Free Speech and the Contemporary University

Economic Anxiety, Political Parties, and Ultimate Concern in the United States

The Extent of the Russo-Finnish Winter War’s Impact on the Eastern Front of World War II

Sigurd’s Norwegian Crusade and the Viking Kings’ Political Use of Christianity

A Political Woman

An Argument for Arguments for Belief

Cubism: The Exception to Plato’s Banishment of Artists

An Examination of Vatican II in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

The Power of Prayer

The Myth and Life of Harold Abrahams

Stranger Things: Who Is the Invader?

John Carl Warnecke and Georgetown University’s Landmark to the Sixties

Global Inequality and Open Borders
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Dear Reader,

On August 18th, 1963, the Mexican philosopher Jorges Portilla died, his passing marked by a few, hastily-penned obituaries published in local newspapers. In the following years, the philosopher’s friends and contemporaries began collecting his various writings in a collection entitled *Fenomenologia de relajo*. The resultant work, at once profoundly perspicacious, keenly incisive, and vastly underappreciated, displays the psyche of a man deeply vexed by his surrounding society. Throughout his writing, Portilla returns again and again to the pernicious influence of two archetypal individuals in society: the relajiento, and the apretado. In Portilla’s view, these individuals have contributed to the destruction of the modern community. And, as I read *Fenomenologia de relajo*, I began to realize that the insidious effects of these individuals have persisted, alive and well, into contemporary society.

The relajiento refers to an individual who exists in a perpetual state of relajo, or a “suspension of seriousness.”¹ Central to Portilla’s philosophy is the notion that the world is imbued with teleological values, which require specific actions from individuals for them to be operationalized. The relajiento, then, is the individual who rejects this value-call; she is given over to a sort of ironic nihilism, existing solely in the transient absolute of the now, devoid of the sense of future and self that an active striving towards value can impart. The apretado, by contrast, defines herself as a sort of living embodiment of these surrounding values. She exists, in her mind, as the epitome of grace, punctuality, justice, or whatever value she chooses; in doing so, however, she lacks the ability to critically analyze what a fulfillment of these values actually requires. Together, these individuals possess the ability to devastate any community. The relajiento prevents values from being actualized, as her infectious and apathetic demeanor inhibits communities from forming around the performances needed to actualize values. The apretado, meanwhile, stifles her surrounding community. By posturing herself as an embodiment of the values that she espouses, she restricts any sort of conversation or critical analysis that might help others more truly realize what the pursuit of values demands of them.

This dual influence—that of indifferent disbelief and stifling, parochial hubris—seems to account for many of the reasons contemporary society often seems incapable of communication. After all, so many of us either regard the obligations that accompany values with a skeptical sense of derision, or we subjugate them as mere embodiments of our identities. Theory, then, has become a tragic casualty in a struggle between nihilism and naiveité. Ideally, theory should exist as the layer between self and value—an essential tool through which we critically evaluate how best to pursue and operationalize the values we profess to follow. Instead, however, the modern relajiento and apretado have divorced theory from its identity as praxis, relegating it to its own, hermetically-sealed vacuum.

This journal can be read as an effort to reclaim the effective value of theory. After all, theory is not simply a dialogical endeavor, mired in the realm of superficial abstraction. Through theory, we debate and analyze what the values which guide our society call us to do. It is for this reason that a journal such as *Utraque Unum* is of such grave importance. In these pages, you will read the work of some of the generation’s most critical student-scholars—individuals who view theory, not as some autotelic good, but as a means of shaping our collective sense of history, present, and future. To them, and to my editors, Micah Musser, Will Leo, Benjamin Brazzel, Carrie Connelly, Mark McNiskin, and Ania Zolyniak, I owe an immense debt of gratitude. Without their hard work and dedication, this
journal would surely not exist today. I also wish to extend my thanks to Professor Thomas Kerch and Professor Richard Boyd, who have lent their unfailing support and guidance to the journal and its mission. As you peruse these pages, I pray that you read these articles, not as fleeting fascinations, but as significant contributions to the conversation about what we, as a society, are called to do.

Best,

Jacob R. Dyson

Editor-in-Chief
John Stuart Mill’s 1859 essay On Liberty is a mainstay of introductory syllabi in political philosophy and constitutional law. As someone who has regularly taught Mill’s classic defense of virtually unlimited free speech and expression, it’s been striking to witness the renewed relevance of this nineteenth-century work in our current academic and political environment.

Until very recently, Mill’s thesis impressed me as both uncontroversial—namely, that virtually unlimited liberty of free speech is a good thing—as well as dubious in its philosophical underpinnings—that is, Mill’s utilitarian assumptions that freedom is ultimately justifiable not in terms of inalienable natural rights but rather in its utility for human progress and development. Who could disagree that free speech was a good thing and ought to be protected? If anything, recent US Supreme Court jurisprudence in numerous domains, whether for better or worse, seemed to have affirmed rights of free speech even more extensive than any Mill could have dreamt of.

All that being said, events in American universities these past few years affirm the endurance of Mill’s classic text. Debates surrounding free speech on many college campuses calls to mind subtle nuances of Mill’s argument that tend to be overlooked. In this note I want to mention briefly some ways in which Mill’s analysis might help to illuminate some vexing dilemmas surrounding intellectual debate and free speech on college campuses. Two caveats before beginning: these remarks are neither intended as partisan statements endorsing any particular political doctrines; nor are they unqualified endorsements of Mill’s philosophy. They are only meant to suggest Mill’s relevance for controversies that have riven many universities in the United States and Canada and called into question their commitments to untrammeled freedom of thought and expression.

First, it is important to recall that Mill’s argument for a vibrant public sphere is premised on the assumption that the main threats to free speech in a liberal democracy are not to be found in totalitarian laws, but rather in a climate of narrow and intolerant public opinion: “[W]hen society itself is the tyrant...its means of tyrannizing are not restricted to the acts which it may do by the hands of its public functionaries.”1 For Mill, “social tyranny” exerts a more powerful chilling effect over controversial speech than the clumsy instrument of state legislation. This distinction is dramatized by recent cases where arguments that are nominally free—that is to say, which may be uttered without any threat of criminal sanctions—have nonetheless been stifled in practice on many college campuses. Whether liberal, conservative, or merely provocative from the vantage of some group or constituency, we’ve seen again and again that ideas which stray beyond the pale of orthodoxy can be driven out by boycotts, protests, and even violence targeting controversial speakers and their campus sponsors. Lists of so-called “disinvited” speakers include not only familiar conservative names, but advocates of controversial positions—left, right, and somewhere in between—on Middle East affairs, gender and sexuality, and other vexing religious or social issues. The de jure right to speak
does not carry with it de facto access to a public forum, all the more so if those ideas are contrarian or unfashionable. Social pressures to conformity are powerful indeed, as Mill foresaw.

Second, we should note that Mill’s argument tacitly assumes that most forms of speech, belief, and expression are purely “self-regarding,” whereas “other-regarding” actions such as trade, social interactions, or behavior have acknowledged effects, whether direct or indirect, on other persons. By their very nature, Mill avers, professed ideas or political positions cannot constitute physical harms to others. Insofar as they are only speech acts, even the most extreme and improbable ideas ought to be permitted because they cannot be imagined to cause physical “harm,” or so the argument runs.

