

oration on the dignity of man analysis

Oration on the Dignity of Man: A Comprehensive Analysis

Introduction:

Have you ever pondered the inherent worth of a human being? What truly makes us valuable, beyond our accomplishments or social standing? Pico della Mirandola's "Oration on the Dignity of Man" tackles this profound question, offering a Renaissance perspective that continues to resonate centuries later. This in-depth analysis will dissect the key arguments of this seminal work, exploring its philosophical underpinnings, its impact on humanist thought, and its enduring relevance to contemporary ethical debates. We'll delve into the central themes, examining how della Mirandola crafts a powerful argument for human freedom and responsibility. Prepare to embark on an intellectual journey that challenges your understanding of human nature and your place in the universe.

1. The Uniqueness of Human Creation: A God-Given Blank Slate

Della Mirandola's oration departs from a unique premise: humanity's position as a being neither wholly celestial nor entirely earthly. Unlike angels, fixed in their divine nature, or animals, bound by instinct, humans are presented as a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate. God, in his boundless creativity, deliberately chose not to predefine humanity's form or destiny. This deliberate ambiguity is the source of both our immense potential and our profound responsibility. The oration emphasizes that this lack of predetermined essence is not a deficiency but a defining characteristic, elevating humanity to a unique position within the cosmic order. This freedom to become whatever we choose is the cornerstone of human dignity.

1. The Power of Free Will: Shaping Our Own Destiny

Central to della Mirandola's argument is the concept of free will. He portrays humans as having the capacity to choose their own path, to mold themselves into the image they desire. This freedom, however, comes with a weighty responsibility. We are not simply passive recipients of our fate; we are active participants in its creation. This agency allows us to ascend to the level of angels through virtue and knowledge or descend to the level of beasts through vice and ignorance. This emphasis on choice underlines the profound moral implications of our actions and the responsibility we bear for shaping not only our own lives but also the world around us.

1. The Image of God: A Potential, Not a Fixed State

The "image of God" in the oration isn't a static representation, but rather a potential to be realized. It's not something we inherit passively; it's something we actively cultivate through our choices and actions. This interpretation challenges the notion of inherent divinity, replacing it with a dynamic process of self-creation. We become more like God not by possessing innate divine qualities but by striving for virtue, knowledge, and understanding – continually shaping ourselves according to our highest aspirations. This transformative potential forms the essence of our dignity.

1. The Importance of Reason and Knowledge: Tools for Self-Mastery

Della Mirandola highlights the crucial role of reason and knowledge in achieving our full potential. He stresses the importance of cultivating intellectual virtues, embracing learning, and striving for wisdom. These intellectual pursuits are not merely academic exercises; they are essential tools for self-mastery. By understanding the world and our place within it, we can make more informed choices, leading to a more virtuous and fulfilling life. The pursuit of knowledge, therefore, becomes a vital component in the ongoing project of defining our own human dignity.

1. The Transcendent Potential of Humanity: Reaching for the Divine

The oration concludes with a powerful affirmation of humanity's boundless potential. Della Mirandola envisions humans as capable of surpassing their limitations, even transcending their earthly nature. This transcendent aspiration is not about denying our earthly existence but rather about using our God-given freedom to strive for something greater. The pursuit of the divine, in this context, is not necessarily religious in the traditional sense, but rather a striving for excellence, knowledge, and virtue—a constant upward trajectory toward self-improvement and the realization of our full potential.

1. The Enduring Relevance of the Oration:

The "Oration on the Dignity of Man" remains remarkably relevant in the 21st century. Its emphasis on human freedom, responsibility, and the potential for self-creation resonates deeply with contemporary discussions on ethics, human rights, and the meaning of life. Its exploration of the human condition continues to challenge us to consider our choices, our actions, and the legacy we leave behind. It serves as a powerful reminder of the inherent worth of each individual and the responsibility we share in creating a just and equitable world.

Outline of "Oration on the Dignity of Man" Analysis:

Name: A Renaissance Reflection: Analyzing Pico della Mirandola's "Oration on the Dignity of Man"

Introduction: Overview of the oration and its central themes.

