

- b. Look at this painting by Giorgio de Chirico (<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/30839>) and read the following poem by Mark Strand:

The Philosopher's Conquest

This melancholy moment will remain,
So, too, the oracle beyond the gate,
And always the tower, the boat, the distant train.

Somewhere to the south a Duke is slain,
A war is won. Here, it is too late.
This melancholy moment will remain.

Here, an autumn evening without rain,
Two artichokes abandoned on a crate,
And always the tower, the boat, the distant train.

Is this another scene of childhood pain?
Why do the clockhands say 1:28?
This melancholy moment will remain.

The green and yellow light of love's domain
Falls upon the joylessness of fate,
And always the tower, the boat, the distant train.

The things our vision wills us to contain,
The life of objects, their unbearable weight.
This melancholy moment will remain,
And always the tower, the boat, the distant train.

Do you see something in de Chirico's painting that Strand does not?

- c. "When we travel we are not, strictly speaking, setting out to learn something; most of the things we learn through our travels can easily - often more easily - be learnt at home. As Horace said, 'Caelum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt' - ('They change their sky, and not themselves, who scour across the sea') - in other words, we will not attain wisdom by running about from one place to another. We do not, then, travel for knowledge. Nor do we travel in order to forget, for a short while, our daily cares and troubles, for we know (Horace again) that 'post equitem sedet atra cura' - ('behind the horseman sits black care') - in other words, wherever we go, our cares will go with us. Thus it is not a thirst for knowledge that drives us, nor a longing to escape, but simple curiosity; and curiosity seems to be a driving force of its own, not explicable in terms of any others. Those who have studied such things tell us that curiosity, the disinterested need to find out about things, is an instinct that remains with us all our lives, and a uniquely human characteristic."

Kolakowski, Leszek . "On Travel." Freedom, Fame, Lying, and Betrayal, trans. Agnieszka Kolakowska. Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999. 42-43.

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Do you think Kolakowski is right to say that we travel because of "simple curiosity"? If not, why do we travel? If so, how important do you think it is to be a person who travels?

- d. Read Edgar Allan Poe's short story "Descent into the Maelström" (1841) (you can find it here: <http://www.eapoe.org/works/tales/maelsd.htm>)

What do you think this story is about?

- e. Watch "Bringing Up Baby" (1938, directed by Howard Hawks). Explain the significance of the leopard (or leopards).

- f. "Since the liberty we need is different from that of the ancients, it needs a different organization from that which suited ancient liberty. In the latter, the more time and energy man dedicated to the exercise of his political rights, the freer he thought himself; in the kind of liberty to which we are drawn, the more time the exercise of political rights leaves us for our private interests, the more precious liberty will be to us. Hence the need for the representative system. The representative system is nothing but an organization by means of which a nation charges a few individuals to do what it cannot or does not wish to do itself. Poor men look after their own affairs; rich men hire stewards" (Benjamin Constant).

Is freedom from politics an important ingredient in the general desire for freedom today?

- g. Produce a proof of Pythagoras' theorem, i.e., that the sum of the squares of the lengths of the two legs of a right-angled triangle equals the square of the length of the hypotenuse. In what way could mathematics (and specifically the practice of proving theorems) be relevant to liberal education or "value studies" as described on our website? (Make sure that all references to mathematical knowledge in your discussion involve the proof you produced.)

- h. Consider the case of Zell Kravinsky, as reported in this article in *The New Yorker* magazine: <http://facstaff.unca.edu/moseley/zellkravinsky%27skidney.pdf>

Do you think it is possible to give too much?