
Honors Journal

Honors

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Rejuvenation: University of Maine at Farmington Honors Journal Spring 2020

University of Maine at Farmington

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Rejuvenation

University of Maine at Farmington
Honors Journal

Volume 2 Spring 2020

Honors Journal

Edited by BrookLyn Miller and Makena Pauly

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FOREWORD

For the second time we have come together as an honors program and decided to showcase students' work. Our honors students drive and motivation here at Farmington goes beyond expectation. Time and time again students push limits and comfort zones to come up with amazing ideas, thoughts, and advice to their fellow students and themselves. In their works it is clear the power writing and art has in their expression. It is our special privilege to be able to showcase the bold, authentic works each of our contributors brought here for publication.

The University of Maine at Farmington Honors Journal has become a safe space for Honors students to simply do what they do best; to create. To imagine. In our second year publishing this journal we still have many obstacles to face, but we have learned from our six contributors, that there is perseverance, and strength in moving forward. In the dark times that this year has cast over us, may this Journal be a light for rejuvenation.

—The Editors,

BrookLyn Miller

Makena Pauly

NIK SHULTZ

And sometimes it is
My flesh, my body
becomes nothing but
this pain
and I can feel
shards of glass
in my chest
and her hands
tearing open
my throat
and my
lungs
Are
on
fire

But it isn't quite
so tangible,
sometimes,
it is just a fog
inescapable blindness,
beyond grasping,
beyond description,
and still I walk forward,
and I write about it
even as I grow so weary

Euclidean geometry is what we usually think of when we think of geometry. It's founded on the ideas of a greek mathematician who lived circa 300 b.c. by the name of Euclid (Butler). Euclidean geometry is based on the idea that parallel lines will never touch and the sum of a triangle's angles is equal to 180° (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

But Euclidean geometry only examines angles and distances in flat planes. What about measuring distance over a curved surface? You know, like the one we live on. Mathematicians such as Gauss and Reimman looked at how geodesics differ on flat and curved surfaces. A geodesic is essentially the shortest distance between two points. On a flat surface this is a straight line with no curves. In this flat surface space, lines that are parallel don't cross. On a sphere however, parallel lines converge and meet. The geodesic between two points on a sphere is curved and is found by finding a cross section that contains both points and the center of the sphere, thus finding a great circle of the sphere that contains both points. The section of the great circle between those two points is the shortest distance between them (Butler). This is why planes often fly in what wouldn't seem to be a straight line, to save on fuel and time. Another neat thing about this spherical geometric is that the sum of a triangle's angles can be greater than 180° . Imagine if you were at the equator and walked up to the north pole, then turned and walked at a 90° angle back down to the equator. If you walked along the equator you would make another 90° angle, and when you reached the point you started from you would have yet another 90° angle. You would've walked a triangle with 270° total! And because of curvature, this is true of any triangle drawn on a sphere, or positively curved surface (Numberphile).

But what about a surface with negative curvature? Curvature is defined by intersecting lines on a plane, such that if a line with positive curvature and a line with positive curvature intersect, there is positive curvature. If a positive curvature and a negative curvature intersect there is negative curvature. On a shape with negative curvature, parallel lines diverge, moving away from each to never meet, as if the space between them were stretching out. One shape that has negative curvature is a saddle, or the shape of a pringle chip (Butler). A shape that has complete negative curvature is a pseudosphere, which is a shape like a funnel or horn. If you draw a triangle on a pseudosphere it will always have less than 180° . On a pseudosphere, a five sided shape with equal sides would have all 90° angles (Numberphile). This geometry is called hyperbolic geometry (Britannica).

ISABELLA WEILAND

Advice for Girls: The First Time A Father Goes to Prison

The first time your father goes to prison

Do not weep.

Do not lay in your bed wondering what you could have done,

Do not go to school the next day,

Do not go to school ever again, because before you tell your teachers,

the disapproving headnod is already forming,

an apology is gnawing at their tongues,

Do not accept it.

Do not wish him home,

he is better off where he is.

The second time your father goes to prison

Do not visit.

