



Elizabethtown College

Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania

# MOMENTUM

Paulo Coelho,  
Inspirations: Selection from Classic Literature.  
New York: Penguin Classics, 2010

## Study Guide

### Paulo Coelho

Paulo Coelho is a Brazilian lyricist and novelist. He was born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 24 August 1947. He attended a Jesuit school. As a teenager, Coelho wanted to become a writer. Upon telling his mother this, she responded with "My dear, your father is an engineer. He is a logical, reasonable man with a very clear vision of the world. Do you actually know what it means to be a writer?" After researching, Coelho concluded a writer "always wears glasses and never combs his hair" and has a "duty and an obligation never to be understood by his own generation," amongst other things. At 17, Coelho's introversion and opposition to following a traditional path led to his parents committing him to a mental institution from which he escaped three times before being released at the age of 20. Coelho later remarked "It wasn't that they wanted to hurt me, but they didn't know what to do... They did not do that to destroy me; they did that to save me." At his parents' wishes, Coelho enrolled in law school and abandoned his dream of becoming a writer. One year later, he dropped out and lived life as a hippie, traveling through South America, North Africa, Mexico, and Europe and becoming immersed in the drug culture of the 1960s. Upon his return to Brazil, Coelho worked as a songwriter, composing lyrics for Elis Regina, Rita Lee, and Brazilian icon Raul Seixas. Composing with Raul led to Paulo being associated with Satanism and occultism, due to the content of some songs. In 1974, Coelho was arrested for "subversive" activities by the ruling military government, who had taken power ten years earlier and viewed his lyrics as left-wing and dangerous. Coelho also worked as an actor, journalist, and theatre director before pursuing his writing career. In 1986, Coelho walked the 500-plus mile Road of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain, a turning point in his life. On the path, Coelho had a spiritual awakening, which he described autobiographically in The Pilgrimage. In a 1986 interview, Coelho stated "I was very happy in the things I was doing. I was doing something that gave me food and water -- to use the metaphor in "The Alchemist," I was working, I had a person who I loved, I had money, but I was not fulfilling my dream. My dream was, and still is, to be a writer." Coelho would leave his lucrative career as a songwriter and pursue writing full-time. In 1982 Coelho published his first book, Hell Archives, which failed to make any kind of impact. In 1986 he contributed to the Practical Manual of Vampirism, although he later tried to take it off the shelves since he considered it "of bad quality." After making the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in 1986, Coelho wrote The Pilgrimage. The following year, Coelho wrote The Alchemist and published it through a small Brazilian publishing house who made an initial print run of 900 copies and decided not to reprint. He subsequently found a larger publishing house, and with the publication of his next book Brida, The Alchemist became a Brazilian bestseller. The Alchemist has gone on to sell more than 65 million copies, becoming one of the best-selling books in history, and has been translated into more than 70 languages, the 71st being Maltese, winning the Guinness World Record for most translated book by a living author. Since the publication of The Alchemist, Coelho has generally written one novel every two years including By the River Piedra I Sat Down and Wept, The Fifth Mountain, Veronika Decides to Die, The Devil and Miss Prym, Eleven Minutes, Like the Flowing River, The Valkyries and The Witch of Portobello. This dates back to The Pilgrimage; while trying to

overcome his procrastination of launching his writing career, Coelho said "If I see a white feather today, that is a sign that God is giving me that I have to write a new book." Coelho found a white feather in the window of a shop, and began writing that day. In total, Coelho has published 29 books. Two of them -- The Pilgrimage and The Valkyries -- are autobiographical, while the majority of the rest are fictional, although rooted in his life experiences. Others, like Maktub and The Manual of the Warrior of Light, are collections of essays, newspaper columns, or selected teachings. In total, Coelho has sold more than 100 million books in over 150 countries worldwide, and his works have been translated into 67 languages. He is the all-time bestselling Portuguese language author.

# WATER

## Introduction

Coelho believes water equals new birth, beginnings, transformation into new dreams and ideas. How is being a first year student a new beginning, what are your ideas and dreams, how do you anticipate being transformed in college? Coelho argues fear can show us how strength can be limited to the stranger parts of the human being. As you enter college what are your fears? How can you find unknown resources of strength within yourself? How can you turn fear into strength? What is the meaning of the expression "to walk through the looking glass?" In your first year of college will there be times when you will have various interpretations of reality?

## The Ugly Duckling

Hans Christian Andersen was a Danish author, fairy tale writer, and poet noted for his children's stories. These include "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "The Snow Queen," "The Little Mermaid," "Thumbelina," "The Little Match Girl," and "The Ugly Duckling." During his lifetime he was acclaimed for having delighted children worldwide, and was feted by royalty. His poetry and stories have been translated into more than 150 languages. They have inspired motion pictures, plays, ballets, and animated films. Why was the ugly duckling, considered ugly? How was the ugly duckling treated differently in the wild as compared to the duck yard? What did the ugly duckling anticipate would happen to him when he approached the swans? Why did the ugly duckling feel glad about the suffering and hardships he had endured? What does Hans Christian Anderson mean "a good heart is never proud?" In the end why did everyone find the ugly duckling beautiful? What will you learn about your identity in college and how will you change your perception of yourself?

