

# All Ye Need To Know

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Fundamentally, as Aristotle attests in the *Categories*, the nature of man compels him to know. This is why we make distinctions. We make divisions. We seek to clarify, to classify. Yet what is it that we are moving toward? What is it that we are refining? It is quite clear that our understanding has a limit. Though humans are famed for our ability to break barriers in all fields of learning, some matters are chalked up as divine or unseen. That is how it has always been. We seem to be after something, all of us, something ever so elusive and meant to be all encompassing. I dare to say that Truth does exist; it is the same Truth that we desire to know. It is the same Truth that our knowledge attempts to trace but will always fail. For knowledge is subject to change over time, while Truth I refer to remains fixed as the stars. It is in this way in fact, that we can view the first man and his initial gaze at the night sky as an early encounter with Truth. Prior to any investigation regarding the movements of the cosmos, before language even, undoubtedly there was a majestic moment, where the first man stood near the shore, looking up in awe. It was also then, I say, where the first man boldly beheld Beauty.

I would like us to explore these terms, Truth and Beauty, in an effort to gain some insight. Perhaps if we are lucky, we may better develop a definition of the terms, though that has proven to be a difficult task, tackled by almost every thinker turned talker or writer. What I find especially curious is the assumption that real Truth and Beauty of the universe can be attained after engaging in a continual process of making distinctions and divisions. It may be that this human method, which serves our fundamental goal, is in fact detrimental to us.

To begin we can bring to attention a common contrast. A quick way to separate Truth and Beauty would be to call one objective and the other subjective; however, I

suspect this would be lazy and lead us to lamentable results. That is because the Truth I refer to must be comprised of more than just science. Beauty, on the other hand, if it were entirely subjective, would cease to have meaning.

I say that science yields us objective data, in that it utilizes facts like little bricks to build upon itself. Knowledge gained from science requires trial and error, and it uses utilizes the Scientific method, which by definition makes its findings fool proof. If something comes to light as false, over time, if an old model needs sprucing, leave it to science and its alterable knowledge-which has the ability to fix itself. Consider all the great innovations that have led us here. We can see that almost all initial systems or schools of thought have required or undergone some sort of tweaking or modification, along with the passage of time. Recall the first man who gazed at the night sky. It was offered, that Truth and Beauty was present. However, following his impulse, which was to simply look, investigation flourished. Somewhere along the way came Copernicus with a hunch. Years of dutiful observation and a bunch of work later, Galileo gets to use a telescope. Yet why is it, we may ask, that man cares whether its the sun or the earth that lies at the center of the solar system? It is obvious to say, well because man just wants to know. So I also say, that it is because man believes such knowledge can gravitate us closer to the ever elusive, all encompassing, eternal Truth.

It is hard to dispute the existence of Beauty, when Newton found such an elegant way to account for earthly phenomena, and just like that, there is a breakthrough for all of us. It appears that our knowledge of science, which has its way of labeling the world, aims to travel directionally towards Truth. That the results are harmonious also seems necessary. In other words, for our knowledge to come about, the knowledge must be

fitting. It may not be a coincidence, that this is also a requisite for Beauty: parts that work together perfectly. The revelation of gravity revealed to us that all bodies are bound, and they can be connected by proportion. This is to this, as that is to that. How magnificent! However, such a way of thinking is not alien to us. This means that all of what we call knowledge is based on ratios that correspond to observances. It is at that point corrupt, as we have come to know, to simply suggest that a correlation can grant or imply to us the causation. With our entire faculty, as rational creatures, it may not be that we know the real reasons things work the way they do. Meanwhile we may only be able to describe “how” in relation to another thing. It is then we must ask ourselves if the scientific explanations that we have produced are sufficient in regards to Truth. Indeed we want to know, but are we ever going to know fully?