Chapter 1: The Uniqueness of Human Creation: A God-Given Blank Slate.

Chapter 2: The Power of Free Will: Shaping Our Own Destiny.

Chapter 3: The Image of God: A Potential, Not a Fixed State.

Chapter 4: The Importance of Reason and Knowledge: Tools for Self-Mastery.

Chapter 5: The Transcendent Potential of Humanity: Reaching for the Divine.

Chapter 6: The Enduring Relevance of the Oration in the Modern World.

Conclusion: Synthesizing the key arguments and their implications.

(Detailed explanation of each chapter point above is provided in the body of the article.)

FAQs:

1. What is the central argument of the "Oration on the Dignity of Man"? The central argument revolves around the unique position of humanity as possessing free will and the potential to shape its own destiny, thus possessing inherent dignity.
1. How does the oration define human dignity? Human dignity is defined not by inherent qualities but by the potential for self-creation and the responsible use of free will to strive for virtue, knowledge, and a life of purpose.
1. What is the significance of the "tabula rasa" concept in the oration? The "tabula rasa" emphasizes the absence of a predetermined human nature, highlighting humanity's freedom to define itself.
1. What role does reason and knowledge play in the oration? Reason and knowledge are essential tools for self-mastery, enabling humans to make informed choices and strive for self-improvement.
1. How does the oration view the relationship between humanity and God? The oration portrays God as the creator who grants humanity freedom and potential, but also emphasizes human responsibility in utilizing this freedom.

1. What is the significance of the "image of God" in this context? The "image of God" represents a potential to be realized through human effort, not an inherent, fixed attribute.
1. What is the contemporary relevance of the oration? The oration's focus on freedom, responsibility, and self-creation remains profoundly relevant in addressing modern ethical dilemmas and human rights issues.
1. How does the oration differ from other philosophical views of humanity? The oration stands apart by its emphasis on the deliberate absence of a predetermined human nature, giving humans unparalleled freedom and responsibility.
1. What are some criticisms of the "Oration on the Dignity of Man"? Some critics argue that the oration's emphasis on free will neglects the impact of social and environmental factors on human choices and potential.

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1. Comparative Theology and the Image of God: Exploring diverse theological perspectives on the "image of God" and contrasting them with della Mirandola's interpretation.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: Oration on the Dignity of Man Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, 2012-03-27 An ardent treatise for the Dignity of Man, which elevates Humanism to a truly Christian level. This translation of Pico della Mirandola's famed Oration, hitherto hidden away in anthologies, was prepared especially for Gateway Editions, making it available for the first time in a stand-alone volume. The youngest son of the Prince of Mirandola, Pico lived during the Renaissance, an era of change and philosophical ferment. The tenacity with which he clung to fundamental Christian teachings while crying out against his brilliant though half-pagan contemporaries made him exceptional in a time of exceptional men. While Pico, as Russell Kirk observes in his introduction, was an ardent spokesman for the dignity of man, his devout nature elevated humanism to a truly Christian level, which makes his writing as pertinent today as it was in the fifteenth century.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: Dignity in the 21st Century Doris Schroeder, Abol-Hassan Bani-Sadr, 2017-05-20 This book is open access under a CC BY license. This book offers a unique and insightful analysis of Western and Middle Eastern concepts of dignity and illustrates them with examples of everyday life. Dignity in the 21st Century - Middle East and West is unique and insightful for a range of reasons. First, the book is co-authored by scholars from two different cultures (Middle East and West). As a result, the interpretations of dignity covered are broader than those in most Western publications. Second, the ambition of the book is to use examples from everyday life and fiction to debate a range of dignity interpretations supplemented by philosophical and theological theories. Thus, the book is designed to be accessible to a general readership, which is further facilitated because it is published with full open access. Third, the book does not defend