## Tales From The Thousand and One Nights

This is a collection of Middle Eastern and South Asian stories and folk tales compiled in Arabic during the Islamic Golden Age. It is often known in English as the *Arabian Nights*, from the first English language edition (1706), which rendered the title as *The Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. The tale of King Shariyer and his brother Shahzaman is a parable. What is a parable? How does the Vizier use a parable to save his daughter's life? The parable told by the Vizier is about thinking before acting. How can thinking before acting be applied to life in college? How does reading a parable

require critical thinking? How will critical thinking be necessary for success in college?

## The Prince

Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli was an Italian historian, philosopher, humanist, and writer based in Florence, Italy during the Renaissance. He is one of the main founders of modern political science. He was a diplomat, playwright, and a civil servant of the Florentine Republic. He also wrote comedies, carnival songs, poetry, and some of the most well-known personal correspondence in the Italian language. His position in the regime of Florence as Secretary to the Second Chancery of the Republic of Florence lasted from 1498 to 1512, a period in which the Medici were not in power. Machiavelli's most well-known writing was, however, after this period, during the time when the Medici recovered power, and Machiavelli was removed from all positions of responsibility.

"The gulf between how one should live and how one does live is so wide that a man who neglects what is actually done for what should be done moves towards self destruction rather than self preservation."

"...a prince must be slow to believe allegations and to take action and must watch he does not come to be afraid of his own shadow; his behavior must be tempered by humanity and prudence so that over confidence does not make him rash or excessive distrust make him unbearable."

"...many men were better at not making mistakes themselves than at correcting then in others."

"...a wise prince should rely on what he controls, not on what he cannot control."

"...everyone realizes how praiseworthy it is for a prince to honour his word and to be straightforward rather than crafty in his dealings..."

"Therefore one must be a fox in order to recognize traps and a lion to frighten off wolves" What does this quote teach us about not being manipulated and not being bullied?

"...the deceiver will always find someone ready to be deceived."

"...men in general judge by their eyes rather than by their hands...everyone sees what you appear to be, few experience what you really are."

What do these quotes teach us about minding our own business, not judging others, about how we can change ourselves and not control or change others?

## Looking Glass

Lewis Carroll was an English author, mathematician, logician, Anglican deacon, and photographer. His most famous writings are *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and its sequel *Through the Looking-Glass*, as well as the poems "The Hunting of the Snark" and "Jabberwocky," all examples of the genre of literary nonsense. He is noted for his facility at word play, logic, and fantasy, and there are societies dedicated to the enjoyment and promotion of his works and the investigation of his life in many parts of the world, including the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and New Zealand. Many of the basic assumptions Alice makes about her environment are reversed in Looking Glass World. The strange phenomenon challenges the way Alice thinks and in some cases exposes the arbitrary nature of her understanding her own world. Alice becomes aware of her new invented perspective on life as she travels

forward and backward through Looking Glass World. In college how will you navigate back and forth between your life at college and your life at home? How will you make sense of this new environment: college life? What will you learn about yourself through living on a residential campus which will change your perspective about how to live?

## The Art of War

*The Art of War* is an ancient Chinese military treatise attributed to Sun Tzu (also referred to as "Sunzi" and "Sun Wu"), a high ranking military general and strategist of the Kingdom of Wu who was active in the late-sixth century BC, during the late Spring and Autumn period. (Some scholars believe that *the Art of War* was not completed until the subsequent Warring States period. Composed of 13 chapters, each of which is devoted to one aspect of warfare, it is said to be the definitive work on military strategies and tactics of its time, and is still read for its military insights. Sun-Tzu emphasizes war as a last resort and characterizes this last resort as itself a significant defeat. He has earned a reputation of being a pacifist who prefers diplomatic resolutions to open total warfare. Elizabethtown College was founded by the Church of the Brethren who are known to be pacifists. Peace and nonresistance is integrated throughout our curriculum and programming. We have a peace and justice minor. What does this mean to you? How can you use diplomacy to solve problems and conflicts? In college how will you employ the ideas of peace and conflict resolution in your relationships? How can you live a life making an impact through nonresistance, through peace rather than through confrontation?

# EARTH

## Introduction

Coelho argues the earth is both a source of life and death, light and darkness, good, and evil. Life is about choices, indeed choices between good and evil, light and darkness. Have you made choices in life you regret? The earth is a symbol of renewal. Can you make choices between right and wrong? Can you make choices you will not regret?