Mill’s characterization of speech—even potentially offensive or insulting speech—as inherently harmless gets right to the heart of contemporary debates over free speech on college campuses. Groups seeking to shut down certain kinds of speech as fake, racist, hateful, or offensive are challenging this basic tenet of Mill’s argument. One strand of objection maintains that certain speakers ought to be denied a voice in the modern university on grounds that they are either self-evidently wrong, substantively misguided, or unprogressive. “No sane person in 2018 could possibly deny the reality of climate change,” for example, “and thus speaker X ought to be denied a hearing on our campus.” Or “everyone knows that such and such organization is supported by George Soros,” and thus its ideas ought to be disregarded. Content-based or substantive restrictions justified on grounds that certain ideas are self-evidently false, retrograde, “fake,” or the fruits of conflicts of interest are exactly the sorts of suppression to which Mill objects so strenuously. Given our fallibility, how are we to know with certainty which ideas will ultimately win out? Might not today’s heresies become tomorrow’s verities, and vice-versa? And even if any particular argument proves to be misguided, as we might say with high degrees of confidence of certain ideas, don’t we need them to stimulate our understanding and bolster our commitments to our own putatively superior views? The conviction that we know which scientific, moral, or political ideas are destined to win out over others deemed patently “fake” or spurious seems to disregard one of Mill’s most central tenets: namely, the fallible and partial nature of human knowledge.

That being said, there is a second and distinct line of objection to contrarian ideas on college campuses. What is alleged in the case of controversial speakers such as Jordan Peterson, Milo Yiannopoulos, Charles Murray, or Janet Mock is not so much that their ideas may be dismissed as substantively false. Among critics this is just taken for granted. Rather, what is frequently cited by opponents is the claim that their positions or commitments are offensive—racist, homophobic, politically incorrect, or insensitive to the feelings of various groups on college campuses.

The point here is not to adjudicate which among the array of positions espoused by these and hundreds of other controversial campus speakers are indeed patently offensive, racist, misogynistic, homophobic, or retrograde. Such an exercise would succeed in alienating everyone while resolving nothing. Rather, the crucial insight from Mill, it seems to me, is the ambition to distinguish—however broadly—between ideas which threaten harm versus those which merely offend or disrespect. With respect to the former, it does not seem unreasonable to worry that some ideas in the public sphere could potentially contribute to a climate where certain groups have legitimate reason to feel unsafe, especially insofar as some speakers notoriously inspire acts of hostility and violence in their wake. As in Mill’s own example of the angry mob gathered in front of the home of the corn merchant, speech can indeed inspire imminent lawless actions. And yet one must also concede that this is unlikely to be true of most cases. Speakers who say things that offend the sensibilities or identities of their audience, or who
raise difficult questions about issues now regarded as off limits in the current political environment, would seem to fall short of the class of cases where Mill thinks speech can legitimately be curtailed. This is a very fine line to draw in theory, of course, let alone to operationalize in practice. Certain forms of speech may very well create a climate in which certain groups feel unsafe or threatened. But does it follow from this, Mill would wonder, that any argument which makes an individual or member of a group feel uncomfortable rises to the level of a harm? Part of the difficulty, as Mark Lilla has lately suggested in his provocative book *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics*, stems from the fact that insofar as political interlocutors increasingly define themselves in terms of their identities, abstract arguments with which one disagrees come to be seen as assaults on one’s personal or group identity.

What makes something offensive—or what might be deemed disrespectful from the vantage of any particular group—is almost impossible to determine in any objective way. And yet Mill counsels that precisely because of this ambiguity—and the grave costs of abridging free speech—we should draw the limits of tolerable offense as widely as possible. Free speech requires us to balance off the fact that some ideas may legitimately offend certain persons or groups, on the one hand, with the potential value of those ideas to the broader political and moral conversation of the university, nation, or civilization, on the other. Even for a putative civil libertarian like Mill, free speech is always a matter of trade-offs.

The more deeply one reflects on Mill’s writings, the clearer it becomes that there are no easy answers to such thorny dilemmas. Nonetheless, these three Millian categories can be an instructive point of departure for debates about free speech on university campuses. Is the speaker in question to be denied a hearing just because their arguments are self-evidently baseless, or “fake,” and thus useless? Or because their arguments offend the sensibilities of those whose identities and beliefs might be challenged by them? Or, finally, because they contribute to an environment where certain groups have legitimate reason to fear harm?

As I’ve noted above, Mill’s views with respect to the first set of concerns are crystal-clear: we cannot smugly assume that there is nothing to be learnt from our enemies, all the more so from voices that seem to us to be eccentric or heterodox. While we ought to approach such positions with skepticism and vigorous criticism, we depend on the existence of such voices to perpetuate the conversation. The major difficulty, it seems to me, comes with sketching the line between the second and third categories: namely, between ideas that offend and those that threaten or endanger. While conceding the objection that many arguments really do threaten or endanger, as even Mill himself allows, it does not follow that every expression that runs contrary to the deeply held values or identities of opponents represents a threat of physical violence or harassment. University officials and other campus leaders face a difficult task of adjudication. Denying certain controversial ideas voices on campus on grounds that these ideas are unpopular or merely offensive hardly seems sufficient on Millian grounds. And yet there must be limits in the name of creating a climate where all parties feel secure enough to participate in the intellectual community of the modern university.

Obviously none of the preceding should be taken as concrete advice as to which kinds of speech we ought to welcome—or scorn—on the Georgetown University campus. But the hope is that Mill might provoke us to rethink both our commitment to the principle of free speech itself, as well as the ways in which his arguments can embolden us to allow even deeply controversial ideas a full hearing. It is not just the fate of the university that rests upon this willingness, but also, as Mill imagined, the broader progress of the conversation of mankind.

As we can see so vividly in the stellar essays published in this issue of *Utraque Unum,*
the intellectual conversation and free exchange of ideas central to the mission of the university takes place primarily in the classroom—and if these articles are representative, that conversation appears to be thriving at Georgetown. Yet it seems just as important for us to maintain other formal spaces within the university where ideas can be freely debated, defended, or debunked.

Richard Boyd
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Global Inequality and Open Borders

Lawrence Huang

Political theory gives practical and impactful insight into the study of immigration and global inequality. If, as Joseph Carens argues, the international system of nation-states is feudalistic, then it immorally penalizes people because of their place of birth, so open borders are a morally necessary solution to global inequality. Or if, as David Miller argues, states are morally responsible for global inequality, then closed borders are morally necessary to maintain the stability of the interstate system.

This paper first introduces Joseph Carens and David Miller’s theories of global inequality. Carens criticizes the modern interstate system for violating the democratic principle of equality, so he calls for open borders to alleviate unequal opportunities as well as social, political, and economic inequalities. Miller objects by arguing that global inequality is the result of states being responsible for the outcome of their choices, so other states are generally not morally required to alleviate those inequalities. Next, this paper establishes differing theories of change as the foundation for the debate between Carens and Miller. Tying Miller to Edmund Burke’s gradual, inheritance-based change in *Reflections on The Revolution in France*, and tying Carens to Thomas Paine’s radical, generation-based change in *The Rights of Man*, it argues that this disagreement grounds the entire debate. This paper neither proposes policy, nor vigorously defends either Carens or Miller. This is an in-depth exploration of their arguments in the hope that, by clarifying the source of the disagreement, this paper can clarify the arguments themselves.

