Featuring

To Obey or Disobey
The Rawlsian View on Civil Disobedience

On the Value of the Liberal Arts

John Locke: The Key to America’s Founding

Some Realities of Decolonization in Africa

Science and Catholicism in the Middle Ages

Martin Luther: The Reformation’s Machiavellian Prince

The Natural Good and Error

Can the Present Self Impose Its Will on the Future Self?

Aesthetics in Orthodox Faith

Boccaccio’s Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer

Competitive Human Glory in Homer’s Iliad

Interview with Dean Chester L. Gillis

Interview with Professor Joshua Mitchell
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Table of Contents

From the Editor-in-Chief ....................................................... 1

About The Tocqueville Forum
On the Value of the Liberal Arts, by Professor Richard Boyd ......................... 2

The Forum (Articles on Political Theory)
To Obey or Disobey: The Rawlsian View on Civil Disobedience, by Erica Tillotson ................. 4
John Locke: The Key to America’s Founding, by Melvin Thomas ......................... 10

The Archive (Articles on History)
Imperialism in Retrospect: Some Realities of Decolonization in Africa, by Cole Horton ........... 15
Single and Sacred: Science and Catholicism in the Middle Ages, by MyLan Metzger ................. 21
Martin Luther: The Reformation’s Machiavellian Prince, by Grant Olson ......................... 28

The Sanctuary (Articles on Philosophy and Religion)
The Natural Good and Error, by William R. Leo ........................................... 34
Advance Directives: Can the Present Self Impose Its Will on the Future Self?, by Janelle Spira ........ 38
Spiritual Content via Natural Means: Aesthetics in Orthodox Faith, by Claudia Huang ................. 44

The Parlor (Articles on Literature and the Arts)
Boccaccio’s Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer,
by Orunima Chakraborti .......................................................... 50
Competitive Human Glory in Homer’s Iliad, by Eric S. Meyers ......................... 54

The Clock Tower (Articles on Georgetown)
Interview with Dean Chester L. Gillis, by Jacob Dyson ........................................... 60
Interview with Professor Joshua Mitchell, by Micah Musser ........................................... 68
Dear Reader,

When I first read Plato, I was puzzled by his writing. I was expecting to find sets of propositions laid out in matter-of-fact prose. Instead, I encountered what seemed like a series of conversations in which friends would pose questions and respond to one another. In these dialogues, the interlocutors react to one another’s ideas and revise their preconceived notions, rejecting some doctrines and adopting others. As his chosen medium suggests, Plato is not particularly interested in learning as an exercise in the passive absorption of information. Learning is always in some sense interactive for Plato. (Even when Socrates dominates the discussion, he never proceeds without the consent of his audience.) When we realize how much our intellectual activity consists of responding to data, theories, and objections from the outside world, we begin to see how appropriate it is to think of education as a back-and-forth exchange—a kind of conversation. More striking still is the fact that even now we continue to hold many of the conversations that began in Plato’s time. Anyone in any age can participate in the conversation, and that participation, which is the goal of a liberal arts education, seems to have a special value in itself.

This journal brings together undergraduate essays from across disciplines in an effort to expand the scope of that conversation. Its aim is not only to showcase the kinds of inquiries that students take up at Georgetown, but also to prompt the reflection and interest of our readers across the university and beyond. If this undergraduate scholarship can instill in our readers a sense of wonder, then I will consider our endeavor a success, for philosophy has no beginning other than the experience of wonder.¹

I must thank a number of people for their contributions to this journal: Bill Mumma and George Mimura for their financial support; the Collegiate Network for continuing what has been a very fruitful partnership over many years; Professors Richard Boyd and Thomas Kerch for their animated leadership of the Tocqueville Forum this past year; my fellow editors for their dedication to the journal and their patience with their despotic leader over several semesters; and finally, to all the authors published in this issue who labored over many weeks to perfect their essays. Every semester, I am amazed at the cooperative spirit with which our contributors undertake the hardly glamorous tasks of revising, rethinking, and rewriting their papers. It is in this kind of magnanimity that Georgetown’s faculty and students particularly excel, and which further distinguishes our university as an especially hospitable environment for scholarly research and personal growth alike.

Nicholas E. Richards
Editor-in-Chief
The Value of a Liberal Arts Education in the 21st century was the subject of a recent and well-attended public roundtable sponsored by the Tocqueville Forum back in February. Let me take this opportunity to add my voice to those of the perceptive commentators who took part in the original event. Rather than being specific to Georgetown, the status of the liberal arts within the modern research university is one of the most debated questions of American higher education. How can one place a value on a liberal arts education, or for that matter, does a liberal arts education have value at all in a dynamic, technologically-driven economy like our own? Can one justify the cost of studying, say, art history or political philosophy at a place like Georgetown? Or should one instead focus on acquiring vocational skills such as marketing, finance, or computer programming more readily transferable to the job market?

Before tackling the contemporary questions, a bit of historical context might be helpful. No scholar of eighteenth century studies can fail to be struck by the ubiquity of the phrase “arts and sciences.” One of the mainstays of the Enlightenment project was its faith in the cumulative increase of the “arts and sciences,” leading to both material and moral improvements in the human condition. This optimistic vision reached its apogee in the teleological narratives of the Marquis de Condorcet, perhaps, or in David Hume’s 1742 essays “Of the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences” and “Of Refinement in the Arts.”

What strikes us today about the hopeful eighteenth century vision of the “arts and sciences” is not that it is progressive—although that confidence may indeed be controversial in the case of the arts. By what standards can one declare Piet Mondrian to be an advance over Claude Monet, or proclaim Saul Bellow as superior to Shakespeare? And yet even granting these misgivings about the arts, the notion of cumulative progress has become part and parcel of the modern worldview. Who could doubt but that the iPhone 7 marks an advance over iPhones 5 and 6? If not, it would be deemed a failure! Instead, the curiosity of the eighteenth century worldview stems as much from the fact that the “arts and sciences” are regarded as a matched set—as fundamentally allied or linked, rather than separated or even opposed. Few any longer imagine that the arts have much to do with the sciences other than that they happen to be quartered together within a single administrative division of most universities, uneasy neighbors that have been hived off in theory, if not altogether in practice, from the unabashedly practical matters studied in schools of business, pharmacy, law, or medicine.

Something looks to have changed in how we conceive of these terms. Not only are the “arts” divorced from the “sciences,” but there is also a widespread impression within the academy that
the sciences occupy a loftier station, overshadowing the merely humanistic dimensions of the educational endeavor.

The twentieth-century English philosopher Michael Oakeshott worried that the voices of “practice” or “science” threatened to crowd out what he came to call “the voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind.” Oakeshott did not literally mean poetry here—whether verse or prose—so much as a manner of regarding the world in which one contemplates beauty and the finer things as ends in themselves, questions we ponder and matters we discuss for their own sake rather than for utilitarian purposes.

Presumably there is a way of pursuing even what we now call “science” that is consistent with Oakeshott’s vision of the conversation of mankind. Like poetry, literature, art, or music, the activity of science can also be cultivated in a spirit intended to cast light on the order, patterns, and aesthetic qualities of the natural world—the way in which its laws and formulae generate patterns that are illuminating in their own light, rather than merely instrumental to the creation of new technologies or instruments.

Recovering eighteenth century notions of the arts and sciences as allies, rather than rivals, does not entail privileging one to the detriment of the other. What is at stake is not whether the arts are relatively more “valuable”—in terms of prestige, financial remuneration, or usefulness—than the sciences, or vice versa. Instead, the defining feature of a liberal arts education consists in fostering a common mode of academic inquiry, a sense of delight in the intrinsic value of learning. Such a manner of liberal learning reveals the arts and sciences to be what they were originally intended: namely, coequal partners in a common endeavor.

This spirit of conversation, wonder, curiosity, and joyful contemplation is abundantly evident in the outstanding student essays that follow. Therein lies the true value of the liberal arts.

Richard Boyd
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In his 1969 text aptly named “The Justification of Civil Disobedience,” John Rawls discusses the grounds and necessary conditions for civil disobedience. Rawls begins by covering the nature of political obligation theory, which is deeply rooted in the social contract doctrine. He then goes on to explain his view that citizens of a just society are obligated to obey both just and unjust laws. After setting the scene, Rawls sketches out four conditions for the justification of civil disobedience in a just society. While Rawls focuses in on the necessary constraints to make acts of civil disobedience justifiable, he fails to fully explain the threshold between an unjust law one is required to obey and an injustice that warrants civil disobedience. His argument would be far more persuasive if he further detailed the threshold for when an injustice is so great that a citizen may act in civil disobedience.

Rawls’ Justification for Civil Disobedience

As mentioned above, Rawls tasks himself with outlining the justification of civil disobedience. In order to make his argument more precise, Rawls limits his domain to that of a “constitutional democracy” that is “reasonably just.” The first section of Rawls’ essay outlines the social contract theory and one’s duty to obey the law under the social contract theory. Rawls delineates two main reasons for citizens to do their part in “just and efficient social arrangements.” The first of these arguments is that it is a “natural duty” to comply with and not obstruct just institutions. The second rationale claims that because we expect others to uphold their duty, we are obligated in turn to do our own duty. Rawls rounds out his discussion of the social contract theory by discussing the two qualifications for a state to be considered just. The first qualification is that each person should have “an equal right to the most extensive liberty compatible with a like liberty for all…” The second qualification concerns social and economic policies, and Rawls argues that in a just society, “social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both to everyone’s advantage and attached to positions and offices open to all.”

Rawls first explains how a citizen of a just society is obligated to obey just laws, after which he explains the grounds by which citizens of the just society are obligated to obey unjust laws. He claims that leaders of a just society cannot construct a perfect constitution or a perfectly and constantly just and effective political system, but if under the social contract theory one subscribes to the benefits of the constitution then they are bound to obey both the just and unjust tenants to preserve the integrity of the institution. It is important to note that Rawls distinguishes between the duty to comply and the duty to regard the act as just saying that...
“... there is... no corresponding obligation or duty to regard what the majority enacts as itself just.” Therefore, because one is not bound to consider unjust acts just, Rawls argues that “... if in his judgement the enactments of the majority exceed certain bounds of injustice, the citizen may consider civil disobedience.” Rawls then goes on to outline his conception of civil disobedience as “a public, nonviolent, and conscientious act contrary to law usually with the intent to bring about a change in the policies or laws of the government.”

The meat of Rawls’ argument falls in section five where Rawls outlines four main, but not exhaustive, conditions for the justification of civil disobedience. Out of these four conditions, Rawls notes that the first three are to determine the principle of justice and when one can take part in civil disobedience, whereas the fourth condition governs tactical concerns over whether one should engage in that behavior. Rawls’ first condition is that civil disobedience needs to be a “last resort” after first exhausting the standard channels to express discontent. Secondly, there must have been a “grave injustice to the law” and a “refusal” by political leaders to correct that injustice. Thirdly, Rawls notes that civil disobedience should be limited to cases where the person dissenting recognizes that those similarly situated also have the right to engage in civil disobedience. Therefore under this constraint, Rawls believes that “legitimate civil disobedience properly exercised is a stabilizing device in a constitutional regime, tending to make it more firmly just.” Lastly, as outlined briefly above, the fourth condition deals with tactical considerations and the question as to whether one should act in civil disobedience even if justified by the three past conditions. To this question Rawls notes that one needs to seriously consider whether engaging in civil disobedience will ultimately advance their aims or not and base their decision off that consideration.

These four restrictions thus limit the extent to which citizens can reasonably engage in civil disobedience under the Rawlsian view.

Thoreau and King: Objections to the Rawlsian View

The most obvious conclusion of the Rawlsian view is that civil disobedience is rarely justified in fact. Rawls places a high bar on those who would engage in civil disobedience by asking them to prove 1) that all other options have been exhausted, 2) that the law in question is not only unjust but is “gravely unjust,” 3) that any others in similar situations also have a right to engage in civil disobedience, and 4) that there is a plausible hope of civil disobedience altering or removing the unjust law in question. Ordinarily, those who discuss civil disobedience tend to be more lenient towards its practice, not placing such a high burden of proof on those who are dissatisfied with current laws. In particular, two of the most famous essays on the issue—“Civil Disobedience” by Henry David Thoreau and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” by Martin Luther King Jr.—demonstrate different views of civil disobedience that conflict with one or more of Rawls’ conditions.

The general implication of Rawls’ four conditions is that civil disobedience, when it is to be legitimate, must be narrowly tailored to protest a particular unjust law without undermining the “relatively just” society. However, Henry David Thoreau departs radically from this view in “Civil Disobedience,” in which he explains that he refuses to pay taxes to a government which enables slavery and the Mexican War, despite the fact that it may on the whole be just. Thus he states, “How does it become a man to behave toward this American government today? I answer, that he cannot without disgrace be associated with it.” And yet Thoreau says this while simultaneously claiming that, “the Constitution, with all its faults, is very good; the law and the courts are very respectable; even this State and this American government are, in many respects, very admirable, and rare things, to be thankful for ...” This contrasts sharply with the Rawlsian view, which instead declares that if a constitution is just and we are receiving the
benefits of it, “we then have both an obligation and a natural duty ... to comply with what the majority enacts even though it may be unjust.”

The fundamental area of disagreement between Thoreau and Rawls hinges on the concept of obligation. Rawls’ claim is that, by accepting the benefits of a relatively just constitution, we have an obligation to therefore abide by its laws even at unjust personal cost, except in cases where the law is “gravely unjust.” Thoreau, on the other hand, states emphatically that, “The only obligation which I have a right to assume is to do at any time what I think right.” Although Thoreau does not require all people to resist injustice at all times, he does insist that when the government behaves unjustly, each person has an obligation to not support the actions of the government—that is, to not support it financially through taxes. The tension between Rawls’ insistence on the obligation of citizens to obey (some) unjust laws and Thoreau’s claim that injustice of any form cannot be supported by conscientious citizens is brought to a head when Thoreau claims that “Unjust laws exist: shall we be content to obey them, or shall we endeavor to amend them, and obey them until we have succeeded, or shall we transgress them at once? Men generally, under such a government as this, think that they ought to wait until they have persuaded the majority to alter them. They think that, if they should resist, the remedy would be worse than the evil. But it is the fault of the government itself that the remedy is worse than the evil. It makes it worse.”

Thoreau’s view on civil disobedience therefore differs from Rawls on several key points. First, Thoreau does not believe that citizens must exhaust all other options before resorting to civil disobedience. Second, Thoreau does not agree that, even under a reasonably just constitution, it is ever permissible to abide by unjust laws. Finally, Thoreau disagrees with Rawls that civil disobedience must have a feasible chance of changing the law in question. In fact, it would be better to live out the commands of one’s conscience even if one is ignored entirely—thus becoming a “majority of one”—than it would be to simply accept the majority view.

The other most prominent challenge to the Rawlsian view is that presented by Martin Luther King Jr. in “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” King does show more leniency towards Rawls’ fourth condition: after all, King’s entire strategy of non-violent civil disobedience was carefully crafted to achieve actual political changes, not merely to protest the functioning of the government out of conscience. King also shows a limited acceptance of Rawls’ condition that other options be attempted first, stating that, “It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham, but it is even more unfortunate that the city’s white power structure left the Negro with no alternative ...” However, King does indicate that while it is good to pursue more democratic means before resorting to civil disobedience, this ought not necessarily be a binding requirement that can be imposed upon those who are currently living the realities of injustice: “perhaps it is easy for those who have never felt the stinging darts of segregation to say ‘Wait.’”

Most strikingly in contrast to Rawls, King makes a sharp distinction between just and unjust laws. And quoting Augustine to state that “an unjust law is no law at all,” King does not agree with Rawls’ principle that a relatively unjust law must be obeyed by citizens. One category by which a law might be labelled unjust is if a majority enacts it with the intention of harming a minority. This could conceivably be grounds for civil disobedience under Rawlsian principles if such a law clearly violated the principle of equal opportunity for all. Yet for King, this determination is a matter of personal conscience—not a question of evaluation according to a pre-chosen set of principles—which is designed to incite the conscience of the community.

In short, Thoreau and King present two powerful alternatives to Rawls’ view. Thoreau objects on very wide grounds, arguing in essence that the individual does not have any obligation to support any part of the state’s functioning if he or she has significant objections from
conscience to its behavior. King makes a narrower argument, essentially supporting some of Rawls’ restrictions on the use of civil disobedience but nevertheless objecting to the idea that an unjust but not “gravely unjust” law must still be obeyed.

**Rawlsian Responses to These Objections**

In order to understand Rawls’ rationale for these restrictions on civil disobedience, it is necessary to look at Rawls’ political theory more generally in order to define what Rawls views as a “reasonably just” constitution. Rawls suggests that a reasonable society is one in which all rational people can broadly agree that the basic principles upon which the society operates are fair. In particular, he imagines that such a society would fulfill several basic principles: rights and duties would be assigned equally, all positions would be open to all members of society, and any inequalities would be justified because they would help the least well off. However, Rawls is primarily concerned not with ensuring these principles in the abstract but rather with ensuring that “the basic social institutions generally satisfy and are generally known to satisfy these principles.” The question is not one of perfect implementation of justice in all moments, but rather of crafting a set of “basic social institutions” that will generally operate under just rules. And critical to this is the notion that these institutions must be stable; therefore, any reasonably just constitution “must insure that just institutions are stable.”

From this we can start to understand why Rawls places so many restrictions on the exercise of civil disobedience: it is because, if a society is “reasonably just,” then its stability is of extreme importance and cannot be jeopardized even for the sake of correcting some minor injustice. Thoreau, for his part, is not willing to tolerate any injustice in the name of stability; therefore he claims that “This people must cease to hold slaves, and to make war on Mexico, though it cost them their existence as a people.” But Rawls is concerned about preserving just institutions more than ensuring that every action of the state is perfectly just. Thus, even in situations when civil disobedience is permitted, Rawls does not permit that so many people can participate in civil disobedience as to throw society into disorder, because “There might be serious injury to the just constitution.” Some injustice must be tolerated for stability’s sake.

Yet civil disobedience can be permitted in cases of “grave injustice.” What constitutes grave injustice? According to Rawls, only in situations where the two primary principles of justice—of equal liberty and of equality of opportunity—are under attack. This is because systemic violations of these principles are so egregious as to threaten the overall justness of the entire social system. Yet minor offenses do not threaten the basic justness of a society, and in situations where the basic justness of society is not threatened, stability and the obligation to abide by the law outweigh the rights to protest on the basis of conscience. Thus, people cannot engage in civil disobedience because their conscience is offended; they may only do so if justice itself is threatened. And because Rawls posits that justice is the result of the agreement of rational individuals who create their constitution, justice is to some extent an objective quality. When people disagree, they must “acknowledge a common point of view from which their claims may be adjudicated.”

**Trying to Apply Rawls’ Restrictions**

While Rawls’ discussion of the necessary conditions for an act to be classified as civil disobedience are logical, his argument is hindered by failing to fully address when an unjust act crosses the threshold into permissible territory to engage in civil disobedience. Further, because Rawls fails to delineate this threshold his overall conception of civil disobedience is threatened.

Rawls provides a cursory outline for when a person may reasonably consider civil disobedience, but that outline is not extensive enough to
support his argument for the overall justification of civil disobedience. Rawls states that when civil disobedience is justified, “there has been a serious breakdown; not only is there grave injustice in the law but a refusal more of less deliberate to correct it.” This is a largely subjective statement. How an individual interprets a “grave injustice” will inevitably vary from person to person and similarly individuals will interpret this lack of redress in the same variable manner. Further on the matter of the subjectivity of Rawls’ argument, when describing the obligation of citizens of a just society to follow unjust laws, Rawls qualifies the argument with “provided the injustice does not exceed certain limits,” but does not attempt to flesh out what those “certain limits” are.

In the course of his essay, Rawls does begin to limit when civil disobedience is permissible. Rawls notes that civil disobedience must be a political act, and usually limited to “substantial and clear violations of justice” and within that with the potential to “establish a basis for doing away with such injustices.” While this starts to limit the grounds on which a person might determine whether civil disobedience is permissible, it is still vague in nature and what is “substantial” or “clear” to one person might not be for the next. Rawls also notes a “presumption” which favors restricting the permissible cases for civil disobedience to those which violate “the first principle of justice, the principle of equal liberty, and to barriers which contravene the second principle, the principle of open offices which protects equality of opportunity.” This presumption further limits the threshold for when civil disobedience is permissible but lacks any concrete examples, which might help to create a barometer for permissible cases.

In the final section of the essay, Rawls addresses this counterargument directly, as his argument fails to settle the question over “who is to say when the situation is such as to justify civil disobedience.” Rawls argues that persons are responsible for determining this for themselves based not on their own choosing but on “the principles of justice that underlie and guide the interpretation of the constitution.” Because Rawls believes that the principles of justice can be to some extent objective, the decision as to whether or not a situation justifies civil disobedience must also be objective. However, it is not clear that the principles of justice are as objective as Rawls would like to believe. Those principles and their interpretation may not be clear-cut and uniform from person to person. Therefore, it follows that one’s own interpretation of justice, and not an objective criteria, governs the decision to engage or not to engage in civil disobedience. Rawls largely agrees with this idea that individuals choose for themselves and could choose wrongly. The concern over the failure to flesh out the threshold for when civil disobedience is permissible is less about when a single individual is wrong, and more so about a multitude of people wrongfully dissenting, to a degree that places an unhealthy burden on the reasonably just society.

Arguably, Rawls’ lack of clarification can potentially cause detriment to his overall argument. This coincides with Rawls’ third condition that “legitimate civil disobedience properly exercised is a stabilizing device in a constitutional regime, tending to make it more firmly just.” Rawls acknowledges that the potential for too many people with a legitimate case for engaging in civil disobedience is a problem. This is because it could cause disorder to the reasonably just political system which could cause “serious injury to the just constitution.” This begs a question of fairness regarding who within a group might be able to exercise their right to engage in civil disobedience. Rawls briefly argues potential solutions such as a potential lottery for who can act, but notes that those contemplating civil disobedience should consider the legitimacy of others’ actions when deciding whether or not to act and that a group might need to come to an understanding among themselves as to who is entitled to action. Not only is this a limitation of the right to engage in civil disobedience, but it also fundamentally undermines the goal of civil
disobedience, which is to persuade others to join a particular cause. In fact, it may constitute a significant threat to justice to deny the right to exercise civil disobedience to a person who, under all of Rawls’ criteria, has a right to engage in that civil disobedience. Although Rawls is attempting to preserve stability by not permitting vast numbers of people to engage in civil disobedience, arbitrarily forcing someone with a legitimate complaint to remain silent might be more threatening to the underlying principles of justice than permitting them to act even if their action creates instability. This counterexample appears highly troublesome for Rawls’ overall argument.

Rawls’ justification of civil disobedience would be far easier to subscribe to if it included a more concrete mechanism for differentiating between “grave injustices” that warrant civil disobedience and unjust acts that citizens are still obligated to obey. Rawls’ four main constraints on civil disobedience are indeed reasonable, but without defining a clear difference between unjust acts that must be obeyed and cases where civil disobedience is appropriate, Rawls’ theory creates the potential for undue strain on a just society. Rawls’ argument would be stronger if he further clarified the threshold above which citizens may consider acting in a manner that constitutes civil disobedience.

