Truth and Love:
Fragmented in Thoughts

By Chris Dunn

**Organon:** Truth is known by reason alone.

**Johannes:** Yes, but at what expense? Must we give up our humanity for a coherent system of truth claims?

**Organon:** Humanity is by nature reasonable; in what manner is humanity suppressed by rationality?

**Johannes:** Let us take an extreme case as an example, for in such cases, the fallacy in an argument is often exposed. Suppose, I am the only child of my elderly mother whom has been good to me throughout my life. Now, however, age has taken its toll and she is infirmed, unable to feed herself, walk on her own, or communicate beyond a grunt of pain or the occasional unintelligible statement. I am still young and have many wonderful opportunities before me. Should I stay beside her in her old age or go out and live as I please?

**Organon:** Why it would seem most obvious that you should stay beside her. She at one time took care of you while you were as helpless as she is now.

**Johannes:** So I owe her a debt then. But surely no one will come to collect or punish if I should choose to abandon her. Thus, I could easily run off and justify it as a waste of my life to sit idly and watch her suffer. Surely the net happiness would decrease as she won’t be happy in her infirmity one way or the other, but if I stay, I will be unhappy and she will only be slightly more happy while I would be much happier leaving.

**Organon:** Indeed, if we take the most overall happiness to be the goal, then you should leave your dear old mother. But what if everyone abandons their old, infirmed mothers? Would this not be disastrous?

**Johannes:** I don’t see how it would, for this small sacrifice would be largely beneficial to the majority of mankind. The people who would be wasting their time caring for useless wretches could be out contributing to the world in greater ways like finding cures for diseases or helping the young who still have their whole lives ahead of them. And for the record, I would not be treating my mother as a means to anything.

**Organon:** I don’t know how to respond to such profanity. However, your argument does seem to indicate it would be just as, if not more, rational to abandon your mother as to stay beside her.

**Johannes:** Then I think we can conclude that some other element besides rationality must be present for me to stay beside my suffering mother.

…

**Johannes:** Suppose I tell you that human beings are merely objects like cups and pencils to be manipulated for whatever suits me. Others are no more than objects of scientific analysis. They are “out there” to be experimented on as cogs in a great chain of cause and effect.

**Organon:** This certainly seems to run contrary to common ideals of human decency.

**Johannes:** Absolutely, but such “decency” is from a bygone age. We are now aware that this is a cold, calculated, scientific universe in which all components have a predictable part which can be known by careful examination and dissection.

**Organon:** How crude your language is!

**Johannes:** Let us take this course of thinking to its logical limit by considering humanity from a biological stance, namely in the form of Darwinism. Darwinism states that life is not a fixed category, but ever changing and evolving. Over eons the most fit species will survive, humanity *happening* to be a stage on the way. Social Darwinism thus begins with the premise that some members of the human race are less fit to survive than others and therefore must be eliminated for the betterment of all. Perhaps not active elimination, but if a mutated form of Homo-sapien naturally dwindles away, then it is by no means a bad thing.

**Organon:** I don’t wish to think of humanity in such terms. A human being is more than a biological system or a component of the scientific universe; man has a soul.

**Johannes:** A soul? I know of no rational basis for such a claim.

**Organon:** Well, what I mean is, man is valuable in and of himself, not as a tool. And we aren’t so isolated from one another as your description makes it seem, for my happiness is more often than not dependent upon the other.

**Johannes:** I see. Some might call love a desire such that one’s own happiness depends on the happiness of the other.

**Organon:** Perhaps love is what makes such scientific descriptions of others as objects invalid.

**Johannes:** Then I think I have successfully shown that knowledge of truth requires more than reason. For the conclusions of reason will depend upon the premises assumed and if love is not assumed, the conclusions of reason will reflect the absence of love as a starting point. Although, I don’t know if it is correct to call love a premise, it is more a *something* required in spite of reason for humanity to be valuable. Or perhaps, love is the seed of truth, which then grows and blossoms by means of reason.

**Organon:** Certainly, but by concluding that love is necessary for truth, I feel we have just entered into an endless hallway filled with the doors of unanswered questions and closed but one door behind...
I was quite impressed with the last Philosopher’s Stone on “Evil!” in which the author states, “the sinner is no better than the saint, and the saint is no better than the sinner; each has the potential to construct a new moral code and live by it.” I was so impressed I decided to invent a new morality.

1) All is purposeless.
2) Emotion guides reason.
3) Oneself and other selves cause pain.
4) Hate what is painful.
5) Hate your neighbor as yourself.

If you have any questions, criticisms, or comments, please contact either Chris Dunn or Dr. Nordenhaug. Anyone interested in writing a brief article for The Philosopher’s Stone, please contact either of us (it doesn’t have to be good, however it does have to be thoughtful).

Chris Dunn, Editor of The Philosopher’s Stone
hammaneater@yahoo.com

Dr. Erik Nordenhaug, Faculty Advisor
nordener@mail.armstrong.edu