Global Inequality and Borders
This section asks what global inequality means for immigration. It first gives Joseph Carens’ critique of the modern interstate system in *The Ethics of Immigration*, and it traces this account to his proposal of open borders. Next, it gives David Miller’s objection that inequality is inherent in a system of sovereign states, for as states make different policy choices they will naturally end up in unequal states of destitution. Therefore, states should not be morally required to open their borders.

In *The Ethics of Immigration*, Joseph Carens argues that democratic principles limit state actions. He explicitly limits his argument to liberal democratic republics, so he can draw on ‘democratic principles’ upon which “there is no serious disagreement among those who think of themselves as democrats.” These principles are the “broad moral commitments that underlie and justify contemporary political institutions and policies throughout North America and Europe.” In the first half of his book, Carens ties these democratic principles to the obligation to better integrate immigrants, apropos of the current system of border controls. In the second half, Carens aims “to call into question the assumption that states are morally entitled to restrict immigration.”

In the second section, Carens argues that the international system is so unequal that it requires fundamental change. He describes the modern system like feudalism:

Citizenship is an inherited status and a source of privilege. Being born a citizen of a rich country in North America or Europe
is a lot like being born into the nobility in the Middle Ages. These advantages and disadvantages are intimately linked to the restrictions on mobility that are characteristic of the modern state system, although the deepest problem is the vast inequality between states that makes so many people want to move. This is not the natural order of things. It is a set of social arrangements that human beings have constructed and that they maintain.4

Because the international system is a constructed social arrangement, people and states are able to fundamentally reshape it. In drawing this analogy between the modern interstate system and feudalism, Carens ties restrictions on movements in the feudal system to modern state border control.5 He aims to “give readers pause about the conventional view that restrictions on immigration by democratic states are normally justified.”6

After questioning this unequal interstate arrangement, Carens draws on democratic principles to argue that open borders are a moral necessity. Carens begins with “the premise that all human beings are of equal moral worth... [and] restrictions on the freedom of human beings require a moral justification.”7 These democratic principles of equality and freedom morally necessitate open borders. Open borders mean that “people should normally be free to leave their country of origin and settle in another,” so there are few circumstances in which the state may limit immigration: national security, public order, and threats to national language or culture.8

Carens ties democratic principles to open borders in three ways. First, the principle of equality morally necessitates open borders because it necessitates the equality of opportunity, so the international system cannot limit opportunities for people in more destitute states.9 Second, democratic commitments to equality require a “commitment to economic, social, and political equality.”10 If democratic states have a genuine commitment to equality, then they are morally obliged to help achieve that equality through open borders, for “the control that democratic states exercise over immigration plays a crucial role in maintaining unjust global inequalities.”11 And third, Carens argues that state controls on immigration conflict with the principle of freedom. Specifically, states need a moral justification for limiting the freedom of movement. In fact, he argues that freedom of movement is a human right and justifies it by extending the freedom of movement inside a state to freedom of movement between states.

In contrast, David Miller objects that the inequalities in the international system stem from state sovereignty and should be upheld by closed borders. He gives this thought experiment:

Imagine two neighbouring countries starting out with an equal endowment. The citizens of one country, call it Affluenza, share an ethos of consumerism, and their democratically elected government allows oil deposits to be used up to make petrol for private cars... Next door in Ecologia, by contrast, there is a strict policy of sustainable development, with a heavy carbon tax... if we look at natural resource levels on generation into the future, Ecologia will turn out to have a higher per capita share than Affluenza.13

Miller uses this example to defend the ‘state sovereignty thesis,’ which is that “nations can be held responsible for the levels of advantage their members enjoy.”14 In other words, “global equality of resources... must be defeated over time by the different policies followed by autonomous political communities, which give rise to fair inequalities in per capita shares of natural resources.”15 Since the people in Affluenza make a policy decision to use their natural resources, they are ‘outcome responsible,’ or responsible for their own actions and decisions, so other
nations typically have no moral responsibility to change those outcomes.16 With this argument, Miller gives a different account of the feudalistic interstate system that Carens describes.

Miller does care about social justice and equality, for he starts by noting that “it is evident even to the most casual observer that inequalities in today’s world are very severe.”17 He pays special attention to structures beyond state policy choices that lead to unequal national resources, and he argues that structures such as colonialism or slavery may place ‘remedial responsibility’ to aid those who need help on other states. For example, the remedial responsibility is on the colonizing state if the “overall impact on the development of the societies in which it occurred was negative... [this] requires taking specific cases and showing the causal mechanisms at work.”18 Miller argues that since each state is generally responsible for the outcomes of their policies, there is no responsibility on other states to open their borders to help alleviate the resulting inequality. While he is willing to make exceptions in cases such as ex-colonies, Miller does not link inequality and open borders because people of each state are morally responsible for their actions, even if those actions lead to different outcomes.

Miller also directly rejects each of Carens’ three arguments tying democratic principles to open borders. First, Miller rejects the conclusion that equality of opportunity requires open borders because there is no international consensus on which opportunities matter. He argues that “we can no longer rely on a common set of cultural understandings to tell us which metric or metric it is appropriate to use when attempting to draw cross-national opportunity comparison.”19 The world is essentially diverse, so different societies can value different things. And without a universal metric or set of valued opportunities, there cannot be a universal moral obligation to guarantee an equality of opportunity. Next, Miller’s objection to Carens’ second argument for economic, social, and political equality largely stems from his Affluenza and Ecologia thought experiment. Affluenza could end up with more economic benefits because of their greater natural resources, but before states have a remedial responsibility to help Ecologia, they must first consider the question of outcome responsibility.20 The people of Ecologia are outcome-responsible for their lack of natural resources, so there is no morally necessary argument for open borders. However, David Miller still supports human rights, so if Ecologia’s actions were to threaten the Ecologians’ right to subsistence or right to life, then there is a stronger remedial responsibility on other states to intervene. Nonetheless, that intervention is not necessarily opening borders, for if the problem of global inequality does not stem from the system but rather from the individual states, then the solution is not necessarily a systematic change. Miller rejects Carens’ link between the democratic principle of equality and open borders because he argues the causes of inequality are morally relevant to placing remedial responsibility on other states.