## De Profundis

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was an Irish writer and poet. Ever the aesthete, Oscar Wilde himself was profoundly affected by beauty and lived and dressed flamboyantly compared to the typical Victorian styles and mores of the time. He was often publicly caricatured and the target of much moral outrage in Europe and America. His writings such as *Dorian Gray* with homoerotic themes also brought much controversy for him but he was part of the ever-growing movement of 'decadents' who advocated pacifism, social reform, and libertarianism. While many vilified him, he was making his mark with style and wit and enjoyed much success with many of his plays. After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. Today he is remembered for his epigrams, plays and the circumstances of his imprisonment, followed by his early death. De Profundis refers to Psalm 130 a penitential psalm.

This is a letter to Wilde's lover Lord Alfred Douglas. Wilde was put on trial for suspected acts of homosexuality due to the Labouchere Amendment prosecuting male homosexuality. Wilde feels he was unsoundly imprisoned. He does not regret his love for Douglas and in prison he has a spiritual experience. Oscar Wilde adopts Jesus as a symbol of western kindness and eastern serenity and as a rebel hero of mind, body, and soul. He raises the question: Is homosexuality wrong? Have you ever been in love? Have you ever been rejected by a former lover? Have you ever yearned to be with someone you love who does not love you anymore? Have you ever been unfairly accused or disciplined? In loneliness and reflection have you ever had a spiritual awakening? In college will you enter into a spiritual journey?

## Dracula

Abraham "Bram" Stoker was an Irish novelist and short story writer. This world famous story written by Stoker in 1897 has made the name Dracula synonymous with vampires. Stoker's stories are today included within the categories of "horror fiction," "romanticized Gothic" stories, and "melodrama." They are classified alongside other "works of popular fiction" such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* which, according to historian Jules Zanger, also used the "myth-making" and story-telling method of having "multiple narrators" telling the same tale from different perspectives. "They can't all be lying," thinks the reader." Most critics agree Dracula is, as much as anything else, a novel indulging the Victorian male imagination, particularly regarding the topic of female sexuality. On another level, the story of Dracula raises the question: What is sanity? In his diary, Dr. Seward observes "he has...today begun a new record. How many of us begin a new record with each day of our lives?" Will college be an opportunity for you to make a fresh start, a new life, a new beginning? How will you build on your past life and create life anew in college?

## Eichmann and the Holocaust

Adolf Otto Eichmann was a German Nazi and SS-Obersturmbannführer and one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Because of his organizational talents and ideological reliability, Eichmann was charged with the task of facilitating and managing the logistics of mass deportation of Jews to ghettos and extermination camps in German-occupied Eastern Europe. Hannah Arendt was an influential German American political theorist. She has often been described as a philosopher, although she refused that label on the grounds that philosophy is concerned with "man in the singular." She described herself instead as a political theorist because her work centers on the fact that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world." Arendt's work deals with the nature of power, and the subjects of politics, authority, and totalitarianism. Arendt is trying to understand the motives for the actions of Adolf Otto Eichmann and comes to the conclusion; this is a case where the state manipulated the weak to perform the atrocious acts of the Holocaust. She quotes Fyodor Dostoevsky, "...in his diaries that in Siberia, among scores of murderers, rapists and burglars, he never met a single man who would admit that he had done wrong." When is it appropriate to challenge authority? How can critical thinking be applied to making decisions about when to accept or challenge authority? Can an institution manipulate people? In college how can you be strong, be independent, think for yourself?

## Yeats Selected Poems

W. B. Yeats was an Anglo-Irish poet and playwright, and one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishments, in his later years Yeats served as an Irish Senator for two terms. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature for what the Nobel Committee described as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." He was the first Irishman so honored. Yeats is generally considered one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize; such works include *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929). There are themes in these poems: (a) Good dreams: ambitions. (b) New land: new beginnings. As you enter college what are your good dreams? What are your ambitions? Is college your new land? Is college your new beginning? How can having a positive attitude have a positive impact on your life? How can a positive attitude empower you to achieve your dreams and ambitions as you enter this new beginning? In college how will you surround yourself with positive thinking people? How will you be a positive influence on other people? How will you make a positive impact on Elizabethtown College?

## Lady Chatterley's Lover

David Herbert Richards Lawrence was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic and painter. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, and instinct. The greatness of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* lies in a paradox: it is simultaneously progressive and reactionary, modern and Victorian. It looks backwards towards a Victorian stylistic formality, and it seems to anticipate the social morality of the late 20th century in its frank engagement with explicit subject matter and profanity. One might say of the novel it is formally and thematically conservative, but methodologically radical. Essentially this is a story about sex without emotional and intellectual compatibility. What are the components of a healthy relationship between two people in love? Are relationships based solely on physical sexuality healthy? What is the importance of the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual components of a relationship? How can the mental health of a relationship have a positive impact on the physical aspects of a relationship? What is important in relationships of attraction and love?