Do not believe that because you are older you can handle the barbed wire,

the guards, wandering eyes, inmate catcalls,

Do not be surprised he won't talk to you,

he'll claim that you're not his blood

As if you didn't give him all you ever had,

you didn't come from his house,

you don't share the same honey eyes

and curly black hair,

As if you are not good enough for your father's love.

Do not let him make you cry.

Do not look at him,
you will see feigned pity and dying light.

The third time your father goes to prison
Do not love him.
Do not mourn him.

Do not let him ruin your taste in men.
You are not your father's daughter
not a jailbird's broken wing
not a hole in the chain-link.

You are completely separate,
a beautiful extension of everything he did not create,
a reminder of what he could have been.

Do not believe his sweet sentiments

He will lie.

He will tell you he loves you

He will lie.

He will tell you all that he wishes to make up to you

He will lie.

He will tell you that he misses you

He will lie.

Do not wish him home,

He is already there.

CANEEL CHESKIN

as sweaters unravel into yarn,
as we journey near to far,
as water turns to rainbow spray,
as the sun rises to a new day,
as the young grow wise,
as a child opens her eyes,
as we fight to survive,
as new life arrives.

as dark gives way to light,
as love soars to new heights,
as spring is summer is fall,
as the world humbles us all.

SIERRA ZAHARRES

Philosophy is the opening of the mind; it is the connective tissue that circuits the inner workings of thought and understanding, and it is truly life changing. The way we think and the inner workings of our minds allow us to brainstorm ideas collectively and process each and every one of our thoughts, making us who we are. Philosophy is the inner waking of the mind, the first sunrise upon our eyes, the awakening of our soul. Without the ability to think we would just be moving corpses, frolicking around what we call Earth. Philosophy has truly changed how I think and how I interact with everyday scenarios has changed; Philosophy is power. From a young age, I can remember finding the beauty deep inside the luscious virtue of finding answers to questions and ideas. I would call this the Thales stage of my life, when all I wanted to do was question and understand the way the world works. Thales and his successors, Anaximander and Anaximenes, began to initiate the approach of learning how to understand the way the world worked through philosophical terms. The need to start thinking this way was provoked by the neighboring civilizations, which possessed mythologies that differed from the Greeks and one another. They believed that there was an underlying rationale that existed, so they wanted to discover a fundamental principle that explained what governed nature and what composed its basic substance. He proposed that, "All is water and the world is full of gods" (Tarnas 19). He thought that nature came from a self-animating substance which moved and changed into different forms, because the author of this self-animating substance ordered motions and transmutations that were everlasting. They believed that nature and religion were somehow intertwined. They began to explain nature as nature being only itself. It wasn't something that was beyond, and it was personal rather than being perceived through gods and goddesses.

The way I began to think and question was definitely not as high quality as Thales and his successors, but I began to question how the world came to be today and who made us the humans we are today. I was fascinated by the dinosaurs and how in a blink of an eye they became extinct. I questioned how something so big and enormous could leave the Earth. I asked all kinds of these types of questions to my parents, who presumably didn't have all the answers, but it was finding those types of answers that drove me to where I am today. I always expected a definite answer or at least one that would stop my mind from spinning, until I met Philosophy, which changed the whole realm of it all.

I met the word Philosophy way back in Elementary school when one of my teachers spouted it out in one of my classes, but I had no idea what it meant until later in my academic career. I knew what the word meant, and I had heard of Plato. However, I had never studied philosophy so deeply before until I came to summer experience at University of Maine at Farmington. We read *The Allegory Of The Cave* by Plato, and this is where my philosophical ideals began to bloom and the circuit in my brain began to charge. *The Allegory of the Cave* was pretty mind blowing in terms of the ways we process our thoughts and ideas. It made me question what reality is and if our interpretations of our everyday lives and objects are correct. Plato's analogy about being a philosopher shows the people he is trying to explain his thoughts to being chained up in a cave, while being forced to watch shadows moving across a stone wall and interpreting those shadows as everyday objects, because they have been confined to only seeing those shadows. However, when one prisoner gets unchained and steps outside of the cave he sees the world in color, and he realizes the world that lies outside of the cave. He is fascinated by the colors, blinded by the sun, and revitalized by his findings.