Miller also objects to Carens’ third argument for open borders, for he argues that freedom of movement across states not a human right. Carens’ argument stems from the democratic principle of freedom, and from the ‘cantilever’ argument. The cantilever argument recognizes the human right of interstate movement as analogous to the recognized human right of intrastate movement.21 Carens argues not only that the same reasons for moving within a state apply to moving between states, but also that there is no morally relevant reason why each type of movement is different. Miller objects to this reasoning first by noting that the right to interstate movement does not exist in any foundational human rights document.22 The internal right to migrate is codified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but is never extended to interstate migration. That does not mean the human right ought not exist, so Miller goes on to object to the cantilever argument.
Miller argues that there is are two morally relevant differences between intra and interstate movement. First, “[the state] controls both ends of the migration route, so to speak, so they can influence the relative desirability of living at either end.” He argues that this is morally relevant given Millers’ focus on outcome responsibility, for the state is and ought to be morally responsible for the outcomes of its actions. Domestically, they retain control of living conditions at both ends of the migration. But to have responsibility, the state needs to have agency over the action. If the state has no control over one end of the migration, then they cannot be held responsible for the outcomes that are affected by migration. Second, the domestic freedom of movement is needed to protect targeted populations, such as segregated populations in apartheid South Africa, from persecution. Internationally, the state has no power to target a population that resides in another state, so there is no moral need for a human right to immigration. Miller argues that these are morally significant differences between intrastate and interstate migration, so the cantilever argument fails. These are also morally significant reasons to restrict freedom of movement, so state controls on immigration do not conflict with the democratic principle of freedom of movement.

This debate over the human right to immigrate remains inconclusive. Each theorist presents a cogent argument on the human right to immigrate, but they seem unable to reach a consensus. The human rights documents may be a basis for extended the right to intrastate migration to the right to interstate immigration, but there are also strong arguments that the two types of immigrations are different in morally relevant ways. There are also other strategies for developing the human right to immigrate, such as demonstrating how they are essential to basic human interests or how they are instrumental to attaining other human rights. Unable to fully delve into these arguments, this paper tackles Carens’ use of another democratic principle: equality. Carens argues first that global inequality conflicts with equality of opportunity and second, economic, social, and political equality, so open borders are morally necessary to address this equality. David Miller objects that Carens does not address outcome responsibility, for Miller argues that states are morally responsible for the outcomes of their actions, so global inequality largely does not place remedial responsibility on other states to open their borders. Given this continuing dispute, this paper now reframes the argument as a dispute over the process of change.

Carens-Paine versus Miller-Burke: Diverging Theories of Change

This paper has already established that Joseph Carens sees the modern interstate system as violating the democratic principle of equality and that David Miller objects with the state responsibility thesis. This section first further explores this argument before analyzing it through the lens of political change. Miller holds the state, and therefore the state’s citizens, responsible for their actions, so it is up to the state to change its policies. Carens argues that states cannot hold each generation responsible for the outcomes of their ancestors’ policy decisions, so each state does have a responsibility to alleviate global inequality with open borders. This paper finally draws a comparison to Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine in their debates over political change, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* and *On the Rights of Man* respectively, to underscore the significance of this element of the topic.

Carens refuses to hold each generation responsible for the actions of their ancestors, so as each generation is adversely affected by state policies, they cannot be responsible for alleviating global inequality. He argues that Miller’s state responsibility thesis “drastically reduces the connection between human agency and responsibility for outcomes in all generations except the first… it is only the first generation that the link really holds between choice and
responsibility.”30 For example, the second generation in Miller’s hypothetical example of Affluenza and Ecologia has no agency over the economic and environmental policy decisions of the first generation, but the second Affluenza generation does not start from the same endowment of natural resources as the second generation in Ecologia. Other states cannot hold the Affluenzans responsible for the outcome of their parents’ policy decisions, for they had no agency in those decisions, and yet there remains a vast inequality between the Affluenza and Ecologia generations. Therefore, the remedial responsibility to aid the Affluenza generation must fall onto other states and the international system at large.

In response, Miller would make the distinction between national inheritance and state responsibility, arguing that Carens cannot explain why each generation can inherit the goods of their ancestors without the responsibility. Miller argues that “one cannot legitimately enjoy such benefits without at the same time acknowledging responsibility for aspect of the national past,” and while Carens may make a convincing argument that each generation is not responsible for the mistakes of their ancestors, it is unclear why that same argument does not make illegitimate each generation receiving the benefits of their ancestors:31 the “physical, human, and cultural capital accumulated by previous generations.”32 Carens fails to explain why the second Ecologia generation ought to benefit from their parents’ wise policy decisions, while Miller fails to explain why second Affluenza generation ought to be held responsible for their parent’s wasteful policy decisions.

This paper now argues that this impasse is analogous to the impasse between Edmund Burke and Thomas Paine. Miller draws on conceptions of inheritance very much present in Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France: inheritance should be treasured and improved gradually over time, not all at once and aimed at some fanciful ideal of justice. However, Paine’s The Rights of Man gives virtually the same responses as Carens: the rights (and responsibilities) of the living trump the rights and responsibilities of the dead. Given that the Burke-Paine argument is just as alive and relevant today as it was two centuries ago, I do not argue that this comparison solves the argument. Instead, this comparison underscores one major reason why the theorists cannot reach agreement, for the authors cannot agree on a principle of how to achieve change.33 Burke believes change should happen naturally and gradually, while Paine argues it can happen radically and with each generation.

David Miller draws on Edmund Burke’s theory of inherited political outcomes to argue for state controls on immigration to defend the community’s inheritance. Burke writes:

> The characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be unequal… The power of perpetuating our property in our families is one of the most valuable and interesting circumstances belonging to it, and that which tends the most to the perpetuation of society itself.34

Burke argues that property, and more specifically the inheritance of property over generations, perpetuates inequality, but it is nonetheless necessary to the ‘perpetuation of society itself.’ In the context of the French revolution, Burke argues that efforts to limit property rights of the church or of the feudal aristocratic class, for example, threaten to push the country towards chaos.35 Property rights come from the principles of ‘acquisition’ and of ‘conservation,’ so it is not only the generation that acquires the property, but also the ensuing generations who inherit and conserve the property that are invested in the stability of the property. This establishes the need for state sovereignty and closed borders.

Miller and Burke connect unequal inheritance of property with the moral need for closed borders by placing the responsibility to make change with the state. Burke rejects the claim that the people have a right “to frame a government for ourselves,” for he argues
that the state, or the monarch and national political inheritance should reign sovereign.\textsuperscript{36} The people do not have a hypothetical right to change the outcomes of state policy, but they do have the right to inherit those outcomes.\textsuperscript{37} From a consequentialist perspective, the right to inherit property over time, which implies the right to inherit unequal resources and opportunities over time, is a morally necessary right because it maintains the stability of society and incentivizes each generation to improve themselves. Since “society is indeed a contract... it is to be looked on with other reverence... it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.”\textsuperscript{38} The very nature of a society is cross-generational, so to break that link between generations through open-borders would dangerously break down the nature of society. Furthermore, Burke explicitly states that inheritance does not “exclude a principle of improvement... we transmit our government and our privileges, in the same manner in which we enjoy and transmit our property and our lives. The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of Providence, are handed down, to us and from us.”\textsuperscript{39} This ‘principle of improvement’ is Burke’s theory of change. Rooted in his refusal to grant sovereignty and responsibility to each generation of people, he argues that changes and improvements happen naturally and safely.

