

# HMU: Dialogues

Harrison Middleton University

11/20/2015

Volume 2, Edition 2

## Letter from the Editor:

The holiday season usually promises some much-needed vacation time. If so, now is your chance to catch up on that large pile of books often set aside for later. We, too, will be reading a lot in preparation for events in 2016. There will be some exciting events and opportunities from Harrison Middleton University including a new film course in the spring.

2016 also marks the revival of *Great Books Chicago*. The theme for this year's conference will be *Imperfect Ideal*, ideas of utopia and dystopia. This conference theme reflects our upcoming film series discussion. For more information, see pages 6 and 7 as well as the book review.

Every newsletter celebrates our student and staff accomplishments, and this is no exception. Find a list of conferences, presentations, papers and professional accomplishments on pages 2 and 3.

HMU is lucky to be in such exciting company. In person, or on the phone, close reading and discussion among peers is a nice way to spend a day.

We wish you the best this holiday season. May you enjoy family, health and a good book!

Email me anytime at [asimon@hmu.edu](mailto:asimon@hmu.edu).

All the best! *Alissa*

*A great city and a populous one are not the same...*

*- Politics, Aristotle*

## Reviews and More:

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Thanks to **Alissa Simon**, HMU Tutor, for the following book review.

Alquist, Denise, et al., eds.  
*Imperfect Ideal: Utopian and Dystopian Visions*. Chicago: Great Books Foundation, 2015. Print.

In his essay, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism", Oscar Wilde says, "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing." The complexities involved in crafting an ideal state are immeasurable. Likewise, printing a book about utopia can be a daunting task. However, The Great Books Foundation (GBF) recently printed a new text attempting just that.

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## Student Highlights:

~ **Michael J. Caba**, HMU doctoral student, recently published an article regarding Hippocrates' relevance today. You can read more at: <https://www.hopechannel.com/au/read/hippocrates-a-modern-mind-in-the-ancient-world>.

~ **Dr. Kristin Rex**, EdD, HMU, is now District Executive Officer of the Yavapai Accommodation District. Of the current job, she says, "We are partnering with juvenile probation and opening the first transition school in the state at juvenile corrections center. Focusing on students just released in recovery and still needing support to earn high school credit. Exciting stuff!"

~ **Mike MacLean**, MA, HMU and HMU Tutor, gave a screenwriting seminar at Phoenix COMICON 2015.

~ **Dr. Edgar Daniels**, HMU Alum, presented a paper at the Twenty-First Annual Conference of the Association for Core Texts and Courses in Plymouth, MA. The conference theme was *The Arts and Sciences of a Core Text Education: What Are They and Why Do We Need Them?* Dr. Daniels' paper was titled *Teaching the 7 Deadly Sins Through Shared Inquiry and Cooperative Learning Principles*.

**Dr. Daniels** also presented at the New York State Middle School Regional Conference, *Teaching For Tomorrow*, held at St. Joseph's College in NY. The name of the presentation was *Using Cooperative Learning to Reduce Bullying in the Middle School*. In the paper, **Dr. Daniels** argued that by applying the principles of Cooperative Learning in the classroom, incidents of bullying can be reduced by equalizing power among students and flattening out social hierarchies.

Finally, **Dr. Daniels** served as a judge for the North East Regional Ethics Bowl held at St. Joseph's College on Long Island. Schools from the region sent 26 teams to debate a series of questions related to real life ethical scenarios. Some of the schools that participated in the Ethics Bowl were the United States Military Academy (West Point), Colgate University, Dartmouth College, Villanova University, the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and Tufts University.

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*Dr. Deborah Deacon presenting a talk on anime  
at the Phoenix COMICON 2015.*



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## Staff Highlights:



~ **Marcus Conley**, HMU Dean of Undergraduate Studies, attended 2015 Toronto Pursuits, a week-long seminar series presented by Classical Pursuits at the University of Toronto's Victoria College. He participated in some excellent small-group discussions on literary memoir. Guided by group leader Melanie Blake, Marcus's group discussed works by George Orwell, Vladimir Nabokov, and William Styron. In addition, he took part in many inspiring activities, talks, and experiences touching on a wide range of visual art, music, cinema, and literature.

~ **Deborah Deacon**, HMU Dean of Graduate Studies, presented two talks on anime at Phoenix COMICON 2015 in May. Her talks were titled: "The Gods of Anime" and "Women of Anime". (See photo on page 2). She also attended Philadelphia's 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Books Fall Institute in the Poconos.