Erica Tillotson is a junior in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying Government.
he seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke may not be featured on any of the American dollar bills or coins, but he certainly deserves as much, if not more, credit than Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington for America’s successful leap from thirteen British colonies to one united republic. In his Second Treatise of Government, Locke espouses a nuanced and multi-faceted reinterpretation of property that intrinsically ties in fundamental societal concepts, such as liberty, consent of the governed, and equality. Lockean notions contributed greatly to informing the socio-economic environment that differentiated America from the rest of Europe. The early Americans adapted these notions in order to answer the greatest question America faced in regards to the success of its founding before, during, and after the Revolutionary War: how could a people so passionate about freedom hold hundreds of thousands of people in the bondage of slavery? As America continued to develop and the question of slavery became more inevitable, Southerners drew new conclusions from Locke’s ideas to help America reconcile, at least temporarily, one of the grossest contradictions in its history: how could the world’s foremost democracy have engaged in the political disenfranchisement of millions of its people.

John Locke is principally known today in the United States for his call for the preservation of people’s “lives, liberties, and estates” and his concept of consent of the governed as the basis for legitimate government, both of which Thomas Jefferson drew upon in composing the Declaration of Independence. However, Lockean political theory is much more elaborate than just the echoes of it that we find in the Declaration. In John Locke’s Second Treatise of Government, Locke declares that “the great and chief end … [of men] putting themselves under government is the preservation of their property.” However, the framework and the claims he utilizes in order to arrive at this conclusion deserve exposition. Locke’s take on social contract theory hinges on the principle that “every man has a property in his own person” and “whatsoever then he… hath mixed his labor with… makes it his property.” More comprehensively, Locke considered property to encompass one’s life, liberty, and estates. Prior to the establishment of any government, all humans were naturally in a “state of perfect freedom to order their actions… as they think fit” and “a state also of equality, wherein… no one [had] more [power and jurisdiction] than another.” However, given how little security each individual could provide for himself and his property, humans established commonwealths and governments that would impose laws for the preservation of property. Every society, in order to be beneficial to live in, and every government, in order to be rational to live under, must designate preserving
the freedom to utilize and acquire private property as the foundational and eternal duty of its existence.

John Locke spoke of performing labor and acquiring property in theoretical terms, but American society took his ideas emphasizing work and productivity very much to heart during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In his “Information to Those Who Would Remove to America,” Benjamin Franklin draws a critical distinction between European society and American society in regards to how individuals are valued. In European society, one’s standard of living, social position, and level of political participation were all essentially determined, and thereby limited, at birth, i.e. by the class and family profession that one was born into.7 In America, in contrast, “multitudes of poor people from England, Ireland, Scotland and Germany, have… in a few years become wealthy farmers, who in their own countries... could never have emerged from the mean condition wherein they were born.”8 Through the means of labor, Americans could acquire property and wealth, thereby allowing for social mobility and increased political participation because they now had more of a stake in the affairs of political society. Thus, Locke’s interpretation of labor and property allowed for the higher social stature and enfranchisement of so many more people in American political society than just the aristocrats. Indeed, it would be difficult to see farmers rise to such levels of national prominence in European society as Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry Lee did in American society. Locke’s influence is clear: in America, labor and skills determine one’s fate, not birth.

If Locke believed that owning property was the greatest expression of freedom, Franklin warned that the inverse was also true in his “The Way to Wealth.” “When you run in debt, you give to another power over your liberty.”9 Franklin went so far as to assert that “the borrower is a slave to the lender,” and that one should avoid borrowing at all costs in order to “preserve your freedom and maintain your independence.”10 Indeed, it would be quite difficult to imagine why Franklin would employ such a hyperbolic metaphor of calling borrowers slaves if it were not for this connection between private property and freedom. A free person has the right to give or withhold consent to be governed, as Locke argued, but one only becomes, and maintains the status of being, free by having property to a stable degree. Without property, one is at the mercy of others and thereby has lost his or her rights to freedom and political participation. Both Benjamin Franklin’s observations in regards to America’s uniquely skill and productivity-based societal structure as well as his financial advice demonstrate how well Locke’s ideas of the importance of property and liberty were integrated into and markedly influenced America’s socio-economic atmosphere during the founding period. American society was able to extend political participation to people of ordinary birth, on the condition that they were productive members of the economy who managed their financial affairs responsibly.

Despite what John Locke theorized about property, liberty, consent of the governed, and equality, many of the Americans did not see how hypocritical it was to fight so ardently for freedom for themselves during the Revolutionary War yet refuse to emancipate their slaves. Hoping to ignite Americans’ patriotism, Thomas Paine wrote in the onset of “The American Crisis” that “if being bound [to British tyranny] is not slavery, then there [is] not such a thing as slavery upon earth.”11 Yet, as his contemporaries surely must have been aware, there were literally hundreds of thousands of people who suffered under actual slavery at the hands of the Americans at the time Paine had written this. Paine himself wrote that, since “all men being originally equals... no one by birth could have a right to set up his family in perpetual preference to all others forever.”12 This contradiction between a freedom-loving people and its simultaneous attachment to slavery was a source of tension during the writing of the Declaration of Independence, prompting Thomas Jefferson to
wipe out any mention of slavery originally included in his draft. This tension persisted over a decade later during the Constitutional Convention where tactful compromise and rhetorical maneuvering were necessary to preserve the unity of the country. Indeed, reconciling these two blatantly opposing elements of American society was the most onerous challenge faced by the newly-independent republic.

This reconciliation could not have been reached, however, without an adaptation of Lockean principles. In response to proposals of the federal government freeing the slaves, slaveholders could easily cite Locke’s principle that “the Supreme power cannot take from any man any part of his property without his own consent” to offer a defense of why the government had no power to do such a thing. Furthermore, Locke recognized that the beginning of “any political society is... the consent of any number of free men capable of a majority.”

Locke’s precise specification that the consent of free men was of prime importance simultaneously supported two conclusions. Firstly, Locke’s recognition of free men as a grouping distinct from that of all men could be interpreted as tacitly condoning slavery as an acceptable societal institution. Secondly, we have seen that, at least under Benjamin Franklin’s interpretation of Locke, freedom meant owning property and owning property was the only means of attaining one’s freedom. If freedom was conditional upon owning property, one needed to be economically self-sufficient in order to be considered free and able to give consent. This meant that the consent of the economically dependent was of no significance. Indeed, the idea that self-sufficiency was necessary to even have consent to offer and, in turn, become a member of the commonwealth, permeated Thomas Jefferson’s beliefs as well in his “Notes on the State of Virginia.” He warned of how slaves’ “dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition” of those whom slaves depend upon. Thus, personal autonomy was a prerequisite for political participation. Because property was so deeply rooted in Lockean principles as a concept prior to the emergence of political participation, those who did not own property (especially slaves) were viewed as in some sense deficient and therefore unable to participate in politics.

Of course, one could argue that this justification of slavery was a biased twist, rather than an impartial interpretation, of Locke’s ideas on the part of the founders. Slave labor was the driving force of the South’s economy at the time; it is quite possible that equating a lack of autonomy with debility in the political process was devised solely to justify slavery, rather than as a genuine and good faith interpretation of Locke on the part of the southerners. For example, if slaves truly were not seen as individuals, how could the representatives from the southern states argue to count them, or at least three-fifths of them, when determining representation in the House of Representatives? Such a contradiction gives some evidence that perhaps it was economic and political interests, not a genuinely-held understanding of Lockean concepts of liberty and equality, that motivated the South to defend the social status quo.

In order to accurately respond to such a counter-argument, one should look to how proponents of slavery articulated their positions, especially during the mid-nineteenth century in response to the growing abolitionist movement. South Carolinian John Calhoun came of age after the founding period and went on to be an unapologetic pro-slavery advocate in the Senate. His “A Disquisition on Government,” written a half-century after the U.S. Constitution was adopted, demonstrates a significant mastery of political theory canon, synthesizing classical Aristotelian ideas about man’s social nature and the need to perfect his faculties as well as Enlightenment ideas such as consent of the governed and checks and balances. After espousing his views on the aims and purposes of government, Calhoun concludes that:

It is a great and dangerous error to suppose that all people are equally entitled to liberty.
It is a reward to be earned, not a blessing to be gratuitously lavished on all alike—a reward reserved for the intelligent, the patriotic, the virtuous and deserving—and not a boon to bestowed on a people too ignorant, degraded and vicious, to be capable either of appreciating or of enjoying it…. A punishment inflicted on the undeserving [could not be] more just, than to be subject to lawless and despotic rule.17

Virginian George Fitzhugh, also a proponent of slavery, had similar ideas about the exclusiveness to freedom in his “Sociology for the South”: “If the children of ten years of age were remitted to all the rights… which men enjoy, all can perceive how soon ruin and penury would overtake them. But half of mankind are but grown-up children, and liberty is as fatal to them as it would be to children.”18 These were the arguments that competed with the abolitionists’ in the struggle for America’s conscience during the decades immediately leading up to the Civil War.

John Calhoun and George Fitzhugh’s views on freedom may not use Lockean verbiage as extensively as Thomas Jefferson’s does, but they still demonstrate elements of Locke’s political thought shaped by America’s socio-economic atmosphere. Given Locke’s claim that free, not all, men’s consent is the basis for government and Franklin’s claim that lack of property diminishes liberty, both Calhoun and Fitzhugh assert that liberty is not something to which all people are entitled. According to Fitzhugh, only about half of the population is entitled to freedom. Who is supposedly not entitled to it? In Calhoun’s eyes, those who were “too ignorant, degraded and vicious,” i.e. slaves, were incapable of earning political rights. Instead, what they deserved for supposedly not having the skills to acquire property was disenfranchisement and exploitation. Thus, by the mid-eighteenth century, slaves were deemed not worthy of liberty because they were economically dependent and their perceived inferiority made it impossible for them to ever become self-sufficient. Although John Locke did not explicitly offer a justification for slavery in his Second Treatise of Government, his ideas on the link between property and freedom were adapted by the early Americans, as Thomas Jefferson observed, to posit that lack of property and economic dependence makes one fit for servitude and later by Southerners to assert that one’s condition can preclude one from ever acquiring property and can justify dehumanization.

Among the array of Enlightenment thinkers, few can claim the credit of influencing the United States as much and as significantly as John Locke. His claims regarding equality and consent of the governed contributed the principles and foundations to the arguments for American independence from the British monarchy. His views on the nature of property and of liberty drastically transformed America’s socio-economic milieu into one that championed hard work and skills instead of noble birth as in most European countries during the eighteenth century. Such a shift in attitude allowed for social mobility and the political enfranchisement of much more people than European aristocratic society would ever have allowed for. At the same time, Locke’s ideas allowed the young American republic to postpone the question of slavery. Albeit with truly regrettable implications, namely the denial of human rights to such a large group of the American population for nearly another century, such a postponement also allowed the United States to settle down and not risk a tragic collapse so soon after such a long and hard-fought war for independence. Whether genuinely believed in or viciously manipulated at first, Lockean principles were so construed as to buttress the arguments of some of the most ardent defenders of slavery who sought to rationally defend the “peculiar institution” from the arguments of their abolitionist contemporaries. Indeed, adaptation of Lockean thought allowed the fledgling republic to avoid the greatest obstacle and threat to its existence during the founding period, i.e. the hypocrisy of slavery in a freedom-loving country. Locke’s views on property and, by extension, liberty, consent of the governed, and equality,
have more value than simply reminding us of the foundations that the American political experiment was based on. These are the same ideas and values that led billions of people all over the world throughout the past two centuries out of subjugation and oppression and onto political enfranchisement in their societies, and these very ideas could continue to do the same for billions more.

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Imperialism in Retrospect
Some Realities of Decolonization in Africa

Cole Horton

In the year 1960 alone, seventeen former European colonies in Africa became independent members of the United Nations, a signal to many observers that imperialism’s retreat on the continent would be as rapid as was its rise in the final years of the nineteenth century. It appeared for the moment that the enlightened principles of self-government and sovereign independence, so widely denied to millions of people around the world in previous decades, had finally triumphed in Africa. Yet as remarkable as this perception sounds, historians have meticulously dissected the social, political, and economic phenomenon referred to as ‘decolonization,’ revealing that imperialism’s retreat in the years following the Second World War was far from straightforward. In fact, some have gone so far as to question whether the aforementioned principles of self-government and sovereign independence can be described as characteristic of decolonization at all. This paper attempts to reconcile the perceptions and realities of decolonization, as well to provide a basic chronology for its development in the twentieth century. In doing so, this paper reinforces the notion that, as Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick articulated in the 1950s, empires often times struggle to learn the ability to “perish gracefully.”

Creating a working definition of decolonization is no simple task, yet discussing it in the absence of such a definition only complicates our understanding of the relationship between European colonizers and the colonized African. Thus, attempts to create such a definition, or at least those to clarify what decolonization is not, are worthwhile endeavors for historians of colonialism. Firstly, any definition of this phenomenon must begin by acknowledging that decolonization is neither monolithic nor uniform. European imperial powers orchestrated the changes in their various colonial relationships with different motivations in mind. The British Empire, for instance, found itself financially and physically depleted after the Second World War, heavily reliant on American loans to support itself and preoccupied with costly welfare programs at home. These weaknesses made it clear to British colonial officials that they would be unable to satisfy the financial demands of their colonial territories, and stringent fiscal policies were implemented that adversely affected the funds available for Britain’s African dependencies. In 1953, for instance, colonial governments in sub-Saharan Africa were asked to report their needs for external finance for the half-decade from 1955-1960. The capital London agreed to direct towards these governments ended up totaling almost 65 million GBP less than what had been requested, a harbinger of the changing relationship between metropole and colony that was to develop after 1945. Of course, recent colonial developments in India and Palestine certainly
primed British official and public opinion to exhibit a reduced appreciation of imperial territories, another motivating factor in the British move towards decolonization.5

The Belgian Empire had its own reasons for pursuing a policy of decolonization as well. Public opinion in Belgium gradually lost its patience with the colonial project, an evolution evidenced in the emergence of the anti-conscription campaign, led by Belgian socialists, in 1959. As Belgian citizens demanded that their resources not be sacrificed for the wellbeing of a distant empire in the Congo, the government moved decisively to adapt its Congolese relationship appropriately.6 The French likewise had their own motivations for reexamining their colonial relationships, especially in French West Africa. The unique French experience with ‘assimilationist’ policies resurfaced following the Brazzaville Conference of 1944, after which African political leaders were offered political seats in Paris and other reforms were implemented. To an unprecedented extent, French-African policymakers had the opportunity to be part of the policymaking process in a substantial way, negotiating alliances and political maneuverings in the 1950s to unite with political parties and even extract concessions from the Parisian government.7 Similarly, Charles de Gaulle’s implementation of the loi cadre reforms in 1956, which ultimately resulted in the breakup of the Federation of French West Africa (FFWA) into separate and independent entities, delegated even more political authority to West African elite governments and away from the metropole.8 De Gaulle’s reasoning for these important structural changes were not because of financial pressures, as in Britain, or because of changing public sentiments towards empire, as in Belgium, but because of strategic calculations about the potential threats of emerging nationalist movements in Africa. Anticipating the same demands to arise in French West Africa that would appear shortly under Kwame Nkrumah’s nationalist movement in Ghana in 1957, not to mention the anti-colonial rhetoric that would continue to echo from the American and Soviet superpowers, de Gaulle’s move toward French decolonization was an effort to maintain order and imperial unity amidst potentially destabilizing imperial and international forces.9

Apart from variations between different colonial powers, decolonization had important distinctions within the territories of individual empires as well. As William Roger Louis, one of the leading scholars of imperialism, demonstrates in his research, decisions about decolonization depended on idiosyncratic local conditions throughout the European empires in Africa.10 While Nigeria and the Gold Coast were considered advanced enough for decolonizing policies in the late 1950s and early 1960s, for example, Britain’s other sub-Saharan African colonies were deemed ill-prepared for independence based on imperial measurements such as “economic viability, political maturity, or ethnic complexity.”11 The Fifth French Republic similarly presided over a “set of decolonizations”: one policy constructed on consensus was implemented in West Africa, while another policy relying on force and coercion was implemented in Algeria.12 Such variations of European decolonization policies should not be surprising, however. Just as the imposition of imperial rule in Africa was characterized by numerous different approaches, including indirect rule, rule under a chartered company, or more direct administration in line with the Berlin Conference’s (1884-1885) ‘effective occupation’ standards, decolonization faced unique situations throughout the various European empires and thus adapted to its particular circumstances.

In short, European imperial powers each had their own motivation for pursuing decolonization policies. However, the varying decolonization policies of the 1950s and 1960s also shared a common similarity essential to articulating its definition: decolonization was not complete withdrawal, nor was it an intention to reduce European influence in former African colonies. The British response to a growing nationalist force under the leadership of one of the foremost
leaders of pan-African unity, Kwame Nkrumah, explains this more clearly. Despite ceding political independence to Nkrumah and Ghanaians in 1957, Britain never envisaged a complete severing of relations with its former African colony. Gold Coast cocoa farmers were expected to continue trading with Britain, the territory’s gold mines were British-owned and guaranteed continued exploitation of its mineral deposits, and the introduction of political reform and self-government was planned to occur in stages. In other words, the benefits of the imperial relationship were not expected to cease, but the costs of administering the empire were to be relieved without the international community accusing Britain of abandoning or neglecting its colonies. The Colonial Office was even instructed to design decolonization programs such that the newly independent countries, especially the larger colonies with more extensively developed economies, were encouraged to become more dependent on their relationship with the United Kingdom, not less. The French Empire likewise did not pursue decolonization as a means of terminating its imperial relationships. In fact French officials sought to create institutions and quasi-federal superstructures to substantively bind African colonies to the metropole, even while allowing the former to administer themselves. The pinnacle of these attempts was the French Union referendum proposed by de Gaulle to French West African elite governments. In its essence, the referendum offered two options for French colonial territories; the first was to accept a position in a French Union that would be more tightly knit than the British Commonwealth, include funds for education and economic development, and access to Parisian society for African rulers, but would forfeit decisions of “grand strategy” to French leaders. The second option offered to French West African colonies was independence, followed by the complete and abrupt removal of French assistance, funds, and technical support. De Gaulle’s strategy largely paid off, as all but one of France’s tropical African colonies voted to join the proposed French Union. The country that chose independence, Guinea, experienced the severe consequences of their decision, as de Gaulle did his best to make the newly sovereign entity ungovernable (fortunately for Guinea, pan-African organizations assisted its transition to self-reliance).

Another factor exemplifying the continuity of imperialism and domination in decolonization policies was the search, by European powers, for collaborative indigenous rulers who would represent imperial interests following nominal independence. Power and authority were often bestowed upon indigenous elites that had been ‘acculturated’ to Western political traditions, values, and philosophies. A similar strategy had been employed by European powers in the creation of ‘chieftaincy’ to smooth the imposition of colonial rule decades earlier. Whereas chiefs were often strongmen chosen because of their willingness to collaborate with European wishes in exchange for financial or material rewards, African leaders after independence were (when possible) carefully selected so as to limit the loss of imperial control over important political and economic matters. Even where such a collaborative leader was absent, however, traditional elites that rose to power often sought to maintain the structures of authority that had formed during the imperial experience, as these structures benefited them and reinforced their social positions and their societies’ unequal distribution of power. Elites in the French Federation of West Africa, for instance, resisted proposals to centralize funding in Dakar, as they predicted that such funding would be distributed too broadly across the territories and would leave less for their own demands. The creation of large political entities was thus stifled in French West Africa in favor of small independent units, which admittedly made French control and influence easier to enforce.

This paper has shown that decolonization’s primary characteristics were its variety and its intention to maintain political, imperial control over its former colonies, even if nominal
independence was granted. Other notable characteristics deserve mentioning as well. While political and economic changes were often swift and brusque, decolonization did not always change ‘the hearts and minds’ of previously colonized African peoples. As the University of Kent’s David Birmingham writes, “the minds of many Africans continued to work on colonial assumptions, making cultural, emotional, and intellectual decolonization difficult for the heirs of empire.”19 Furthermore, decolonization was not the result of solely European and African forces, but occurred in the wider international political environment of the Cold War. The two superpowers from the 1950s to the late 1980s, the United States and the Soviet Union, expressed severe criticisms of imperialism in addition to other anti-colonial rhetoric. That empire was no longer a prerequisite for great power status certainly affected European cost-benefit analyses about the futures of their dependencies in Africa.20 Furthermore, the United States State Department played an active role in encouraging Britain and France to negotiate decolonization programs with their colonies so as to avoid driving Africans into the communist, Soviet embrace.21 In this way it could be understandably interpreted that decolonization simply meant the replacement of European imperialism for American imperialism; newly sovereign African states could be seen as pawns in a global ideological battle between nuclear giants. There is surely some truth to this, as Cold War proxy conflicts on the African continent claimed nearly a million casualties in Mozambique alone.22 Of course, reducing postwar African agency by characterizing Africans as Cold War ‘pawns’ would be a gross misrepresentation; even during the harshest epochs of colonial domination, Africans navigated their unique situation and helped mold the colonial and postcolonial experiences.

A working definition of decolonization must consider each of these aforementioned characteristics. Decolonization was a process, not a single event, that was varied and dependent on situational circumstances like economic strength, political maturity, and the presence of indigenous elite leaders willing to collaborate with imperial powers. Moreover, it was not initially a policy of withdrawal; in fact, the opposite is more accurate. Decolonization policies sought to guarantee continued imperial influence and control over important political and economic issues in former colonies, even as it ended formal political domination. In this way, decolonization was not that much different, substantively, than the European imperialism that had characterized the previous several decades. The most dynamic, blatant example of the ‘imperialism of decolonization’ was visible in Charles de Gaulle’s referendum in the Federation of French West Africa. It was only with time and continuing changing circumstances that decolonization’s ‘new imperialism’ began to subside. Decolonization also did not mean a significant change of perspectives and thoughts on the ground for Africans; the imperial experience did not wash off quickly in the waters of sovereignty and independence. Finally, decolonization was not a product of the Cold War, but it was undoubtedly influenced by the context of superpower conflict. The stakes for the West of maintaining good relations with former European colonies were magnified exponentially in the context of the spreading threat of communist subversion, and thus, new African states often found European control replaced by powerful American influence and ‘aid’—a sort of imperialism in its own right.

A working definition of decolonization still leaves important questions unanswered, however. A chronological understanding of this phenomenon, for instance, is hard to come by in contemporary scholarship. The questions of when decolonization began and ended are contested and almost certainly have mixed responses, but nevertheless, narrowing the era of decolonization as much as possible can only help to reveal its real historical character.

There are several potential ‘starting points’ for decolonization in Africa: some have suggested that its first inklings began in Liberia and
the Cape among freedmen and white settlers respectively in the late nineteenth century; others cite the term’s coinage and use in Britain and Germany in the interwar years by Moritz Julius Bonn as a potential beginning for the process’s birth in the minds of European colonizers. Still others ignore the starting point of decolonization altogether, instead discussing the Suez Crisis of 1956 as the watershed moment of decolonization in Africa: “The year 1956 is to 1882 as the end [of empire] is to the beginning,” William Roger Louis writes. As might be expected by these suggestions, there is no one starting point for decolonization. It development was gradual in the minds of colonial officials and correspondingly emerged as the world’s principles and priorities changed, and as the possession of colonies came to acquire a new, negative connotation. This likely occurred first, at least in any meaningful and widespread manner, in the postwar environment of the 1950s, and possibly even the 1960s. At that time, initial complications of administering colonies in the postwar world became clearer, whether those were financial, political, or other problems. However, African societies began to gain their independence in the 1950s does not necessitate the birth of decolonization as a withdrawal policy (which only came later on). Ghana and Nigeria were granted independence in the 1957 and 1960 respectively, for instance, but were not expected to leave the colonial sphere any time soon.