In response, Thomas Paine contends “for the right of the living, [while] Mr. Burke is contending for the authority of the dead over the rights and freedom of the living.”\textsuperscript{40} Paine argues that the living cannot be ruled by their ancestors, so he supports the French revolutionaries’ attack on the structures of society, just as Carens targets the structures of the international system that limit equality and subsistence. Pre-Revolution France was feudal in the same way the modern interstate system is feudal: “Government of the old system is an assumption of power for the aggrandizement of itself; in the new, a delegation of power for the common benefit of society.”\textsuperscript{41} The old system refers to the French feudal aristocracy or the modern feudal interstate system. These systems not only perpetuate inequality, but they perpetuate power inequalities ‘for the aggrandizement of itself.’ Therefore, from a consequentialist perspective, the question is whether the possible Painian outcome of a more just society outweighs the possible Burkian outcome of the disintegration of the global society.

The debate between Burke and Paine is useful in reframing the argument over global inequality as a debate over gradual versus radical change. Miller advocates for gradual change because he fears placing that taking sovereignty away from the state and putting it in each generation of people breaks the social contract that each state depends upon for stability across generations. The system may be unequal, but that inequality is not only the natural consequences of the modern state system but is actually necessary for its perpetuation. However, Carens argues that the modern interstate system is so feudal that it offends the basic democratic principle of equality and requires open borders to place sovereignty with the living people, making each generation responsible for their actions and responsible for alleviating global inequality. This section has drawn out the Carens-Miller debate largely by tying Carens to Painian radical change and by tying Miller to Burkian gradual change. The pace and manner of making change drive radical differences in policy prescriptions, so one must decide on the former before they conclude the latter.

Conclusion

This paper first lays out how each theory of global inequality leads to different immigration proposals before tackling the question of whether the radical change of open borders is a morally necessary solution to global inequality. Drawing an analogy to the debate between Edmund Burke in \textit{Reflections on the Revolution in France} and Thomas Paine in \textit{The Right of Man} over the process of change, this paper demonstrates
how Miller’s account of the moral responsibility for global inequality allows for gradual, Burkinian change, while Carens’ account necessitates radical change. The debate over the process and timeline of change is not unique to the discussion of migration. It is a central component of political ethics, especially in discussions of the problem of dirty hands or over the use of violence. Similarly, the debate is also central in approaches to criminal justice reform, specifically in the debate between ‘liberal’ approach which seeks to make the existing system fairer and ‘radical’ approaches which seek to fundamentally change the system. While the applications of this debate are diverse, this paper has not taken a normative position on the best approach to political change. Ultimately, this paper takes up the debate between Joseph Carens and David Miller and reframes its deepest point of contention: change.

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Paul Tillich demands that, “A theological system is supposed to satisfy two basic needs: the statement of the truth of the Christian message and the interpretation of this truth for every new generation.”¹ In more simple terms, then, systematic theology as an academic discipline seeks to address contemporary issues and concerns in light of the enduring Christian message. The systematic theologian’s goal is twofold: aid the Christian faithful in living out Christian lives during changing times, and adapting, all the while maintaining, the Christian truth to contemporary situations. The current political situation in the United States is in desperate need of a change of course based on an adaptation of a Christian theological anthropology. Negativity and partisan politics marked the 2016 presidential campaign between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Both candidates were plagued by overwhelmingly negative mainstream media coverage. For example, 77% of President Trump’s and 64% of Secretary Clinton’s coverage related to the respective candidate’s qualities which made each “unfit” for the presidential office.² Partisanship between liberals and conservatives has also become corrosive with many partisans choosing a political affiliation based on dislike of the opposing party rather than on policy differences.³ The political tumult in the United States reaches from the realm of political science into the realm of theology. Systematic theology seeks to answer the question as to how Christians living in the United States amongst the realities of political parties, policy debates, and elections can continue to live out the Christian message.

Tillich develops his systematic theology on some foundational concepts: being and nonbeing, the courage to stand on the ground and abyss of being, and ultimate concern. Relating to politics, the question of being and nonbeing materializes in discussions concerning the existence of the human person as part of a whole and as in and out of human community. The courage to be by standing firmly on the ground and abyss of being despite ostensible meaninglessness actualizes in the courage to be as part and more concretely in what Tillich terms “democratic conformism.” Finally, ultimate concern can be explained in the context of the demonic expression of ultimate concern, as contrasted with the ideal political situation of theonomy. Drawing on Tillich’s basic tenets for his systematic theology, this paper will argue that the American political parties have become the demonic expression of many Americans’ ultimate concern because they actively seek to replace the Christian truth of God as the ground of being in the collective consciousness by promising access to economic production in the United States, and as such, by striving to serve as the foundation of Americans’ existence despite their temporality.

Because politics focus on the interactions between human beings within community,
an understanding of human beings as part of human community is vital. These interactions can be defined as “praxis,” or “the whole of cultural acts of centered personalities who as members of social groups act upon each other and themselves.” In short, human beings exist as particular iterations of the human race. Because of this anthropology, human beings as free agents interact with each other and form community. The human as part of a whole is a function of the human person. Key to understanding the human as part of community is how intimately connected individualism and community membership really are. As Tillich explains, “The act in which man actualizes his essential centeredness is the moral act,” and therefore the human being becomes his or her most individual self when he or she expresses his or herself within the context of community. The human person cannot be an individual in isolation; he or she must exist as a particular within a whole, a person within a community. Furthermore, a community is only made up of individuals expressing their individuality. Thus, individuality and community are mutually dependent. The understanding of human beings as part of community is essential to the theological analysis of human politics.

Now that human beings can be understood as particular fulfillments of spirit as part of community, a proper analysis of human community can proceed. As this paper seeks to adapt the Christian message to the American political community, a thorough understanding of human community in general is necessary. Tillich argues that, “The frame in which cultural self-creation occurs is the life and growth of the social group under the dimension of spirit.” Social groups, then, are the product of the contribution of selves; they have “grown naturally within the cultural self-creation of life.” While communities are made up of centered-selves, the community itself possesses no such center. For Tillich, the closest analogy to the centered-self for the social group is that of its leader, who arises out of the individuals who have formed a community. The human community, according to Tillich, holds in its collective consciousness an idea of justice towards which it strives and chooses a leader that understands this idea of justice and leads the group towards its fulfillment.

Adapting Tillich’s understanding of community to the American political system, the ideals of Tillich’s community map nicely onto the ideal functioning of the American democracy. Conceptually, the United States is a political entity formed under the Constitution of the United States. This written Constitution opens with the words, “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice....do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” The “people” of the United States exist as individuals because they express themselves as members of the United States, and the United States exists as a political community because individuals express their membership in such a group. These individuals entrust the “center” of the group to their elected officials, producing a government that upholds the community’s conception of justice. While the ideal American democracy formed under the Constitution is one embodiment of Tillich’s outline for human community, the dissonance between this ideal and the reality of the American political system presents additional challenges.

Tillich provides an understanding of the challenges evident in American democracy by discussing what he terms “ambiguities in the actualization of justice.” Tillich explains, “The ambiguities of justice appear wherever justice is demanded and actualized. The growth of life in social groups is full of ambiguities which—if not understood—lead either to an attitude of despairing resignation of all belief in the possibility of justice or to an attitude of utopian expectation of a complete justice, which is later frustrated.” Human community exists as the un-centered expression of centered selves who choose a leader and pursue a particular ideal of justice. Justice, although the telos of human community, materializes in different forms in
varying societies. For Tillich, though, the justice of the human community must always be rooted in God.