When he returned, he was, “unable to persuade them that what they were perceiving was only a dim reflection of reality” (Tarnas 42). Plato wants us to realize this is what it feels like to be a philosopher, trying to get people out of their own way is a very hard task. This analogy made me think about how we as people are only confined to the lives that we live and uphold. There could be so much more to our lives, yet I think sometimes we can be too stubborn to actually see what lies outside our “box.” We as human beings, mostly create habits in our lives that could potentially block us from seeing the truth that lies underneath all of what is life. He feels that people are ignorant in their own entities, and the masses are too stubborn and ignorant to group themselves, so that is why there is a need for a higher power. This also made me think about the reasoning of why having a higher power exists in the first place. Is it to unite the people? Or is it to keep people from finding their own desitudes and destinies, confining them to one set of rules and regulations under a ruler, making it so that there will be no people like the prisoner who the other prisoners thought was “crazy”. This is when I discovered the power of thinking within these philosophical terms and how much opens up when we begin to think this way.

Now, I am here, in the present day, expanding my mind in this first year seminar, learning more about the beauty of Philosophy. Something that has struck me is the beliefs of Socrates, and his followers. Socrates believed in the significance of the soul. He thought that the soul was the individual waking consciousness and was the prominent part of moral and intellectual character. If this waking consciousness was found, then it would lead to true happiness: “A true happy life is a life of right action directed according to reason. The key to human happiness, therefore, is the development of a rational moral character” (Tarnus 34).

This really resonated with me, because I believe that we should always follow our soul and listen to our inner consciousness before making decisions that may impact our lives. I have always been told to listen to the voice in my head that tells me right from wrong. My Freshman year of high school, I really started to think about how important the inner consciousness was and how important the moral soul is. I began writing a book of poetry called *Beneath Her Soul*, and in the poems I talk about the significance of the soul, following the soul, and healing your soul. The soul is something that can constantly heal itself, change, and grow, and that is what I believe life is. I believe that going through life is simply your soul growing, molding, learning, and becoming. In order to understand our souls we must dig deep and find empowerment deep within. We must pave the way for ourselves in this world and make the most out of the growth of our souls.

For my future endeavors, I want to follow the ideals of Socrates: be a stoic and a bit of a skeptic. To follow the ideals of Socrates, I want to follow my inner consciousness and soul wherever life takes me. The idea of stoicism is that “happiness in this life can best be achieved through withdrawal from the world of affairs to cultivate a quiet existence of simple pleasures in the company of friends” (Tarnas 77).

This idea is the idea that virtue is happiness and that judgement should be primarily based on behavior, rather than words. We cannot control what happens in the world, but we can control how we respond to the events and how we control ourselves. I have always thought that this is a good way to go about life, because you control your responses to events and the way that you handle them is all up to you. My parents have always told me that I can't control what other people say, but I can always control how I react to what they say.

This is an important life philosophy, because there are going to be things that people say that you don't agree with, or that hurt you, and you are the only one who can choose how that will affect you in the long run. It's all up to you and your values. I also want to follow the ideals loosely of the skeptics, because I believe that questioning is power. The skeptics believed that "no truths could be known to be certain and that the only appropriate philosophical stance was the complete suspension of judgment" (Tarnas 77). I would not take this questioning power to the extreme like they do, but I would like to keep questioning and asking. I believe we live in a world where we need to ask questions, and we should not rely on one person for the "truth" that they pursue, because their "truth" could be totally wrong. We see this a lot in politics nowadays, people don't question the candidate. They just pick them because of the party they're in. I believe each and every one of these practices is important to embed into my future, and into my future students.

Philosophy has allowed me to open my eyes and see deep inside my inner consciousness. It has awakened my mind and given me the power to think critically and responsibly about my everyday endeavors. I truly believe everyone should take a Philosophy course and allow their minds to be expanded. The importance of having independent thinkers is becoming more and more prominent as generations move through. You must be able to think for yourself, make your own decisions, follow your own moral consciousness, and be able to present all those ideals effectively, because that is what makes us human.