In the search of Beauty, there is no test, which is why it cannot be seen as objective. There is much testament however, to a very high standard that exists. Perhaps this is the standard that all of us, as desirers to know, seek to reach. For Beauty can conjure certain responses, which include the reaction of mankind following the initial sky gaze, that no matter the eye of the beholder, strike the heart. Even if Beauty is an emotion, or a feeling, hence its ties to subjectivity; there is indication of absolute Beauty in the idea of absolute Truth- in that we as individuals, with our personal frames of reference, are intent on valuing things that conform to what is also our shared experience. Scientific method will not help us to humbly attain Truth or Beauty. That is why I do not believe that we can be satisfied with the knowledge of science.

Certainly, Nikolai Lobachevsky was not satisfied by Euclid’s pure geometry in the *Elements*, which was a brilliantly ordered compilation, and while the Russian’s own

work could be considered jarring, or perhaps less aesthetically pleasing to some, it remains in its own way just as “true”. It is in its own way as “beautiful” because its design functions. The geometry of Lobachevsky is an example of a paradigm shift, which further shows that all of our collective knowledge is designed to build toward the absolute Truth. Otherwise, who could be bothered to attempt to improve the masterwork of Euclid, seemingly complete, “true” and “beautiful”?

Albert Einstein had issues himself in regards to the limit of our knowledge during his time, so he is another to be noted. Einstein was definitely not satisfied by the completeness of Newton’s explanation of gravity, or Euclid’s of geometry for that matter. When he presented the *Special Theory of Relativity*, Einstein hinted at the sort of Truth I am concerned with, insofar as he conceded Truth lays separate from the axiomatic “truth” behind geometric propositions or logical systems. These “truths” ostensibly allow us to claim knowledge, though as Einstein warned, the “truth’s” and subsequent knowledge are indeed limited. He points out that naturally, we impose the laws or “truths” of geometry onto our experience. (Einstein, *Relativity*)

By imposing these laws onto our experience we take the theoretical and apply it to the physical world. Once again, this is not foreign; it is how we have come to know or determine anything. For instance, have you ever considered that it is in the same way, using the same power, we are able craft rulers to measure, and are notorious for creating rules to govern? These sorts of activities further the validity of “truths” that are in actuality limited. They also give reason to our ideas of morality or law, wherein absolute Truth is not present.

Truth and Beauty must not be at war with one another. Nor do the two change themselves because of latitude and longitude, which is just placement on a map. For rules and laws differ territory to territory, never mind from country to country, all across the world. If we take into account, for example, the fact that across the pond a twenty-year-old lad in England drinking what is called a pint has twenty measured ounces of beer in a glass and realize, that if the same chap were trying to order in the United States he'd not only be denied, for the barman would cite the law, but if he were able to enjoy the same liberty, that it would only consist of sixteen ounces, then, well I believe you can see my point; the idea of absolute Truth- in respect to what has been instilled upon us in our daily lives- is gravely muddled. Or rather it is non-existent. That would mean Beauty too, which must not be disjointed. Either way, in turn, the idea of Truth and Beauty that I covet, one that fully integrates, one that I argue we all yearn for, physicist, lawman, and simple man alike, is complicated.

Now Einstein also believed that the physicist was a special case, and although he helps us point out the limits of other sciences, Einstein claimed that the physicist was actually capable of dealing with Truth. There was an allusion to the issue of this assertion earlier. The difficulty is, that if we all want to know, an extension of that arising from natural curiosity is everyone wants to know why. If we can know a cause as how, but not be able to know it as why, is this sufficient Truth? It is sufficient for science, but science only produces facts subject to change. It may be inevitable that we ask ourselves: Why do these things happen? Or; Why are things this way

Well, it is because the answer to all of our questions of why is meant to align with the ever elusive, all-encompassing Truth. In addition, the answer to all of our questions of

“why” is commonly considered to coincide with an illumination, perhaps that of ultimate Beauty. It follows then, with regard to the claim that we desire to know, and its natural extension demonstrated by our insatiable questions of “why” anything is, that we all desire to know Truth and Beauty. That we are capable of it, that is, in our lifetimes, is yet to be determined. What remains indisputable is that our conceptions of Truth and Beauty are in actuality only bits of things that we have deemed as “true” or “beautiful.” Einstein is one who urges us that our experience is incomplete, evidence that our “truths” derived from theoretical fields are not yet the totality in regards to the universes real answers. At this point, we still don’t know all that we need to know.