one superior theory of dignity, but instead presents six Western approaches and one based on the Koran and then asks whether a common essence can be detected. The answer to the question whether a common essence can be detected between the Koranic interpretation of dignity and the main Western theories (virtue, Kant) is YES. The essence can be seen in dignity as a sense of self-worth, which persons have a duty to develop and respect in themselves and a duty to protect in others. The book ends with two recommendations. First, given the 7 concepts of dignity introduced in the book, meaningful dialogue can only be achieved if conversation partners clarify which variation they are using. Second, future collaborations between philosophers and psychologists might be helpful in moving theoretical knowledge on dignity as a sense of self-worth into practical action. The “scourges” of a sense of self-worth and dignity are identified by psychologists as violence, humiliation, disregard and embarrassment. To know more about how these can be avoided from psychologists, is helpful when protecting a sense of self-worth in others.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: Oration by Frederick Douglass. Delivered on the Occasion of the Unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument in Memory of Abraham Lincoln, in Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C., April 14th, 1876, with an Appendix Frederick Douglass, 2024-06-14 Reprint of the original, first published in 1876.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity K. Bayertz, 2012-12-06 ‘Sanctity of life’ and ‘human dignity’ are two bioethical concepts that play an important role in bioethical discussions. Despite their separate history and content, they have similar functions in these discussions. In many cases they are used to bring a difficult or controversial debate to an end. They serve as unquestionable cornerstones of morality, as rocks able to weather the storms of moral pluralism. This book provides the reader with analyses of these two concepts from different philosophical, professional and cultural points of view. Sanctity of Life and Human Dignity presents a comparative analysis of both concepts.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: Magic and the Dignity of Man Brian P. Copenhaver, 2019-11-19 “This book is nothing less than the definitive study of a text long considered central to understanding the Renaissance and its place in Western culture.” —James Hankins, Harvard University Pico della Mirandola died in 1494 at the age of thirty-one. During his brief and extraordinary life, he invented Christian Kabbalah in a book that was banned by the Catholic Church after he offered to debate his ideas on religion and philosophy with anyone who challenged him. Today he is best known for a short speech, the Oration on the Dignity of Man, written in 1486 but never delivered. Sometimes called a “Manifesto of the Renaissance,” this text has been regarded as the foundation of humanism and a triumph of secular rationality over medieval mysticism. Brian Copenhaver upends our understanding of Pico’s masterwork by re-examining this key document of modernity. An eminent historian of philosophy, Copenhaver shows that the Oration is not about human dignity. In fact, Pico never wrote an Oration on the Dignity of Man and never heard of that title. Instead he promoted ascetic mysticism, insisting that Christians need help from Jews to find the path to heaven—a journey whose final stages are magic and Kabbalah. Through a rigorous philological reading of this much-studied text, Copenhaver transforms the history of the idea of dignity and reveals how Pico came to be misunderstood over the course of five centuries. Magic and the Dignity of Man is a seismic shift in the study of one of the most remarkable thinkers of the Renaissance.