## AIR

### Introduction

Coelho writes about how when we breathe air, "...we know that the world is real and we belong to it." He argues air is creation and can only be felt or lived; it is the voice of God "whispering" or "roaring." In the end Coelho believes air "allows communication and action." In college you will learn so much and expand your mind. How will you communicate this new knowledge and perspective? How will you

respond to what has been communicated to you? How will you act on what you learn? Our motto is "Educate for Service." How will you be creative with what you learn?

## No Easy Walk to Freedom – Mandela

Nelson Mandela was an anti-apartheid activist, and the leader of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC). In 1962 he was arrested and convicted of sabotage and other charges, and sentenced to life in prison. Mandela served 27 years in prison, spending many of these years on Robben Island. Following his release from prison on 11 February 1990, Mandela led his party in the negotiations leading to multi-racial democracy in 1994. Mandela served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999, and was the first South African president to be elected in a fully representative democratic election. As president he frequently gave priority to reconciliation. His statement in this part of the book is about justice and raises the question: How much is enough? In college how will you learn to work for justice? How will you recognize ways to become involved on campus and in the local community where you can bring justice? As a member of the Elizabethtown College community how will you work to achieve reconciliation?

## One Hundred Years of Solitude

Gabriel José de la Concordia García Márquez is a Colombian novelist, short-story writer, screenwriter and journalist, known affectionately as Gabo throughout Latin America. He is considered one of the most significant authors of the 20th century. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982, and is the earliest winner of this prize to be still alive. He pursued a self-directed education resulting in his leaving law school for a career in journalism. From early on, he showed no inhibitions in his criticism of Colombian and foreign politics. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is the story of seven generations of the Buendía Family in the town of Macondo. The founding patriarch of Macondo, José Arcadio Buendía, and Úrsula, his wife (and first cousin), leave Riohacha, Colombia, to find a better life and a new home. One night of their emigration journey, whilst camping on a riverbank, José Arcadio Buendía dreams of "Macondo," a city of mirrors reflecting the world in and about it. Upon awakening, he decides to found Macondo at the river side; after days of wandering the jungle, José Arcadio Buendía's founding of Macondo is utopic. Buendía believes Macondo to be surrounded by water, and from this island, he invents the world according to his perceptions. Soon after its foundation, Macondo becomes a town frequented by unusual and extraordinary events involving the generations of the Buendía family, who are unable or unwilling to escape their periodic (mostly) self-inflicted misfortunes. Ultimately, a hurricane destroys Macondo, the city of mirrors; just the cyclical turmoil inherent to Macondo. At the end of the story, a Buendía man deciphers an encrypted cipher generations of Buendía family men had failed to decipher. The secret message informed the recipient of every fortune and misfortune lived by the Buendía Family generations. This is a story about contact with the larger world and the subsequent consequences of such contact. In college you will come in contact with a larger world. You will be exposed to new ideas and people. What will be the consequences? How do you expect to change as you come into contact with a larger world? Will you study abroad while at college? How will studying abroad challenge your world view? Are you prepared for change?

## Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist and travel writer. His best-known books include *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped*. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is the original title of a novella written by the Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson first published in 1886. The original pronunciation of Jekyll was "Jeekul" which was the pronunciation used in Stevenson's native Scotland. The work is commonly known today as *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* or simply *Dr Jekyll and M. Hyde*. It is about a London lawyer named Gabriel John Utterson who investigates strange occurrences between his old friend, Dr Henry Jekyll, and the misanthropic Edward Hyde. The work is commonly associated with the rare mental condition often spuriously called "split personality," wherein within the same person there are at least two distinct personalities. In this case, the two personalities in Dr Jekyll are apparently good and evil, with completely opposite levels of morality. The novella's impact has become a part of the English language, with the phrase "Jekyll and Hyde" coming to mean a person who is vastly different in moral character from one situation to the next. *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was an immediate success and is one of Stevenson's best-selling works. Stage adaptations began in Boston and London within a year of its publication and it has gone on to inspire scores of major film and stage performances. This is a story about how people have a capacity for good and evil. How do we determine the difference between good and evil? When do we choose to do good or evil? Do we always present ourselves consistently to the world around us? In college how will you handle learning about yourself and others when choosing between good and evil will reveal the complexity of the human mind and spirit?