What we do know is, that we don’t know why all the things that we say are, really are. All this time we have spun our wheels, and they’ll continue to spin, since the creation of the first wheel, as each and every one of us lives and then kicks the tire. Even in the case of physics, where there is no answer as to why. Instead the question is cast aside. As Richard Feynman writes in his work *The Strange Theory of Light and matter*, which details the groundbreaking theory of quantum electrodynamics, “So again, we are not going to deal with why Nature behaves in the peculiar way she does; there are no good theories to explain that.” (Feynman, *Strange Theory*) Here we see a physicist reiterate that the question as to why is not going to be answered in science. It may in fact be detracting, or even frivolous for the practice. There is no way to ascribe for Truth with science; we can only get closer and closer to Truth, and for all our knowledge, what is unknown still exists. We have logical processes that can tell us, A leads to B, and we can rationalize as to how, but what causes A may always be a mystery. In this way, Feynman describes the biologist turning to chemistry for the reasons why things react the way they

do, yet he highlights how chemistry in turn refers to physics and buzzing particles for which we cannot attribute a why, only attempt at how.

This is not to be entirely cynical however, as if the geometer, lawman, and physicist have no function. We have no solution for Truth and Beauty yet, which is all that we need, and for that we are innocent. After all, it was Einstein who declared, "The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives." (Einstein, 1879-1955)

It would be wise to say that everything is founded on incomplete experience. As if we can never fully grow from children with inkling into a realm of adulthood where suddenly we possess absolute answers. It is not possible that any man has ever grown to achieve or to learn, during his lifetime, absolute knowledge or even all the knowledge there is. Anyone to have claimed to do so, whether or not to deceive was his or her intention, is a liar. What is plain is that the earth has been revolving, and as long as we have been here to notice we have always evolved with it. It is quite clear that advancements with tools and technology will continue as the planets rotate. The result is, unless everything on the earth is burned and we must start over, the knowledge we call ours will forever compound and expand. Our knowledge is aimed at the Truth, yet while we may learn something new tomorrow, and perhaps something else the next day, this process will never end, if the basis is correct in regards to our willingness to know. However, since Beauty will be ever present, as it were when the first man saw the night sky, and Truth is eternal in that it transcends time, we must ask how far can we really be from attaining the two, though they are decidedly elusive. It seems that we should be able



to take in Truth and Beauty at once, as did the first man. Yet we have not been satisfied. Investigation has not ceased to commence.

Socrates, the wise man and philosopher, was famous for his careful inquiry but also for the proclamation that he did not know. For him, a hastily made division was met with skepticism. His approach made it apparent that he was on to something, in contrast to those who were content with their reasoning. Making a division, in hopes of clarity, and remaining steadfast, oft proves to be a human error. It can be difficult for one to realize what is wrong, but also when the time comes where knowledge can fix itself, the mended issue may still be founded on a compromised premise.

For example, consider what it means to have a democratic nation, and have it written into the original constitution that all men are created equal. Then over 100 years later upon the many realizations that Africans, Native Americans, Women and the poor are also people, and that slavery is bad, all that is required is a few amendments to the document. I am one to suggest that the constitution needed to be rewritten entirely upon the realizations of such grave errors, for clearly Truth was never present, and although “all men are created equal” is something that sounds nice, neither was Beauty. Now I can see how the suggestion sounds radical, and I do not offer a solution as to how to move forward, other than for us to consider that the constant making of distinctions and divisions is stifling us from attaining Truth and Beauty. It may be that we need to operate in a way with less ingrained distinction, and instead, focus on connection. What connects us all is that we are human, and that we want to know.