BRANDON MARTIN



ANA ROGERS

Ever since the Revolutionary War, American culture has been rooted in the ideas of self-reliance and sufficiency. This has been shown throughout history, whether it be in the form of the Westward Expansion and pioneering, or even in the form of victory gardens. The idea of individuals being able to provide for themselves was an essential part of both of these events. The transcendental movement of the 1820's summarized these ideas. This movement was based on self-reliance, the rejection of social institutions, and a relationship with nature. The industrialization and globalization of society, today, tends to overlook these attributes. Although, a new movement seeks to rekindle the ideas of self-reliance: the local food movement. At first, this movement doesn't seem to reflect the traditional values outlined by transcendentalism, but with further examination, it begins to draw an evident connection between the two. This essay will explore the common themes of self-reliance and rejecting social institutions in the transcendental and the local food movements, as illustrated by Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan, and critical articles.

The transcendental movement was a philosophical, religious, and political movement from around 1820-1830, that was largely based on the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and focused on the downfalls of society and the importance of independence (Russel). The most influential person of this movement was Ralph Waldo Emerson, a poet and philosopher. He was best known for challenging traditional ideas and for defining the key concepts of the transcendental movement, the homogenization of society and the need for independence. Emerson's essay "Self-Reliance" became one of his most noted works, and establishes a clear and well-constructed argument against society and for self-reliance.

Emerson argues that no little act of self-reliance is enough, and doing so, he begins to define the elements of self-reliance. In Emerson's definition of self-reliance, self-sufficiency "must work a revolution in all the offices and relations of men; in their religion; in their education; in their pursuits; their modes of living; their associations; in their property; in their speculative views" (47). The type of self-reliance Emerson describes is one in which the common man must alter his relationship with society.

He argues that every person has the ability to be a "genius," and this shows because "In every work of genius we recognize our own rejected thoughts; they come back to us with a certain alienated majesty" (12). That being said, the common man fails to notice or accept his own thoughts because "it is his" (Emerson 11) . The common man is forced to reject his own thoughts because society has influenced his perception of intelligence so that it is no longer recognizable unless it comes in the form of a teacher, preacher, or an intellectual, all representatives of some social institution. This emphasizes the importance of being able to think for yourself, or in other words, to become more autonomous. It becomes clear in this passage that Emerson places very little value on social institutions and even argues that they tend to erase personal identity. Society and its institutions act as "a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion" (Emerson 16). By becoming a part of society, the individuals must submit themselves to a homogenous group of beliefs, institutions, and relations, or in other words, lose their "liberty and culture," and therefore, their individual voice.

Much like Emerson's view of society, the American food system has become a homogenized military-industrial complex focused on a few commodity crops. Before the rise of industrialization, the American food system consisted of local connections, and was based on small local farms in the community. As the U.S. became more industrialized, so did the food system. Local, diverse, and seasonal produce were replaced by corn. Corn made the perfect precursor to the industrialized food system because it requires very little energy to grow when compared to the amount of energy that can be obtained from it, and it is easily hybridized. As technology increased, corn, once again, was the perfect plant for GMO. The very traits that led to the rise of corn in the industrial food system also led to the rise of corn as a GMO crop. As corn became more energy-efficient, due to genetic modification, it began to dominate the market. This domination decreased the diversity of the market by making it one of the cheapest foods to buy. As prices fell due to high supply, the government interfered by buying up the excess corn to help support the farmers. This eventually caused corn prices to fall so new uses of corn had to be discovered. As corn became one of the cheaper crops to buy, it began to be processed into new products that could be sold for even less. This allowed it to dominate the market and become one of the commodity crops that defines the military-industrial food system.

The focus on a few commodity crops limits the consumer's choice and, therefore, their individuality. As the government continues the process of buying corn and selling it to big corporations, it reinforces the homogenization of something as simple as a supermarket, which alters the diversity of the local community and, in turn, society.

So, although you can choose from seventeen different types of cheerios, you are ultimately choosing from seventeen different variations of processed corn (Pollan). As our food market becomes more and more industrialized, it begins to resemble the kind of homogenized society Emerson condemns. In Emerson's words, "Self-reliance is its [only] aversion" (16). So, how does one abide by transcendentalist ideas and become self-reliant in a market that is dominated by one commodity crop and is controlled by one social institution, the government? To many people, the answer to this comes in the form of the local food movement.