If pinpointing the beginning of decolonization is difficult, discerning its ending is nearly impossible. As David Birmingham notes, Nigerian independence in 1960 was followed by ten years of negotiations and compromises with Britain and new Nigerian citizens to make peace possible. However, the Nigerian politicians who negotiated such concessions with the British in 1970, and who stayed in power for the following three decades, were trainees of the British Royal Military Academy. In Nigeria, then, did decolonization end in 1960, 1970, 2000, or sometime later? Yet another option for the end of decolonization (at least for the British) could be 1964, when the British Colonial Office was absorbed by the Commonwealth Relations Office, which itself was then absorbed by the Foreign Office in 1970. In contrast, German historian Wolfgang Mommsen has complicated the picture of a lasting imperial presence amidst decolonization, arguing that the poor economic performance of African countries is due not to continued imperial controls, but the opposite: insufficient integration into the world economy, or “sheer neglect.” Similarly, David Fieldhouse, a former Vere Harmsworth Professor at the University of Cambridge, posits that even the presence of multi-national corporations, often viewed as a vehicle of economic imperialism in the postwar world, shifted from exploitation in the imperial past to investment and domestic African manufacturing in the present. In the end, finding a single date, or even a single decade, to represent the end of decolonization is futile. A more worthwhile approach is to locate the continuities of the imperial, or post-imperial, relationship (as in the example of Nigeria) that trace from the 1950s and 1960s to the present day. Such continuities can shed light on how the imperial relationship has changed from former political control to other, more subtler means of control such as loans, military assistance, and foreign aid, or still yet to a severance of imperial ties altogether.

Decolonization is a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that has shaped the development of modern Africa. The ambiguity of its definition, beginning, and ending all testify to the fluidity and varied nature of this process. Yet decolonization has undoubtedly had an enormous effect on the institutional, political, and economic development of modern states in Africa. The colonial legacy, then, is an essential phenomenon that demands attention from students of history. This paper has attempted to clarify some of decolonization’s underlying features and to offer a basic introduction of what decolonization meant for Europeans and Africans in the post-Second World War international environment. In doing so, it does not pretend to have answered even a small fraction of the remaining questions related
to imperialism, decolonization, and independence in Africa’s history, but instead encourages their continued analysis by future students and scholars alike. “The world [contains] only one Africa,” and we have still a tremendous amount of work to do before we can claim to understand it in its entirety.  

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Today the debates over evolution or abortion dominate the media’s portrayal of the public’s view on the relationship between Christianity and science. It seems as though there can only be belief in science or belief in the Divine. However, to truly examine the relationship between Christianity and science, one cannot just look at public opinion during this one era. Christianity has an almost 2000-year history and the continual progress of science throughout all of human existence requires us to broaden our scope of judgment.

This paper will examine a time period where Christianity was highly influential and shall evaluate its relationship then with science: Western Europe during the Middle Ages. During this rather expansive time period the Catholic Church held significant authority, and this was also an era that preceded some of most significant advances of education and science: The Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. Thus, the Middle Ages paved the way for the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution.

During the Middle Ages, Christianity encouraged the development of modern scientific thought. Reason, which is a key element of the Catholic creed, influenced why medieval Catholics studied science. Faith therefore inspired Christians in Western Europe to explore scientific advancement, especially in the first universities founded by the Catholic Church.

The Middle Ages and the Structure of Christianity

The Middle Ages, the Medieval Era, the post-classical era, have all been terms used to describe an ambiguous time period spanning for in some cases over a thousand years, with uncertain beginning and ending dates. For the purposes of this paper, the Middle Ages will be defined as the era between the end of Roman civilization in Western Europe (around A.D. 500) and the beginning of the Renaissance and early modern world history (roughly A.D. 1450). This time period has been further broken up into three different periods: the early Middle Ages (500 to 1000), the transition period (1000-1200) and the high or late Middle Ages (approximately 1200 to 1450). This paper will more closely examine the transitional period and high Middle Ages because this time period was the most influential in causing the cultural and scientific revolutions that followed: the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution. However, comprehension of the Early Middle Ages is still vital to understanding the people and Christianity of the time period, and some of the reforms that occurred during the early Middle Ages also affected the development of modern science.

It is also important to understand the different branches of Christianity. Within Christianity there are three main branches. The largest and oldest is the Roman Catholic Church, which
became more structured as a religious body during the early Middle Ages. Until 1054, the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church were united. In 1054, the Roman Catholic Church in the West split with the Eastern Orthodox Church in the East for mainly political reasons. Then, in 1517, the Protestant Reformation began with Martin Luther. Several different groups then split from the Roman Catholic Church in Western Europe, forming their own Protestant denominations. According to this timeline of Christianity, it is clear that Roman Catholicism refers to the dominant faith of Christians in the medieval west. For this reason, I will address the Catholic Church as synonymous with Western Christianity.

Due to the collapse of Roman rule in Western Europe by A.D. 500, there was far less centralized power, and more local leadership, which fell in the hands of not an emperor, but of the local rulers. Political unity became relatively weak. The remaining unifying power now came from the spreading missionary religion: Christianity. It was during this era that the power of the Roman Pope was consolidated and revered. The popes before and during the early Middle Ages were active in sending out missionary expeditions to evangelize the barbarian kingdoms throughout Western Europe. As Roman influence died in the West, the office of the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, grew in power, thus preserving the rule of law and form of governance.

The hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church that developed during the early Middle Ages bears many similarities with the Church of today. The most common clerics in the daily lives of most medieval Christians were parish priests, who conducted services for the residents of the area. Above the local priest stood the bishop, who sat at the head of a diocese comprised of many parish churches. The church where the bishop celebrated Mass was called a cathedral. The archbishop exercised control over the archdiocese, which was a grouping of many different dioceses. At the very head of the church sat the Bishop of Rome, the Pope.

In addition to the Church hierarchy, other religious institutions existed. Men who chose the life of a monk resided in secluded monasteries, and devout women lived as nuns in the female equivalent, convents. Members of both institutions devoted their lives to praying, studying, caring for the poor, sick, and elderly, and helping the population spiritually. All of these Catholic institutions, consolidated in the early medieval era, would continue throughout the transitional period and the high Middle Ages, and have major influences on the relationship between religion and science.

Applying Reason to Faith and Science

Catholicism’s emphasis on reason encouraged people of the faith to be educated, both about their faith but also about their universe in general, and inspired many to study science. Reason in this context meant the ability to think with rationality about the surrounding world. Catholics emphasized the use of reason for several purposes, which were explained by Catholic theologians and scientists during the Middle Ages. Berengar of Tours, a theologian and archdeacon, who lived from 1000-1088, believed that evidence was more important in theology than authority, and expected that people see their faith and the world for themselves, rather than simply being told so by another. Berengar was convinced that reason was a gift from God, and therefore should be used and applied to one’s own faith. Adelard of Bath, a philosopher and scientist from the twelfth century shared a similar view of reason. He contended that though Christians should accept divine authority as supreme, it was imperative that in order to fully understand the faith, one must use logic and reason. Involved both in the Church and science, Adelard also argued that reason was a gift from God, and if not used, it would be given in vain. To Adelard and many other Catholic scholars, theologians, and scientists of the era, God had created the world around them. He made it operate in a certain function and rational manner.
for a purpose. It was the duty of a Catholic scientist to seek out the rational explanations for the natural phenomena that God had created.\textsuperscript{10}

Perhaps the most famous theologian of reason and faith was St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274).\textsuperscript{11} St. Thomas Aquinas is considered to be a Doctor of the Church, from the Latin, \textit{Docere} which means to teach. Thus, in the Catholic Church, people who have been deemed “Doctors of the Church” are people who have taught the faith incredibly well and clearly; they lead and guide others in the faith. St. Thomas Aquinas was not just a Doctor, but also a Doctor \textit{communis}, meaning common doctor in Latin. This distinction indicates he is a teacher that all should look to and is influential in all areas of Catholic theology.\textsuperscript{12} Thus, his teachings are especially important when evaluating the relationship between faith and reason.

Aquinas believed that all truth was inherently good and came from God. Thus, there can be no conflict between the truths of science and the truths of faith. Some theologians of his era argued that the facts of science could exist while still being contradictory to truths from revelation. They simply existed as a different kind of truth. Aquinas rejected this idea, arguing that all truth came from God, and therefore both science and religion are all one truth, because truth is part of God’s inherent identity. The truths of science and the truths of religion are one.\textsuperscript{13} Aquinas discussed reason in light of Christianity in his famous but unfinished magnum opus \textit{Summa Theologica}, which means Summary of Theology in Latin. In this piece of theological literature, Aquinas walks the reader though the different arguments for the existence of God, proving that human reason can be used to learn about, to worship, and to love God. Justifying religious and scientific knowledge together, Aquinas wrote,

\begin{quote}
Sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For the astronomer and the physicist both may prove the same conclusion: that the earth, for instance, is round: the astronomer by means of mathematics (i.e. abstracting from matter), but the physicist by means of matter itself. Hence there is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation.\textsuperscript{14}
\end{quote}

Aquinas is known as the great synthesizer, combining human knowledge and the light of faith.\textsuperscript{15} The conscious application of reason to faith and the physical world was a significant step for the course that would gradually produce modern science.\textsuperscript{16}

Furthermore, this integration of faith and reason was expressed through the rise of medieval universities of Western Europe.\textsuperscript{17} Though exact birth dates of the first European universities are unknown, they began taking a formal structure around the latter half of the twelfth century. Some of the first included the universities at Paris, Bologna, Oxford, and Cambridge, and all were Catholic institutions. By the beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517, eighty-one universities had been established in Western Europe. The pope himself often established and encouraged the growing centers of education, issuing papal charters for universities.\textsuperscript{18} Key elements\textsuperscript{19} that come to mind when we think of a university today originated from these Catholic universities of the twelfth century: faculties, courses of study, degrees, examinations, and the division between undergraduate and graduate areas of study. As Catholic institutions of learning, these universities were committed to pursuing both the truths of science and faith, as one unified goal. The medieval European university curriculum encouraged its students and staff to appeal to reason.\textsuperscript{20} The goal of the medieval education was to unlock the eternal truths about God’s universe and to find explanations for why things are as they are. Catholic universities found it important to know such things so that they might better understand how God’s creation works.\textsuperscript{21}

Medieval universities also drew their emphasis on reason and rationality from the
classical learning tradition. Scientists and theologians alike drew inspiration from the works of Aristotle, not only his scientific discoveries but also his philosophy. Like Aristotle, theologians viewed human reason as a valuable tool that must be applied in order to do good. Catholic scientists followed Aristotle’s example of using human reason to justify all of his scientific conclusions.22 In accordance with the teachings of the famous philosopher, medieval universities believed that knowledge was a noble endeavor in itself and that the search for truth and knowledge was inherently good.23 Adelard of Bath, a cleric in the twelfth century, exemplified this quest of learning for God. As a member of the Church, his thirst for knowledge encouraged him to travel to Sicily and the Middle East. He translated key texts concerning math and science from Arabic into Latin, in order to spread this knowledge with other Christians in the West. One of his greatest Latin translations was the *Elements* by Euclid of Alexandria (325-265 B.C.), a comprehensive study of geometry. His translation was the standard text until the sixteenth century.24

While reason was clearly intertwined with science throughout the Middle Ages, the term “science” is relatively new. It was not until the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Cambridge in June of 1833 that the term was used as now understood. In its genesis, the term “science” was completely separated from philosophy and theology.25 However, people of the Middle Ages considered the study of the universe “natural philosophy”, as somewhat equivalent to the modern study of science.26 Catholics of the Middle Ages called science philosophy because philosophy was wisdom and an understanding of the world. Theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas in France and St. Bonaventure (1221-1274) in Italy believed that man could use philosophy to understand the ultimate truth of theology. God spoke this truth in philosophy, so it was man’s duty to understand this truth.27 The fact that science was considered a philosophy proves that science was by no means viewed as the counter to religion, but rather its counterpart. And since the study of science was viewed as an integral part of the Catholic faith, the Catholic Church was called to promote education.

The Establishment of Schools and Universities

As briefly discussed, the Catholic emphasis on reason was especially prevalent in the first schools and later universities. Some of the earliest examples of more widespread education came during the Carolingian time period. This era was when King Charlemagne, or Charles the Great, ruled over the Franks, in the area around what is now France, from 768 to 814. Charlemagne believed that in order to be a good Christian ruler to his people he needed to not only protect them, but also to educate them.28 In order to achieve this, Charlemagne ordered the establishment of cathedral and monastic schools.29 Though occurring in the Catholic Church, Charlemagne’s new revival of learning spread beyond just religious education. Charlemagne supported the teaching of reading and writing as part of the curriculum in religious institutions throughout the kingdom, so that the clergy would not only live pure lives but also scholarly lives.30

As a result of these new decrees, some of the most active and prestigious schools of France were attached to or operated out of the cathedrals in the regions influenced by these ninth century reforms.31 Charlemagne’s reforms helped contribute to the recovery and preservation of important parts of the classical tradition, establish schools, spread literacy, and lead to advances in astronomy and geometry. This enabled the full recovery of the classical learning tradition several centuries later.32 Even as late as the Renaissance, humanists and scientists found a majority of their classical learning from the libraries of Catholic monasteries. Thus, Catholic monasteries during the Carolingian era played a pivotal role in contributing to the scientific advancements of the Renaissance.33
Educational institutions expanded throughout the transitional period of the Middle Ages. In 1079, Pope Gregory issued a papal decree, ordering cathedrals and monasteries to create schools and train priests. This decree spread the motivation for education throughout all of Western Europe, while Charlemagne’s order applied to mainly the Franks. Cathedrals, which were located in population centers throughout Western Europe, were instructed to provide clergy and non-clergy alike with free teaching in both Latin and the liberal arts. In Ireland, for example, after St. Patrick brought Christianity to the area in the fifth century, Irish monks built what would become a university city. Thousands of students from throughout Ireland, later England, and finally all of Europe traveled to these cities to receive an education. Throughout history, there has been direct relationship between education and urbanization. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was a shift in the European population towards the urban areas. As more people moved into the cities, monastery schools in the areas become major educational forces. As more people began to value the ability to read and write, skilled teachers became higher in demand. One cathedral school that was especially important to the world of science was the School of Chartres in France. Almost every scientific scholar of the era was at some time or another associated with or influenced by the university. The school was very much devoted to understanding the natural causes of the universe. During the eleventh century, under Fulbert of Chartres, a strong Christian, the school grew. Fulbert was heavily involved in new developments in logic, mathematics, and astronomy. He also studied new scientific information coming from Muslim Spain.

Education reached its apex in the university system. In these first universities, the Church granted charters, protected the rights of the universities, defended scholars from undue interference by overbearing authorities, created an international academic community, and created the kind of robust and unfettered academic debate and discussion that we now link with a university. Universities had the freedom to establish standards and procedures, create the curriculum, fix fees, grant degrees, and grant acceptance to those deemed fit to teach or study. Despite this freedom to pursue education, they received protection, privileges, and immunity from local jurisdiction and taxes from the popes and monarchs. By the beginning of the Protestant Reformation, as many as 750,000 could have been educated in these new universities, creating a substantial literate population. The universities stood at the center of the Western civilization and culture. It was there that a new culture of education was formed: one that was not Roman or pagan, but emerging as its own driving force of education, and eventually natural philosophy.

More specifically, the establishment of universities was important in the education of science, or natural philosophy. Every student graduated from the medieval university with a firm understanding of Aristotelian natural philosophy. The universities were dedicated to the critical examination of knowledge claims through Aristotelian logic and integrated the content of classical Greek and Arabic learning with the claims of Christian theology. Most students began their studies at the universities around the age of fifteen, and were immediately educated in logic and natural philosophy centered around the works of Aristotle. In an era of a relatively low-educated population, the only way students could learn about science was to listen to lectures and read texts at these Catholic universities. Scholars at these universities were determined to understand the classics of natural philosophy, including Plato’s Timaeus, which was “the most coherent discussion of cosmological and physical problems then available.” At these universities, more people were exposed to math and science than at any other time in the past.

The study of medicine was also highly emphasized in medieval universities. As part of the goal or providing a general education, medical studies began to appear in cathedral schools.
during the tenth and eleventh centuries. The popularization of medicine in the universities guaranteed the continuation of medical studies, and the creation of a community of university-trained physicians. The increased practice of medicine also sprang from the Catholic tradition of service and charity. Several Catholic values relate the Church’s mission to the promotion of health care, including human dignity, care for the poor, responsible stewardship, common good, and rights and conscience. The promotion of human dignity and the common good are even the foundation of Catholic social teaching. For this reason, many religious orders and monasteries created centers of medical treatment as part of their outreach to care for the sick and vulnerable of society. For example, in Germany during the fourteenth century, the Alexian Brothers organized care for the victims of the Black Plague. Medical schools formed at the universities of Montpellier and Padua in order to train professional physicians on Arab and Greek medical texts. The University of Salerno, in southern Italy, was the chief medical school of the era. Medieval medical students were trained in comprehensive medical teachings of the Greek physician Galen (A.D. 29-199) and information from Arab medical scholars. They used this information to make their own contributions to medicine, such as curative properties of plants and new discoveries in anatomy. These doctors emerging from the universities fostered the foundations for Western European medical science that would thrive centuries later.

Catholic institutions created centers of learning and a new emphasis on natural philosophy without which later scientific inquiry and modern scientific thought could not have been possible. Experiments and ideas published in the universities were highly influential in the development of our scientific understanding today. Thus, there is a direct link between “many of the questions raised by the 12th and 13th century naturalists and the experimental pursuits that were carried out in the 17th century during the Scientific Revolution.” This new information included the discovery of electricity, experiments on pneumatics, air pumps, and the vacuum, and the study of anatomy occurring across Europe during the Middle Ages. The seeds of the neo-Platonic ideas of Copernicus and Kepler, key scientists of the Scientific Revolution, were planted throughout the Middle Ages in Catholic universities. The understanding of the world as a rational universe that can and should be studied and examined was developed throughout the scholastic natural philosophy of the Middle Ages. The modern scientific process of developing, critiquing, and perhaps eventually discarding of hypotheses was invented by scholastic natural philosophers and continued throughout the Scientific Revolution and even to this day.

In addition to the specific outputs of scientific discoveries by universities, the most important legacy of the teachings of the Catholic universities was the development of “a spirit of scientific inquiry—that is, it instilled a fundamental intellectual curiosity that was to persist all the way to the present.” The fundamental intellectual curiosity to use reason and to become educated in natural philosophy was key to the later developments of science, and was birthed at Catholic centers of learning.

**Conclusion**

The common conception that Christianity and science have been the antithesis of each other throughout history is not supported by my research. Though one can argue that there have been plenty of times where Christianity and science have clashed with each other, overall the scientific knowledge gained in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment was made possible by Catholicism in the Middle Ages.

Even to this day, universities remain the premier institutions for scientific research and training. The university model where scholars formed self-governing corporations was created by the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. The process of receiving an undergraduate education followed by law school or medical school was also formulated in the Middle Ages.
Additionally, our entire understanding of classical literature was only made possible by translations created by Catholics during the Middle Ages. Finally, because they incorporated both faith, and reason, Catholic schools and universities were important promoters of literacy, education, and a higher level of learning. These schools created an environment where scientific inquiry was encouraged and this intellectual curiosity has persisted even to the present day.

The rift between Catholicism and science as a whole was not supported by either the history or the theology of the Middle Ages. St. Thomas Aquinas argued in his *Summa Theologica* that “objects which are the subject-matter of different philosophical sciences can yet be treated of by this one single sacred science under one aspect precisely so far as they can be included in revelation.” Thus, sacred natural philosophy of the science must be incorporated and embraced with the sacred science of theology and Catholicism. Scientific advancement should therefore not be viewed as the antithetical to Catholicism, but rather it’s partner, as it often had been throughout the Middle Ages. As Saint Pope John Paul II explained in a letter in 1988, science and Catholicism “Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish” and we need both “to be what we must be, what we are called to be.”

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Niccolo Machiavelli, the noted Italian political theorist, conceived of the ideal Prince in his work *The Prince* as a person who could strategically acquire and maintain power through whatever means necessary. While he was a prominent religious leader during the Protestant Reformation rather than strictly a politician, Martin Luther exhibited many of the qualities that Machiavelli identified as necessary for the acquisition of power and influence. In his own way, Martin Luther was a talented political strategist willing to use his considerable skills in political diplomacy in order to assure the success of his theological agenda. The course of Luther’s life necessitated the use of selective and informed political action during the turbulent years of conflict between the various sects of Protestantism and the institutional power of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire, even if he did not consider himself to be a politician. Luther’s letters over the course of his life reveal him to be a calculating individual who understood how to cultivate and manipulate certain relationships with powerful figures in Germany in order to protect himself while advancing Lutheranism, mirroring strategies that Machiavelli points to as essential for the success of a Prince. Martin Luther’s approaches to issues of secular political authority, his cultivation and manipulation of powerful political figures, and his willingness to adapt his message to account for changing political and theological circumstance all reflect Luther’s Machiavellian tendencies and demonstrate that perhaps Luther was the ideal “Prince” for the rise of the Protestant Reformation and the advancement of Lutheranism during the sixteenth century.

Luther gained prominence throughout Germany and the rest of Europe for his scathing assaults on the sins of the Catholic Church, which reflects Machiavelli’s almost identical condemnations of the Church for the destabilization of the Italian political scene. According to Machiavelli, the Church was failing Italy and the rest of Europe because it had lost touch with its religious purpose and only caused harm to the people by attempting to maintain its political power at the expense of Italy’s potential unity: “First, the papal court and the bad example it sets has led to the utter loss of piety and religion in Italy. This has brought about endless disadvantages and turmoil, because as one might presume where there is religion there is every good, where religion is lacking one might presume the opposite.” Luther first rose to prominence when he posted his 95 Theses on the doors of a Church in Wittenberg, accusing the Pope and the Church itself of tremendous avarice and greed at the expense of the common people without any consideration of its proper role as the spiritual soul and center of Christianity. Luther’s initial arguments demonstrate a parallel between his work and Machiavelli’s earlier attacks on the Church by effectively restating it through a more
theologically-centered perspective rather than a purely political one. Additionally, Luther mirrors Machiavelli’s earlier arguments by stating that the Church has become less of the spiritual soul of Christianity and more of a political institution focused solely on self-preservation. In a scathing letter directly to Pope Leo X, Luther spares nothing in his assaults on the sins of the Church and the Pope himself:

Your See, however, which is called the Court of Rome, and which neither you nor any man can deny to be more corrupt than any Babylon or Sodom, and quite, as I believe, of a lost, desperate, and hopeless impiety, this I have verily abominated, and have felt indignant that the people of Christ should be cheated under your name and the pretext of the Church of Rome and so I have resisted, and will resist, as long as the spirit of faith shall live in me.²

Luther’s coarse and aggressive language helps drive interest in his message while simultaneously staking out a moral high ground in his fight against the Church. Taken together, one can see the striking parallels between the opinions of Machiavelli and Luther on the dangers and depravity of the Catholic Church. Therefore, Luther’s initial rise to prominence, fueled primarily by his vehement assault on the Church’s sinful nature, certainly paralleled the work of Machiavelli and his opinions on the heinous effects that the Church had concerning Italian political division.