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theoretical alternative which can constitute a foundation for a new way of thinking about organisations, management, and leadership. *Dignity in the Workplace* offers scholars ideas for how research in the field of management studies may be enriched by a dignity-paradigm, and goes further to explore the role of a dignity-paradigm in the function of HR-managers and organisational leaders. Thus, the book aims to contribute to the need for alternative conceptualisations of how contemporary organisations can be managed.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Mathematics for Human Flourishing* Francis Su, 2020-01-07 The ancient Greeks argued that the best life was filled with beauty, truth, justice, play and love. The mathematician Francis Su knows just where to find them.--Kevin Hartnett, *Quanta Magazine* This is perhaps the most important mathematics book of our time. Francis Su shows mathematics is an experience of the mind and, most important, of the heart.--James Tanton, *Global Math Project* For mathematician Francis Su, a society without mathematical affection is like a city without concerts, parks, or museums. To miss out on mathematics is to live without experiencing some of humanity's most beautiful ideas. In this profound book, written for a wide audience but especially for those disenchanted by their past experiences, an award-winning mathematician and educator weaves parables, puzzles, and personal reflections to show how mathematics meets basic human desires--such as for play, beauty, freedom, justice, and love--and cultivates virtues essential for human flourishing. These desires and virtues, and the stories told here, reveal how mathematics is intimately tied to being human. Some lessons emerge from those who have struggled, including philosopher Simone Weil, whose own mathematical contributions were overshadowed by her brother's, and Christopher Jackson, who discovered mathematics as an inmate in a federal prison. Christopher's letters to the author appear throughout the book and show how this intellectual pursuit can--and must--be open to all.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Utopia* Thomas More, 2019-04-08 *Utopia* is a work of fiction and socio-political satire by Thomas More published in 1516 in Latin. The book is a frame narrative primarily depicting a fictional island society and its religious, social and political customs. Many aspects of More's description of *Utopia* are reminiscent of life in monasteries.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Kant on Human Dignity* Oliver Sensen, 2011-10-27 Immanuel Kant is often considered to be the source of the contemporary idea of human dignity, but his conception of human dignity and its relation to human value and to the requirement to respect others have not been widely understood. *Kant on Human Dignity* offers the first in-depth study in English of this subject. Based on a comprehensive analysis of all the passages in which Kant uses the term 'dignity', as well as an analysis of the most prominent arguments for a value of human beings in the Kant literature, the book carefully examines different ways of construing the relationship between dignity, value and respect for others. It takes seriously Kant's Copernican Revolution in moral philosophy: Kant argues that moral imperatives cannot be based on any values without yielding heteronomy. Instead it is imperatives of reason that determine what is valuable. The requirement to respect all human beings is one such imperative. Respect for human beings does not follow from human dignity—for this would violate autonomy—but is an unconditional command of reason. Following this train of thought yields a unified account of Kant's moral philosophy.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *The Impact of Humanism* Margaret Lucille Kekewich, 2000-01-01 These are explored through a reassessment of the role of humanism, with case studies in music (Josquin Desprez), moral philosophy (Valla, Castiglione, Erasmus, More) and political thought (Machiavelli). This book is the first in a series of three specifically designed for the Open University course, *The Renaissance in Europe: A Cultural Enquiry*. The series is designed to appeal both to the general reader and to those studying undergraduate arts courses in the period.--BOOK JACKET.

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itself. The book includes essays by leading Australian and International figures.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: Model Rules of Professional Conduct American Bar Association. House of Delegates, Center for Professional Responsibility (American Bar Association), 2007 The Model Rules of Professional Conduct provides an up-to-date resource for information on legal ethics. Federal, state and local courts in all jurisdictions look to the Rules for guidance in solving lawyer malpractice cases, disciplinary actions, disqualification issues, sanctions questions and much more. In this volume, black-letter Rules of Professional Conduct are followed by numbered Comments that explain each Rule's purpose and provide suggestions for its practical application. The Rules will help you identify proper conduct in a variety of given situations, review those instances where discretionary action is possible, and define the nature of the relationship between you and your clients, colleagues and the courts.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Sophie's World* Jostein Gaarder, 2007-03-20 A page-turning novel that is also an exploration of the great philosophical concepts of Western thought, Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* has fired the imagination of readers all over the world, with more than twenty million copies in print. One day fourteen-year-old Sophie Amundsen comes home from school to find in her mailbox two notes, with one question on each: Who are you? and Where does the world come from? From that irresistible beginning, Sophie becomes obsessed with questions that take her far beyond what she knows of her Norwegian village. Through those letters, she enrolls in a kind of correspondence course, covering Socrates to Sartre, with a mysterious philosopher, while receiving letters addressed to another girl. Who is Hilde? And why does her mail keep turning up? To unravel this riddle, Sophie must use the philosophy she is learning—but the truth turns out to be far more complicated than she could have imagined.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *The Life of Pico* Saint Thomas More, 2010 Presented to modern readers in English for the first time in 500 years, *The Life of Pico* is a biography of one of the Renaissance's most famous figures: Giovanni Pico de la Mirandola (1463-94). Given More's demanding personal spiritual life, one would assume that More wishes to praise a famous and virtuous man. But what emerges from this book is quite different. Pico turns out to be an extraordinarily virtuous, talented, and wealthy man, but a man nonetheless, who is missing something essential. And so More calls Pico a very spectacle of virtue. More sees Pico as very much like himself, as the two turn out to have very similar life experiences. Both carry some scars from difficult or missing relationships with their fathers, both are extremely talented and powerful in their time, and both had been steered toward a religious vocation which they did not embrace. The book is as much a riddle about More as it is an explanation of Pico. More's great-grandson and biographer, Cressida More, claims that Thomas More as a young man sought to emulate Pico once he decided that his path in life was marriage and not the cloth. The book's first half contains the abridged account of Pico's life. The second half is More's rhymed verse on the 12 rules of spiritual battle, the 12 weapons of spiritual battle, and the 12 properties of a lover, followed by Pico's prayer to God. In the last analysis, this biography of Pico becomes an exercise in the discernment of true virtue, in the contradictions and difficulties one encounters in the immersion into the world, and at the same time, in the life of God.