## Nineteen Eighty—Four

Eric Arthur Blair better known by his pen name George Orwell was an English author and journalist. His work is marked by keen intelligence and wit, a profound awareness of social injustice, an intense opposition to totalitarianism, a passion for clarity in language, and a belief in democratic socialism. He is considered perhaps the twentieth century's best chronicler of English culture. Orwell wrote fiction, polemical journalism, literary criticism and poetry. He is best known for the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and the satirical novella *Animal Farm* (1945)—they have together sold more copies than any two books by any other twentieth-century author. His 1938 book *Homage to Catalonia*, an account of his experiences as a volunteer on the Republican side during the Spanish Civil War, together with numerous essays on politics, literature, language, and culture, are widely acclaimed. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is a 1948 dystopian fiction written by George Orwell about a society ruled by an oligarchical dictatorship. The Oceanian province of Airstrip One is a world of perpetual war, pervasive government surveillance, and incessant public mind control. Oceania is ruled by a political party simply called The Party. The individual is always subordinated to the state, and it is in part this philosophy which allows the Party to manipulate and control humanity. In the Ministry of Truth, protagonist Winston Smith is a civil servant responsible for perpetuating the Party's propaganda by revising historical records to render the Party omniscient and always correct, yet his meager existence disillusioned him to the point of seeking rebellion against Big Brother. As

literary political fiction, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is considered a classic novel of the social science fiction subgenre. Since its publication in 1949, many of its terms and concepts, such as *Big Brother*, *doublethink*, *thoughtcrime*, *Newspeak*, and *memory hole*, have become contemporary vernacular. In addition, the novel popularized the adjective *Orwellian*, which refers to lies, surveillance, and manipulation of the past in the service of a totalitarian agenda. Some would argue the individual is always subordinated to the state. Here again we are confronted with the challenge of critical, independent thinking, challenging authority, and witnessing against abuses of power. Which other stories in this book point to these themes? What connections can be made among these stories?

## The Library of Babel

Jorge Francisco Isidoro Luis Borges Acevedo was an Argentine writer, essayist, poet and translator born in Buenos Aires. In 1914 his family moved to Switzerland where he attended school and traveled to Spain. On his return to Argentina in 1921, Borges began publishing his poems and essays in surrealist literary journals. He also worked as a librarian and public lecturer. In 1955 he was appointed director of the National Public Library (*Biblioteca Nacional*) and professor of Literature at the University of Buenos Aires. In 1961 he came to international attention when he received the first International Publishers' Prize, the *Prix Formentor*. In 1971 he won the Jerusalem Prize. His work was translated and published widely in the United States and in Europe. Borges himself was fluent in several languages. He died in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1986. "The Library of Babel" (Spanish: *La biblioteca de Babel*) is a short story by Argentine author and librarian Jorge Luis Borges. His narrator describes how his universe consists of an enormous expanse of interlocking hexagonal rooms, each of which contains the bare necessities for human survival—and four walls of bookshelves. Though the order and content of the books is random and apparently completely meaningless, the inhabitants believe the books contain every possible ordering of just a few basic characters (letters, spaces and punctuation marks). Though the majority of the books in this universe are pure gibberish, the library also must contain, somewhere, every coherent book ever written, or might ever be written, and every possible permutation or slightly erroneous version of every one of those books. The narrator notes the library must contain all useful information, including predictions of the future, biographies of any person, and translations of every book in all languages. Conversely, for many of the texts some language could be devised making it readable with any of a vast number of different contents. Despite — indeed, because of — this glut of information, all books are totally useless to the reader, leaving the librarians in a state of despair. This leads some librarians to superstitions and cult-like behavior, such as the "Purifiers," who arbitrarily destroy books they deem nonsense as they move through the library seeking the "Crimson Hexagon" and its illustrated, magical books. Another is the belief since all books exist in the library, somewhere one of the books must be a perfect catalog of the library's contents; some even believe a messianic figure known as the "Man of the Book" has read it, and they travel through the library seeking him. The story is about a universal multilingual library and raises the question of censorship. What is the significance of Elizabethtown College being a liberal arts college? What is meant by a liberal education? What are the dangers of censorship? Who should decide what others can

learn? Why do some people support censorship? In college how will you learn new things which will be necessary and yet difficult to accept?

## FIRE

### Introduction

Coelho writes about fire as light. He maintains how love then is like the great and dangerous fire able to kill or to give life.

### Rig Veda

The Rig-Veda is a collection of over 1,000 hymns, which contain the mythology of the Hindu gods, and is considered to be one of the foundations of the Hindu religion. While the Rig is the oldest of the Vedas, there are three other Vedas. There is the Sama Veda, which is the "knowledge of chants" or a number of basic hymns recited at sacrifices. There is also the Yajur Veda or "knowledge of rites" which serve basically as a "how to make sacrifices" book. The final Veda is the Athara Veda; this Veda represents the knowledge given by Athara who was a sage. These Vedas were passed on orally for many generations. When they were written down, they were first written in Vedic, an early form of Sanskrit. Then around 300 B.C. the Vedas were written down in the form we have them today. In the selections included in this book we read about creation, light, sacrifice, and a bridge between God and humanity. In which other stories have we encountered these themes? How is fire a source of power? You have heard the expression "on fire" as it relates to enthusiasm. As you enter college what is your fire? What is the source of your enthusiasm? How will you express this "light" to others?

