises like the scaly back of some extinct saurian between the estuaries of the Tagus and the Rio Sada, above a lovely sheltered bay called the Portinho, stands a small abandoned convent. … The agony of renunciation still hangs over the crabbed cells encrusted haphazard into the rocky ledges. … In the narrow court squeezed in between cruel rock walls the presiding genius of the place hangs beside the entrance. The custodian calls it São Martinho: dear little Saint Martin.
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> "It is the figure of a coarse-looking man with a black spade beard hanging from the cross. A bandage covers the eyes. The ears are stopped up. The mouth is sealed by a padlock through the lips. There is a keyhole in the chest, perhaps in case the Holy Ghost should care to unlock the erring heart. The arms are lashed to the arms of the cross. … Under the crude feet writhes a small Satan wincing under the weight of holy abnegation.
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> "The flesh creeps at the sight. The brutal symbol says to the humanist: 'This is the man you thought to raise up equal to God. Only by becoming blind and deaf to the sights and sounds of the world, and by macerating the eager curiosities of the flesh, and by locking the lips that might speak blasphemy can you attain salvation.'
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> "This pushed to its ultimate extreme, was the counterreformation's answer to the sensual pride and the scientific curiosity and the uninhibited inventiveness of the enterprise of the Indies."

Loss of prominence has occurred more gradually in England and in France than in Renaissance Florence and the Portugal of the global explorations. Nevertheless, both examples clearly demonstrate the dangers of over-expansion. Napoleon could not resist the temptation to reduce all of Europe to his domination. The wealth of France and his military genius were not enough to prevent his final defeat. Thanks to the Channel, England enjoyed a higher degree of

natural security than continental countries, enhanced when the English leaders concentrated on building a powerful navy. Yet even there the demands of recent world wars and the rise of nationalism in the so-called "third world" convinced the English they too were overextended, a conclusion rather forced on them by necessity.

What role cultural factors played in driving these expansions is a difficult question. France, like Spain in an earlier era, placed considerable emphasis on advancing their culture and the Catholic religion in their expansive phase, while Protestant missionaries were especially welcome throughout the British Empire. Whether this was ultimately constructive or intrusive may depend on where it occurred.

Today, a number of American scholars point to a growing imperial thrust in the nation's foreign policy, often promoted with religious enthusiasm and bearing many similarities to the now largely defunct British Empire.[7] However, there is a clear lack of unanimity on the desirability of this trend, so the issue remains open.

We know the American story is still being written. Furthermore, historians cannot agree on the extent to which history occurs mainly in large-scale cycles (with many important details differing each time), or whether each great civilization or nation is relatively unique. While I would agree with those who say America is a great experiment in democracy, largely successful to date, there is no guarantee this success will continue.

Since the American experiment remains a work in progress, and many citizens of this country are not convinced that the most revolutionary feature of American democracy, the separation of church and state, is a good thing, I pose the following three questions.

Question One: History demonstrates that many civilizations and individual nations prosper best when fully engaged in this world, usually reflected in their artistic achievements as well as their scientific and technical advances. At least in some of these cases, decline can be

associated with the enhancement of supernatural religion. Was this "otherworldliness" a cause or a consequence of the decline in worldly achievement? Is the current trend toward greater religiosity in public life in America a healthy or an unhealthy trend?

Question Two: History affords several examples of nations that experienced brilliant success in the arts and the sciences of their day. In at least some of these cases, this success was followed by unwise expansion and relative decline, often gradual but occasionally precipitous. Is there a danger the United States is following this path today?

Question Three: Is it true, as claimed by proponents of American exceptionalism, that the wealth, power, and general excellence of America are so great that the fate of other peoples discussed above can be ignored by this country?

Conclusion

I have tried in this essay to advance a thesis and to stimulate thought, not to offer final answers. The thesis posed in the beginning, that humanity is better served by a vigorous and mutually reinforcing pursuit of the sciences and the worldly arts than by an uncritical focus on "otherworldly" matters, has been followed by an attempt to explore the relationship between cultures, broadly defined, and the cultural factors that might have led to their success or their decline, emphasizing the roles of the sciences and the worldly arts, and of "otherworldly" religious factors as well. Some suggestive examples have been offered of both growth and decline.