~ **David Curd**, **Michael Curd**, **Lauren Guthrie**, **Rebecca Fisher** and **Walt Miller** attended the October 2015 Distance Education Accrediting Commission fall workshop.

~ **Dominique Wagner**, HMU Tutor, attended the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Poetry Weekend in Menlo Park, CA, organized by the Great Books Council of San Francisco.

~ **Sue Durkin** attended the Long Novel Weekend in Menlo Park, CA, organized by the Great Books Council of San Francisco.

~ **Margaret Metcalf** and **Andy Tafoya**, HMU Tutors, attended the Pacific Northwest Great Books Regional Discussion in June 2015. (See photo).

~ **Rebecca Fisher** attended Asilomar Great Books Weekend in Pacific Grove, CA.

~ **David Curd** and **Rebecca Fisher** attended and participated on panels at the Alliance for Liberal Learning conference in Chicago, IL on November 6 and 7.

~ **Philip Stewart**, HMU Tutor and alum, was appointed a Chaplain and commissioned at the grade of Captain in the Civil Air Patrol (United States Air Force Auxiliary) on October 7, 2015.

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## Reviews (continued):

In classic GBF style, the book includes all genres, from poetry to essay, science fiction and political treatises. *Imperfect Ideal* places texts of different formats creatively. For example, "The Economic Basis of the Withering Away of the State" by Vladimir Lenin falls in between the essay by Oscar Wilde and a selection from the science-fiction novel *We* by Russian author Yevgeny Zamyatin.

In addition, the selections in *Imperfect Ideal* stretch across a long history, beginning with early treatises by authors such as Mencius and Aristotle. There are also more modern-day essays, such as Robert Owen's "A New View of Society". Each of these authors approaches the idea of utopia from two standpoints. First, each one speaks with a specific historical reference point and, second, each has a precise form of government that they address. GBF has creatively selected pieces that can be specific to a region and time, yet they also address similar issues found in other times and places. This tactic enriches the dialogue of utopia itself. As Oscar Wilde says, utopia is a dream that exists in every culture, yet there is no singular approach.

The idea of utopia inherently involves human desire, which further complicates the argument. Wandering through the full text demonstrates the fact that man has a few basic requirements

and, yet, an infinite possibility of desires. As a sort of answer to the great variety of landscapes encompassed by the idea of utopia, GBF separated *Imperfect Ideal* into sections. These sections discuss questions such as what is 'best', what is missing, and the map of internal, specific human desires. Under each subheading, then, falls three or four texts that really represent the main idea of that section. Each of these selections, however, is also larger than its subheading. The ideas and questions overlap.

One idea that runs throughout these texts is that perfect peace and perfect perfection does not satisfy man. In the science-fiction texts, these elements lead to an unstable, disintegrating world. In the political treatises, these elements are controlled by some force who claims perfection, at the expense of an other. There is an ever-present element of discord that also, ironically, unites man. For example, Dostoyevsky's "The Dream of a Ridiculous Man" is an example of a fight against culturally-accepted barriers and imposed values. At the end, the narrator declares that he will continue to fight and this purpose drives him to live a better life. In some way, the fight is as necessary as the goal.

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## Reviews (continued):

This text highlights many of the Great Ideas, but one pleasant surprise was the interplay of the idea of One and Many. One person has the power to affect the happiness of the many and vice versa. For example, in "Black Box" by Jennifer Egan, the narrator states, "In the new heroism, the goal is to transcend individual life, with its petty pains and loves, in favor of the dazzling collective." This idea is also present in

Lenin's essay, and he notes that the state will pass through trouble before arriving at the ideal. However, the reverse is important in Ursula Le Guin's and George Saunders' short stories, which focus on the importance of providing a community which allow for individual growth. For this reason, *Imperfect Ideal* succeeds in raising important questions about an idealized world. Many of these experiments involve some form of enthusiasm, some strife, personal ideals, all of which stem from individual desires.

## Student Corner:

Please join HMU tutors and staff in congratulating the following students:

~ Harrison Middleton University congratulates graduates **Dr. Phillip M. Perry**, **Dr. James R. Thurman, Jr.**, and **Gary Jarvis Waters Jr.** on their induction into the Delta Epsilon Tau Honor Society, the premier national honor society for America's accredited distance learning institutions. The Society encourages and recognizes superior student academic achievement, character and leadership.