### The Desert Fathers

The Desert Fathers were hermits, ascetics, monks, and nuns (Desert Mothers) who lived mainly in the Scetes desert of Egypt beginning around the third century AD. The most well known was Anthony the Great, who moved to the desert in 270–271 and became known as both the father and founder of desert monasticism. By the time Anthony died in 356, thousands of monks and nuns had been drawn to living in the desert following Anthony's example — his biographer, Athanasius of Alexandria, wrote "the desert had become a city." The Desert Fathers had a major influence on the development of Early Christianity. The desert monastic communities growing out of the informal gathering of hermit monks became the model for Christian monasticism. The eastern monastic tradition at Mt. Athos and the western Rule of St. Benedict both were strongly influenced by the traditions beginning in the desert. All of the monastic revivals of the Middle Ages looked to the desert for inspiration and guidance. Much of Eastern Christian spirituality, including the Hesychast movement, had its roots in the practices of the Desert Fathers. Even religious renewals such as the German Evangelicals, the Pennsylvania Pietists, (on campus we have the Center for Anabaptist and Pietist Studies) and the Methodist Revival in England are seen by modern scholars as being influenced by the Desert Fathers. In the selection included in this book we read about charity, patience, prayer, self-control, discretion, lust, compunction, quiet, visions, obedience, non-judgment, and fortitude. What has been your spiritual journey

through life so far? Where will your spiritual journey lead you while in college? How will the values discussed in this part of the book sustain you in your years at Elizabethtown College?

### Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gītā (*Song of God*), also more simply known as Gita, is a 700-verse Hindu scripture part of the ancient Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*, but is frequently treated as a freestanding text, and in particular, as an Upanishad in its own right, one of the several books comprising the more general Vedic tradition. Apart from being a very comprehensive compendium of the whole Vedic tradition, it is also considered among the most important texts in the history of literature and philosophy. The teacher of the Bhagavad Gita is Lord Krishna, who is revered by Hindus as a manifestation of God (Parabrahman) Himself, and is referred to within as Bhagavan, the Divine One. The context of the Gita is a conversation between Lord Krishna and the Pandava prince Arjuna taking place on the battlefield before the start of the Kurukshetra War. Responding to Arjuna's confusion and moral dilemma about fighting his own cousins who command a tyranny imposed on a captured State, Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna his duties as a warrior and prince, and elaborates on different Yogic and Vedantic philosophies, with examples and analogies. This has led to the Gita often being described as a concise guide to Hindu theology and also as a practical, self-contained guide to life. During the discourse, Lord Krishna reveals His identity as the Supreme Being Himself (*Svayam Bhagavan*), blessing Arjuna with an awe-inspiring vision of His divine universal form. Krishna unveils his divine form to Arjuna. The direct audience to Lord Krishna's discourse of the Bhagavad Gita included Arjuna (addressee), Sanjaya using Divya Drishti (or divine vision) gifted by the sage Veda Vyasa to watch the war and narrate the events to Dhritarashtra, Lord Hanuman (perched atop Arjuna's chariot) and Barbarika, son of Ghatotkacha, who also witnessed the complete 18 days of action at Kurukshetra. It has been highly praised by not only prominent Indians such as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi but also Aldous Huxley, Albert Einstein, J. Robert Oppenheimer, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Carl Jung, and Herman Hesse. Once again we have the ideas of charity, patience, prayer, self-control, discretion, lust, compunction, quiet; visions, obedience, non-judgment, and fortitude are expressed. How does this demonstrate universality to all seekers of things spiritual? How does this challenge us to see connections among various interpretations? How does this make us more tolerant and accepting?

## The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of 972 texts from the Hebrew Bible and extra-biblical documents found between 1947 and 1956 at *Khirbet Qumran* on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea from which it derives its name, in the British Mandate for Palestine, in what is now named the West Bank. The texts are of great religious and historical significance, as they include the oldest known surviving copies of Biblical and extra-biblical documents and preserve evidence of great diversity in late Second Temple Judaism. They are written in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, mostly on parchment, but with some written on papyrus. These manuscripts generally date between 150 BCE and 70 CE. The scrolls are traditionally identified with the ancient Jewish sect called the Essenes, though some recent interpretations have challenged this association and argue the scrolls were penned by priests in Jerusalem, Zadokites, or other unknown Jewish groups. The Dead Sea Scrolls are traditionally divided into three groups: "Biblical" manuscripts (copies of texts from the Hebrew Bible), which comprise roughly 40% of the identified scrolls; "Apocryphal" or "Pseudepigraphical" manuscripts (known documents from the Second Temple Period like Enoch, Jubilees, Tobit, Sirach, non-canonical psalms, etc., not ultimately canonized in the Hebrew Bible), which comprise roughly 30% of the identified scrolls; and "Sectarian" manuscripts (previously unknown documents speaking to the rules and beliefs of a particular group or groups within greater Judaism) like the Community Rule, War Scroll, Peshar on Habakkuk and the Rule of the Blessing, which comprise roughly 30% of the identified scrolls. There is one prominent theme running through this scripture: mercy. How do we define mercy? How can we be merciful to others? When have you been the beneficiary of someone's mercy? When have you returned mercy to someone? In college how will you be merciful? How will you be a witness for mercy?