Furthermore, while Luther and Machiavelli both maligned the Catholic Church for degrading the spiritual authority of Christianity, they also agreed on the value of proper religion in maintaining order and promoting the general well-being of society. In his discussion of the Romans’ religion, Machiavelli argues that, “anyone who looks closely at Roman history can see how religion served to govern the armies, encourage the plebeians, keep good men good, and shame the evil.”³ Machiavelli believed that the effective use of religion in a society was essential to the success of the state, a view that he contrasted with the destabilizing sins of the Church, an institution in his eyes that failed the Italian people by preventing any possibility for political unification. As Luther’s views evolved and he began to understand that his divisive theological differences with the Church meant that it was highly unlikely he would be able to reform the Church from within, Luther went out on his own and formulated a new theology with the state and religion as the two pillars upon which a successful Christian community could thrive. As a result, Luther made sure to create a significant role for the state in the advancement of his new religious vision, even if the motives for this evolution reflected an extremely Machiavellian calculation: “As the princes came aboard the Reformation, Luther also altered his views on the proper function of princes in ecclesiastical affairs...The result was that the church princes ruled over what became, in effect, a branch of the state.”⁴ However, Luther’s shift toward a more prominent role for the state in Lutheranism might not have been entirely the product of his own theological views, but rather a Machiavellian political calculation to ensure the support and advancement of his theology by German princes who, in turn, could protect him and convert their regions to his cause.

The key to Luther’s political and theological success was his ability to consistently reinvent himself and his opinions and adapt to changing political circumstances by appealing to different groups of people in his quest for the advancement of the Reformation. Machiavelli speaks of the necessity for a Prince to understand the need to be flexible in his opinions and beliefs in the acquisition and maintaining of power and influence: “He must have a spirit that can change depending on the winds and variation of Fortune, and...he must not, if he is able, distance himself from what is good, but must also, when necessary, know how to prefer what is bad.”⁵ According to Machiavelli, a successful prince would be able to effectively understand the fickle whims of Fortune and have a flexible moral center in order to consolidate his hold on authority.
Throughout his entire career, Luther was a master at understanding exactly how to tailor his message to the person or audience he was speaking to in order to ensure maximum success for his cause. From his earliest days teaching in Wittenberg, Luther was able to cultivate strong relationships with powerful lords, such as Elector Frederick the Wise who was one of his first and more enthusiastic defenders. When his main political benefactor, Frederick’s brother Elector John of Saxony, considered joining a defensive alliance with other Lutheran states championed by the young and ambitious Landgrave Philip I of Hesse, Luther made his views very publicly known in the aftermath of the Smalcald meetings. Luther strongly argued against the prospect of a defensive alliance against the Holy Roman Emperor in a letter to Elector John on December 24, 1529: “First, I advise that Your Electoral Grace, together with the other sovereigns and cities who are united in their faith, give a humble reply to the Emperor, and in all humility sue for peace from his Imperial Majesty.” Luther believed that to form the defensive alliance in the absence of any significant abuses by the Emperor against the Protestants negatively affected their collective Protestant cause and cast them in a bad light. Luther continued to maintain this position for years, arguing instead to wait and see against the wishes of the ambitious and ready-to-fight Philip of Hesse. However, as soon as Luther saw the situation in the Holy Roman Empire shift with the formation of pro-Catholic alliance leagues, he immediately altered his stance on the prospect of Protestant armed resistance against the Emperor and his supporters with incredible alacrity. Around October 27, 1530, Luther wrote a tract to the Electoral Saxon government maintaining that after analysis of the legal code, perhaps armed resistance was not such a bad idea:

Further, now everywhere there is the danger that any day other incidents might occur, as a result of which one has to defend oneself immediately, not only because of the secular law, but also because of the duty and distress of conscience. Therefore it is also fitting arm oneself, and to be ready to meet a force which might suddenly arise, as could easily occur judging by the present pattern and course of events?

For years, Luther had staunchly opposed the prospect of armed resistance against the Emperor because he feared the negative effect it would have on general opinion of the Lutheran movement if they escalated the situation. Additionally, Luther maintained that there was not any recent or valid justification in the actions of the Emperor for Protestant armed resistance. Yet, when Luther judged the political situation to be sufficiently auspicious, he became willing to drop his objections and let others make the difficult decision: “Following the Diet of Augsburg, Luther, who had stood for non-resistance, discovered that resistance was in fact a matter for the lawyers and not the theologians.” Luther’s evolution on the matter of armed resistance to the Imperial Emperor through the creation of a Protestant defensive alliance reflects Machiavelli’s core message: a prince who wants to maintain his authority must be willing to sacrifice principle for the sake of continued influence and power.

The issue of armed resistance to the Emperor remained far from the only issue on which Luther vacillated for political or theological means. During the Peasant’s War, an armed insurrection of economically and religiously-motivated peasants from 1524-1526, Luther came to many different conclusions on whether secular political authority resided with the common people or with the nobles. Luther expressly opposed the political disorder, and he considered any insurrection to be entirely detrimental and distracting from the real issues of the Reformation. With his 1520 tract, To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, Luther firmly placed the secular authority to dispose of the sinful clergy in the hands of nobles, whom he believed to be the better instruments of theological change, rather than armed, belligerent common people:

Therefore, when necessity demands it, and the pope is an offense to Christendom, the first man who is able should, as a true
member of the whole body do what he can to bring about a truly free council. No one can do this as well as the temporal authorities, especially since they are also fellow Christians, fellow-priests, fellow-members of the spiritual estate, and fellow lords over all things...”

Luther’s placing of secular authority in the hands of the nobility reflects his ever-present desire to see the maintenance of political order and his belief in the divine right of the nobility, especially as he considered political insurrection to be “nothing else than being one’s own judge and avenger, and that is something God cannot tolerate…” Interestingly, Luther’s desire to see the nobility in charge of the reforming of the Church and the advancement of the Reformation correlates with Machiavelli’s own opinion that the nobility are the proper vehicle for the protection of liberties instead of the unruly and unpredictable common people:

First, [the placing of authority in the nobles] satisfies the nobles’ aspiration to rule, and with that power in their hands they consequently play a larger part in the state and have more reason to be satisfied. Second, it removes authority from the plebeians with their restless spirits, which are the cause of infinite discord and upheaval in a state...”

Thus, in two different countries and eras, each with different inherent issues and concerns, Luther and Machiavelli both came to a similar conclusion regarding the role of the nobility in affecting positive political and theological change. However, in typical Machiavellian fashion, Luther altered his opinion on the position of secular and religious authority as he continued to monitor the events of the Peasants’ War and attempt to further his own appeal.

Not three years after his initial determination of the nobility as the proper agents of religious reform, Luther shifted his views in his 1523 tract On the Rights of a Christian Congregation, in which he postulates that all fully invested Christians, regardless of their position in society, have the right to determine what Gospel will guide their community and who their minister will be. By this time, Luther had felt the ongoing tensions of the common people who would go on to start Peasants’ War, and seemed to be reacting to their concerns with his new doctrine of religious self-determination. Most incredibly, Luther vests within Christian communities the right to refuse the rule of their sovereigns if they are deemed to be acting in defiance of the Word of God:

Thus we conclude that wherever there is a Christian congregation in possession of the gospel, it not only has the right and power but also the duty...to avoid, to flee, to depose from the authority that our bishops, abbots, monasteries, religious foundations, and the like are now exercising... we must act according to Scripture and call and institute from among ourselves those who are found to be qualified and whom God has enlightened with reason and endowed with gifts to do so...”

Luther’s new position on the rights of a Christian congregation put him at odds with his own earlier statements on the matter, and yet, one gets the sense that Luther not only understood what he is doing but also consciously played both sides of this particularly thorny question in order to solidify his own theological and political leadership position. Also, while Luther’s abrupt reversal on these questions meant that his views no longer aligned directly with Machiavelli’s earlier stated beliefs, that he changed his views at all indicates that Luther followed Machiavelli’s precepts of what it takes to be a successful prince, albeit in a more theological rather than political context. In essence, Luther acted as both the fox and the lion in Machiavelli’s metaphor as Luther clearly understood the precept that, “a [prince] cannot and should not keep his word when it would be at his disadvantage to do so, and when the reasons that made him give his word have disappeared.”

Luther’s changes in his stated theological opinions during the tumultuous times of the Peasants’ War also shows him in another light; not only was he the singular religious authority for Lutheranism...
to the rest of Germany, but he was also a crafty political maneuverer who recognized the intricacies of a situation and was more than willing to play both sides in order to achieve his ends.

While not fully present at face value, Luther’s letters and writings reveal him to be what that can most accurately be defined as a Politician-Theologian; he demonstrated significant talent in maintaining the goodwill of powerful political figures so as to influence their political decisions all the while subtly advancing Lutheranism through their actions. Luther maintained a close personal relationship with Elector John of Saxony, who was Luther’s personal benefactor and protector and one of the most significant Lutheran nobles in Germany. Elector John relied on Luther’s advice because of his role as the spiritual leader of Lutheranism; thus, he was able to affect real political and theological change through John: “Luther’s views were in no way merely the otherworldly theories of a theologian...The imperial politics of Elector John, insofar as they concerned the Reformation, were substantially influenced by Luther’s advice.”

Luther was able to effectively cultivate this critically important relationship with Elector John because of his role as the ultimate authority of Lutheran faith, which he then translated into political influence. Additionally, through this relationship and the forging of alliances with other significant political and theological leaders throughout Reformation Germany, Luther effectively, “foiled the anti-Catholic and anti-Hapsburg politics of Philip of Hesse. Both the Hessian-Saxon preemptive war and the Protestant alliance were thwarted.” While these actions taken to prevent the formation of a Protestant political alliance might seem contradictory to Luther’s desire to ensure the success and expansion of the Reformation and Lutheranism, he was actually just exhibiting Machiavellian thought, indicating that he understood the political landscape enough to recognize when and where to act when it was appropriate. Just like Machiavelli, who was never the actual political figurehead of the city-state of Florence but exerted his authority behind the scenes, Luther understood where his skills were most useful and exerted tremendous influence through the actions of others.

Luther’s letters reveal that in all political issues brought before him by Elector John or anyone else, he carefully weighed every possible outcome before acting; in this way, Luther represents the political thoughtfulness that Machiavelli values in the ideal prince. In his discussion of what makes a suitable prince, Machiavelli speaks of the importance for the prince to understand how to maximize influence through timing and patience when confronted with seemingly pressing political issues:

when a problem arises within a state or against it, whether triggered by internal or external causes, and becomes so grave that it begins to alarm everyone, it is a far more secure course of action to bide one’s time than to try to eliminate it. Those who try to eliminate the problem in fact increase it, and so amplify the evil that was expected. Now, it is easier to understand Luther’s differing and seemingly contradictory opinions on the Protestant defensive alliance which Philip I of Hesse was attempting to bring into reality. Luther simply believed that the timing was wrong for significant action to be taken against the Emperor, as he explained to Elector John’s son Duke John Frederick in a joint letter with Philip Melancthon, “war does not gain much, but loses much and risks everything. Gentleness, however, loses nothing, risks little, and gains everything.” Luther understood the inherent value of waiting until the right moment to take action, and this outlook indicates his Machiavellian skills as a political, as well as religious, strategist. His political astuteness ensured that on political and theological issues concerning the Reformation, he would have the patience to wait until the timing was right to push his agenda and affect change throughout Reformation Germany.

Throughout his entire public life, Martin Luther’s actions and words reflect a picture of a man deeply knowledgeable about the methods
necessary to advance his theological agenda while simultaneously employing Machiavellian political calculations in order to protect himself and secure the future success of his religion. Much of how the Reformation developed can thus be attributed to Luther’s Machiavellian machinations. While it is unclear if Luther ever read Machiavelli’s works or took explicit instructions from them on the proper path for a Prince to succeed, his own actions indicate that the two men held similar views on the practices necessary for the acquisition of power and influence. Perhaps most important to the development of Lutheranism and the Protestant Reformation in total was Luther’s ability to adapt his message to appeal to a broad spectrum of individuals all with disparate beliefs and desires. It speaks to the genius of Luther’s theology and message that the economically depressed common people during the Peasants’ War could rally behind Luther’s message with the same fervor as powerful landed nobles such as Elector John of Saxony and Philip I of Hesse who used Lutheranism more for political ends. Therefore, without Luther employing Machiavellian methods that expanded the appeal of his message and engendered positive feelings towards him from powerful nobles, perhaps the Reformation would not have had the groundbreaking effect that it did on the Europe and the rest of history.

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Central to meta-ethics are two controverted contentions, first that moral facts actually exist and secondly that these facts can arise naturalistically from physical processes. In response, realist naturalism wholeheartedly supports both of these assertions, but error theory rejects any attempt to erect moral systems. Realist naturalists, like Peter Railton, advance a theory of ethics based on natural phenomena which produces a thoroughly rational account of morality, but error theorists like J. L. Mackie reject objective moral values entirely as implausible in a naturalistic world, as it requires the existence of utterly strange entities. This argument from queerness suggests that no objective moral facts, like a moral prohibition on murder, can exist in a purely naturalistic universe. Nonetheless, Railton advances a rigorous and substantial theory of naturalistic moral realism, which is able to withstand the criticism of error theory. Mackie rejects objective moral values entirely as implausible in a naturalistic world, as it requires the existence of utterly strange entities. This argument from queerness suggests that no objective moral facts, like a moral prohibition on murder, can exist in a purely naturalistic universe. Nonetheless, Railton advances a rigorous and substantial theory of naturalistic moral realism, which is able to withstand the criticism of error theory. Mackie rejects the claims that moral language simply represents sentiment or command. Instead moral statements claim actual entities in existence. Mackie continues to describe how these claims imply the existence of utterly strange entities and require this strangeness in order to be true.

J. L. Mackie argues that the queerness of moral facts renders the existence of any objective moral system so improbable and unknowable that rational actors should reject morality altogether. As Mackie states, the argument from queerness has two parts “one metaphysical, the other epistemological.” Objective moral values would be “utterly different from anything else in the universe” as they would be universal and intrinsically prescriptive, motivating human action.
in spite of needs or desires.\textsuperscript{4} As Mackie illustrates with the example of Plato’s forms, “knowledge of it provides the knower with both a direction and an overriding motive.”\textsuperscript{5} These entities, which categorically motivate human action in spite of context, are utterly strange as they are unlike anything else in the universe. Mackie also expands his argument with the epistemological problems posed by trying to know these objective moral values, as values could only be known by “some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else.”\textsuperscript{6} For Mackie, human beings are able to know the natural world around them through their senses and their reasoning, however there is no clear explanation for the perception of universal moral values.\textsuperscript{7} These values are not clearly perceivable in nature and intuition describes an epistemological process which would be utterly strange from all others. As such, from an ontological and epistemological perspective, objective moral values require the existence of utterly strange entities. However, there can be no utterly strange entities. There is no rational basis to suppose the existence of entities outside of the natural world perceived by senses and therefore, there is no basis for utterly strange entities. While common sense and intuition may support the idea of objective moral values which exist in some strange way, the arguments to support his worldview are tenuous and rely on the queerness of entities outside of the naturalistic world. Therefore, there are no objective moral values, as they would require the existence of entities which humanity has no reason for believing in. Mackie argues that everyday moral statements are wrong, as they assert the existence of entities which cannot exist. J. L. Mackie asserts that, as objective moral values require utterly strange facts in the fabric of the world, we should reject realist moral systems.

While Mackie advances that objective moral systems should be rejected owing to the argument from queerness, Peter Railton posits a naturalist account which produces real moral facts while avoiding the ontological and epistemological flaws of other moral systems. In Railton’s system, morality is an outgrowth of observation and reasoning rooted fundamentally in the naturalistic universe. For morality to exist, according to Railton, there must be two foundational features: independence, meaning “it exists and has certain determinate features independent of whether we think it exists or has those features”\textsuperscript{8} and feedback, meaning humans can perceive it and receive direction from it. In order to describe how a purely naturalistic world produces a morality with these features, Railton first asserts that one can observe subjective interests. These “wants or desires, conscious or unconscious” are readily perceptible by individuals based on observation and self-knowledge.\textsuperscript{9} However, subjective interests do not always lead to the best long term outcomes because any given individual may lack the knowledge or the experience to understand if their desires are harmful. However, with “unqualified cognitive and imaginative powers, and full factual and nomological information” an individual can idealize her subjective interests to conceive of the non-moral good, which leads to the objectively best outcome for the individual.\textsuperscript{10} As Railton puts it, “non-moral good consists in: roughly, what he would want himself to seek if he knew what he were doing.”\textsuperscript{11} The non-moral good is still based off subjective interests which are perceived by individuals, but through the idealization and objectification of interests any given individual has a set of actions which would objectively best serve their interests. In other words, there is a set of actions which objectively avoids ill-being and maximizes well-being.\textsuperscript{12} For example if an individual wishes to gain money, it is objectively true that one stands to better attain this goal through gainful employment than idleness. With a subjective goal in mind, reason can demonstrates the objectively best way to satisfy that goal. Sometimes, wants and interests are incongruent as desires lead to ill-being for the individual. But through the accumulation of knowledge, one can begin to understand one’s objective interests more fully. Through the
observation of “natural and social facts”, rational individuals can determine the sets of actions which produce the outcome that objectively best satisfies individual interests and values. From the purely naturalistic processes of observation and sensation, Railton demonstrates actions objectively fulfilling subjective interests.

Further, Railton expands his discussion of the non-moral good to include social norms, as social systems which account for the objective interests of each individual and group better serve each individual and group. As each individual is better served in a rational social system, there is a social norm implied which states that individuals ought to act with the interest of other individuals in mind. Railton introduces this concept with the idea of social rationality, meaning “what would be rationally approved of were the interests of all potentially affected individuals counted equally under circumstances of full and vivid information.”

With this information, groups can make social decisions which serve the objective interests of individuals in society, thus improving the lot of everyone. For example, equality under the law is a social state of affairs which objectively leads to a more stable and efficient society than inequality under the law. Through observation and reason, individuals can determine the social policies which objectively sate the desires of everyone in society. Societies which operate with social rationality have less “potential for unrest” as they consider the needs and interests of every group in society instead of some particular faction. As actions which serve one’s objective interest carry normative weight and imply that the action ought to be done, there is a social norm implied that one should act in the interest of others. Therefore, there are objective moral values which are rooted in naturalistic observation and social action. In the system Railton has outlined, reason and observation allow for both independence and feedback, as morality arises independently from natural facts and can be perceived and perfected through the observation of those facts. Unlike the moral systems which Mackie criticizes, Railton builds a moral system out of natural facts and subjective experience which is able to operate without any utterly strange entities or facts outside of nature. Railton’s morality is not only ontologically sound, but also has a clear and naturalistic mechanism for perception. Through observation and experience, individuals can build a progressively more objective model for action which benefits the best interests of everyone. Though Mackie advanced a powerful critique of the utter strangeness of moral facts in ethical systems, Railton’s moral realism circumvents this objection with a purely naturalistic model.

Despite the naturalistic origin of Railton’s philosophy, Mackie would respond that it is still utterly strange because it requires a generalization of values and that these values must be perceivable by human beings. In order to jump from premise to the conclusion that there are objective moral norms in Railton’s argument, there needs to be a generalization of individual values which transforms them into universal norms. In the eyes of an error theorist, this idealization of individual interest to social interest is a generalization, as Kant would have used. A partisan of error theory would assert that transforming subjective desires to general moral laws implies some metaphysical reality in the same way as a deontological imperative, based on the same queer moral facts as other objectivist theories. In the process of generalization, Railton departs from the non-moral good and enters more difficult territory. As Railton himself puts it, before this generalization he has “no right to speak of moral realism” but merely the implications of objectified self-interest. By expanding the scope of the norm which the non-moral good implies to the moral good, the idealization takes on different terms. As this generalization brings the moral good further away from easily perceivable subjective desires, it requires the existence of something utterly strange. Mackie would assert that through generalizing the non-moral good, it is no longer simply based on observation and the actions which best serve individual interests. Instead, it is now an imperative which
directs one to act for the sake of others in spite of own individual desires. By transforming the non-moral good into a social norm, Railton has opened his reasoning to criticism from the argument from queerness. Aside from the ontological problems of this generalized norm, there are also epistemological issues. Mackie might object to the idea that interests can be so easily idealized and that perfect knowledge is easy to attain. Instead of providing an actionable, practical system, Railton’s idealization cannot work in practice because it is impossible for the individual to attain perfect knowledge about the self or society. There is no epistemological mechanism for this idealization, at an individual or social level, just as there is no epistemological mechanism in Kant’s or Plato’s theories. As there can be nothing utterly strange and nothing that is not perceived in the naturalistic universe, therefore Railton’s morality cannot exist.

However, Railton is able to respond to these objections with a further description of his naturalistic system. If Railton’s system is a deontological generalization (which Kant or another objectivist ethicist would endorse), then it implies an imperative regardless of human desires or context. The transition from the non-moral good to the moral good is not a generalization, but rather a contextual process which is still ultimately based on subjective interest. Railton bases his generalization in purely naturalistic phenomenon and does not assert metaphysical claims. Instead of operating through categorical imperatives, like Kant’s moral system, Railton’s system operates through hypothetical imperatives. In a hypothetical imperative, “the reason for doing Y lies in its causal connection with the desired end, X” and hypothetical imperatives are still based on the individual wants and needs.¹⁷ The non-moral good only becomes a social norm as everyone’s objective interests are benefitted by this transition, so Railton’s moral realism is still based on human interests instead of abstract ideals or Platonic forms. Railton’s morality is situated in the context of human wants and thus is always changing. Moreover, Railton’s system counters the epistemological criticism as it is ultimately rooted in naturalistic observation of human conditions and desires and does not require an utterly strange mechanism of perception in order to understand its morality. While the process of idealization may be long and arduous, it is nonetheless possible with natural observation and reasoning. As such, Railton’s morality does not require utterly strange entities but simply the perception of individual and social facts. Thus, by demonstrating the possibility of moral realism arising out of purely naturalistic observation, Railton demonstrates that reason can be used to establish objective moral values in human life. Railton’s account remains sound as it does not advance a generalized imperative, but a contextual mechanism for moral action which is readily observable.

J. L. Mackie objects to moral realism because it requires utterly strange moral facts, but Railton circumvents the argument from queerness by demonstrating that humans have subjective interests which can be extrapolated into objective goods. Objective moral values exist, but must be based on from natural facts and the social relations of human beings. The implications of Railton’s reasoning are vast. Objective social norms imply the responsibility to strive for a more inclusive society which acknowledges the interests of disparate groups and individuals in order to achieve greater stability and satisfy the objective interests of its all its members. In addition, it also seems to imply that individuals ought to act rationally in their own interest, when in practice many traditions advocate self-abnegation and selflessness. Most notably, however, realist naturalism reconciles naturalism with morality without the need for supernatural facts. On a purely naturalistic basis, Railton establishes a sustainable morality which avoids being utterly strange and has wide reaching implication for both society and meta-ethics.

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As human beings, we desire to express our own will, indicate our own wishes, and determine our own fate. One of our fundamental rights as human beings is the right to autonomy, which includes the right to make our own decisions and express our will, particularly in high stakes situations, such as life and death situations that arise near the end of our lives. Ideally, we would always be able to express our will; however, there are certain circumstances under which we are unable to express our will. For instance, if a person becomes incapacitated, she loses the ability to express her will.

Advance directives exist to allow a person to express her will if she ever becomes incapacitated. Specifically, people use advance directives to indicate their medical desires, such as the desire to not be put on a breathing machine, undergo dialysis, or have CPR performed on them. The purpose of an advance directive is to preserve a patient’s will and values if she becomes incapacitated and cannot articulate her own will and values. Theoretically, advance directives should help preserve a person’s right to autonomy at the end of her life; however, advance directives do not actually achieve this end.

Advance directives possess a vast amount of power because people use them to stipulate that they do not want certain medical treatments, including life-preserving treatments. Furthermore, heeding an advance directive may result in the patient dying because she failed to receive life-preserving treatment. Due to the critical role advance directives play in life and death situations, one must carefully consider whether using an advance directive is ethical. Advance directives are contractual agreements between the present self and the future self: using an advance directive is unethical because it allows the present self to unjustly impose its will on the future self.