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mainstream high culture' and the 'radically changing world' of the 1990s, offers a new breakthrough for lay and scholarly readers alike....Allows readers to grasp the big picture of Western culture for the first time. SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE Here are the great minds of Western civilization and their pivotal ideas, from Plato to Hegel, from Augustine to Nietzsche, from Copernicus to Freud. Richard Tarnas performs the near-miracle of describing profound philosophical concepts simply but without simplifying them. Ten years in the making and already hailed as a classic, THE PASSION OF THE WESTERN MIND is truly a complete liberal education in a single volume.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Human Dignity and Bioethics*, 2008 Contains a collection of essays exploring human dignity and bioethics, a concept crucial to today's discourse in law and ethics in general and in bioethics in particular.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Laws* Plato, 2022-05-28 The *Laws* is Plato's last, longest, and perhaps, most famous work. It presents a conversation on political philosophy between three elderly men: an unnamed Athenian, a Spartan named Megillus, and a Cretan named Clinias. They worked to create a constitution for Magnesia, a new Cretan colony that would make all of its citizens happy and virtuous. In this work, Plato combines political philosophy with applied legislation, going into great detail concerning what laws and procedures should be in the state. For example, they consider whether drunkenness should be allowed in the city, how citizens should hunt, and how to punish suicide. The principles of this book have entered the legislation of many modern countries and provoke a great interest of philosophers even in the 21st century.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: *Dignity (Determination Trilogy 1)* Lesli Richardson, Tymber Dalton, 2018-12-28 (Book 1 in the Determination Trilogy) He wants it back... My name is Kevin Markos, former anchor for Full News Broadcasting. I say former, because an exhaustion- and frustration-fueled emotional on-air meltdown of apocalyptic proportions means my previously dignified reputation and successful career as a highly respected conservative TV news host and commentator lay in smoking, irreparable ruins. Only one person will hire me now, and it's the last person I want to work for—Democratic Senator ShaeLynn Samuels, who's determined to be the next president of the United States. My reluctance isn't because of her, but because of who's working for her: Christopher Bruunt, the head of her Secret Service detail. A college spring break trip I thought was safely hidden forever in my past, even if it never strayed far from my thoughts, now comes back to haunt me. But if I take this job and succeed, it could resurrect my career and put me at the right