The local food movement is defined simply as "the direct or intermediated marketing of food to consumers that is produced and distributed in a limited geographic area." (Local Foods), but it means a lot more to the people supporting it. The local food movement is a political, social, and even personal "rebellion," ultimately fueled by a desire for knowledge. Many people have found this movement alarming because it appears to be "as much an anti-Big [Agriculture] endeavor as it is an anti-regulatory one." (McWilliams), which is exactly what it is. In order for the movement to be anti-big agriculture then it also has to be anti-regulatory, since the American food system has come to be a "representative" of the government. The convergence of the government and the American food system limits the consumer's and individual's role in it, therefore, causing them to accept whatever the government provides them with. This begins to mirror the idea of individuals losing their voices to social institutions, as discussed in "Self-Reliance." For many people, the support of this movement stems from a desire to regain their individual voices, and a hope to support the community. For many people, "supporting the local food movement is a sort of civic duty, an act to preserve their local economy" (McWilliams).

Micheal Pollan is able to experience the drive behind the local food movement first hand when he visits Polyface Farm. Polyface Farm is a local farm run by Joel Salatin, a self described “Christian-conservative-libertarian-environmentalist-lunatic-farmer” (Pollan 125). Here on Polyface Farm, Pollan learns about what goes into running a sustainable farm, but more importantly, he learns what drives people to choose local food. Joel is interested in keeping his food system as short as possible. This means that he processes as much food on his farm as the government will allow. Unfortunately, the government tends to favor big agriculture instead of small local farms, like Joel’s, so he finds that the only real processing he can do is slaughtering his own chickens. The kitchen Joel processes his chickens in is, “a sort of outdoor kitchen on a concrete slab, protected from [some of] the elements by a sheet-metal roof perched on locust posts” (Pollan 229). At first, this may seem to have little importance, but this kitchen represents one of the fundamental ideas of the local food movement: knowing where your food comes from.

The people buying local food trust it because it comes from their community, a place they know well. Joel takes it one step further by slaughtering his chickens out in the open. Joel’s customers trust him “More than any USDA rule or regulation” because his “transparency is their best assurance that the meat they’re buying has been humanely and cleanly processed.”(Pollan 235). USDA regulations governing food tend to be full of ambiguity. The USDA definition of Organic livestock says that the animals have to have access to the outdoors, but what isn’t mentioned is the fact that many concentrated animal feeding operations don’t allow their chickens out until one week before slaughter (United States Department of Agriculture). By this time, the chickens have formed habits and won’t leave of their own free-will (Pollan).

In the industrial food system that has come to dominate America, the consumers are only shown a glimpse of the process that brings food to their tables and supermarkets.

In local food, consumers can watch their food be grown, harvested, and slaughtered. By watching these processes, the consumers are ensured food that was produced in a way that is acceptable to the individual, a stark contrast to the processes of the industrial food system. This kind of thinking isn't just seen on Joel's farm, but one of the fundamental ideas of the local food movement. According to an article by *The Week*, the idea of food safety "comes through neighborly integrity rather than the United States Department of Agriculture/Food & Drug Administration leviathan" (McWilliams). In many articles, books, and studies, they cite the idea of knowing where your food comes from as the main motivator as to why people choose to eat local. The simple act of wanting and gaining knowledge, begins to undermine the ideas of a homogenized food culture and society. By choosing to think and decide for oneself if the food was produced in a way that supports their ethical standards, is in its own way, the first step to becoming self-reliant. As Emerson stated in "Self-Reliance", thinking for oneself is the first step to becoming an autonomous individual that can rise above the limitations of society. Beginning to think for oneself is one small act of self-reliance that the local food movement stands for, but this alone isn't enough to stand up against the industrialization of the American food system.

Despite the idea of knowing where your food comes from being key to the local food movement, this movement is also rooted in an innate desire to return to a pastoral version of our food system. It's part of human nature to romanticize the past in such a way that the individuals no longer see the issues with it.