Advance directives are unjust because they allow the present self to wield power over the future self. The present self is defined as the self that makes the advance directive and the future self is defined as the self upon whom the advance directive is later imposed. In evaluating advance directives, one must consider the present self and the future self on a timeline. The present self forms the advance directive, utilizing it to stipulate her will for what will happen to her future self. People tend to form advance directives long before they actually need them; therefore, it is likely that years, possibly even decades, might pass before the advance directive written by the present self will get imposed on the future self. It is troublesome for the present self to use an advance directive to impose its will on the future self because it is uncertain whether the future self’s values will still match the present self’s values when the advance directive comes into play in the future.
Advance directives fail to account for the impact of time on human values. Time can change our values. As we age and gain more experience, our values may change, and we may no longer value what we used to value. For instance, if a professional marathon runner who used to value running as the activity that made her life worth living gets into a dire accident and becomes a paraplegic, she will have to entirely reassess her life. Unable to do what previously made her life meaningful, she will have to reconsider her values, account for her limitations, and find new things that make life worth living. Perhaps she will find meaning in taking up a new vocation, such as coaching aspiring runners. One finds another instance of radically changing human values in the lives of people who undergo religious conversion. For example, a hardened felon who previously committed violent hate crimes may find Jesus in prison and go on to radically change her values, becoming a pastor who preaches peace and the love of Christ when she gets out of prison. As these examples demonstrate, human values are not immutable; they change as the tides of life ebb and flow over time.

Advance directives are unethical because they cannot account for changing values. Changing values have an immense impact on advance directives because advance directives are meant to ensure that one’s previously held values will be acted upon if one becomes incapacitated. The present self, the self that forms the advance directive, has one set of values; however, the future self, the self that the advance directive’s stipulations are imposed upon, may have a different set of values. It is uncertain whether the future self’s values will still match the present self’s values when the advance directive comes into effect. It is unethical for a person to use an advance directive to impose her present will onto her future self because the future self may have different values than the present self, which could cause the future self to disagree with the stipulations the present self put in the advance directive.

Advance directives pose a threat to autonomy. Advance directives are meant to preserve one’s right to autonomy if one ever becomes incapacitated. Advance directives automatically rely on the will of the present self over the future self, which may violate the future self’s right to autonomy by denying it the ability to express that its will differs from the present self’s will. Autonomy involves the capacity to act on one’s current values. Advance directives automatically heed the present self’s values, which can prohibit the future self from acting on its values if its values no longer match the present self’s values. Advance directives abet in the loss of the future self’s right to autonomy and in the loss of the future self’s right to not have another will imposed upon it.

Using advance directives is irrational and unethical due to uncertainty. Humans should not agree to contracts that could result in the untimely death of their future selves without knowing the values of their future selves. One of the guiding principles of bioethics is informed and voluntary consent. There is a time frame for voluntary consent. People change their minds. What a patient values today may not be what she values in ten years. If a patient changes her mind, the cost is death. Death is too great a cost. By using an advance directive, one debases the values of the future self and assumes that the future self’s values will match the present self’s values, which is irrational because values can change. Advance directives infringe upon the right of the future self to consent to medical procedures according to its own values, which may differ radically from the present self’s values.

Advance directives are contractual agreements between the present self and the future self, correctly implying that they are two different selves. However, the future self arises from the present self, which raises the question of when exactly the present self becomes the future self. In other words, where is the dividing line between the present self and the future self? Would it still be unethical to impose an advance directive on the “future self” if the advance directive was only formed one day ago by the “present self”? In this scenario, using the
Advance Directives

advance directive is likely ethical, although not definitely ethical. To clarify, it is likely that the present self who formed the advance directive one day ago is still the same self with the same values as the self upon whom the advance directive is imposed. However, if during that period of twenty-four hours, the self underwent a major transformative event or had a philosophical epiphany that radically changed its values, then the present, advance-directive-forming self would be different from the future, advance-directive-imposed-upon self. The dividing line between the present self and the future self depends on the fundamental values humans hold that shape who they are. Humans’ values are “essential to [their] present self[ves];” therefore, if their values change significantly, they morph into different selves with different identities. If the present self holds different values than the future self, then they are separate selves and the present self does not have the right to impose its will on the future self, depriving the future self of its right to autonomy.

Derek Parfit provides an example of what it would look like for the present self to attempt to impose its will on the future self. In *Reasons and Persons*, Parfit presents the case of a young Russian man who knows he will inherit a vast amount of land. Holding strong socialist values, the young Russian man decides to give away the land to the peasants when he inherits it in the future. However, he realizes that “his ideals may fade” and change in the future, causing him to no longer desire to give the land away to the peasants. Therefore, he tries to prevent this possibility by signing a legal document that will automatically give the land away and can only be revoked with his wife’s consent. He makes his wife promise to never give consent, even if his future self demands it. He justifies this by saying that he “regards [his] ideals as essential” to his self; therefore, if he “loses [his] ideals,” he wants his wife to “think” that he “ceases to exist” and regard her husband then “not as” him, “the man who ask[ed] for” the promise, but as “his corrupted self.”

This gets at the heart of the distinction between the present self and the future self, demonstrating how one’s values can radically change one’s identity as a self. The young Russian man fears that his future self will hold different values from his present self and will for the money to be used differently; therefore, he creates a plan to ensure that his present self can impose its will on his future self. Years later, if the Russian man’s future self asks his wife to consent to revoking the document, his wife must decide if she will uphold her promise to the man’s past self or listen to the wishes of his future self. Essentially, the Russian man’s wife must consider if her promise to the past self according to the past self’s values trumps the wishes of the future self according to the future self’s values. Although the future self is a different self from the past self, he is still the same person as the past self. Because the future self is the same person as the past self, they possess equal rights to autonomy. Due to the fact that the past self ceases to exist when the future self comes into existence, the Russian man’s wife should default to the will and values of the future self, the only self who can actively express its will and values. If the wife refuses to listen to the future self, she forces the values of the past self onto the future self, thus, denying the future self his autonomy, his capacity to act on his current values. The same principle of not allowing the past self to unjustly impose its will and values onto the future self holds true for advance directives.

As previously explicated, time has the potential to change human values; hence, in many cases, advance directives that involve a large quantity of time between formation and implementation involve a present self who differs from the future self because it holds different values. Ideally, people who form advance directives would evaluate them regularly to ensure that the self who last updated the advance directive would share the same values as the self upon whom the advance directive is imposed. In theory, this could prevent the harmful division between the values of the present self and the
values of the future self. In reality, this type of advance directive reevaluation rarely occurs. If people cannot be bothered to go to the dentist for a yearly checkup, will they realistically be bothered to reassess their advance directives regularly? Unlikely. It has been argued that the use of advance directives can be unethical. To clarify, the use of advance directives is not always unethical. It is unethical when there is uncertainty about whether the future self’s will matches the present self’s will because this uncertainty can lead to an unjust deprivation of the future self’s right to autonomy and right to not have another will imposed upon it.

In many advance directive cases, a division exists between the values of the present self and the values of the future self because a significant amount of time passes between the formation and the implementation of the advance directive, providing ample time for the self’s values to change. If the present self’s values were to theoretically match the values of the self upon whom the advance directive was imposed, then the use of an advance directive would be ethical. Using an advance directive would be ethical in this scenario because the present self is not unjustly imposing its will on the future self and preventing the future self from expressing that its will differs. However, in reality, the use of advance directives can easily result in an unethical imposition of the present self’s will onto the future self, largely due to the fact that a large amount of time often passes between advance directive formation and implementation, creating uncertainty about whether the future self’s will still matches the present self’s will.

Critics might argue that condemning advance directives as contractual agreements between the present self and the future self necessarily implies a condemnation of all agreements that involve the present self binding the future self. For instance, promises and legal wills belong in the category of agreements made by the present self that bind the future self. Firstly, advance directives are different from promises because they involve an incapacitated self who cannot articulate her will, which implies a diminished right to autonomy. When the present self makes a promise, she makes it with the knowledge that her future self will be theoretically bound to the promise, but will still possess the capacity to renge on her promise if she changes her mind. In the case of advance directives, the future self does not possess the capacity to renge on the commitments expressed in the advance directive because she is incapacitated and unable to express her will. Whereas the promise future self can express her will and articulate that her values have changed from the values of the present self, the advance directive future self does not possess this capacity and cannot indicate that her values have changed from the values of the present self. The capacity to express that one has changed one’s mind matters immensely for the future self and is directly tied to the future self’s right to autonomy. The present self from the promise example does not divest its future self of its right to autonomy to the same degree that the future self from the advance directive example does because the promise example’s future self has the capacity to express that it has changed its mind, whereas the advance directive example’s future self does not. Whereas the promise example’s future self can choose to endorse or not endorse what the present self willed, the advance directive example’s future self cannot choose to endorse or not endorse what the present self willed. We have no way of knowing what the advance directive example’s future self would have willed because it cannot speak for itself and express its will. Advance directives are different from promises because the advance directive example’s future self has less autonomy than the promise example’s future self due to its state of incapacitation and lack of capacity to express its will and endorse or not endorse what the present self willed.

Secondly, I contest that advance directives are different from legal wills because they involve the possibility of death. Legal wills stipulate what a person desires to happen to her estate after her death whereas advance
Advance Directives stipulate what a person desires to happen to her body in the case that she becomes incapacitated. Advance directives operate at much higher stakes than legal wills because heeding them can result in the death of the future self. On one hand, in the case of legal wills, the future self is already dead; hence, no bodily harm can result from following the present self’s desires in the legal will. On the other hand, in the case of advance directives, the future self is still alive; hence, serious bodily harm, including the death of the future self, can result from following the present self’s desires in the advance directive. Essentially, if the legal will example’s future self disagrees with the specifications the present self put in the legal will, no serious bodily harm will come to the future self. However, if the advance directive example’s future self disagrees with the specifications the present self put in the advance directive, serious bodily harm, including an untimely death, could befall the future self. The stakes are much higher in the case of advance directives.

In sum, advance directives are different from promises and legal wills because they involve an incapacitated future self who cannot articulate that her will differs from the will of the present self, which denies her right to autonomy. Moreover, advance directives also involve the possibility of grave bodily harm for the future self, including an untimely death. Not all contractual agreements between the present self and the future self are unethical; promises and legal wills need not be condemned. However, the use of advance directives must be condemned when it involves an unjust imposition of the will of the present self onto the incapacitated future self who is denied her right to autonomy and, as a result, can be forced into an untimely death.

Proponents for the use of advance directives admit to the shortcomings of advance directives, yet argue that they are better than the alternative, which is someone else making a decision for one in the case that one becomes incapacitated. It is, indeed, better for one to make the decision oneself than for someone who does not possess full knowledge of one’s values to make the decision. However, the advance-directive-forming present self is not a sufficiently competent judge of the values of the incapacitated future self. If a doctor must choose between listening to an advance directive formed ten years ago and listening to the husband of a dying woman who spoke to her this morning, the doctor should listen to the husband because the husband has a better chance of accurately expressing the values of the dying woman than the advance directive. The advance directive may reflect the dying woman’s outdated values whereas the husband likely reflects the dying woman’s current values. A family member is not a perfect judge of the values of the incapacitated self; however, he is a better judge than an outdated legal document that may fail to reflect that the woman’s values have changed. Theoretically, advance directives could be better alternatives to consulting a family member because they could more accurately reflect the patient’s current values; however, many people who use advance directives do not use them in an ethical manner. The use of advance directives is a worse alternative to consulting a family member, owing to the possibility that advance directives can be outdated and, thus, may contain inaccurate representations of the patient’s values. If advance directives were to accurately reflect a patient’s current values, then they would be better alternatives to consulting family members to make decisions for incapacitated patients; however, advance directives do not presently achieve this end.

To make the use of advance directives more ethical, we could institute policies to force people to reevaluate them regularly. This would help ameliorate the problem of innumerable advance directives being outdated and replete with inaccurate values. As a first step, we could compel people to reexamine their advance directives once a year by initiating a policy that automatically makes advance directives expire after one year. Hence, if a person wanted to continue having an advance directive, she would have to reevaluate it on a yearly basis. Additionally,
people should be instructed to reassess their advance directives after any major life event that has a high potential to change a person’s values. For instance, life events such as a death in the family, a diagnosis of physical or mental illness, marriage, divorce, the birth of a child, the acquisition or loss of a job, and religious conversion seriously affect the human psyche and have a high probability of altering a person’s worldview and values. Values define our identity; therefore, in order to use an advance directive ethically, people must ensure that the values they expressed in the advance directive continue to match their current values. If the values expressed in the advance directive do not match their current values and the advance directive comes into play, the advance directive would violate their right to autonomy by taking away their capacity to act on their current values.

It has been shown that advance directives can be used to allow the present self to oppress the future self and prevent it from expressing its values. The use of advance directives could be made more ethical by implementing policies to compel people to reevaluate them regularly, which would prevent uncertainty about whether the values of the self who created the advance directive match the values of the self upon whom the advance directive is imposed. Until dramatic changes are made in the way people are allowed to use advance directives, their use will continue to be unethical. We should condemn advance directives when their use allows the present self to unjustly impose its will on the future self and deny the future self its right to autonomy.

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Pages 44 - 49 contain the article "Spiritual Content via Natural Means: Aesthetics in Orthodox Faith" by Claudia Huang and has been redacted at the author's request.
wo notable European writers of the 14th and 15th centuries, Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer, had one important contemporary influence in common—Italian humanist Giovanni Boccaccio. From his *De Mulieribus Claris*, the first collection of women’s biographies, to his collection of stories in the *Decameron*, Boccaccio portrayed a wide range of three-dimensional, female characters. Christine and Chaucer both utilized Boccaccio’s works as sources for their own writing, modifying and extending his portraits of women. In her inclusion of Ghismonda’s tale from Boccaccio’s *Decameron* in her own *Book of the City of Ladies*, Christine highlights Boccaccio’s example of female constancy and strength. However, she subtly retells the story to resist the commonplace accusations against women that she so strongly opposed. Christine presents Ghismonda as a virtuous woman who is not driven by lustful or deceitful desires, but by true fidelity in love; in Christine de Pizan’s retelling, Ghismonda becomes an active participant in her own story. In Chaucer’s case, he uses “Menedon’s Question” from Boccaccio’s *Filocolo* as the basis for “The Franklin’s Tale” in his *Canterbury Tales*. Chaucer’s advocacy for equality in marriage, as well as a woman’s power to make and keep a promise, demonstrates that he too presented a fuller, more multidimensional version of a woman’s role in society.

Giovanni Boccaccio’s true views on women are extremely difficult to pinpoint in his works. On the one hand, he noted the lack of a biography composed of memorable women’s stories and wrote it himself, *De Mulieribus Claris*. However, Boccaccio believed that these extremely accomplished women had to overcome the limitations of their female intelligence and bodies to achieve these “manly” feats worthy of being written down. To twenty-first century readers, this masculinization of women’s accomplishments seems rather defeating, but Boccaccio’s range of portrayals of women were nevertheless progressive for their time. For example, the vices of lust, stupidity, and deception are found in women throughout the entertaining *Decameron* and moralizing *De Claris Mulieribus*, but so are the virtues of fidelity, love, and generosity. Moreover, Boccaccio locates all these traits in both genders. In their retellings and modifications of Boccaccio’s stories, Christine de Pizan and Chaucer did not categorically oppose Boccaccio’s portraits of women. Instead, both writers made efforts to highlight new or additional themes in his stories.

Christine de Pizan selects the story of Ghismonda from Salerno for the section of the *Book*
of the City of Ladies that focuses on women who are “exemplary embodiments of moral virtue”. In Ghismonda’s case, the virtue is constancy, or fidelity in love. In both versions of the story, Ghismonda is a young woman whose father, Tancredi of Salerno, refuses to marry her off again after her first husband dies. When Tancredi discovers Ghismonda with a lover, she confidently defends her love, but Tancredi resolves to kill the young man. Ghismonda thus takes poison to join her lover. Christine modifies many aspects of this version of the story from Boccaccio, expanding Ghismonda’s role significantly and removing slights to women’s character or intelligence. For example, Boccaccio begins the tale by describing Tancredi as a “man of benevolent character” who is “known for his humanity,” whereas Christine does not include any such positive accounts for this man. Instead, she quickly begins to describe Ghismonda and her virtuous attributes, one of which is her “fine upbringing.” This phrase importantly replaces Boccaccio’s description of Ghismonda as “wiser than might have been appropriate in a woman,” which reflected a common fear, in the Renaissance era and for centuries afterward, that a woman who is too educated, independent, and neglectful of learning female household tasks, will have difficulty finding a husband. Christine de Pizan’s own mother feared the same for her daughter, and it was only her father’s support and Christine’s love for learning that allowed her to continue her education. Pushing back against this mistrust of educating women, Christine’s use of “fine upbringing” subtly reinforces the idea that a woman’s education should not be feared, but valued instead.

The most meaningful changes to Ghismonda’s story lie in Christine’s presentation of Ghismonda’s selection of Guiscardo as a lover, the couple’s time together, and Ghismonda’s independence at the end. In Boccaccio’s version, Ghismonda considers all the men at her father’s court and finally settles on Guiscardo, who is virtuous by his conduct; then, “by dint of seeing him often,” she develops a passionate love for him, and he returns her favor. They discover a hidden grotto with a passage that leads to the princess’s room, which they use to meet in her room and “[enjoy] themselves in delight.” When Ghismonda defends herself to her father, she boldly accuses her father of being foolish enough to ignore the “carnal desires” that result from being made of “flesh and blood,” and she explains how she fell in love by following these desires. As an educated, virtuous noblewoman, Ghismonda values Guiscardo’s honorable character when choosing a lover and seems to have grown to truly love him, declaring she will love him even past death. But the details in Boccaccio’s writing of Ghismonda “satisfying [her] desires” collectively imply and emphasize that Ghismonda’s initial motives in seeking a lover were primarily sexual.

In sharp contrast, Christine does not include any overt sexual overtones in her version of Ghismonda’s tale. When Ghismonda approaches Guiscardo about her feelings, Christine inserts a lengthy conversation between them that does not appear in Boccaccio’s version. The interaction shows the care and thought that gentle Ghismonda has invested into choosing a worthy companion, selecting Guiscardo for the “nobility of his heart and [his] good manners” His humble joy in return reflects an admirable love on his part as well. Editor Charity Willard mentions in an endnote to the Book of the City of Ladies that Christine likely inserted this conversation into the story to make it more reminiscent of idealistic courtly literature. While this is a plausible motive for Christine’s downplaying of Boccaccio’s more open sexual references, her rhetorical strategy still stresses the honest and emotional, not physical, beginning of Ghismonda and Guiscardo’s relationship. When Tancredi finally discovers the lovers, he hears them “speaking with one another behind the bed curtains,” not playing or enjoying themselves as Boccaccio described.

These details do not necessarily mean that Christine’s Ghismonda and Guiscardo had no sexual relations, but Ghismonda’s rebuttal to her father once again de-emphasizes them.
Christine’s Ghismonda does not use the words “carnal desires” as motivation, but says that, “feeling young and urged on by [her] own prettiness,” she fell in love with Guiscardo. Christine thus shifts emphasis away from any interpretation of Ghismonda as a lustful or deceitful woman, a certain target for many of Christine’s contemporary male readers. Instead, she portrays Ghismonda as a caring and resilient woman who is willing to die for the virtuous man she chooses as her companion. This more emotionally invested atmosphere allows for a greater emphasis on and believability in the strength and fidelity of Ghismonda’s love, the virtues Christine wishes to highlight in this section of her book.

Ghismonda’s changed story is just one part of Christine de Pizan’s trend toward “systematic de-eroticization” of the women in Boccaccio’s tales. Of course, she would have had to keep the stories both appropriate and discreet for her courtly audience, including Queen Isabeau of France, but the de-eroticization would also ensure a “fairer” presentation of women. Most importantly, Christine portrays women with a greater degree of independence, in terms of the societal framework in which they live. She insisted upon rebutting the ideas of misogynistic famous poets such as Ovid in his *Art of Love*, and her contemporary Jean de Meun in his sections of *The Romance of the Rose*, the latter of whom accuses women of being lustful temptresses controlling men and simultaneously reduces women to objects of desire to be pursued and captured by men. In her retellings of others’ stories, Christine de-eroticizes women to fight these manipulative stereotypes. In doing so, she does not make them passive. Instead, she demonstrates that a well-educated, well-mannered woman like Ghismonda could be active and independent in her own story.

While Christine de Pizan was still in her early twenties, Geoffrey Chaucer utilized the story of “Menedon’s Question” from Boccaccio’s *Filocolo* as the basis for “The Franklin’s Tale.” In his portrayal, Chaucer alters the dialogue in ways that suggest increased nuances of power in women’s familial and societal roles. In both stories, the basic plotline follows thus: a young man falls madly in love with the wife of a lord, who makes a deal impossible to fulfill with him. When the desperate young man achieves the necessary feat with a sorcerer’s help, the wife confesses to her husband what has happened. He tells her that she cannot break the promise, but when the young lover hears of this, he releases the lady from her word.

Within this framework, Chaucer elaborates greatly on the reciprocity and nature of the relationship between the wife and the lord, named Dorigen and Arviragus in his version. In Boccaccio’s portrayal, the only description of the couple’s relationship is that there was a lord who loved a noblewoman with a “most perfect love” and married her. In contrast, Chaucer inserts a lengthy account of how both the lord and lady fell in love and agreed to marry. Remarkably, the lord Arviragus even tells Dorigen that he will “obey and do her will in all as any lover of his lady shall,” to which she humbly thanks him for the “loose rein” he gives her and promises to love him faithfully. He is not only her husband, but her lover as well, uniting two roles that historically were separate. In the next section, the Franklin narrates how, in a good marriage, “friends must each the other obey,” advocating that a marriage is not a relationship of male dominance, but one of mutual friendship and a sense of equality; after all, he notes, “women by nature love their liberty” just as men do. This liberty does not extend in public, though, for Arviragus insists Dorigen portray publicly his “name and show of sovereignty, lest he shame his degree.” Although the couple’s marriage dynamic may be one of internal equality, their external presentation to society still necessitates the lord’s dominance.

When the time comes for the fulfillment of the bargain, both Boccaccio’s and Chaucer’s female protagonists are devastated at the prospect of dishonoring their husbands through their own defilement. Although modern readers may
find it problematic for women’s self-worth that both Dorigen and her female counterpart in “Menedon’s Question” contemplate suicide in the face of physical dishonor, both texts actually argue that this is not the answer. On the contrary, the knight in “Menedon’s Question” tells his lady that the situation “does not displease him at all.” In “The Franklin’s Tale,” Arviragus even speaks to his wife in “glad cheer,” telling her that he would much rather she spend a night with the squire than “not her true word keep and save.” Both husbands tell their wives not only to fulfill their promises, but that they will love them no less for it. Chaucer’s text goes further in subtly emphasizing the necessity of Dorigen keeping her word because her husband believes not only that “trouthe is the highest thing a man can keep,” but that his wife has the power to keep it as well. In Boccaccio’s tale, the need for the lady to fulfill the promise is based less on her honesty and more on not wronging Tarolfo, who has “justly and painstakingly earned” his end of the bargain.

Chaucer’s subtle emphasis on a woman’s power to make and fulfill a word of honor continues in the last portion of “The Franklin’s Tale,” in the interaction between the squire and Dorigen. Unlike Tarolfo in “Menedon’s Question,” who seems to acknowledge the lord’s generosity first and foremost as a reason to forget the bargain, the squire Aurelius feels more loath to have Dorigen “break her word of truth” and to “break apart” the love between the couple. Moreover, “Menedon’s Question” ends with a discussion between the narrator, Menedon, and the noble lady who heard the story, Fiammetta, in which Fiammetta argues that the lady of the tale never had the authority to make a promise in the first place without her husband’s consent. Fiammetta has the last word, asserting that the honor at stake was that of the knight who generously surrendered his wife to the other man, as a question of his lady’s chastity is one of his honor. In “The Franklin’s Tale,” however, Chaucer’s ending verse once more emphasizes Arviragus’s strong wish that his wife were “[not] to her promise false.” In a sentiment that is strikingly ahead of his time, he argues that his wife’s “trouthe” is actually more important and meaningful to him than her sexual fidelity.