Socrates was perhaps more aware, and better equipped to tackle philosophical problems, by instilling this sort of mantra; I know that I do not know Truth. For as we can

see, as perspectives multiply and time goes on, our knowledge dilates, and with the more nuances that arise, a complete understanding seems incapable of simple explanation. That is, unless we have made it be all too complicated. Constant division without integration is worthless. This is why Einstein offered us  $E=MC^2$ , and Darwin introduced natural selection, for each of us that attempts to theorize and divide must bring the pieces back together in order to say something. However, since we have this far been fruitless in describing or capturing Truth or Beauty, I fear it is because we have shattered our chances. We live in a fragmented reality, bits of “truth” and “beauty” because what was there for the first man has all but disintegrated for us. In attempting to pick up the pieces, we are likened to the king’s horses and his men, unable to put Humpty Dumpty, Truth and Beauty, back together again.

It is not in my power to say entirely what life would be like without the continual process of making divisions and haste distinctions, however, I suspect it would be a life that contained Truth and Beauty, as it were for the first man. What life is now, remains full of mystery. I still cannot describe Truth or Beauty in full as of yet. I believe it is because of the myriad of distinctions placed upon us in daily life, many of which are subject to context or flat out contradictory. Mystery is abounding because humans can never cease to ask why- as if the answer is exactly what is needed to know. However, it has been suggested that all we need to know is real Truth and Beauty. The way we can get there is with less division. So let us try and solve the mystery. It seems as if asking why is instinctual, a byproduct of being alive.

I present another quote from Einstein, who also said:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom the emotion is a stranger, who can no longer

pause to wonder and stand wrapped in awe, is as good as dead—his eyes are closed. The insight into the mystery of life, coupled though it be with fear, has also given rise to religion. To know what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty, which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling is at the center of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong to the ranks of devoutly religious men. (Einstein, *On Mystery, The Rotary May 1944*)

With our current problem, that being how to integrate Truth and Beauty back into our experience, it is important to remember that every one of us desires to know. Now even Einstein admits to being devout in that way. The suggestion, from what has been discussed so far, is that our science, fields of knowledge and subsequent “truths” can only take us to a certain point. Beyond that, the impenetrable and mysterious will always remain, with questions of why, among other things, separating us from Truth itself. The sense presented in regards to Beauty is that Beauty is what beckons us. Just as the night sky, which was always there, attracted aspiring astronomers after appearing before the first man; Beauty, untouched, coaxes one to wonder. Einstein suggests that without this response we are good as dead. Traditionally for us to come to know, however, in the way that we do, our wonder must be converted into action. Hence, we have our deplorable practices of divisions, decisions and denominations.

Religion, then, as a human activity, is “beautiful” in that it deals with answers to the unknown. Religion serves to relay bits of “truth” to its followers in an effort which is similar to that of science, and their goal can be seen as compatible—which is not usually said about religion and science. Both are aimed at attaining elusive Truth in a fascinating universe. Both aspire to unveil the Beautiful bare.

That said, just as science has proved to be limited despite harboring hundreds of years of objective data, there is a flaw to religion as well. Though I stated that each

religion offers bits of “truth”, in the same way that science does, each religion claims to know absolute Truth, which presents a problem. While religion offers history, various accounts and stories, its credibility hinges on the faith of its followers. It can be said that all written history is questionable; its method of recalling events is murkier in comparison to science for example. Now my intention is not to attack religion, nor history. In the same way, though it may fail to attain Truth and Beauty, science is not deemed worthless. The point is, who is the one to say that believers of one major religion are nearer to Truth in respect to the others? Who is to say that the word was this? Or, that the word was that? I for one cannot be naïve enough to choose. If we take Christianity, we can see there are multiple factions within the religion itself. There are numerous interpretations of the same Bible. This goes on as well for believers of Islam, who may exist with differing views of the Qur’an. Not to mention the fact that there are mirroring stories, similar messages with different characters perhaps, in numerous religions from all parts of the world. All in all, this points to unity between doctrines, despite the fact that most religions are separate and often irreconcilable to one another. What every religion has in common is an idea of the divine. However, since religions divide, no single religion can wholly be considered Truth-which has been stated as all encompassing.