~ Please join HMU tutors and staff in congratulating **James W. Keller** on successfully earning his Bachelor of Philosophy and Religion. **Mr. Keller** submitted a capstone project titled "Exploring Eden", which is a dialogue about the second and third chapter of *Genesis*, the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and the prohibition to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The dialogue between the two characters represents the process of Shared Inquiry and delves into the underpinnings of the ethical system of Torah. **Mr. Keller** has since enrolled in the Master of Arts program at Harrison Middleton University. We look forward to more great work from **Mr. Keller**.

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## Continuing Education



### Film Series Discussion:

In anticipation of Great Books Chicago 2016- *Imperfect Ideal*, we will be offering film series discussion over *Blade Runner* which is a modified film adaptation of the 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick on Thursday, March 3rd, 2016. This discussion over both the film and text will be co-led by Gary Schoepfel, HMU Tutor/Great Books Chicago founder and Michael MacLean, HMU tutor/science fiction film writer. Mr. MacLean is best known for writing the hit Roger Corman Syfy movies *Sharktopus*, *Piranhaconda*, and *Dinocroc vs. Supergator*. In addition to writing for film and comics, Mike has published numerous short stories, mostly in the hardboiled crime genre. His short fiction can be found in *The Best American Mystery Stories*, *ThugLit*, *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*, and *Kaiju Rising: Age of Monsters*.

For more information please see our continuing education page at <http://www.hmu.edu/continuing-education-programs/> or contact Rebecca Fisher at [rfisher@hmu.edu](mailto:rfisher@hmu.edu).

### April Quarterly Discussion:

HMU's April Quarterly discussion will cover Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. This text was selected to complement the 2016 Toronto Pursuits summer courses (<http://www.classicalpursuits.com/>) which are designed around the theme of metamorphosis this year. In addition, Great Discourses (<http://greatdiscourses.com/>) will be offering similar courses during the winter. For more information on HMU's Quarterly Discussion, please contact Alissa Simon at [asimon@hmu.edu](mailto:asimon@hmu.edu).

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## Great Books Chicago 2016:

The Great Books Foundation is pleased to announce the return of this weekend of discussions and cultural outings for Great Books enthusiasts! Great Books Chicago 2016 – Imperfect Ideal will take place starting at noon on Friday, April 29 and will run through 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 1, 2016.

We're thrilled that HMU Tutor Gary Schoepfel, founder of Great Books Chicago, has returned as program director. The weekend will be centered on the Great Books Foundation new release *Imperfect Ideal: Utopian & Dystopian Visions* and George Orwell's masterpiece, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. You'll also have the opportunity to enjoy some of the rich cultural opportunities Chicago has to offer.

For more information: <http://www.greatbooks.org/outreach/great-books-chicago/>

*"Studies teach not their own use; that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation." – Sir Francis Bacon*



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*HMU Tutor, Marge Metcalf, attended the Pacific Northwest Great Books Regional Discussion in June.*

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## Spotlight on HMU:



June was a busy month for HMU's **Philip Stewart** (front, center in photo below), Tutor and alum, who received all of the following accolades:

- ~ board certified as a Chaplain by the Association for Professional Conservative Chaplains and as a CPE Supervisor (Clinical Pastoral Education)
- ~ officially named the Chair of the Committee on Education and Formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Conference and Ministerium on June 27
- ~ became Professor Ordinarius at Martin Luther International Seminary on June 27 and also named "Johann Gerhard Professor of Christian Doctrine and Practice". Also elected Dean of the Faculty of Divinity of Martin Luther International Seminary.
- ~ ordained into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on the morning of June 28



## Alliance for Liberal Learning:

In June 2014 and February 2015, representatives of twenty organizations, including Harrison Middleton University, working in discussion-based liberal education, met in Chicago to talk about common challenges and opportunities. Those groups then formed the Alliance for Liberal Learning to enhance collaborations and collectively address issues facing liberal learning institutions. The Alliance seeks to open the public imagination to the enduring value of lifelong liberal learning, which prepares us to live freely and well.

The Alliance held its first conference November 6 and 7, 2015 in downtown Chicago, IL. More information about the Alliance and upcoming events can be found on their website:

<https://allianceforliberallearning.org/>.