Chaucer ends his tale with this sentiment of equality and the importance of a woman’s word of honor, just as Christine’s retelling of Ghismonda’s tale leaves readers with an affirmation of the strength and power in a well-educated, virtuous woman. Modern readers might still find some aspects of Boccaccio’s tales more progressive than Chaucer’s and Christine’s, such as his Ghismonda’s more open confidence in her sexuality. Nonetheless, Chaucer and Christine were revolutionaries in their own right, portraying female characters exercising new sources of power that we take for granted today within their existing societal framework. Royal ladies of the French court, including Queen Isabeau, might well have been empowered by Christine’s passionate arguments in defense of their gender. Moreover, Christine’s emphasis on proper education may have influenced the way these ladies chose to have their children raised. In England, Chaucer’s work was likely read aloud by contemporary elites, and the arguments for equality in marriage, for example, must not have gone unnoticed as the idea of companionate marriage emerged. Despite the limitations of their time, Chaucer and Christine did a remarkable service to both their contemporaries, by portraying women as more multidimensional human beings, and to modern readers, providing us with a precious window into their distant world.

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Competitive Human Glory in Homer’s *Iliad*

Eric S. Meyers

In Book V and Book XXIII of Homer’s *Iliad*, life tragically intersects with death to determine the true nature of heroic glory in competitive human activities. The grim reality that death results in an afterlife devoid of meaning frames the composite portrait of glory these books depict against the backdrop of the Trojan War. Given this tragic reality, the great warriors of the *Iliad* seek competitive glory in life within a matrix of death and the application of what the philosopher Simone Weil calls “brutal force.” At first blush, this appears to involve playing deadly and dangerous games with only winners and losers, whether it is on the battlefield of Book V or during the funeral games of Book XXIII. Closer analysis, however, suggests a more richly complex vision of glory in the *Iliad*, one that may be characterized by a conflict between Thanatos, or what Sigmund Freud terms “the death instinct”, and Eros, “the instinct of life” that binds civilization together.

In Book V, Diomedes is not just a ferocious warrior who wounds the goddess Aphrodite, lest the Eros she represents diminish his lethality. He also injures the god Ares in a struggle against Thanatos, the insatiable desire to kill, that Ares, the god of war, signifies. In Book XXIII, Achilles exemplifies this thematic conflict between death and life as well. Achilles begins Book XXIII preoccupied with death as he mourns his dearest friend, Patroclus, and desecrates the corpse of Hector, the Trojan hero who killed Patroclus. Yet, Achilles becomes a civilizing force during the funeral games he holds for Patroclus when he confronts mortality and becomes more humane. Where Achilles once caused only strife, he now reconciles with his bitter enemy Agamemnon and mediates conflicts among the irascible Greeks, moreover, where Achilles once viewed glory as a winner-take-all proposition, he now honors all the warrior-athletes competing in the funeral games—not just those who win. In this manner, a conflict between death and life results in a contrapuntal movement between bestial savagery and noble grace for Diomedes in Book V and for Achilles in Book XXIII of the *Iliad*, as each defines what it means to achieve glory in competitive human activities.

This contrapuntal movement begins with the disturbingly bleak conception of the afterlife in the *Iliad*. As Bernard Knox observes, “Homer offers no comforting vision of life beyond the grave.” In the *Iliad*, there is no Elysium with “lands of gladness, glades of gentleness” where “the plains wear dazzling light”, as there is later in Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Nor do resurrection and the possibility of achieving glory through purgation exist in the afterlife of the *Iliad* as they do in the *Aeneid* where some spirits “drink the waters of the River Lethe” and return to earth to live again and a “few” enter the most exalted “Fields of Gladness” as spiritually pure beings. Even the dead Patroclus who returns to earth in Achilles’ dream does so only to ensure his swift burial so
that he may, as he must, enter the enshrouding darkness of the Homeric underworld. Hence, every human life in the *Iliad* inexorably results in a "black death," as each human "generation ... dies away" like "old leaves," the winter winds "scatter ... across the earth." In death, each person loses the animating spirit of life to exist as a "ghost, with no significant physical or mental existence", according to the scholar Seth Schein. Even great heroes, like Diomedes and Achilles, are inexorably fated to become shadows in death’s black night in the *Iliad*.

The grimness of this afterlife becomes especially evident when one reads Homer’s *Iliad* in conjunction with his *Odyssey*. During Odysseus' visit to the underworld in Book XI of the *Odyssey*, he greets the dead Achilles and says, "Achilles, there’s not a man in the world more blest than you—there never has been, never will be one."" Achilles, however, flatly rejects the notion that he leads a happy life in what the seer Tiresias calls, the "joyless kingdom of the dead." Indeed Achilles poignantly tells Odysseus, "No winning words about death to me. I’d rather slave on earth for another man—some dirt-poor tenant farmer who scrappes to keep alive—than rule down here over all the breathless dead." This statement becomes even more remarkable when interpreted in the light of Achilles' observation in the *Iliad* that only "the gods live free of sorrows" because Zeus allots "sorrows only" or a mixture of "misfortune [and] good times in turn" to every mortal. Achilles would seemingly never question the sanity of someone about to exchange the afterlife for the suffering of earthly existence as Aeneas does during his visit to the underworld in the *Aeneid*. For Achilles, the pain and tragedy of life are immeasurably better than eternal existence in an afterlife where no one—not even a once towering hero like him—can achieve meaning or attain glory.

Such a conception of the underworld offers an explanation of the high value of earthly competitive glory in Book V and Book XXIII of the *Iliad*. If the *Iliad* expressed a Christian view of the afterlife, Diomedes and Achilles might subordinate the pursuit of competitive glory to achieve eternal blessedness in heaven. In the *Iliad*, however, achieving earthly glory is the supreme goal where the afterlife is a joyless eternity that lacks significance, according to Seth Schein. As the Trojan Sarpedon tells his comrade Glaucus, "Ah my friend, if you and I could escape this fray and live forever ... I would never fight on the front lines again or command you to the field where men win fame." However, Sarpedon fights to win glory, as the "fates of death" await every human. Likewise, Diomedes does not "cringe in fear" or "shrink from battle" because the game of war provides him the opportunity to achieve earthly glory he can never attain in the obscuring darkness of this afterlife.

Achilles also chooses earthly competitive glory even though it means his early death. Achilles knows from his "immortal" mother Thetis that "two fates bear [him] to the day of death." In one, he chooses a short life with great glory; in the other, he elects a long life mired in obscurity. Achilles questions the wisdom of pursuing glory because he dejectedly believes at one point that "the same honor waits for the coward and the brave ... both go down to Death." Although Achilles "hate[s] ... the very gates of Death," he heroically chooses a short life. When Achilles does so, he achieves the only "form of immortality" open to him—"the undying glory of his name." In this manner, Achilles gains "kleios apthiton," or "glory [that] never dies," among the living even as the brave and the cowardly alike endure an eternity of sorrow in the bleak shadow lands of the *Iliadic* underworld.

On first analysis, achieving this competitive glory seems to entail playing a winner-take-all game, which Sarpedon describes to Glauclus when he says that they will either "give our enemy glory or win it for ourselves." The brutality of this kill-or-be-killed contest leads the French philosopher Simone Weil to characterize the *Iliad* as a "poem of force"—one in which warriors turn each person they defeat "into a thing," lest they be objectified themselves by becoming a corpse in battle. As Seth Schein explains, "Weil
argues that the true hero, the true subject, the center of the *Iliad* is force.” This “force to kill” becomes readily apparent during Book V when Diomedes takes the life of one Trojan after another with stunning ferocity in his “aristeia” or exhibition of “nobility [in battle skill].” Since Achilles refused to fight following his bitter feud with Agamemnon, Diomedes temporarily ascends to become the Greeks’ finest warrior in Book V. Indeed, Book V begins by comparing Diomedes’ excellence to a “star … rising up to outshine all other stars.” Diomedes exhibits this excellence by fighting like an inhuman force of nature on the battlefield. An epic simile compares him to a “flash flood” that destroys “dikes” or every manmade obstacle the Trojans put in his way. Not even the injury he suffers from the arrow shot by the “shining archer Pandarus” stops him. Instead, it “spurred his strength” with “raging” fury, as he “mauls” the Trojans like a wounded “lion…piling corpse on corpse.”

Diomedes further demonstrates his excellence by wounding the goddess Aphrodite with the permission of Athena. Diomedes’ violent encounter with Aphrodite suggests that he, as an agent of Thanatos, or “man’s natural aggressive instinct,” must combat the Eros Aphrodite represents in order to achieve glory. This analysis may seem counter-intuitive since Diomedes’ apparent love for the terrible beauty of war might be interpreted as a manifestation of Aphrodite’s Eros. Zeus, however, makes it clear that the “works of war” lie outside Aphrodite’s province by defining her as the goddess of “marriage” who instills the “fires of longing” for love through the force of her Eros. Interpreted from a Freudian perspective, Aphrodite’s Eros thus “combine[s] single human individuals, and after that families” to form the building blocks that interconnect to create “races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind.” In this manner, Freudian Eros unites civilization even as Thanatos seeks to rend society asunder. The apparent result is a Freudian “struggle” between the “libidinally” binding the power of Eros associated with Aphrodite and the “aggressive instinct” of Thanatos. Thus, as the Greeks seek to defeat Troy, Diomedes, it seems, must overcome Aphrodite since her Eros, from a Freudian perspective, may animate and unify the civilization Troy represents.

More than that, the unifying power of Aphrodite’s Eros threatens to diminish the man-killing prowess of Diomedes as well as the Trojans he battles. Aphrodite triggered the Trojan War when her Eros enabled the Trojan prince Paris to seize Helen from Menelaus, her Greek husband. Yet, her Eros can neuter a warrior’s ability to act honorably on the battlefield. This effect is evident when Aphrodite whisks Paris from battle and then “lays [him] low” with “irresistible longing” to make love to Helen when he should be fighting Menelaus in a single combat to decide who will win the Trojan War. Paris is not alone in feeling the influence of Aphrodite’s power. In fact, there is a continuing tension in Book V between the desire to win glory in the deadly game of war and the longing to return home to one’s wife and resume a peaceful, civilized life. Pandarus, the Trojan archer, tells Aeneas that he will “smash [his] bow and fling it in the fire” if he “get[s] home again.” Aeneas, however, “sharply” censures Pandarus by saying there should be “no talk of turning for home” because thoughts of his “wife and … fine house” will weaken Pandarus’ resolve to battle Diomedes. Likewise, Sarpedon spurs Hector’s fighting spirit by describing how he “left [his] loving wife” in “distant Lycia” to become Hector’s “ally-to-the-death” in the Trojan War. Where Aeneas and Sarpedon thus refuse to succumb to the longing for wife and home Zeus associates with Aphrodite, Diomedes earns glory by going one step further and actually wounding Aphrodite. His hardheartedness allows Diomedes to achieve great glory in war. Yet, this glory may come at a horrible cost since the goddess Dione tells Aphrodite that Diomedes’ wife may soon “wail” in mourning because the “man who fights the gods does not live long.”
Notwithstanding the fury of Diomedes’ battle valor, there appears to be more to the glory he represents than just the exercise of the brutal force Weil describes. As Schein observes, Weil’s interpretation is “one-sided and fails to recognize the nobility and glory” of heroes like Diomedes. This one-sidedness becomes evident when Diomedes battles Ares, the god of war, with the help of the goddess Athena. On one level, this battle arises because Ares fights for the Trojans whereas Diomedes and Athena battle for the Greeks. On a deeper level, however, Diomedes may also be battling against the “uncontrollable rage” and insatiable lust for war that makes Zeus “hate” Ares “most of all the Olympian gods.” That he does so with Athena’s help suggests that the wisdom she represents informs his actions. As such, Diomedes may not completely succumb to what Weil calls the power of war to “intoxicate” the heroes of the Iliad. Instead, Diomedes wisely fights against the personification of that power in Ares to establish an ethos of glory that includes, but also transcends, Weil’s conception of force. Thus, Diomedes not only exemplifies Weil’s force by killing Trojans and wounding Aphrodite, but he also struggles against that force by battling against Ares. In this manner, Diomedes may become a paradigm for the Freudian conflict between Thanatos and Eros.

The same Diomedes who brings death like a superhuman force of nature also seems to realize that he must not lose his humanity in the process. Thus, Diomedes in Book VI rejects the unyielding application of the ethos of force Weil describes when he spares Glaucus, “his hereditary xenos (guest friend).” By doing so, Diomedes reveals that the civility of the guest-host relationship takes precedence over the “rough justice” and brutality of war. The result is a curious paradox, for the same Diomedes who fought against the civilizing force of Aphrodite’s Eros now embodies that force by clashing with the Thanatos Ares represents. As such, Diomedes’ battles against Aphrodite and Ares may represent a conflict between Eros and Thanatos as these two forces epically interact to define human competitive glory in Homer’s poem.

Like Diomedes in Book V and Book VI, Achilles in Book XXIII also exemplifies both the killing fury of the aggressive instinct for death and the civilizing nobility of the unifying force of Eros. As Book XXIII opens, Achilles displays an implacable rage against Hector that is Ares-like in its inhuman intensity. After Hector kills Patroclus, Achilles is not content merely to exact proportional revenge by killing Hector. Instead, Achilles becomes “bent on outrage, on shaming noble Hector.” In lieu of granting Hector “the solemn honors owed the dead,” Achilles desecrates the corpse of Hector in Book XXIII. He announces, “I’ve dragged Hector … for the dogs to rip him raw.” And he then proclaims, “I’ll cut the throats of a dozen sons of Troy in all their shining glory, venting my rage on them for [Patroclus’] destruction.” Where Diomedes’ internal battle against the unrestrained fury of war becomes externalized when he wounds Ares, the god-like Achilles personifies this wrath and must therefore struggle against himself. The result is a narrative movement that alternates between Achilles’ inhuman fury against Hector and the civilizing force of his emerging humanity.

Though Achilles is “still raging for his friend” Patroclus, he attends a “feast” that signals the end of his overwhelming rage against Agamemnon. That ire begins in Book I when Agamemnon seizes Briseis, a beautiful woman who is Achilles’ gēra, a “gift” that represents the timē or “honor,” Achilles won in battle. His anger reverberates throughout the Iliad as Achilles, in his injured pride, “chooses to sit out the battle for a time” while the Trojans score victories and many Greeks, including Patroclus, die. One might argue that Achilles is not responsible for these deaths since these people were fated to die notwithstanding Achilles’ selfish preoccupation with glory. Thus, as Zeus does not intervene to prevent the fated death of his son, Sarpedon, it seems unlikely that he would alter the fated death of these Greeks. Yet, Zeus changes the tide of battle when Thetis, at Achilles’ request,
asks him to do so because Achilles wants “the Achaeans to recognize how important he is to them.” As such, Zeus may transform the circumstances in which these Greeks die even if he does not alter the date of their fated deaths. If so, Achilles’ anger at Hector “must also be anger against himself” because Achilles’ “refusal to reenter the battle … is ultimately the reason Patroklos [Patroclus] fought in his place—and died.”55 Interpreted in this light, Achilles’ rage against Hector confirms and rejects Achilles’ ferocious pursuit of glory. In this manner, Achilles may be exacting revenge against Hector and simultaneously berating himself since both he and Hector are responsible for Patroclus’ death.

Achilles’ rage against Hector also exists hand in hand with his visceral recognition of the common mortality he shares with all humans. This realization remained abstract for Achilles so long as a lengthy, yet inglorious, life was still one of the two fates available to him. That abstraction, however, becomes a reality when Achilles kills Hector and thereby chooses the fate of a short and glorious life. Achilles signals this choice when he places a “red-gold lock” of his hair on the corpse of Patroclus instead of fulfilling his promise to give it to “the river-god Spercheus” when he returns “home.”56 Achilles’ imminent death becomes even more touchingly clear when “the ghost of the stricken Patroclus drifted up” from the underworld to remind Achilles, “your fate awaits you too, godlike as you are … to die in battle beneath the proud rich Trojans’ walls.”57 By recognizing the nearness of his death, the god-like Achilles undergoes a transformation—one that allows him to achieve even greater glory by becoming more human.

The “humanizing” effect of these changes becomes evident when Achilles presides over the funeral games honoring Patroclus.58 These competitive games, like the Trojan War itself, test the military prowess of the Greeks through athletic activities such as a chariot race, archery, single combat, boxing, and wrestling that “bear a distinct relationship to battle events.”59 Yet, the Achilles who kills the Trojans with furious force on the Trojan battlefield becomes a “peacemaker” who acts with grace and civility during these funeral games.60 He prevents Oilean Ajax and Idomeneus from “com[ing] to blows” after they begin “trading … stinging insults” by reminding them they should act with decorum during Patroclus’ funeral games.61 He deftly mediates a dispute between Antilochus and Eume- lus regarding who should be awarded the second place award in the chariot race.62 He also graciously gives the elderly Nestor and Agamemnon prizes even though neither competes in the games.63 In this manner, Achilles seems to evolve from a “self-focused” warrior concerned only with individual glory to a more “community-focused” and humane individual.64

Through this transformation, a different and more genteel Achilles takes center stage in Book XXIII. The death of Patroclus still fills Achilles with “iron rage.” Yet, Achilles departs from the winner-take-all understanding of glory that fueled his anger at Agamemnon. Then his loss of Briseis became a gain to Agamemnon that further gifts to Achilles could not recompense—not even the return of “the beautiful maiden Briseis” and “one of [Agamemnon’s] daughters to wed.”66 Now, Achilles seemingly recognizes that glory can be individually won and collectively shared without tarnishing its worth. During the funeral games, he thus awards all the contestants, not just the winner, gēras, or gifts, that recognize the timē they have won through the excellence of their war-like athletic prowess. He declares that “Victory goes to both” Ajax and Odysseus even though their wrestling match results in a “stalemate.”67 Likewise, he announces that Ajax and Diomedes should “[s]hare and share alike” the winner’s prizes in their fight in full battle gear when that contest ends in a tie.68 Achilles himself passes up the opportunity for personal glory when he “sits out of the chariot race … he would easily win because he possesses immortal horses.”69 Like Diomedes, Achilles thus earns glory through noble conduct that arises from, yet transcends, his ferocious rage.70 Thus Book XXIII sets the stage for what Soltes calls the
“final resolution of Achilles’ fury” that occurs in Book XXIV when Achilles “gives back Hektor’s [Hector’s] body to the latter’s suppliants father, Priam” and thereby achieves a heroic humanity that constitutes perhaps his greatest glory.71

As the foregoing analysis suggests, glory seemingly arises in Book V and Book XXIII from contrapuntal movements between life and death, nobility and ferocity, and glory and oblivion that define what it means to be human in the Iliad. In Book V, Athena “lift[s] the mist” from Diomedes’ eyes and thereby allows him “to tell a god from man on sight.”72 When she does, Homer may remove the veil from our eyes to see that being human in the Iliad entails more than the application of Simone Weil’s force. To be sure, Diomedes brutally kills Trojans just as Achilles inhumanly desecrates the corpse of Hector. Nevertheless, Diomedes and Achilles also achieve glory through actions that question the application of this force. Diomedes does not only reject the unifying life force of Aphrodite’s Eros, but he also battles against the implacable rage and war lust of Ares’ Thanatos. Likewise, Achilles does not only desecrate Hector’s corpse and mourn for Patroclus, but he also acts with a civility that rejects the winner-take-all ethos of competitive human activities, whether they occur in the brutal life-or-death struggle of war or the intense win-or-lose competition of sports. The result is that the competitive games also seemingly arise from a conflict between life and death that makes the Iliad “a poem of mortality.”73 Although “[d]eath … seems to have the last word,” mortality allows humans to achieve an undying glory—one the immortal gods may never equal because they cannot courageously risk life itself.75 Yet, human mortality is simultaneously a source of tragedy in the Iliad because it arises from a life filled with pain that leads to a joyless eternity for everyone—even great heroes like Achilles and Diomedes. As a result, Book V and Book XXIII of the Iliad suggest that glory, like human nature itself, arises from a conflict between life and death.

Eric S. Meyers is a sophomore in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying Russian.
Interview with Dean Chester L. Gillis

Jacob Dyson

Chester L. Gillis is the Dean of Georgetown College and a Professor in the Department of Theology. In addition to founding the Program on the Church and Interreligious Dialogue in the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affair, Dean Gillis has also served as the chair of the Theology Department from 2001 to 2006 and was the inaugural holder of the Amaturo Chair in Catholic Studies. His scholarship focuses on comparative religion and contemporary Catholicism, including topics such as the Catholic Church in the United States, interfaith dialogue, and religious pluralism. The author of numerous publications, Dean Gillis is currently working on a new book, tentatively titled *Two Shall Become as One?: Interreligious Marriage in America*. Dean Gillis recently spoke with *Utraque Unum* about Georgetown, his research, and his experiences as Dean of the College.

Q: I want to begin with a general question: why Georgetown? What does Georgetown University offer—to students and staff alike—that other premier research universities and institutes of higher education don’t? Why, with a global proliferation of higher educational opportunities, should Georgetown remain a viable candidate for individuals seeking a postsecondary education?

A: Well, there’s a range of reasons “why Georgetown.” Among those are its Jesuit, Catholic character which is attractive to some. Our Washington D.C. location is a very large draw for almost everyone. The quality of our faculty, the quality of our student body. The intimate sense of a campus within the middle of a city—a very powerful and prestigious city. It’s not a unique distinction but it’s an important one. Many fine schools are located in rural areas—some of the big state schools or some of the smaller colleges, for example—and some of the fine research universities aren’t in major cities. When you come on this campus, which is elegant and attractive, you find an enclave—there’s really a college feel to it.

For faculty it’s the quality of our students, the support for their research, the possibility to have colleagues across disciplines, and the access to all that Washington offers. Those are all assets. The fact that we’re in US News’ “Top 25” also doesn’t hurt—it certainly makes it attractive for students and faculty to come here. And success begets success. Once you have that success we get better students all the time, the school becomes more competitive. The faculty are coming from the top graduate programs and are leaving tenured positions at some of the best universities to join us.

Q: Do you think Georgetown’s sense of its own identity and competitive assets has grown over the years? I know you’ve credited President DeGioia with putting the University on the international stage.
A: Yes, it has grown a lot. Let’s take a fifty year trajectory. I recently saw a presentation by Charlie Deacon, the Dean of Admissions, that showed that the admission rate to the University fifty years ago or so was fifty-six percent. This year it was fifteen percent. There’s clear quantitative growth in competitiveness. Those people who got in fifty years ago might not get in today. They’re no less smart than the people who are here today—I think they’re equally natively bright—but there’s so much more competition for the limited spaces that we have. That’s one measure in which we’ve grown. We also grew from a regional university to a national university during Father Healy’s time, and during President DeGioia’s time we’ve gone from a national university to a global university, with a global vision and a global understanding. So yes, it has changed.

While it has changed, there are certain things that I think Georgetown needs to preserve—things that the University has, to a large degree, preserved. People often ask me: “what’s new and innovative and exciting and entrepreneurial?” All of that is good; chasing the competition or the “shiny, new object” can be a good thing—we need to be innovative. But at the same time, I always want to know what we’re going to preserve. Is this Georgetown the same one that people came to fifty years ago? In many ways it is. I attribute that largely to its Jesuit, Catholic character and values, Cura Personalis, and the individual attention that students—even at the undergraduate level—receive. We can’t sacrifice that. That has to be consistent.