The final example offered is America today. While my own answers to the questions posed would generally reflect the "liberal" position, I do not think these answers are easily found. For example, if some kind of "empire" is inevitable for America, as has been claimed by a number of

contemporary scholars,[8] is this necessarily bad for the rest of the world? Joseph Nye of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government has argued for more emphasis on "soft (persuasive and economic) power" relative to military power to achieve reasonable objectives for America and other nations.[9] This approach has great appeal to most humanists, but tends to be viewed as ineffective by more traditional thinkers. The debate will no doubt continue.

As for religion, I would only hope that Americans become more aware of the dangers of religious enthusiasm in our own country, and especially of the more violent and fanatical forms. These have a long history of doing dreadful damage to a people, and the recognition of this compelled Jefferson and Madison to insist on strong separation of church and state, while not in any way discouraging the free expression of all faiths. It is disturbing to think that many contemporary Americans may know little or nothing of this history. We should resist the temptation to use religion as something to hide behind in times of crisis. Franklin Roosevelt is famous for answering the depression and the rise of fascism with the expression "We have nothing to fear but fear itself." That is a sentiment worthy of a free people. One hopes to hear a similar refrain today.

I should note before ending that almost everything I discuss in this essay involves primarily the efforts of white "European" males. Despite this I, and many others, maintain that granting truly equal opportunity to women might be the most important single thing we could do today to advance humanity and reduce the deplorable excesses of "patriarchal authoritarianism".[10] I should also acknowledge that many non-European civilizations could have been chosen to illustrate the points made here. Sadly, the once great Islamic civilization offers a sobering example of how religious fanaticism effectively destroyed one of the world's most vibrant cultures centuries ago. Chinese civilization in its many flourishing phases could be invoked to show how a people more concerned with life in this world than with

supernatural phenomena can thrive. Indian civilization in its depths and complexity, while well beyond the range of my knowledge, could be mined for examples of practically everything described here. The restriction to the largely masculine West is entirely a matter of reporting what I know best, not what I consider intrinsically "better". Humanism is, or should be, gender neutral and global.

At the conclusion of Goethe's most famous work, *Faust*,[11] the philosopher discovers at last the one thing so satisfying to him that he is willing to part with his "soul" (in effect, his life), as in that moment he learns what has given his life meaning. From the following translation, I hope the reader will understand Goethe's intended answer.

> "Yes! To this thought I have surrendered slowly
> 'Tis wisdom's lesson tried and true:
> He only merits life and freedom wholly
> Who daily conquers them anew!
> And thus, by danger girded, childhood here,
> Manhood and age each pass their active year.
> Such busy throngs I fain would see,
> On free soil stand among a people free!"

Faust's early life, like humanity's, was compromised by terrible crimes. Yet in stages he learned, as we can too. The words of Faust, or Goethe, were spoken by one individual. However, they could well be applied to all of humanity.

Notes and Bibliography

If all of the statements made in this essay were to be properly referenced, hundreds of sources would be needed and most of these would not be original. However, almost all of the historical information is available in one of two sources: The *Encyclopedia Britannica* and the very readable and well-indexed eleven-volume *The Story of Civilization* written by Will and Ariel Durant. Sources that appear below are included because they contain information that might not be readily found in these two major sources, or because direct quotes have been used.

[1]Theodore Rozak, *Where the Wilderness Ends* (New York, Doubleday,1972).
[2]Luc Cuyvers, *Into the Rising Sun: Vasco da Gama and the Search for the Sea Route to the East* (New York, TV Books, 1999).
[3]J. B. Bury, *The Idea of Progress* (New York, Macmillan, 1932). The same edition is available through Dover Books (New York, 1955).
[4]Henry Steele Commanger, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (New York, Doubleday, 1977).
[5]Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1787), (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952). Chapters XV and XXVIII, are especially pertinent.
[6]John Dos Passos, *The Portugal Story* (Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1969).
[7]See *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 82 No. 5 and No. 6 (2003) for articles discussing American imperialism.
[8]*The Wilson Quarterly* frequently discusses American imperialism. See for example Vol. XXVI No. 3 (2002) which devotes five essays to "An American (Global) Empire."
[9]Joseph Nye, *The Paradox of American Power: Why the World's Only Superpower Can't Go It Alone* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2002).
[10]Stuart Jordan, "Toward a Partnership Society," *Free Inquiry* Vol. 15 No. 2 (1995).
[11]Johann W. von Goethe, *Faust,* translated from the German by J.F.L. Raschen (Ithaca, NY, The Thrift Press, 1949).

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