Tillich defines God as “being-itself as the ground and abyss of everything that is.” Tillich’s symbol for God is inherently paradoxical. God is both ground and abyss, concrete and abstract, secure and terrifying. Nevertheless, “everything that is,” principally human beings, can exist as a creature out of being itself. Because of Tillich’s understanding of creation standing out of the ground and abyss of being that is God, but God as not part of the subject-object relationship that created beings experience, the question of being and nonbeing is central to understanding how human beings exist and form community.

God is being-itself and makes possible everything that is. However, human beings, as creatures, experience both being and non-being. In short, human beings live finite lives constantly threatened by the necessary end of death. This structure, described by Tillich, Thomas Aquinas, and Karl Rahner, among others, makes the question of God implicit in being, or as Tillich writes, “it is the finitude of being which drives us to the question of God.” Human beings are the fulfillment of spirit, and this fulfillment finds its ground in being-itself despite the threat of non-being. The precise interplay between being in life and non-being in death defines the human experience.

If human beings are, by their very nature, constantly faced with the threat of non-being, why do human beings continue to live their lives? In other words, why do human beings continue “to be”? Tillich defines the human persistence in life despite the threat of non-being as courage: “Courage is self-affirmation ‘in spite of,’ that is in spite of that which tends to prevent the self from affirming itself.” The courage to be is the reason human beings continue to live their lives and produce meaning even though life necessarily ends in death. Tillich does not simply state that human beings live out of courage but explains the reality that the threat of non-being creates. For Tillich, “anxiety is the state in which a being is aware of its possible nonbeing.” Anxiety is not fear of something, but fear of nothing; while one can be afraid of something, it is precisely the fear of absolute nonbeing which causes anxiety.

While the object of a fear can be removed to alleviate a particular fear, the basic cause of anxiety, the fear of nonbeing, never goes away as the threat of nonbeing is part of the fabric of human life, which always ends in death.

One method by which human persons exercise the courage to be is the courage to be as part. Developing the understanding as the human person as fulfilled spirit as part of a community, Tillich writes that, “The courage to be is essentially always the courage to be as a part and the courage to be as oneself in interdependence.” The courage to be as part is what drives the human desire to be in community. Because the human person affirms oneself in spite of the threat of nonbeing, there must be a function by which the self affirms itself. As Tillich explains, “But the self is self only because it has a world, a structured universe, to which it belongs and from which it is separated at the same time.” In other words, a human being can exist as a centered-self and affirm his or herself in the face of nonbeing only because he or she also is part of something that is not he or she. Further explaining the relationship between the courage to be as part and the whole, Tillich writes, “A part of a whole is not identical with the whole to which it belongs. But the whole is what it is only with the part.” In this arrangement, the human person affirms his or herself in spite of the threat of nonbeing by developing a self as part of a whole. When discussing the American political system, the importance of this human reaction to the threat of nonbeing could not be more important. The argument of this paper is that Americans affirm themselves as part of a whole when they affiliate with one of the American political parties. While affiliation with a political party is a healthy affirmation of one’s self as part of a whole, it only remains such when partisanship and political ideology remain a preliminary concern.
In his book *The Courage To Be*, Tillich attempts to diagnose the type of courage to be as part that he observed in various cultures around the world. When treating Western Europe, and more specifically and accurately, the United States, Tillich decided on a type of courage to be as part that he termed “democratic conformism.” Tillich traces the early roots of Western culture and zeroes in on the concept of “progress.” According to Tillich, progress is the human community’s move from potentiality to actuality. In Tillich’s words, progress for Western civilization is “horizontal, temporal, futuristic.” The human community present in the United States is one that is always seeking to advance economically and scientifically. For Americans, then, Tillich hypothesizes that the courage to be as part, and thus the way Americans affirm themselves in the face of nonbeing, is to be productive in society, specifically by conducting economic activity. Tillich writes, “Its self affirmation is the affirmation of oneself as a participant in the creative development of mankind.” Tillich further explains, “…it is the productive act itself in which the power and significance of being is present.” By recognizing oneself as an element of the progress of humanity, the human person living in the American milieu can take the anxiety of fate and death, emptiness and meaninglessness, and guilt and condemnation onto oneself.

Observing the American way of life, Tillich’s concept of democratic conformism seems to be lived out. Concerning the anxiety of fate and death, Tillich points to the pervading fear that unemployment or the lack of sufficient economic resources presents to many Americans. When Americans do not have a job to earn income and they cannot support their household, their greatest fear is realized. Exclusion from participation in the economic progress of the nation is a source of ontic anxiety. Furthermore, Tillich treats the idea of the “immortality of the soul” arguing that the notion as understood by Americans is neither a Christian nor classical philosophical idea. Many Americans understand the concept of the immortality of the soul to be some sort of continuation of life after death. Americans living in democratic conformism, taking the threat of nonbeing onto themselves by participating in progress can hardly be blamed for their belief. The best antidote to reverse the anxiety brought on by death, the ultimate cessation of productivity, is to hold that the soul lives on forever in an infinite productive process.

Americans face the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness when they question why, in fact, progress is the answer to their entire being. The reality of life is that it ends, seemingly pointing to the anxiety caused by death. However, for the American steeped in democratic conformism, the anxiety of emptiness and meaninglessness results from the knowledge of finite productivity. At death, or at exclusion from economic production, productivity ceases, the reason for productivity becomes meaningless, and the resulting anxiety is that of emptiness.

Democratic conformism describes the social reality of the United States in which members of society take anxiety onto themselves by contributing actively to the productive progress of the nation. Tillich points out one danger in democratic conformism, that the centered self is at risk of losing his or her individuality in the attempt to conform to the onward march of progress. This paper argues that Tillich’s fear of the loss of self among conformism has materialized in the current political situation in the United States.

Tillich’s understanding of “ultimate concern” is the foundation for the argument of this paper. According to Tillich, “Our ultimate concern is that which determines our being or non-being.” In other words, whatever humans determine to cause themselves to be, or cease to be, can become their ultimate concern. At the first level, ultimate concern could be anything one desires. For example, one could determine that whether or not wearing a hat outside on a cold day is a matter of ultimate concern, if that person determines the decision was a matter of
being or non-being. However, Tillich dispels this flawed understanding of ultimate concern by expanding on his initial explanation: “Nothing can be of ultimate concern for us which does not have the power of threatening and saving our being.”\textsuperscript{35} Ultimate concern is no longer simply that which the human subject determines to be a matter of being or non-being; ultimate concern is quite the opposite. A human person’s ultimate concern must “have the power of threatening and saving our being.” Drawing on the human person as fulfilled spirit, the being described in ultimate concern is not temporal; it points to being itself, esse ipsum, the ground and abyss of being.\textsuperscript{36} Thematically, man’s ultimate concern can be named as “God,” as God as the ground and abyss of being is solely capable of “threatening or saving our being.”