Q: In the beginning of your book Pluralism: A New Paradigm for Theology, you seem to delineate two religious spheres: a “lived religion,” pastoral practice side of religion, and a side of theological, scholastic discussion. In particular, you contend that “the limited audience [of this latter group] can make theology an elite enterprise with few immediate implications in the world of lived religion.” My next question has two parts. To what degree do you believe a bifurcation between these two spheres still exists today? And more generally, what can scholars do to ensure that their work isn’t consigned to an academic “echo chamber” of sorts—that their work reaches the worlds of policy and public discourse?

A: I believe the bifurcation continues to exist. There is academic theology, generated by theologians, philosophers of religion, and other professionals from disciplines that contribute to and examine religion. That’s an arcane world where there’s an expectation that you understand the language, the nomenclature, the arguments—an expectation that you can dive into the deep end of the pool. That’s what scholars do. This kind of writing, some of which I have done, is designed for scholars. There’s an expectation of a significant background in order to understand the work. These scholars don’t stop to explain everything, a background is just presumed. That’s an important discourse because it’s on the cutting edge of the discipline. It asks: “where are we going next?” The work is often incremental, sophisticated, and nuanced. It’s depth that’s important to have in any discipline.

At the same time, that type of theological discourse often doesn’t resonate with or touch people in the pews. The practice of religion is equal to or more important than the theological theory. I think there’s a symbiotic relationship between the two: theory informs practice and practice should reflect theory as well. I taught at Drew University before I came here. I was teaching in the Ph.D and the M.Div programs. Many of the Masters of Divinity students wanted to go into pastoral ministry at the time. I remember one of those students once came up to me and said: “this course is not appropriate for us. All you’ve given us are ideas.” And I replied: “True, that’s very true. I’m giving you these ideas because I hope that you can understand them, and learn to generate your own ideas. I anticipate that if you go on to ordination—to a pastorate somewhere, at some pulpit, in some church—you will be the theologian for that local community. They’re not going to have me. And they’re not going to be
reading the works that we were reading. You are the theologian. As a result, you need ideas to generate—not just techniques to use on a Sunday morning, that are wonderful for a liturgy, but really have a limited shelf-life. If you can think theologically, you can be the theological leader for that community”—ideas move the world. I said to him: “before you came to Drew Theological Seminary, you had an idea that you wanted to be in ministry. You had an idea. And that idea led to you being here now. If I’m only giving you ideas, I’m unapologetic about that. Ideas will last your whole career; techniques will change, but ideas will allow you to generate new ideas. And that’s what I’m doing for you.”

Q: Perhaps you can make a parallel there about Georgetown. Ideas lend it a certain institutional continuity, but also allow the school to have a certain mutable character.

A: Absolutely. At Georgetown—or really any place now—the shelf-life of the content we disseminate in classrooms is much shorter than it was. Fifty years ago, the content could last for twenty years or longer. When students leave here today, however, a lot of the factual elements of the things they learned are outdated after five or ten years. But the ability to think critically, to analyze a text, to write clearly and persuasively, to make an argument, to conduct an oral presentation that’s persuasive—those skills stay forever. That’s what we’re teaching you. We’re not teaching mere content. You can get a lot of content from the Web. But how do you massage, interpret, and work with that information? Those are the skills we’re teaching.

Q: In a similar vein, how do you shape the curriculum of the College to help Hoyas apply these skills and studies to the outside world—to live as “women and men for others” in a global community?

A: In part, because I listen to students. I regularly have dinners at my house with students—I had one last night. I always ask the students a different question. Last night I asked them: “tell me about the most profound, moving, innovative, transformative intellectual experience you’ve had at Georgetown so far.” I got remarkable answers. Stories about how people opened up to the world of ideas through their intellectual pursuits at Georgetown. Some of these were through group work, some were individual, some people talked about a course they had taken or a book they had been assigned that opened a new world to them.

In a lot of these sessions—and other meetings with students and faculty—I also ask the question: “what are we doing well, and what are we not doing well?” When they’ve just applied and gotten in, I’ll ask them: “where else did you apply, and why did you come to Georgetown?” A lot of times I’ll hear that they got into a number of excellent schools and chose us for a particular reason, but also that they had a hesitancy about coming because we didn’t have something that Brown, Duke, Chicago, Northwestern, or other schools that they got into did. That always makes me think: “oh, we need to fill that gap.” As much as I’m a theologian and a theorist, I’m also a pragmatist—I have a practical bent. For example, I put in a business minor for college students. I am a huge defender of the liberal arts and humanities. I believe in the intrinsic value of them. But you can be a history major and know how to read a spreadsheet too. Doing a business minor is not a bad idea no matter what you plan on doing. Even when I went from being a full-time theologian to being a dean, I started dealing with budgets and other things for which I had never been trained. Qualitative skills are valuable. If you’re going to be a doctor, if you’re going to be a lawyer, if you’re going to Wall Street, if you’re going to run an NGO, you’ve got to know how to manage and be responsible for budgets.

Film and Media Studies was another program I instituted. It’s a terrific program, for which students have a passion. They want to be creative and generate new content. Will they go to New York City or Hollywood? Some might. But the program’s not designed for that. It’s designed as
a curricular outlet for those skills so that we can guide them in a sophisticated manner about media creation and its influence. There’s a practical dimension to it.

Q: Justice and Peace Studies too.

A: Justice and Peace studies went from a minor to a major and has done extremely well. We have lots of majors and high demand for the program. We’re equipping these students to move into a range of NGO’s and nonprofits and advocacy organizations with sophistication and leadership skills. Skills that we can provide for them.

The Journalism minor is another one. I was quite skeptical of Journalism when it was proposed because the financial models for journalism have imploded—newspapers don’t make money. But I was persuaded by the right people. Barbara Feinman Todd provides excellent leadership for the program. The minor is so successful that there’s a waiting list for it. We’ve placed people at The New York Times, the Washington Post, NBC—a range of outlets, both print and media. And we did that with a minor. It’s terrific. The proof is in the pudding; these kids are doing something. They still acquire their values from Georgetown—they may want to transform the world, to “set the world on fire” as Ignatius said. Now they have a place to do that, a place with jobs.

Q: Moving to your own scholarship, one of your greatest focuses has been theological pluralism. Your first book focuses on the soteriology and pluralist paradigms of philosopher John Hick. And this has been a theme you have continued to explore throughout your academic career. Can you explain your conception of theological pluralism, as well as what piqued your interest in the topic?

A: When I finish reading books, I often write a note in the front of the book—mostly just about my impressions. There was a book that I read a long time ago—I might have been an undergrad at the time—called God and the Universe of Faiths by John Hick. It was a collection of essays and the lead essay, called “God and the Universe of Faiths,” was a very provocative thinking about crossing religious boundaries, about thinking about the Transcendent from various vectors. It was arguing that communities understand the Transcendent, God, in certain ways because they have a history, they have rituals, they have texts, they have figures—all of which confirm this particular understanding or belief. Other communities have similar things with different conclusions. God is triune, God is singular. God became incarnate, God did not become incarnate. God is multiple manifestations—like in Hinduism—or God is a singular manifestation. There isn’t a god in the traditional sense in the Buddhist context. In this book John Hick had a metaphor of going up a mountain with different groups. Each group had its own texts, its own rituals, its own music. All of them were thinking: “this is the complete understanding of the Transcendent, of God. We have God. God has disclosed Godself to us.” Then they all meet at the top of the mountain and they see all the other groups and think: “these other groups are making similar claims about the Transcendent. Do they have any veracity to them, or should we just dismiss them?” This is what Christianity did for a long time, saying: “they need to be converted.” There was this Christian imperialism sense, a practice of: “baptize them immediately.” The book raised the question: could the Transcendent be disclosing itself in various places, at various times, through various texts and figures? And that Transcendent is, in a sense, unknowable to all of us in its absolute self. It’s not fully disclosed. If it were fully disclosed it wouldn’t be God.

I thought about that and started reading texts from other traditions, and I saw parallels in the narratives and symbolism that were there. I sometimes thought: “that sounds like Christianity!” And it would be like Christianity, only it would be from Buddhism—even before Christianity. Are there certain rhetorical narratives or techniques that transfer across religions
to disclose the same understanding, the same ways of being and viewing the Transcendent? I think there are. It doesn’t mean that Christians don’t have a grasp of God. We do. It just means we don’t have the exclusive or complete grasp of God. I think that’s really important. If you’re born in Bhubaneswar, India you’ll likely be a Hindu. If you’re born in Pakistan you’ll likely by a Muslim. If you’re born in New Jersey, you’ll likely be a Christian. Could it just be the vagaries of where you’re born that determine your access to salvation? Are there other paths to salvation as well? Then you have to figure out the Christology or soteriology of that. It’s a complex landscape, but it’s an exciting landscape. You can’t ignore “The Other”, especially on a campus like Georgetown where you meet “The Other” daily. A hundred years ago in America, “The Other” meant a Catholic meeting a Lutheran. Now it’s a Lutheran meeting a Muslim, a Muslim meeting a Jew, interactions like that. It’s an important element to explore—worth the inquiry I’ve done over the last thirty years or so.

Q: You identify as Catholic. If all of these different religious groups possess salvific parity, my question, then, is: why Catholicism? Why do you identify as a Catholic?

A: For a number of reasons. Certainly I was born into it, which was how I was introduced to it. But I also find it compelling and cohesive; I find its theology to be coherent. I find its rituals attractive and the community it creates welcoming and supportive. I find the Gospel liberating and an important guide. All of these things are essential and important. And they’re as good or better than any other tradition. It’s very attractive to me and has nourished my spirituality.

Is it the only way to get to God, however? I don’t think it is. It’s a little bit like this: when I go to the store before Valentine’s Day I buy a card that says to my wife: “you are the most beautiful, most romantic, most engaging woman in the world, and I will love you forever.” Theoretically there must only be one of those cards sold. After all, if you say: “you are the most beautiful, most romantic, most engaging woman in the world,” there must only be one of those cards made. Yet we know that as soon as you pick up one of those cards, there’s another one right behind it. I would never get my wife a card saying: “you’re pretty nice, among many people you’re relatively attractive and intelligent.” My marriage is an absolute commitment to something that is relative. For me, my wife is the most beautiful and engaging and intelligent woman. But on a philosophical level I know she’s not perfect. My love for her is not a philosophical claim, it is a faith claim and a commitment. Commitments are absolute, but there’s still a relative character to them. They’re like religions—religions have the same sorts of bonds as marriage. You don’t abandon what you have and say it’s no good. Not at all. But you put it in perspective.

Q: In your works you talk about how paradigm shifts are both precipitated by—and often followed by—a crisis in the discipline in which they’re introduced. In your own experience, either here at Georgetown or in the broader scholastic and theological milieu, what sorts of criticism and disagreement have you faced in propagating this new paradigm for theology?

A: The notion of the paradigm change comes from Thomas Kuhn’s work The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, published in 1962. And the classic paradigm change occurred with the geocentric model of the Earth as the center of the Universe. The world and Christianity believed in that model for a long, long time. After all, we had to be the center of the Earth—Adam and Eve, God created us, we had to be the center. When Copernicus came along with his telescope and said: “well, we’re really not the center of the Universe. We revolve around another element, the Sun, and we’re one of many planets that do that,” it dislodged us from the center and it dislodged us theologically. If we were the pinnacle of creation then obviously we had to be the center of everything. What Christians did was
create epicycles. The subsequent models grew more and more convoluted until they eventually imploded. Finally people said: “the Earth is not the center of the Universe.” And we still went on—we were fine.

When you say: “this religion is the center of everything, and everything else revolves around it and reflects it,” it gets convoluted and complex after a while. Maybe every religion thinks that it’s the center. Maybe no religions are the center. Maybe the Divine, the Transcendent is at the center. Maybe all of us are just revolving around that Transcendent, gaining our life and our sustenance from that being.

Q: So have you found yourself in contestation with people who have felt “dislodged” by this theory?

A: Oh absolutely, no question about that. People say: “no, no, no, you’ve abandoned Christianity. This is terrible, how can you say this? We have to be the best.” It’s a little like American exceptionalism in the political realm. I have a friend who says: “everybody wants to live in America.” And I say: “guess what, not everyone wants to live in America.” It doesn’t mean we’re not a great nation, or that I don’t love it. I do. But I ask: “have you ever been to Switzerland? It’s a beautiful place, it runs well, it’s efficient.” There are people from disadvantaged nations who really want to come here for opportunities. But there are opportunities other places as well. We’re not the center of the geo-political world. The sense is that we’re better than anybody, and I don’t think we are. We’re very good at a lot of things, but we’re not better than everybody at everything by any means. It diminishes the other communities, the other cultures, the other societies. I don’t want to diminish the other religions by saying: “you didn’t quite get it right, only we got it right.”

Q: To what degree do you believe the process of globalization—the idea of a shrinking world that increasingly puts people of different cultures, traditions, and faith backgrounds in conversation with one another—has helped propel this paradigm of theological pluralism? And have you witnessed such a change—a trend towards greater cultural and religious pluralism—occurring here at Georgetown?

A: Let me answer the first question in regard to my new book. I’m currently working on a book called Two Shall Become as One? Interreligious Marriage in America. I just created a website called interreligiousmarriage.com. On that website there are two pictures of one of my daughter’s friends, a Catholic who got married a couple of years ago to a Hindu. He went to Georgetown business school and got his M.B.A. They had a dual ceremony wedding. They had a Hindu wedding with all of the rituals of Hinduism, and they had a Catholic wedding in Dahlgren. Fifty years ago that wouldn’t have happened, but it happens much more regularly today. If you come to Georgetown, the community is so diverse. The likelihood of you coming here and falling in love and partnering with someone who’s religiously identical to you is less than it was in the past. A Christian marries a Jew or Muslim or Hindu here. Then you have to really deal with these concrete issues of religion “on the ground.” That’s what the new book is about. A place like Georgetown is the intersection of the world. It’s always been welcoming to non-Catholics since its opening with John Carroll. But when you come on campus today and hear ten languages being spoken and meet people from all over the world, it’s different from going to college fifty years ago where everyone was from your neighborhood, they all looked like you, and they all had the same basic disposition or beliefs. That’s not true here. And because of that, you get to know “The Other” as who she or he is—not a caricature of “The Other”, but that person as who she or he says they are. That changes the whole dynamic.

Politically, we’re moving back towards nationalism, a position that’s contrary to my theories. We’re pulling in the reins, we’re saying: “oh no, it’s only America, America first and only America.” I don’t think you can really roll that
back. I think we all live in a global village. It’s wishful thinking that we can live in the 1950s again, but I don’t think it’ll happen.

**Q:** A sort of nostalgic yearning for the past.

**A:** Right. We romanticize the past about how wonderful it was. But that still won’t take away globalization. The moment you had easier access to travel, the internet, access to higher education—it opened the world.

**Q:** When looking at something as intimate as marriage between people of very different faith backgrounds, do you think there’s room for both individuals to practice their respective doctrines, to practice that “faith on the ground”? Or do you believe religious practice in such an arrangement will be inherently zero-sum?

**A:** No, I don’t think it’s a zero-sum game. Come back to me in a year when I finish the book, because I’m not sure what the conclusion will be. What I’m trying to answer in the book is how you talk about God, or the Transcendent, across religious traditions when you’re marrying someone from another tradition. There are lots of practical issues and Gordian knots I might not be able to untie in this book. You’re going to have to make decisions if you have children. Are you going to have a baptism or a bris? People make different choices, they go with one tradition or the other. Sometimes one person converts to the other tradition, out of conviction or convenience. Sometimes they move to a neutral religion. Sometimes they abandon religion altogether. Or sometimes they try to do a dual understanding of their religions, raising their children with an appreciation for both traditions. It’s a complex landscape, but one worth exploring. This book makes concrete the things I explore theoretically. This is where the rubber meets the road. When I talk about soteriology and religious pluralism and philosophy of religion claims, people who aren’t knowledgeable about those subjects tend to look at me, their eyes glass over, and they yawn. When I talk about the marriage book, however, they say: “oh, we’re Christian and my brother married a Jew,” or “we’re Jewish and my sister married a Muslim.” The book comes alive. They understand exactly what I’m talking about.

**Q:** So these points of theological confluence are very real places—places people know and can relate to.

**A:** Exactly. And some of those people have worked out some of the ritual and the ceremony, but most of them haven’t thought out the theological side. They haven’t thought out what the marriage will mean theologically for them. I have the ability to help them do that. In the book I say: “if you’re going to benefit from this book you have to take two things seriously: marriage—which many people don’t, many people have eschewed marriage—and religion.” If you take those two things seriously, this is the book for you. If you don’t care about either of those there are still going to be bumps in the road. Even if you don’t think you’re religious, there are still going to be issues. There are going to be cultural issues. If you’re a Jew, whether you’re a religious Jew or not, you’re a Jew. If you’re a Christian, whether you’re a religious Christian or not, you’re a Christian. Those things are still going to arise. I want people, even before their marriage, to think through these as much as they can. It’s an issue, like everything else—from finances to in-laws—that will arise once you get married. I just say: “here’s a way to think through this in a sophisticated manner.”

**Q:** In the past you’ve spoken of the individualized attention you received from John Hick when you were working on your dissertation on him—his prompt and thorough responses to the queries you’d send him, the attention he would lend to your studies. During your time as Dean I would argue that you, too, have done a remarkable job listening to student voices. Do you ever find it difficult to balance focusing on the macro, administrative facets of your job, while also paying attention to student needs and opinions?
A: There are a lot of demands on my time, but I prioritize things. I prioritize students. I say I’m a dean for students. I’m not the Dean of students, that’s Todd Olson, he’s the Vice-President of Student Affairs. But I’m here to serve students, they’re our constituents. I’m also here to serve faculty and to facilitate their teaching and research, but they’re adults and they’re more self-directed than students might be. I make time for students just like John Hick made time for me. I was a lowly graduate student and he was remarkably generous to me. He was one of the most famous philosophers of religion of the twentieth century, and yet if I wrote to him, within two weeks I would get a detailed letter back. Initially I was writing contrary to him—I thought he was all wrong. And I told him that. My first book said he was all wrong. He was patient and thought I had very good arguments. And over time I came around and said: “oh, he’s got it right and I’ve got it wrong.” The kind of attention that he gave to me I’d like to give to our students. It’s important that I answer student emails, have students over to my house, do interviews for *Utraque Unum*, or do things with the College Academic Council. The college experience is many things. It’s the classroom and your friends—but it’s also how you interact with campus adults like me.

I do a lot of fundraising, and I meet a lot of alumni. I often hear stories about previous administrators or faculty members who had huge influences on someone’s life. Many alumni are deeply dedicated to Georgetown because of that. One example is Father Royden Davis. He was Dean in this office for twenty-three years. Royden did extraordinary things for students—he had power that I don’t have any more. We were a very decentralized administration, run largely by the Jesuits, and Royden could do what he wanted. There were several times when a kid would come in on a Friday at the end of the semester and say: “I have to leave Georgetown, my father lost his job and I can’t afford to come to Georgetown. I’m done.” And Royden would say: “come back on Monday.” When the kid would come back, Royden would say: “it’s all taken care of.” He took care of the kid’s tuition for the next year and a half. I can’t do that. If I did that, the financial people would say: “you don’t have that authority.” And I don’t. But many of these alumni now are generous donors. They say: “I never would have gotten through without the Dean doing this for me. I never would have had a degree. Now that I’m very successful on Wall Street, I want to give back.” One time after I gave a talk, an alumnus said to me: “do you know what my son’s name is? It’s Royden.” I think we’re here to inspire and serve students—I love being with them.

Q: Any advice you’d give for the next Dean?

A: I think when Chris Celenza comes he’ll do a wonderful job. He’s a great choice. I think he’ll find that although he has some administrative experience as I did—I was interim Dean before—he will largely be drinking from a firehose for the first six months. He’s coming from Hopkins so he’s got to learn our culture. His wife, Anna, is a professor in the Performing Arts Department at Georgetown, which is good, but he still has to learn firsthand. My first piece of advice to him would be: just listen. Listen for six months. Don’t come in and make decisions immediately before learning the lay of the land—knowing who’s a leader, what the issues are and how far they go back, what the complexities are. Be open to faculty and student input. He’s a smart guy, so he’ll probably do all of this. He won’t need my advice. That’s the first part. And then: do things that are yours. If Gillis did it this way and you don’t want to, I won’t be offended. Do something different. Do something better than I did. That’s good for Georgetown. I’m not protecting any legacy. It’s about the people and Georgetown thriving.

Q: Thank you so much, and thank you for your service to the school.

Jacob Dyson is a sophomore in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying Government, English, and Film and Media Studies.
Interview with Professor Joshua Mitchell, Professor of Political Theory

Micah Musser

Professor Joshua Mitchell is a Professor of political theory in the Government Department. He teaches classes on Alexis de Tocqueville, Plato and Nietzsche, Ethics and the Market, and the Fundamentals of Political Theory. He has held the position of Chairman of the Government Department on the main campus and the position of Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs on the SFS campus in Qatar. He also spent two years as the Acting Chancellor of The American University of Iraq in Sulaimani. Along with having published four books, Professor Mitchell has had articles published in numerous journals, including The Review of Politics, The Journal of Politics, The Journal of Religion, APSR, and Political Theory. Professor Mitchell recently spoke with Utraque Unum about his time in academia and his experiences teaching in the Middle East, from which he has returned just this past semester to Georgetown’s main campus.

Q: First of all, thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. This is primarily meant to be a discussion about your experience helping to establish the SFS school in Qatar, but we may have time to discuss some more general aspects of your scholarship and interests or your experience at Georgetown more broadly. To start off, would you mind giving a brief explanation of the work you did in Qatar and your involvement in the opening of the SFS there in 2005?

A: In 2005 I was finishing up as the chairman of the Government Department. I had just been re-elected in fact. The dean of the faculty of the School of Foreign Service then, James Reardon-Anderson, who was to be the dean of the new School of Foreign Service, asked if I would be on the start-up team for the school in Qatar—though in a faculty capacity—which was fine by me. I wasn’t really interested in administration after being the chair of the Government Department for three years. So, five faculty members and I don’t know how many administrators—maybe 30, I don’t think it was much more than 30—flew off to the sands in June/July/August of 2005 and worked very hard because the opening was September of 2005. So we had four months to get the school running.

I was there initially as a teacher for the equivalent of Political and Social Thought and for a couple of the other philosophy majors. I was teaching the canon of western civilization to students, only some of whom had had exposure to this through private schools—they had a brief, broad familiarity with western education and western ideas. And then there were others who really had never had any exposure. I did that for a year.

I got pulled up into the administration the second year: the position known now as the Academic Dean for Faculty Affairs. It is sort of the head—it’s too strong to say Provost—but it was basically the overseer for the academic program. That is the definition of Provost, except over there
it would have been about ten people, so the scale isn’t quite right, but that’s the function. I did that for a couple of years and then, actually, I left. I intended to come back here at the beginning of 2008. But I got invited to Iraq for two years. I got invited to look around. I decided I would take a two year leave of absence because they were setting up the first American University there in Kurdistan. I don’t want to say I did it because I was looking forward to a new experience. I did it because I knew who was next in line and I wasn’t sure he could do it. I knew I could because I had just helped build a university in Qatar. So I did that for two years (2008-2010), then came back here for a year, hoping to be done with the Middle East, but then decided I wasn’t. I went back to Qatar for two years straight in 2011 and then was there intermittently for a couple of semesters. I just came back to the US in December of 2016. Probably not for good, but in terms of my presence here on campus I have to think as though it’s permanent, at least for now.