So, in summation to what has been said, we can see that the shortcomings of science and religion are well documented. They each fail to capture Truth, though they aspire to. Meanwhile it appears unavoidable, that mystery brought upon us by our desire to know, clouds over our view of Truth and Beauty during our lifetime. There is no easy answer that one can give without being subject to debate. However, debate does not center on Truth, nor does it get at it, it centers on power. It is of considerable importance

to note, that upon the realization of the respective shortcomings of each, religion and science can now be thought of as the same pursuit. This is in contrast to the ill tendency that man has developed, to label everything, and in this case, to label religion and science as opposite one another. I feel as if we have now eradicated another distinction, the first being that Truth is objective and Beauty subjective, in a manner that will actually promote contact with real Truth and Beauty. It has been proposed that if we have to destroy more divisions, and focus on integration, perhaps we must, in order to get closer real Truth and Beauty- not just in theory.

Granted, practitioners for each of the activities mentioned thus far have differing methods, but the goal remains the same. After all, every one of us that engages in any sort of livelihood has the compulsion to know, grasp Truth and apprehend Beauty. With what has been said, it appears inevitable those who pursue Truth with constant division in the manner described will always be doomed to a continuous chase. Their work is endless, for it will never be able to capture the all encompassing and in relation will always be incomplete. Also, those who hound for Beauty, perhaps undergoing a different route, while vowing to be faithful, may have a feeling in the heart, but never science to validate their claims. Thus they are liable to be cast into a realm of subjectivity and obscurity. The fine line is where I find myself now. So I'll turn our attention to a poem by Emily Dickinson:

I died for beauty, but was scarce  
Adjusted in the tomb,  
When one who died for truth was lain  
In an adjoining room.

He questioned softly why I failed?  
"For beauty," I replied.

"And I for truth - the two are one;  
We brethren are," he said.

And so, as kinsmen met a-night,  
We talked between the rooms,  
Until the moss had reached our lips,  
And covered up our names.

Dickinson's poem centralizes the ideas of Truth and Beauty around the theme of death. Death, it should be stated, familiarizes itself with all of us at some point. Here on earth, we can only hope for Truth or Beauty to do the same. Perhaps following death these things are revealed. In the poem, Dickinson portrays a scenario where two main characters have realized their efforts to achieve the absolute have fallen short. It may be that the failure referenced in the opening line of the second stanza pertains to dying, that the characters have not attained the expected result of immortality despite their sacrifices. However, I see the failure as each of characters lack of fulfillment after committing a lifetime to a certain cause. In the case of Dickinson's first person character it is Beauty, yet the man who died for Truth ends up sharing an identical sentiment. Surely the characters did not actually expect to live forever physically, but this does not dissolve the feeling of disappointment. I am struck, in light of all that has been discussed, in tandem with Dickinson's poem, by another distinction that must be abolished. In the poem, the reader is lead to believe that these characters operated under a false premise. It may be that during life, to dedicate oneself to either Truth or Beauty, as if they were diverging paths, is what is dangerous. Perhaps this is a dichotomy that is a bad one. It is apparent that what each of the characters gather after their respective failures is that Truth and Beauty are one. We are left to contemplate if the pursuit of Truth, and our efforts to define it, is a worthless endeavor without the search for Beauty, and it's understanding,

for perhaps the notion of one is incomplete without the notion of the other, and vice versa.

We can already point to the deficiency of the scientist and the religious man in that they both aim at universal Truth and Beauty but ultimately fall short. Now it appears that anyone of us who pursues either Truth or Beauty as separate entities is also bound to fail. It may be that the arrogant axiomatic “truths” of science do not right away acknowledge the fact that the “truths” are limited. Actually, it seems that this precisely the manner by which axioms are designed, purposefully presented in order to establish “truth” when in reality Truth cannot be accounted for. The same goes for religion, nearly each offers us perfect maker, from which the rest of what said is meant to form- but cannot be rationalized. Even if it could be, factual analysis would lead us to science, which begins a terrible cycle. We have Beauty, which on one hand cannot be objectified by science, on the other hand far more than some subjective quality; Beauty must contain harmony and order. We have Truth, ever elusive, all encompassing, and eternal. So who is it then that is most equipped to tackle the topic, Truth and Beauty, as one entity, without the inclination to divide, and without any false presumption? Must it not be the poet? It is the poet that works under no illusion.