When human beings replace God as ultimate concern with a finite concern, ultimate concern becomes what Tillich terms as “demonic.” As Tillich writes, “the demonic is the elevation of something conditional to unconditional significance.”\textsuperscript{37} Thus, any finite object or concern elevated to ultimate concern is demonic. Demonic ultimate concern can also be understood as idolatry. When the Israelites during their flight from Egypt worshiped the golden calf as an idol in place of God, they elevated a finite, physical object to their ultimate concern.\textsuperscript{38} Demonic ultimate concern does not always have physical manifestations. As Tillich explains, there are many “preliminary necessities and accidents” that confront human beings in their day to day life, but they are not matters of ultimate concern. Such preliminary matters may include one’s education, career, love interests, or hobbies. These preliminary concerns are not demonic in themselves; for example, it is not demonic to pursue a romantic relationship. However, where preliminary concerns become demonic is when the human subject elevates the concern to the realm of the ultimate. Preliminary concerns cannot be ultimate concerns simply because they are incapable of “threatening or saving our being.” Only God, as the ground and abyss of being, is such an ultimate concern for the human person. As Tillich explains, “Man is infinitely concerned about the infinity to which he belongs, from which he is separated, and for which he is longing.”\textsuperscript{39} A human being’s ultimate concern cannot be a finite object, yet ultimate concern so often finds demonic expression in the everyday life of human subjects.

The American political parties have become demonic expressions of ultimate concern in the United States. Taking the sociological reality that democratic conformism presents, access to the American economic machine allows Americans to take the anxiety caused by the threat of nonbeing onto themselves. However, when access to the American economy becomes a matter of being or nonbeing for a person, that drive for production becomes a demonic expression of ultimate concern. The American political parties have capitalized on the promise of access to economic production that would hypothetically materialize if voters elect leaders from their respective parties. Both major political parties, the Republican party and the Democratic party, have made the economy a major issue in recent presidential campaigns. Furthermore, each party has enshrined economic growth and prosperity in their party platforms.

Combining each American political party’s focus on economic access for all Americans, and voting patterns in recent presidential elections, this paper argues that the political parties have become demonic expressions of ultimate concern because they have become the vehicle by which Americans hope to access the nation’s economic machine and thus address their anxiety of nonbeing. The most compelling evidence is voters’ candidate choice when considering questions of economic growth and stability as well as areas of the country that appear to vote without any deducible ideological compass. Economic anxiety appears to drive many voters’ decisions and a change in the presidency from one party to another appears to be an expression of this anxiety. The American political party has become the ultimate concern of some American
voters as the parties promise access to the nation’s economic production.

The issue presented by American political parties and economic access becoming some Americans’ ultimate concern is unique as both realms are very important preliminary concerns. The question, then, is how can the American public dedicate proper attention to their political and economic preliminary concerns without those concerns becoming ultimate and thus demonic? Tillich terms the milieu created when a society’s ultimate concern is God as the ground of being and preliminary concerns are properly ordered as “theonomy.” Gilkey explains theonomy when he writes, “Theonomy, therefore, as the ‘answer’ to the ‘question’ of history, represents a culture at once autonomously creative and yet dependent upon and so affirmative of its unconditional ground, its religious substance.” In a culture that exists in theonomy, the public can have spirited political debates, supporting a political party and electing leaders in fair and free elections. Members of society can pursue careers, work to earn a living, and support themselves and their families. The society can even exalt economic growth and technological progress. However, grounding all preliminary concerns is the society’s only possible ultimate concern: God as the ground and abyss of being. A culture that allows for preliminary concerns but reserves ultimate concern for the ground of being is both “autonomously creative” and “dependent upon and so affirmative of its unconditional ground.”

In conclusion, the American political parties have come to represent many Americans’ demonic ultimate concern because they seek to promise voters access to the nation’s economic production. Americans have replaced God as their ultimate concern because they muster the courage to be in spite of the threat of nonbeing by contributing to the economic machine of the United States, instead of the human person’s one true ultimate concern: the ground and abyss of being. The theological anthropology of the human person, which describes human beings as centered selves in community, sets the conditions necessary for Americans to locate their courage to be in contribution and participation in economic production and progress. Finally, utilizing Tillich’s understanding of theonomy, in which a society functions fully with preliminary concerns properly ordered and ultimate concern resting in God, the problem in American society is apparent. Americans have allowed economic growth and technological progress to become their ultimate concern and express this concern in their choice of political party. Theonomy does not exist in the United States because the society’s preliminary concerns have demonically replaced the ground and abyss of being as its ultimate concern. Perhaps if the men and women of the United States would come to respect their humanity, realize the value in their anthropology as fulfilled spirit, live together in moral community, and hold God as their ultimate concern, their courage to be by participating in democratic conformism would aid their quest to take the anxiety of nonbeing onto themselves, their political expressions would cease to be demonic, and the United States could enter a period of theonomy.

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On the eastern tip of the Baltic Sea lies a narrow stretch of cold, hard tundra known as the Karelian Isthmus. The rugged expanse has practically no intrinsic value, but its geographic location has made it one of the most fought-over pieces of land in Europe. Forming a land bridge from the vast Scandinavian plains of the northwest to the eastern mass of Asia and Russia, the Karelian Isthmus has been hotly contested for millennia for its strategic value as a trade conduit, defensive buffer, and offensive pier. No conflict exemplifies this better than the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-1940, more commonly known as the Winter War.

Ever since the building of Saint Petersburg in the early 18th century, the Karelian Isthmus posed a looming danger to Russian interests. The city sat neatly on the edge of Russian territory, a scant 30 or so kilometers from the Isthmus, which was at the time considered Finnish land. An unchallenged army could sweep from Finland to the cultural capital of Russia in hours. It is no surprise, then, that when the famously paranoid Joseph Stalin suspected Finland of collaborating with Nazi Germany in November 1939, he almost immediately launched a titanic assault on a quiet but hardy nation with a smaller population than contemporaneous Moscow.

Germany’s spectacularly successful blitzkrieg assault on Poland had given Stalin confidence that Finland could be rolled over in a matter of days, which was reinforced by the commander placed in charge of the invasion, General Meretskov. Meretskov scoffed at brooding predictions from subordinates, declared to a pleased Stalin that the invasion would “last twelve days, no more,” and drew up ammo consumption and fire-support approximations to fit that estimate. To his credit, this was far from an unpopular evaluation. In an empathetic letter to the then-Prime Minister of Britain Winston Churchill, the Earl of Halifax lamented: “I don’t see how the Finns can stand the financial strain...nor what is keeping Russia from keeping them mobilised till they crack.” Hence, it came as a surprise to most contemporary observers, particularly the Russians, when Finland’s apparently meager, sparse, and under-equipped army held the Karelian Isthmus for over one hundred days. Incompetent leadership, a brutal climate, and perpetually collapsing morale had kept the Red Army from breaking through Finland’s main line of defense, the Mannerheim Line, until February 1940. The war was eventually a Soviet victory, but an embarrassingly Pyrrhic one. Modern estimates place Finnish casualties at around 70,000, and Soviet casualties at almost half a million.

