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Purposeful Movement

Constantly in motion, I stride the increasing sinusoidal graph of my being. I rise, and I approach the excellence I so yearn for, but just as often, I fall, and I approach what seems to be Hell's doom. Yet up again I go the very moment I feel the last tug of my demise. I no longer fear such oscillation, but rather a sensation much, much more erosive: stagnation.

I run and I run, and sometimes it makes me high off of life, and sometimes it breaks me down to my core, but somehow I cannot stop running and running. I run for the euphoria of knowing and feeling and hearing that my body is alive and well, but that gift does not come without pain and suffering. I run to approach anything in sight, moving forward along a path of reflection and thought and vision. I run for health, aspiring for alertness and strength and longevity, but often such wishes transcend the goal, and I submerge myself in what seems to be far from healthy. Yet, this I would prefer any day over indifference and stillness. What a tragedy it is to find myself on a trajectory of nothingness, to barricade inertia within the void of equilibrium.

I used to think I was I was a conglomeration of contradictions, but that is far from the truth I now hold dear to my heart. Ayn Rand taught me well that there is no such thing as a contradiction, but rather a picture not yet complete. I used to confuse my mindful fluctuations as simultaneous yet independent forces, zipping in opposing directions; however, I now find no purpose in this world for such convoluted reasonings, so I will glide in my belief that I rise and fall to learn. I rise, for I have learned that there is no such thing as perfection in the natural world, but rather a ceaselessly augmenting beauty of life, and I fall, for the constant

reminder that I can always do better. Down in my descent, I learn how to reach greater heights, and so I scale my ascent, this time a little higher, and then I fall once again.

To be stagnant is to flatline. In motion I entertain the natural course of my wavering. It requires more energy to halt my intrinsic tendencies, and my body feels the impact. In stillness, I feel encompassed with the distressing pain of uselessness.

As time goes on, my highs and lows exponentially intensify. I mount farther and farther, reaching bountiful joy and success which I could previously only dream of, but equal in amplitude are the downhills, as it takes more and more strength and understanding and momentum to rise higher and higher. But then again, I do not have a clue about what it is I am constantly trying to approach. I have had no basis to believe that this mentality is grounded in anything other than my tendency to sculpt such circumstances of life in an embrace around my imagination, but, of course, this does not remain so, for Dante has the bewildering tendency to illuminate reason.

Not only is the entirety of Dante's journey grounded in the notion of descending in order to later ascend, but so too is love and prayer. Virgil explains the process love to the pilgrim as those who "bend toward each other up there," and what stands out to me most is the emphasis on "toward" and "up there" (15.73-74). Mathematically speaking, I can infinitely approach "toward" another being without ever touching him. To love someone is to exude from within, so "up there" can be easily interchangeable with the term "in here." However, if the indispensable aspect of love is to rise together, then perhaps I should coin the term "in-up." Visualizing such a phenomenon, I instantly think of Islamic prayer, during which one bends down to the ground to plead and hope and thank from within to then rise once again. In order to love fully, and thus live fully, it is intended to be in constant

approach, bending and rising. The extent to which I “reach out” “toward” another with love is directly proportional to the “eternal Worth” which “grows upon it;” therefore, the extent to which I bend down, or fall, is directly proportional to the extent to which I rise (15.71-72). Once again this image is optimized as Statius “bend[s] to embrace [Virgil’s] feet,” but rises to Virgil’s command to “grasp the greatness of the love that burns in [Virgil] toward [Statius]” (21.130-134). Statius descends in a faulty attempt to express his reverence, learns while he is down that such a method is not the proper way to share love, and thus rises to approach the love that moves infinitely toward him.

I love to move because I love to feel alive. There is a reason why the greatest growth and understanding derives from active motion, why Dante experiences the existential lesson of this poem on a journey, why the proud must walk carrying rocks on their backs, why the slothful must run, why all must climb. I was born to grow and move and travel and experience and see and learn and approach and rise and fall, so I find no purpose in this word for stagnation.

Works Cited

Alighieri, Dante. *The Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri: Inferno*. Trans. Robert M. Durling. Vol. I. New York: Oxford U, 1996. Print.