Since it was proposed that our problem with attaining Truth and Beauty here on earth is complicated by our habits of division, it seems appropriate that the two are one was introduced to us by a character in an Emily Dickinson poem. That is credit to the poet. The poet, it seems right away, has the ability to teach without science or scripture.

Remember, the first evidence of Truth and Beauty being one in the same came way back when the first man gaped at the starry sky. This was before any dichotomy

existed between the two. If there is Truth and Beauty to the fixed stars prior to any sort of measurement, we must ask if measuring the cosmos is really the way to attain what is already there, though elusive. Of course we want to know deeper, we want to learn and sharpen our wit, and we are inspired by the awe of Truth and Beauty, which is what rouses us to engage in human activities- such as scientific experimentation, historical documentation and religious practice. These are only some of the ways in which we have passed the time, these activities, despite the fact that it is not difficult to see, they all fall short of actually attaining the entirety of Truth and wholeness of Beauty. Whereas the medium I now suggest has no face, no blemish that it tries to hide. It is poetry that is the secret: a channel for us humans to exist with real Truth and Beauty, as if our desire to know these things and attempts through action are not in vain and instead can be reached, during our lifetime, by an act of pure will.

These are the words of Sir Philip Sydney, who wrote *The Defense of Poesy*:

There is no art delivered unto mankind that hath not the works of nature for his principal object, without which they could not consist, and on which they so depend as they become actors and players, as it were, of what nature will have set forth. So doth the astronomer look upon the stars, and, by that he seeth, set down what order nature hath taken therein. So do the geometrician and arithmetician in their divers sorts of quantities. So doth the musician in times tell you which by nature agree, which not. The natural philosopher thereon hath his name, and the moral philosopher standeth upon the natural virtues, vices, and passions of man; and "follow nature," saith he, "therein, and thou shalt not err." The lawyer saith what men have determined, the historian what men have done. The grammarian speaketh only of the rules of speech, and the rhetorician and logician, considering what in nature will soonest prove and persuade, thereon give artificial rules, which still are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The physician weigheth the nature of man's body, and the nature of things helpful or hurtful unto it. And the metaphysic, though it be in the second and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernatural, yet doth he, indeed, build upon the depth of nature.

Only the poet, disdainful to be tied to any such subjection, lifted up with the vigor of his own invention, doth grow, in effect, into another nature...



With mind to all the other practices of man, Sir Phillip Sydney argues that it is only through poetry, one can loosen his or herself from the oppressive nature of our experience, and can instead be capable of inventing a new nature, free from any limiting distinction and division. I find this very intriguing. Let us examine how this new nature, as Sidney calls it, is a realm where we can be with Truth and Beauty, one in the same.

To define poetry is not the easiest task. In that way though, it is a delightful art form, the solution to our problem, because what we have been looking for is a practice without rigid methods leading us to hurried conclusions. The nature of poetry evades such constraints, which is remarkable. Classically, poetry has been likened to imitation. Aristotle is one who contended that the poet was a discoverer of hidden resemblances. This fuels our current case, that the poet can reveal real Truth and Beauty. It can be seen as an act of making, as Sidney described, one that uses language in conjunction with rhythm, meter, and melody, in order for the poet to express something. In that way, no matter how many devices are employed or parts a poem has, each poem is fully integrated. If what is expressed is an accurate imitation of nature, but free of its constraints, then we may have exactly what it is we are looking for: Truth and Beauty free from division.

As another example of a human practice, poetry has been around longer than literature. Originally an oral tradition, the recitation of poetry was an important aspect of many early cultures. Its purpose can vary, with its numerous contexts and genres, which include tragic and comic- yet one of the constants of poetry is that it evokes emotion, and spurs the mind. As was highlighted earlier, we have the ability to learn from poetry in a decidedly different manner than that of philosophy, science and arithmetic. Curiously

enough, poetry predates all of those practices. That may be why in *The Republic*, Plato referred to Homer as the first teacher of Greece (*Rep. 606e2-3*).

