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A Political Allegory

Philosophical Discussion Group, Armstrong State University

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Celebrating 20 Years of ASU's

The Philosopher's Stone

October 26, 2016

Philosophical Discussion Group

Volume 19, Number 2

Come visit "this land that makes no sense" on November 3rd @ 4pm in G 106.

A Political Allegory

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Chapter XVI

As my dream continued, Clio began her descent from the high mountains. Dawn light peering over the lilac peaks at her back revealed the plain before her. The only visible thing in the fresh morning was the mist glinting down below. In the far distance she could just make out the spine of another mountain range still slumbering in obscure darkness.

Each step became more laborious as Clio continued her decent. What was mistaken first as mist quickly became a dense haze that choked both her sight and breath. The vegetation was thorny, and clung to Clio's skin as eagerly as the wet smog. Ground that was first tiny stones underfoot gave way to wet earth that smelt of rotteness. It was only a short time before she became lost in the stifling country.

Clio sat down in a patch of matted grass and mud, rubbing her sore feet. Confused and worn she wondered to herself which direction to take. However, just as she was nodding off with her elbows tucked into her knees, a tune floated past. Out of the mist, walking with the song, came a figure decked in bright armor.

"Hullo traveler!" The emerging woman beamed. Her flaxen hair that was coiled in a tight braid over her shoulder, bounced as she spoke.

"Hello," Clio responded simply, eyes wide, "who are you?"

To her astonishment it seemed as if the mist not only wasn't clutching to the woman's armor. But it was repelled by her very presence. As she moved forward it even parted.

"I have been called much, but you may call me Reason. I have travelled this land before and have returned in search of the house of Wisdom." The woman began to trail off lost in thought, "It seems not to be where I last remembered." But with a firm grin she addressed Clio again, "And who might you be little one?"

As Clio stood and brushed off muddied knees she explained her plight in the mysterious land.

Putting a gilded finger to her chin Reason answered, "Well I cannot answer your questions, but I believe I can be your guide and companion. Wisdom will know your way out of this country. Let us journey to her house together. This way!" With that Reason drew her sword, the mists giving way in assent, and she marched forward with Clio hesitantly following.

Before long the wet earth turned into wetter mire as Clio and Reason trudged on their way.

"Where are we?" Clio asked. Holding her nose from the stink.

"I believe we have come to the Bog of the Golden Age," said Reason.

No sooner had she finished speaking, the haze gave way to a huge white pillared building rising out of the swamp. As they approached, the oaken door flung open and a clean shaven portly man dressed in a tweed suit stepped out onto the porch.

"Well well well, visitors! Welcome! What a fine day for company. Although yesterday was surely a finer one for it," spoke the man through plump cheeks.

As Clio and Reason made their way to the steps of the porch Clio felt like something was off in how the man was standing but she could not quite make out what was giving her this impression.

He introduced himself as Mr. Right, and then proceeded to talk extendedly about his house and its long history. There were many references to long dead figures, their great triumphs in this land and their additions on the house. The man's charcoal eyes were lost in thought of the past. Somewhere in the midst of this, the house visibly sank into the muck by half an inch. Mire bubbles eagerly lapped up the bottom most step of the porch.

"Excuse me sir, but your house appears to be sinking," interrupted Clio cautiously, "shouldn't you do something to stop it?"

"Why my dear little girl, make no mention of it. This house has been this way for generations. Back in those days they knew how to make houses you know. Why should I change what has worked before

me?" the man replied. His voice became round and hollow as he spoke, like an echo that had been reverberating too long in a brass room.

"But if you don't do something today to stop it the house will obviously be destroyed," said Clio. Voice rising in frustration at being talked down to, fingers curling at her sides.

"Ah I see you are one who *obviously* has no appreciation for what was before. And therefore cannot *obviously* appreciate my hospitality. It would have been much better yesterday anyway." With his reply the man turned, walked inside, and shut the door behind him.

As he strode back inside Clio spotted what she felt was off before. The man stood painfully twisted so that his upper body was completely turned around with his front so that he was always looking behind him as he walked forward. The bog gurgled and swallowed a bit more of the house.

Clio and Reason continued traveling. Clio venting her confusion with Mr. Right and his lack of care for his actual house, but only having a care for the memory of it. They had been walking for several hours through progressively drier and colder terrain before Reason lead them up a dead grassy hill onto a wide stretch of asphalt.

"This is new to me," said Reason, "I was sure that the Ethics River flowed just beyond here."

As she was observing the stretch of black asphalt road, a rumbling was heard in the distance. No sooner than they had time to think, they were in the path of a vehicle racing toward them at an astonishing pace. Reason instinctively grabbed Clio, closed her eyes and dove. The car squealed to a halt, and amid the cloud of dust they could make out a smooth voice say, "You look like some forward thinking ladies. Need a ride?"

Against Reason's wishes, Clio eagerly took the driver's offer and they were soon whizzing down the highway in the backseat of the silver sports car.

The man driving wore a sleek navy suit that shimmered in the chilly wind. Thick black sunglasses framed his slim face and gave it an air of nonchalance and cool.

"Excuse me," said Reason "but do you know what happened to the Ethics River?"

"Oh that old thing? It dried up ages ago, couldn't keep up with the future. This is Progress Highway now. Much faster, gets you where you wanna go when you wanna go there." The man replied liquidly, then added, "Heads all the way west to Utopia City."

Reason's eyes narrowed as she heard the man's last phrase. "If I remember correctly, the river diverted before the cliffs of False Hope." Reason replied, her voice having hints of distrust.

"Look lady, everybody knows this highway leads to Utopia City. That's where the future is. That's where I'm going. That's all that really matters." The man replied like liquid turned to ice, "Maybe you're not as forward thinking as I first thought."

Hoping to ease the tension after some silence Clio asked, "What did you say your name was again?"

"Mr. Left of course. The future is my game. And the past? Already forgot about it." Mr. Left replied with a rehearsed, flashy smile. His teeth looked fake.

Shortly after, Reason told Mr. Left that indeed they were not headed to Utopia City and to let them off. As the car became a speck on the horizon, Reason could make out several miles away the distant gash of earth that was the cliffs.

As she was looking into the distance Reason heard Clio sob behind her. Somehow the car ride had left them more drained than before.

Sitting cross-legged and crying Clio looked up at Reason, "This land makes no sense. No one seems to be concerned with today, but only with what was or what will be. I just don't understand." The tears were slowly trickling down her face like a faucet with a hardly turned handle.

Reason extended her strong arm and comfortingly helped Clio up. "The house of Wisdom cannot be much farther. Once there perhaps we will know what to make of this land and how we might navigate it. Do not fear, all is not lost." She said with a true smile.

Hand in hand, Reason and Clio walked away from the road, into the mist and toward Wisdom.

What will happen to Reason and Clio on November 8th? Come share our meager provisions of pizza and sodas as we interpret and vote on their journey Thursday, November 3rd at 4pm in Gamble 106.

Present Messages from Past ASU graduates to Future ASU graduates

"The pursuit of knowledge is not for the weak – it will test every belief and assumption you hold dear, eventually destroying them one by one. Open your mind and let it in. Sometimes what appears as "self-destruction" is in reality mental growth and sometimes what appears as "self-preservation" is in reality mental self-destruction."

--Melissa Bates, class of 2015,
Graduate Student in Political Science