hand of the most powerful person in the United States. But how much am I personally willing to sacrifice to claw my way back to the top? Because Christopher never forgot that spring break, either. And he has a few agendas of his own. This MMF contemporary political romance features older main characters, second-chance love, an Alpha Secret Service agent, power exchange, pining, frenemies to lovers, a secret workplace romance at the highest levels of our nation's government, political intrigue, and a satisfying HEA. Book 1 of the Determination Trilogy, a standalone spin-off trilogy set in the world of the Governor Trilogy, the Devastation Trilogy, and others.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: And Still I Rise Maya Angelou, 2011-08-17 Maya Angelou's unforgettable collection of poetry lends its name to the documentary film about her life, *And Still I Rise*, as seen on PBS's *American Masters*. Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. I'm not cute or built to suit a fashion model's size But when I start to tell them, They think I'm telling lies. I say, It's in the reach of my arms, The span of my hips, The stride of my step, The curl of my lips. I'm a woman Phenomenally. Phenomenal woman, That's me. Thus begins "Phenomenal Woman," just one of the beloved poems collected here in Maya Angelou's third book of verse. These poems are powerful, distinctive, and fresh—and, as always, full of the lifting rhythms of love and remembering. *And Still I Rise* is written from the heart, a celebration of life as only Maya Angelou has discovered it. "It is true poetry she is writing," M.F.K. Fisher has observed, "not just rhythm, the beat, rhymes. I find it very moving and at times beautiful. It has an innate purity about it, unquenchable dignity. . . . It is astounding, flabbergasting, to recognize it, in all the words I read every day and night . . . it gives me heart, to hear so clearly the caged bird singing and to understand her notes."

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: Oral Literature in Africa Ruth Finnegan, 2012-09 Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* was first published in 1970, and since then has been widely praised as one of the most important books in its field. Based on years of fieldwork, the study traces the history of storytelling across the continent of Africa. This revised edition makes Finnegan's ground-breaking research available to the next generation of scholars. It includes a new introduction, additional images and an updated bibliography, as well as its original chapters on poetry, prose, drum language and drama, and an overview of the social, linguistic and historical background of oral literature in Africa. This book is the first volume in the *World Oral Literature Series*, an ongoing collaboration between OBP and World Oral Literature Project. A free online archive of recordings and photographs that Finnegan made during her fieldwork in the late 1960s is hosted by the World Oral Literature Project (<http://www.worldoralliteratureproject.org>):

[//www.oralliterature.org/collections/rfinnegan001.html](http://www.oralliterature.org/collections/rfinnegan001.html)) and can also be accessed from publisher's website.

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oration on the dignity of man analysis: Don Quixote and Catholicism Michael McGrath, 2020-08-15 Four hundred years since its publication, Miguel de Cervantes's Don Quixote continues to inspire and to challenge its readers. The universal and timeless appeal of the novel, however, has distanced its hero from its author and its author from his own life and the time in which he lived. The discussion of the novel's Catholic identity, therefore, is based on a reading that returns Cervantes's hero to Cervantes's text and Cervantes to the events that most shaped his life. The authors and texts McGrath cites, as well as his arguments and interpretations, are mediated by his religious sensibility. Consequently, he proposes that his study represents one way of interpreting Don Quixote and acts as a complement to other approaches. It is McGrath's assertion that the religiosity and spirituality of Cervantes's masterpiece illustrate that Don Quixote is inseparable from the teachings of Catholic orthodoxy. Furthermore, he argues that Cervantes's spirituality is as diverse as early modern Catholicism. McGrath does not believe that the novel is primarily a religious or even a serious text, and he considers his arguments through the lens of Cervantine irony, satire, and multiperspectivism. As a Roman Catholic who is a Hispanist, McGrath proposes to reclaim Cervantes's Catholicity from the interpretive tradition that ascribes a predominantly Erasmian reading of the novel. When the totality of biographical and sociohistorical events and influences that shaped Cervantes's religiosity are considered, the result is a new appreciation of the novel's moral didactic and spiritual orientation.

oration on the dignity of man analysis: Natural Rights on the Threshold of the Scottish Enlightenment Gershom Carmichael, 2002 Gershom Carmichael (1672-1729) was the first professor of moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow, preceding Hutcheson, Smith, and Reid. He defended a strong theory of rights and drew attention to Grotius, Pufendorf, and Locke. James Moore is Professor of Political Science at Concordia University in Montreal. Michael Silverthorne is Honorary University Fellow in the School of Classics at the University of Exeter. Please note: This title is available as an ebook for purchase on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and iTunes.

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