In other words, the further away an event is, the less we remember about what actually happened and the more the memory is based on abstract feelings. The pastoral idea relates to the romanticization of traditional agrarian lifestyle because it represents the pinnacle of self-reliance in the American food system and society. The pastoral idea expands beyond the idealization of agrarian lifestyles as it represents the longing for communities that emphasized individuality and self-reliance. As the American food system becomes more industrialized, this longing becomes stronger.

The second key aspect of the local food movement is an attempt to remedy this longing by returning communities to the pastoral image that promotes absolute freedom. Reaching this point of self-sufficiency is much harder now because of the industrialization of the food system and the increasing reliance on the government, but it is still sought after. Both Micheal Pollan and the article by *The Week* refer to the local food movement as an attempt to return to the “Jeffersonian” way of life which is defined by agrarian ideas that encouraged the complete self-sufficiency of farmers and emphasized the importance of pastoral communities (2016; McWilliams 2015; Shelton 2007). Farms that are able to support families with very little to no external support from the government or even society, become the new “norm” as people seek a pre-industrial food system. When the food system became industrialized, it began to force farmers out of business as it became cheaper to be an industry than a small, local farm. In 1986, farmers made up 2.2% of the national population, and in 1987, this number decreased to 2% (“Farm Population Lowest Since 1850's”, 1988). Michael Pollan argues that “nowadays [this] sort of independence constitutes a politics and economics and way of life both deliberate and hard- won — an achievement.” (2016, p. 204).

Yet, this struggle has come to define the local food movement. The movement has challenged government regulation, shifted the economy of small towns, and ever so slowly, moved small communities out of the industrial-military complex we call our food system. These changes, although small, help people rise up against the homogenization of the food system, and, in turn, mirrors, the “Emersonian” society that was rejected by transcendentalist philosophy.

Although “Self-Reliance” was published in 1841, many of the central claims of Emerson’s essay are still accurate. Society in Emerson’s time was a threat to individual liberty due to homogenization. This is still true in our industrialized society. Emerson argues that the only solution is self-reliance, which is exemplified by the local food movement. The impending threat of industrialization and homogenization has pressured small communities to make a stand against the current food system. The local food movement is rooted in two key ideas: knowing where your food comes from and returning to an idyllic version of the past in the form of pastoral self-sufficiency. Knowing where your food comes from plays into a much larger idea. Seeking knowledge about where things come from and only accepting what the individuals see for themselves is a defining step in going against the “mainstream” mindset of society and becoming truly self-reliant. Thinking and trusting oneself is one of the most important elements in becoming self-reliant. The globalization and industrialization of the American food system has changed society’s focus and shifted it away from the ideas of individuality and self-reliance. These ideas were central to the transcendental movement, as examined by Emerson. In other words, the fundamental aspects of Emerson’s philosophy and the transcendental movement are self-reliance and the rejection of a homogenized society.

The rise of the industrial food system was largely based on the development of GMO corn. By mass-producing corn, the food system begins to lose its diversity and resemble a homogenized society. The local food movement challenges this type of system by valuing the knowledge of how, where and when their food is produced. At the same time, there is an undeniable nostalgia for completely self-sufficient, Jeffersonian communities. This nostalgia encourages individuals to persevere through the challenges of trying to become independent in America's current food system in order to gain the true self-reliance they saw in the past. Against all odds, the local food movement has grown and spread throughout America as like-minded individuals take actions towards becoming more self-reliant. The growth of this movement has caused people to question the potential impacts of the movement. Some of the most common concerns surrounding the local food movement have to do with the environmental effects of eating local, the effects on food regulation, and the effects on the national economy (Martinez et al, 2010; McWilliams, 2015). Unfortunately, there is no clear or simple answer to these concerns, but the one thing that can be known for sure, is that this movement is changing the way Americans think about their food.

YouTube, YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=coPD3h8Iidc.

YouTube, YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7GYerlQWs&fbclid=IwAR1T7YXwk52c9VUkYIdnuNupVgfDoGIDjMbKwwGYzV6wEqwIN-6J6Sp_nk7I.

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