Sir Philip Sidney was a passionate believer in the power of poetry to teach. He was also an advocate, as I feel myself becoming, for the importance of poetry. Now it was his claim that the poet is more effective than any other at leading ones soul to virtue and goodness. My claim is that poetry is a medium for us as mortals to actually deal with Truth and Beauty- with it we can be satisfied.

We have gone over accounts detailing the inescapable failures that plague other practices. Sidney's retort to those folk, who denounced poetry while patting themselves on the back, was that although poetry is imitation indeed, "a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example." (Sidney, *Def. of Poesy*) I find this to be most agreeable, especially with regard to all that has been explored. What is really provided by what we call our knowledge, are simply these bits of "truth". The poet can just as easily provide these bits. What our knowledge lacks, however, identified as actual Truth, is not found missing from the work of poetry.

That is because, as it was said by perhaps the most famous poet of all, William Shakespeare, "truest poetry is most feigning." (Shakespeare, *As You Like it*) This alludes to the uncanny ability of the poet to enter a realm whereby construction of an imitative universe enables contact with real Truth and Beauty. To exist with contradiction, such as, the idea of what is most true being the most feigned is an ability of the poet and the poet only.

The English romantic poet, John Keats, had contemplated himself the problem that I introduced earlier, that the continual making of divisions and distinctions, the

seemingly endless amounts of parts, that without integration, leave nothing but confusion. To lift oneself up, as the poet does, into a mode of thinking where certain institutionalized divisions do not exist, Keats coined the phrase “negative capability”. He wrote in a letter to his brother: “several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously - I mean Negative Capability, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.” (*Selections from Keats Letters, 1817*)

For we can see thoroughly, from after the moment where the first man graciously gazed at the night sky, before the first division, that all of our irritable reaching has never again allowed us Truth and Beauty. Whether it is through science and calculation, or religion and faith, either contradiction arises or uncertainty underlies every single argument. That is in every case, whether or not the practitioners are aware. Mystery does not dissipate; most do well to acknowledge this. Yet for the poet it is ingrained. As is Truth and Beauty, which lives in the work of a good poem. The poet is capable of transcending all of the problems highlighted by an act of pure will, a making of an imitative universe, the discovering of hidden resemblances. In other words, with the practice of poetry, mortals attain real Truth and Beauty. The poet is enabled Beauty by the use of supreme harmony, order and images. The poet reaches Truth by contradiction, symbolism and metaphor- not fragmented but fully integrated to achieve the ever elusive and all encompassing.

Poetry, as an activity, is by far the most superior practice for those of us who want to know. Meaning all of us, charged with the desire to know Truth and Beauty, can be

satisfied by poetry and need not deal with any other faulty methods. That is why, for every human that wants to ask, poetry is that which can provide for us, all of our poor ponderous souls, with the answer: all we need to know.

So I turn to poetry, to teach us, to gain final insight on Truth and Beauty, and to be fulfilled. From Keats, I leave you with Ode on a Grecian Urn.

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
 A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
 What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape     5  
 Of deities or mortals, or of both,  
   In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?  
 What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?  
 What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?  
   What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?     10

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
 Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;  
 Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,  
   Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:  
 Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave     15  
 Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;  
   Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,  
 Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;  
   She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
   For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!     20

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed  
 Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;  
 And, happy melodist, unwearièd,  
   For ever piping songs for ever new;  
 More happy love! more happy, happy love!     25  
   For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,  
   For ever panting, and for ever young;  
 All breathing human passion far above,  
   That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,  
   A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.     30

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?  
 To what green altar, O mysterious priest,  
 Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,  
   And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?  
 What little town by river or sea-shore,     35  
   Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
   Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?  
 And, little town, thy streets for evermore  
   Will silent be; and not a soul, to tell  
   Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.     40

O Attic shape! fair attitude! with brede  
 Of marble men and maidens overwrought,  
 With forest branches and the trodden weed;  
 Thou, silent form! dost tease us out of thought  
 As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!     45  
   When old age shall this generation waste,  
   Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe  
 Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,  
 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all  
   Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know

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