## Venus in Furs

*Venus in Furs* (German: *Venus im Pelz*) is a novella by Austrian author Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, the best known of his works. The novel was part of an epic series Sacher-Masoch envisioned called *Legacy of Cain*. *Venus in Furs* was part of *Love*, the first volume of the series. It was published in 1870. The framing story concerns a man who dreams of speaking to Venus about love while she wears furs. The unnamed narrator tells his dreams to a friend, Severin, who tells him how to break him of his fascination with cruel women by reading a manuscript, *Memoirs of A Suprasensual Man*. This manuscript tells of a man, *Severin von Kusiemski*, so infatuated with a woman, *Wanda von Dunajew*, he requests to be treated as her slave, and encourages her to treat him in progressively more degrading ways. At first Wanda does not understand or relate to the request, but after humoring Severin a bit she finds the advantages of the method to be interesting and enthusiastically embraces the idea; though at the same time, she disdains Severin for allowing her to do so. Severin describes his feelings during these experiences as *suprasensuality*. Severin and Wanda travel to Florence. Along the way, Severin takes the generic Russian servant's name of "Gregor" and the role of Wanda's servant. In Florence, Wanda treats him brutally as a servant, and recruits a trio of African women to dominate him. The relationship arrives at a crisis point when Wanda herself meets a man to whom she would like to

submit, a Byronic hero known as Alexis Papadopolis. At the end of the book, Severin, humiliated by Wanda's new lover, loses the desire to submit. He says of Wanda: "That woman, as nature has created her, and man at present is educating her, is man's enemy. She can only be his slave or his despot, but never his companion. This she can become only when she has the same rights as he and is his equal in education and work." Venus is the Roman God of love, beauty, and fertility. This is a story of self respect in love and honoring oneself and others. What are some similarities with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*? When in a romantic relationship how can one maintain their self respect? Why do some people allow "love" to cause pain in a relationship? How can you be mindful to keep respect as paramount in any loving relationship?

## The Prophet

*The Prophet* is a book of 26 poetic essays written in English by the Lebanese artist, philosopher and writer Kahlil Gibran. The prophet, Al-Mustafa who has lived in the foreign city of Orphalese for 12 years is about to board a ship which will carry him home. He is stopped by a group of people, with whom he discusses many issues of life and the human condition. The book is divided into chapters dealing with love, marriage, children, giving, eating and drinking, work, joy and sorrow, houses, clothes, buying and selling, crime and punishment, laws, freedom, reason and passion, pain, self-knowledge, teaching, friendship, talking, time, good and evil, prayer, pleasure, beauty, religion, and death. This is a story about knowledge. This is about knowledge of self, of loving thy self, and loving others. One cannot love others if they do not love themselves. We have heard this before, in the words of Jesus Christ recorded in the Gospel according to Saint Mark 12:31, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." How will you demonstrate this principle as you live out your life at Elizabethtown College? How will you learn to love yourself and to in turn love others?

## Spiritual Verses

The *Masnavi*, is an extensive poem written in Persian by Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi, the celebrated Persian Sufi saint and poet. It is one of the best known and most influential works of both Sufism and Persian literature. The *Masnavi* is a series of six books of poetry that amount to about 25,000 verses or 50,000 lines. It is a spiritual writing teaching Sufis how to reach their goal of being in true love with God. The title *Masnavi-I Ma'navi* means "Rhyming Couplets of Profound Spiritual Meaning." Rumi himself referred to the *Masnavi* as "the roots of the roots of the roots of the (Islamic) Religion."-The *Masnavi* is a poetic collection of rambling anecdotes and stories derived from the Quran, hadith sources, and everyday tales. Stories are told to illustrate a point and each moral is discussed in detail. It incorporates a variety of Islamic wisdom but primarily focuses on emphasizing inward personal Sufi interpretation. This work by Rumi is referred to as a "sober" Sufi text. It reasonably presents the various dimensions of Sufi spiritual life and advises disciples on their spiritual paths. "More generally, it is aimed at anyone who has time to sit down and ponder the meaning of life and existence." This writing is about how to reach the goal of being in union with God. In your busyness in college life will you make time to "sit down and ponder the meaning of life and existence?" How will you take time to contemplate the motivations for your goals? How will you strike a balance in your life and be at peace with yourself and others?

## Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet, novelist, musician, painter and playwright who reshaped Bengali literature and music. As author of *Gitanjali* with its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse," he was the first non-European and the only Indian to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. His poetry in translation was viewed as spiritual, and this together with his mesmerizing persona gave him a prophet-like aura in the west. His "elegant prose and magical poetry" still remain largely unknown outside the confines of Bengal. A Piral Brahmin from Kolkata, Tagore had been writing poetry since he was eight years old. At age 16, he published his first substantial poetry under the pseudonym *Bhanushingho* ("Sun Lion") and wrote his first short stories and dramas in 1877. Tagore achieved further note when he denounced the British Raj and supported Indian independence. His efforts endure in his vast canon and in the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University. Tagore modernized Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to political and personal topics. *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*), *Gora* (*Fair-Faced*), and *Ghare-Baire* (*The Home and the World*) are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and contemplation. Tagore was perhaps the only litterateur who penned anthems of two countries – *Jana Gana Mana*, the Indian national anthem and *Amar Shonar Bangla*, the Bangladeshi national anthem. Tagore's political thought was complex. He opposed imperialism and supported Indian nationalists. He emphasized self-help and intellectual uplift of the masses as an alternative, stating how British imperialism was a "political symptom of our social disease", urging Indians to accept "there can be no question of blind revolution, but of steady and purposeful education." Despite his tumultuous relations with Gandhi, Tagore was key in resolving a Gandhi-Ambedkar dispute involving separate electorates for untouchables, ending Gandhi's fast "unto death". Tagore lampooned rote schooling: in "The Parrot's Training", a bird is caged and force-fed pages torn from books until it dies. These views led Tagore, while visiting Santa Barbara on 11 October 1917, to conceive of a new type of university, desiring to "make Santiniketan the connecting thread between India and the world [and] a world center for the study of humanity somewhere beyond the limits of nation and geography." The school, which he named Visva-Bharati had its foundation stone laid on 24 December 1918; it was later inaugurated on 24 December 1921. Here, Tagore implemented a *brahmacharya* pedagogical structure employing *gurus* to provide individualized guidance for pupils. In this selection of his work Tagore challenges us to think of God living within and the impact this has on our thoughts and behavior. Based on Tagore's model, how will you act on your convictions? How will you learn in college? What will you learn in college? How will you act on what you learn?

## Frankenstein

Mary Shelley was a British novelist, short story writer, dramatist, essayist, biographer, and travel writer. She also edited and promoted the works of her husband, the Romantic poet and philosopher Percy Bysshe Shelley. Her father was the political philosopher William Godwin, and her mother was the philosopher and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* is a novel about a failed artificial life experiment producing a monster, written by Mary Shelley. Shelley started writing the story when she was eighteen, and the novel was published when she was twenty-one. The first edition was published anonymously in London in 1818. Shelley's name appears on the second edition, published in France in 1823. Shelley had travelled the region in which the story takes place, and the topics of galvanism and other similar occult ideas were themes of conversation among her companions. The actual storyline was taken from a dream. Shelley was talking with three writer-colleagues, and they decided they would have a competition to see who could write the best horror story. After thinking for weeks about what her possible storyline could be, Shelley dreamt about a scientist who created life and was horrified by what he had made. Then *Frankenstein* was written. *Frankenstein* is infused with some elements of the Gothic novel and the Romantic Movement and is also considered to be one of the earliest examples of science fiction. Brian Aldiss has argued this should be considered the first true science fiction story, because unlike in previous stories with fantastical elements resembling those of later science fiction, the central character "makes a deliberate decision" and "turns to modern experiments in the laboratory" to achieve fantastic results. The story is partially based on Giovanni Aldini's electrical experiments on dead and (sometimes) living animals and was also a warning against the expansion of modern man in the Industrial Revolution, alluded to in its subtitle, *The Modern Prometheus*. It has had a considerable influence across literature and popular culture and spawned a complete genre of horror stories and films. The name "Frankenstein" – actually the novel's human protagonist – is often incorrectly used to refer to the monster itself. In the novel, the monster is identified via words such as "monster," "fiend," "wretch," "vile insect," "daemon," and "it;" Shelley herself called it "Adam." This is the modern Prometheus who stole fire from Zeus and gave it to mortals warning against the expansion of modern man in the Industrial Revolution. Fire is light and light is knowledge and knowledge is dangerous like fire. In the years ahead at Elizabethtown College you will gain knowledge. What will you do with this knowledge? How will you create with this knowledge? How will you live up to the motto; "Educate for Service?" How will you serve with your education, your knowledge?