Q: You mentioned that before you left the Middle East you were the Chair of the Government Department here. Can you elaborate more on what prompted you to take up the offer to travel to Qatar?

A: It was a number of things. The political theory field as a whole was starting to get into trouble at that time. What I mean by that is this: I went through the University of Chicago in the mid-80s and there was still a generation of professors there who had in one way or another lived through World War Two. That experience—that crisis—had formed their thinking about political theory. It struck me that this was the kind of work that political theory needed to do. That is to say, they were trying to link ideas in the great books to the real life events of our times, in order to make sense of both. That was the enterprise as I understood it in the University of Chicago, but as the 80s waned and the 90s and early 2000s appeared, it became clear that political theory was becoming yet another academically-inbred field, and I wanted less and less to do with it. So it struck me that, here I am, a Tocqueville scholar for the past 15 years, and Tocqueville was concerned with the crisis of modernity. Given what I knew about the Middle East—from growing up there for a few formative years and from my dad’s work on the Muslim Brotherhood—it struck me that this might be an opportunity to get out there and think about the problem of modernity through the specialty of my field. It was also an opportunity to teach students and learn from them how they understood their standing in this march toward modernity.

Q: Can you elaborate on the lessons you learned from your students in the Middle East, both specifically about the development of the Middle East and more generally about the development of modernity and Tocqueville’s comments on it?

A: There are a number of things, but two are prominent in my mind to this day. One is that while American students have the appearance of having negotiated this modern life—which is characterized by the individuation of the self—more easily, it was clear from my discussions with my Qatari students that they could see some of the problems of this advanced individuation very clearly. And of course these are things that Tocqueville can see, too, so the Qatari students could see in Tocqueville’s reading of America’s future exactly the same problems that they see in the West today. There was a confirmation, and I was happy for that.

The second point stems from the fact that the Middle Eastern students are really torn between two worlds much more so than American students. And by that I mean: what Tocqueville describes as the aristocratic age (which includes commitment, honor, family, predicates of existence, roles, etc.) is something that the students in the Middle East know by living it. Yet at the same time, they also have access to all the Facebook and social media stuff that we seem to create, so they are much more cognizant of the
chasm caused by this “aristocratic life.” Our American students know the realities of this modern existence well and fully, but they don’t dwell in the tension as the Middle Eastern students do. So that’s the second thing.

And there is a third thing which follows from that. One possible reaction to the impossibility of the disembodied life is to long for a re-enchantment with the past. And whether it’s a romantic longing or something more serious than that, I saw a lot of it in the Middle East. Hyper-modernity leads to re-enchantment movements—this is my general thesis, anyway. That allowed me to come back to the United States and hear a lot of my political theory colleagues who were disenchanted with the modern world—perhaps they dreamed of some medieval or Ancient Greek alternative to it—in other words, colleagues who had a re-enchantment view. This struck me as both dangerous in the Middle East and dangerous and unproductive in the American context. I again side with Tocqueville, who thought that we can’t go back—we have to find some way to live in some way in this more or less individuated position.

Q: You’ve talked about how students differ between the Middle East and the US, but in what ways does higher education more generally differ—whether it’s in terms of cultural appreciation, institutional structure, or just norms of interaction?

A: Well, so the big difference right off the bat is that in the American context you have a K-12 system that largely prepares students to think—as we use the term—critically. They have a familiarity with the idea that they are somehow responsible for the classroom: the teacher will ask the questions and they’ll know how to respond. Whereas, in Qatar and Iraq, we developed what we called the 18 Months Rule. This meant that over the first three semesters, our students would have enormous trouble breaking out from the K-12 habits they had learned: namely that they were simply to repeat and memorize and be passive learners. They had come from a teacher-centered education, whereas we are now using the term “student-centered learning.” They had come from an educational system where authority was still very much intact and many of them had never been asked ever what they thought of an idea. So there was a necessary period of adjustment—a period of re-hardwiring—that almost all the students had to go through. Not the ones at the very high level who had gone through private schools and had exposure to the West—they clearly are an example to the contrary—but so many of the other students had to be re-hardwired and that’s where I think the liberal arts education was so very, very important. It’s conceivable they could have gone through technical training and continued with this teacher-centered learning where they just memorize and repeat, but I think the virtue of a liberal arts education is that it re-wires you so you can develop your own voice, so you can speak, so you can write for yourself. And our argument—if not in Qatar, especially in Iraq—to the group of elites who didn’t believe in that sort of thing was that: yes, it’s true that you need business leaders and IT people, but we’ll make them better if we give them 18 months of liberal arts training so that they can begin to think and speak for themselves and think like entrepreneurs. Our way of advancing a much needed liberal arts curriculum was to do it in the context of the aspirations that they had—which was to build up their economy.

That strikes me as something Tocqueville would have admitted was perfectly appropriate, because as Tocqueville notes: as we move into our democratic age we have our material comforts to worry about; it’s not fixed by social standing, and we need to have business and IT and agriculture and science. This actually is one of the increasingly prominent justifications for the liberal arts training in America: as we move more towards STEM it’s important to recognize that we have to also develop people who can think critically and creatively. The liberal arts education is probably the best venue for doing that. So, while I’d like to make the argument that liberal arts is good for
the soul—and I believe that—in the democratic age it’s just not clear, given the focus on materialism, that virtue-based arguments will be compelling enough for vast swaths of people. I take this intermediate position which is, “no we’re not going to have St. John’s College, but we don’t want a pure technical institution either, so we’ll find this middle ground where at least for a couple of years you have that broad liberal arts training for the purpose of character formation”.

Q: Did you encounter other difficulties in trying to encourage the liberal arts education? In particular from those outside of the educational system?

A: I’ll focus on Iraq here. You have a command economy from the Baathists for a couple of decades. A command economy will do something peculiar to your educational system: it will give the illusion that the elites who run the command economy can decide in advance how many pharmacists and doctors they will need, say five years from now. So they develop a comprehensive national testing system. And literally, depending upon the test score you got on your high school test, your career would be chosen for you based on projections of which jobs will be needed five, six, even ten years from now. That habit of mind does not die easily. If you have that habit of mind it’s very difficult to be convinced that you need the liberal arts because you are just training people to fill slots in a top-down economy. So one of our arguments was: if you are serious about competing in the global economy you can’t simply have a command economy, you need to have people who can adjust and find new jobs and think about things in new ways because you yourself can’t establish in advance what sort of economy you’re going to have or what kinds of jobs you’re going to need. If you’re interested in the well-being of Iraq, you should also be committed to the formation of this new kind of character that’s much more fluid and entrepreneurial and that I think only the liberal arts can produce.

Q: You talked about how your experience with Tocqueville impacted your understanding of the Middle East and the process of modernization there. Has your time in the Middle East at all impacted your understanding of Tocqueville?

A: I’ll have to answer that more broadly. I think I have learned more about every author that I teach—primarily Plato, Augustine, Hobbes, Rousseau, Tocqueville, and Nietzsche—from being in the Middle East. Because here, I can start a class and say “Athens” or “Rome” or “Europe” and my students can be counted on to know roughly what that means. Whereas over there I have to realize that my students don’t have that frame of reference and so I have to ask myself the question: if I went beyond the words “Athens” and “Rome” and “Europe,” what would I say next to people who don’t know much about that context, or may have certain views that aren’t very helpful for us to move forward the class? It’s made me think more carefully about where I begin a class and why I begin here, rather than there. It’s made me think a lot more carefully about what one would have to say in order to make an idea clear. Whether I’m successful, I don’t know, but I think it’s helped immensely, and this is why I’ve tried to encourage my political theory colleagues—indeed everybody—to go over there. I believe it really does help you back on the main campus as well.

Q: Except for a few intermittent semesters at the main campus, you’ve primarily been in the Middle East since 2005. Since coming back to Georgetown, have you noticed any significant changes about this campus relative to your time here before leaving?

A: I think that the trends that were underway before I left are still very much intact: a dreamy view that “social justice” supplies a comprehensive enough framework to think through just about everything. This was underway a long time ago. I continue to believe it’s a problem. I
believe justice is not an answer, it’s a question. So I get very nervous about that sort of view. I will say I have been surprised to find this semester that it’s actually easier to teach St. Augustine to Muslim students in the Middle East than it is to teach on the main campus of Georgetown. Not because my Muslim students in the Middle East agree with St Augustine—they honestly don’t—but because I think so many of my Middle Eastern students understand that religion is the deepest of things and so when I tell them that St Augustine is one of the foundations of Western Civilization, they perk up and say “okay, I might not agree, but I need to listen.” I’ve been rather surprised in teaching this semester with the reluctance of people to engage fully in St. Augustine, as if somehow it would be an embarrassment to deal with a Christian author here at Georgetown. That’s based on one class of 140, but I was really quite surprised in my dealings with that class because of the palpable resistance to going into much detail about him.

Q: You’ve taught on an extensive number of authors, but your primary focus of your scholarship is focused on Tocqueville. What originally fascinated you with his writings?

A: I think sometimes you’re drawn to an author initially but you don’t quite know why. You spend a lot of years reading in order to discover why you’re initially drawn. I can give you one reason: my primary research before that had focused on the emergence of the Reformation, and one of the curious things that you see in the emergence of the Reformation in political theory is an easy endorsement of a very strong state; curious, but probably logically consistent with some of the theological positions. What struck me in reading about Tocqueville was that he saw the dangers of a strong state and was interested in filling out the mediational space between the individual and the state, while some of the other authors had been intent on destroying that mediational space. It was theoretically an interesting question: “why would Tocqueville move in this direction?” And that pressed me to think about preconditions for liberty.

I’ve come to think more and more that he is right; that his analysis of America is the best one ever given. Whatever the particular omissions or commissions of error it may have, the general theory is right: you have habits of forming associations—those are necessary for liberty. Those necessarily operate at a communal level between the individual and the state. His prediction and worry is that these communal associations eventually get erased as you move into the late democratic age. As a predictive matter that seems to have been true. If it is true, you have to seek other resources than Tocqueville that provide guidance for stemming that development and slowing it. I think those resources exist, so I’ve tried to think about them theoretically, and then to search for ways to apply those lessons. That is to say that I’ve tried to look at the world for evidence of the disappearance of these mediational sources, but also to seek to find them and to encourage them, if possible.

Q: On your faculty bio you are described as an avid conservationist. What initially drew you to conservationism, and why do you use that label?

A: Well, first of all, I didn’t write the bio. I always struggle with the right word; I would not characterize myself as an environmentalist, though in terms of my everyday practices I’m probably ten times more of an environmentalist than most people who call themselves environmentalists. My reason for being worried about the term “environmentalism” is that it presupposes that we can have a pure relationship to nature; that we can somehow “get it right” so that we are not involved in harming so-called “pristine nature.” My view is that we are always already in it—and what I want is what environmentalism proposes to provide, but ultimately sells us short on. I want a moral wrestling match in everything we do in nature. I think environmentalism wants to
find a way to have moral repose so that we can sleep well at night knowing we have left something “pristine.” I don’t think we can ever leave things “pristine”—we never do because we are always already interacting with the natural world—and so I think more in terms of stewardship than environmentalism. I suppose “conservationist” comes closer to that, but I didn’t have several pages to explain what it is I’m doing out there.

**Q: Is there anything that initially interested you in that area?**

**A:** Before I fell in love with political philosophy, I was a biologist. I grew up in the Midwest, so I always had my hands in the dirt. It’s been interesting—both my sister and I as we’ve grown older are moving back towards that way of life; not that we were farmers, but we’ve always had a keen interest in nature. We would take off time during the school year for the spring migration season and spend half our day watching the spring warblers come through in Michigan. We never paid attention to school, we payed attention to the cycles of nature. I’ve found that after 15 years of living here in Washington, I had lost sight of that. I was sufficiently unhappy that I thought it was important to do something about it. So I moved.

**Q:** Final question, do you have any advice for Georgetown students who might pick up a copy of *Utraque Unum*, see this interview, and be interested in hearing your thoughts on making the most of an undergraduate education?

**A:** Here’s a journal written by students. It’s an opportunity for them to gather together over important ideas, and learn about writing from big authors and one another. Something like this should be a center point to their intellectual, personal, and academic life at Georgetown.

The best education I got did not occur in the classrooms at Chicago, it occurred with the four or five of us who would stay up to the small hours of the morning talking about Heidegger, Plato, Nietzsche, and the rest. If you don’t do that in college, you walk away impoverished. You have to have some kind of forum like that, that gathers like-minded people together over big ideas.

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Endnotes

From the Editor’s Desk
1 Cf. Pl. Tht. 155d.

THE FORUM
To Obey or Disobey: the Rawlsian View on Civil Disobedience
2 Ibid., 176-7.
3 Ibid., 177.
4 Ibid., 178.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid., 180.
7 Ibid., 181.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 183.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 184.
13 Ibid., 185.
14 Ibid., 186.
16 Ibid., 16.
18 Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience,” 2.
19 See Ibid., 6.
20 Ibid., 7.
21 Ibid., 8.
23 Ibid., 39-40.
24 Ibid., 40.
John Locke: the Key to America’s Founding


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., 287-8.

4. Ibid., 350.

5. Ibid., 269.

6. Ibid., 324.


8. Ibid., 69.


10. Ibid., 59.


13. Locke, 360.
14 Ibid., 333.
17 Ibid., 620.

THE ARCHIVE

**Imperialism in Retrospect: Some Realities of Decolonization in Africa**

3 Ibid., 19.
7 Ibid., 155.
8 Ibid., 157.
11 Hargreaves, 100.
12 Holland, 154.
14 Hinds, 185.
16 Birmingham, 31.
18 Holland, 154.
19 Birmingham, 7.
21 Hargreaves, 92.
23 Birmingham, 4.
24 Shepard, 56.
25 Louis, 5.
26 Birmingham, 36.
27 Hargreaves, 205-206.
28 Mommsen, 351.
30 Robinson, 287-289.

**Single and Sacred: Science and Catholicism in the Middle Ages**

7 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 152, 162.
Bennett, 191.


Even some of the more unconventional elements present in universities today existed in medieval universities, including new student hazing, partying, and students begging their parents for more money to spend (Bennett, page 181-182).


Grant, *God and Reason*, 103.


Bennett, 282.

McGoldrick, interview by the author.


Lindberg, 205.

Davis, 145.

Lindberg, 205.


Davis, 145.

Grant, *Science and Religion*, 149.

Cahill, 157.

Lindberg, 204.

Bennett, 180.

Woods, 85-86.

40 Lindberg, 219.
42 McGoldrick, interview by the author.
43 Lindberg, 223.
44 Hannam, “Medieval Science.”
45 Lindberg, 209.
47 Lindberg, 334.
50 Ibid.
51 Bennett, 180.
53 Ibid.
54 Hannam, “Medieval Science.”
55 Ibid.
56 Huff, 81.
57 Ibid.
58 Hannam, The Genesis of Science, 347.
59 Lindberg, 334.
60 Ibid., 196.
61 Hannam, “Medieval Science.”
62 Huff, 81.
63 Aquinas, I.1.iii.
64 Pope John Paul II Letter to George V. Coyne, Rev., June 1, 1988.

Martin Luther: the Reformation’s Machiavellian Prince
1 Peter Constantine, trans., The Discourses on Livy in The Essential Writings of Machiavelli (New York: Random House Inc., 2007), 152.
2 Martin Luther, letter to Pope Leo X, September 6, 1520, http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/luther-freedomchristian.asp.
3 Constantine, Discourses, 148.
4 Michael G. Baylor, The German Reformation and the Peasant’s War: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s, 2012), 29.
8 Thomas A. Brady, Jr., German Histories in the Age of Reformation 1400-1650 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 221.
9 Martin Luther, “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,” in The German Reformation and the Peasants’ War: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012), 56.
10 Martin, Luther, “A Sincere Admonition to Guard against Rebellion,” in The German Reformation and the Peasants’ War: A Brief History with Documents (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2012), 58.
11 Constantine, Discourses, 125.
13 Constantine, The Prince, 68.
15 Ibid.
16 Constantine, Discourses, 185.

THE SANCTUARY

The Natural Good and Error

2 Ibid., 23.
3 Ibid., 38.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 40.
6 Ibid., 38.
7 Ibid., 38-39.
9 Ibid., 173.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 177.
12 Ibid., 179.
13 Ibid., 190.
Advance Directives: Can the Present Self Impose Its Will on the Future Self?
4 *Ibid.*, 327
5 *Ibid*.

Spiritual Content via Natural Means: Aesthetics in Orthodox Faith
3 *Ibid*.
6 *Ibid*.
14 *Ibid*.
21 Ibid., 35.
22 Ibid., 80.
24 See 2 Kings 4:8-37.

**THE PARLOR**

*Boccaccio’s Women in the Works of Christine de Pizan and Geoffrey Chaucer*

6 Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 308.
7 Pizan, 199.
8 Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 308.
9 Pizan, 196.
11 Boccaccio, *Decameron*, 310.
12 *Ibid*.
15 *Ibid*.
16 Pizan, 199-200.
20 Brownlee, 250.
24 Boccaccio, “‘Menedon’s Question’,”154.
Competitive Human Glory in Homer’s Iliad

2 Sigmund Freud discusses the conflict between the life instinct and the death instinct in Civilization and Its Discontents, when he observes, “… civilization is a process in the service of Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations into one great unity, the unity of mankind … But man’s natural aggressive instinct, the hostility of each against all and of all against each, opposes this programme of civilization. This aggressive instinct is the derivative and the main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it. And now I think the meaning of the evolution of civilization is no longer obscure to us. It must present the struggle between Eros and Death, between the instinct of life and the instinct of destruction, as it works itself out in the human species.” See Sigmund Freud, Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), 81-82.
5 Ibid., 6.942, 991, 983. See Ori Z. Soltes, God and the Goalposts, (Washington: Bartleby Press, 2017), 57-58. Soltes observes, “For Virgil was known to be drawn to Orphism as a religious preference, and the Orphics, like the Pythagoreans, had a strong belief in the transmigration and reincarnation of souls.”
9 Ibid., 11.105.
10 Ibid., 11.555-58.
11 Homer, Iliad, 24.619, 618.
12 See Virgil, 6.951-952.
Schein observes, “The main reason why winning honor and glory in war can endow life with meaning is that in the world of the Iliad there is no significant afterlife” (68). Schein further notes that the word “psuche, usually translated ‘soul’” in the Iliad “has none of the intellectual or spiritual significance that it came to have for later Greeks and for the West” (68).

Homer, Iliad, 12.374-77.

Ibid., 12.378.

Ibid., 5.280.


See Ibid., 9.498-505. In his book God and the Goalposts, Soltes observes how Achilles knew of his fate even before the Trojan War started. Thus, “Achilles does not join the expedition” to Troy initially because he “knows the prophecy regarding him: that if he ventures to Troy he will acquit himself spectacularly as a warrior … but he will be killed before the city is taken and Helen rescued” (Soltes, 37).

Homer, Iliad, 9.386-87.

Ibid., 9.378.

Soltes, 37.

Ibid., 37, and Homer, Iliad, 9.501.

Homer, Iliad, 12.381.

Weil, 7 and Schein, 82.

Weil, 7 and Soltes, 41.


Homer, Iliad, 5.100, 97.

Ibid., 5.104.

Ibid., 5.154, 159, 151-57.

Freud, 82.

Homer, Iliad, 5.492, 493.

Freud, 81.

Ibid., 82.

As Soltes explains, this connection between Aphrodite, Paris, and Helen arises at the marriage of the human Peleus to the goddess Thetis. Eris, the goddess of strife, appears at the wedding as an uninvited guest and “drops a piece of fruit onto the banquet table, attached to which is a note, ‘to the fairest’” (Soltes, 35). Aphrodite, Hera, and Athena all claim this piece of fruit, but Paris chooses Aphrodite to be the “fairest” goddess because she promises to reward him with Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world. When Paris, with Aphrodite’s help, takes Helen, he precipitates the Trojan War because Helen is married to the Greek Menelaus. As Soltes further notes, Achilles is connected to this myth as well since he is the son of Peleus and Thetis (See Soltes, 36).

Homer, Iliad, 3.524.

Ibid., 5.240, 236.
44 Homer, *Iliad*, 6.71. Agamemnon, for example, shows no mercy to the Trojan Adrestus. He even wants “all Ilium blotted out, no tears for their lives, no markers for their graves” (*Ibid.*, 6.69–70).

45 Some might argue that Diomedes cheapens his humanity by tricking Glaucus to trade his “gold armor for [the] bronze” (*Homer, Iliad*, 6.281) armor Diomedes wears. The fact that Diomedes does this with Zeus’ help (See *Ibid.*, 6.280), however, may suggest that Diomedes receives this gold armor in recognition of the glory he earns from his noble grant of mercy to Glaucus.


51 See Soltes, 49 fn. 5. (“It is Agamemnon’s confiscation of Briseis as an ‘honor-prize’ from Achilles that leads to their argument and to Achilles’s decision to sit out the battle at the beginning of the poem.”)


58 Soltes, 46.


60 *Ibid.*, 47.

61 Homer, *Iliad*, 23.547-48. See also Soltes, 47.

62 See Homer, *Iliad*, 23.600-627 and Soltes, 47.


64 Soltes, 56. As Soltes reveals, this conflict between individual and collective glory also plays a central thematic role in the *Aeneid*. Where Achilles moves from individual rage to collective responsibility, Aeneas reverses that teleology when his focus shifts from the altruism
of selflessly founding Rome to the egoism of individual revenge, as he unmercifully kills Turnus at the end of the *Aeneid* (See Soltes 57). From the viewpoint of Freudian psychology, Aeneas and Achilles may reveal how “the development of the individual seems … to be a product of the interaction between two urges, the urge towards happiness, which we usually call ‘egoistic’, and the urge towards union with others in the community, which we call ‘altruistic’” (Freud, 105).

66 Soltes, 41.
69 Soltes, 46.
70 The contestants in the funeral games also earn glory through their gracious nobility evident in the dispute between Antilochus and Menelaus. At first, it seems like this interaction will mirror the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. Thus, Menelaus, with “heart smoldering, still holding a stubborn grudge” (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.630-31), objects to Achilles awarding Antilochus the second-place prize in the chariot race. Yet, Antilochus does not react to Menelaus’ objection with the anger Achilles showed when Agamemnon took Briseis from him. Instead, he honorably offers to give his prize to Menelaus. Menelaus, in turn, acts magnanimously by allowing Antilochus to keep the second-place prize to show that the “heart inside [him] is never rigid, unrelenting” (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.678-79). Later, “big-hearted Epeus” (Homer, *Iliad*, 23.773) also acts nobly when he helps the injured Euryalus get to his feet after he won their boxing match. In this manner, Antilochus, Menelaus, and Epeus all achieve glory by acting honorably with what today we call good sportsmanship.

71 Soltes, 45.
72 Homer, *Iliad*, 5.140-41.
73 Schein, 84.
74 Soltes, 45. See Schein at 77 (“In contrast to human conflict, which is literally a matter of life and death, divine warfare is a game without serious consequences, a game that ... can always be replayed.”) Nevertheless, the gods intervene to grant humans glory on the battlefield of Book V and during the funeral games of Book XXIII. Thus, for example, Athena helps Diomedes defeat Aeneas and win the war booty of Aeneas’ famed horses in Book V. Then Diomedes races these horses in a chariot contest Athena helps him win in Book XXIII. In this manner, the gods may vicariously experience human glory even if they never directly achieve it themselves.

**THE CLOCK TOWER**

**Interview with Dean Chester L. Gillis**