The Winter War is seen by some modern historians as an insignificant misstep in the history
of Soviet Russia. Finland still lost, after all; the Karelian Isthmus was ceded to Russia and the threat to Leningrad was averted. However, there are many striking arguments suggesting that the Winter War was in fact of great importance to the course of the Second World War in Europe. Firstly, there is evidence to suggest that the failures of the Winter War triggered reforms in the Red Army on a massive scale and shaped it into a fighting force capable of surviving a German invasion. Secondly, it is possible that the Red Army’s humiliating defeat led Nazi Germany to believe that an invasion of Russia would be not only viable, but elementary, and underestimate Soviet Russia’s ability to fight a long, drawn-out war.

The extent of the Winter War’s impact on the Eastern Front is crucial to understanding the course of World War II. In order to comprehend the actions and motivations of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, the Winter War must be considered as a potential factor, making it an important conflict to study for modern historians. This essay will attempt to answer the question: to what extent did the Winter War impact the Eastern Front of World War II? It will evaluate evidence from primary sources and consider modern analysis to conclude that the Winter War’s outcome, while not of paramount importance to the course of the Eastern Front, had a considerable effect on how and why the Soviet Union defeated Germany during Operation Barbarossa.

After only a few months of a struggling Red Army during the Winter War, it became clear to the Soviet High Command as well as contemporary observers that the Soviet Military’s war machine was failing to live up to expectations. Russian troops outnumbered Finnish defenders four to one but were being lost at a rate of over seven Russians for every one Finn. The Soviet tank fleet, despite being practically unopposed by Finland’s almost complete lack of artillery and armor, was proving unable to shatter Finnish defenses. An invasion meant to last mere days was dragging on for much longer than anticipated, and by the end of the war, Stalin had grudgingly moved on from his plans of total Finnish occupation and instead settled for little more than the ceding of the problematic Karelian Isthmus. Within the Soviet command structure, the Red Army was widely deemed incompetent and in need of serious and rapid reform. However, the Red Army’s actual incompetence during the Winter War has since become a point of contention among historians. Some historians, such as David Glantz and Albert Seaton, have claimed that the Winter War’s failures were a much-needed reality shock, and that without the military reforms that came thereafter, the German invasion of Russia would have been far more successful. Other historians, such as Roger R. Reese, have instead argued that the Red Army was more or less competent enough during the Winter War to fend off the German assault of 1941, and that the post-Winter War reforms were relatively insignificant. Both viewpoints will be examined in detail.

The primary and prevailing theory among modern historians places the post-Winter War reforms in a position of much importance. On the 27th of March 1940, Kliment Voroshilov, a member of the Soviet State Defense Committee, published a report detailing the failings of the Winter War. Primarily, the report blamed the need for a larger standing army, the excessive turnover of commanders, deficiencies in rail transportation, poor equipment and supplies, a significant number of unsuitable commanders, poor uniforms, and a general lack of preparation and understanding of the Finnish defense. As a result, the Soviet Party Central Committee (SPCC) held a series of conferences to further examine the Red Army’s failures, and found that “the planning experiences for the Finnish War, as well as the subsequent dismal performance, are... sobering and embarrassing.” As a result of the SPCC’s findings, a widespread series of reforms were set in motion across the Red Army. These reforms primarily focused on addressing tactical and logistical failures during the Winter War, “as well as the adoption of Finnish tactics
and equipment that was observed to be effective,” including the adoption of the widely successful PPSh-41 submachine gun, a near-replica of the Finnish Suomi KP/-31. Furthermore, the SPCC found that “command and control was embarrassingly lacking during the initial stages of the conflict,” concluding that poor communication and leadership were largely responsible for the Red Army’s shortcomings. In response, the Soviet Military Command greatly increased its ability to communicate with and control frontline forces, with reforms ranging from a large increase in the number of telephones to the adoption of defense Finnish motti bunkers and the replacement, imprisonment, or execution of incompetent or inadequate officers. These changes substantially improved the Red Army’s control over its forces and were most likely crucial in retaining military stability and competence during the German invasion the following year.

However, there are undoubtedly valid counterclaims to the idea that the Red Army was totally incompetent during the Winter War. Most obviously, the fact remains that the war ended in Soviet victory. Despite massive casualties, dramatically inept commanders, harrowing weather conditions, chaotic organization, and a staunch, resilient enemy, the Red Army prevailed. Thus, it can be reasonably argued that the origin of the Winter War’s shortcomings should be placed much higher in the chain of command than at the level of the soldiers and officers. The Soviet Ministry of Defense initially treated the war as little more than a distraction, envisioning twenty or so divisions of the Leningrad Military District “comprised primarily of conscripts and reservists” rapidly crushing the seemingly meagre Finnish resistance and occupying the country in a matter of days. However, the fantasy was not unanimous; General Boris Shaposhnikov submitted a plan calling for a campaign plan of several months which was promptly rejected by Stalin, and General Kirill Meretskov, having toured the Russo-Finnish border a few days before the start of the war, wrote in his journal that “should hostilities break out in the winter it would be very difficult to conduct military operations in this region.” Soviet memoirs now prove that there were a considerable number of generals and intelligence officers who presented the Finnish invasion as easy despite having serious personal reservations, most likely out of fear of being deemed unhelpful or insubordinate. Therefore, Stalin’s notorious fear-seeped echo chamber was responsible for far too optimistic war planning, which in turn would be responsible for the failings of the Red Army during the struggle. No matter how skilled and organized the men, the Red Army simply could not effectively fight a three-and-a-half-month war with ammunition and supplies intended for twelve days. Furthermore, Soviet motivation was severely hampered during the war. The reasons for the invasion were poorly communicated to officers and soldiers, so unlike the German invasion of 1941, individual drive and patriotism ebbed away over the course of the war. One Soviet Winter War veteran, Mikhail Lukinov, wrote:

One of the peculiarities of this war was the fact that we fought because we were ordered. This was different from the following [Great] Patriotic War, when we hated the enemy that attacked our native land. Here they simply told us: ‘Forward march!’ — without even an explanation of where we were going.

In addition, blistering conditions, heavy casualties, and poor leadership all contributed to a disastrously low morale. Trepidation permeated throughout the entirety of the Soviet forces, exemplified by one soldier’s despondent observation: “We’re going to certain death. They’ll kill us all. If the newspapers said that for every Finn you need ten Russkies, they’d be right. They are swatting us like flies.” If the Winter War’s shortcomings are attributed to the Soviet High Command and poor morale, instead of the lower levels of tactics and equipment, then the hurried post-war military reforms did very little to fix the Red Army’s problems.
With that said, regardless of the problems at the highest levels of command, the fact remains that the Red Army during the Winter War was disjointed, poorly led, and used ill-conceived tactics. The reforms that followed may not have solved the problems of high command, but they certainly did a lot to improve the communication, leadership and tactics of the war. Not all of those changes had been completed by the time of the German invasion, but there had been enough reforms for the Red Army to be a notably more resilient and organized army than it would have been had the Winter War not happened at all. Operation Barbarossa’s initial victories were closely overcome by the Soviet Army’s counter-offensives, and the Soviet victory was so close that it is not far-fetched to affirm that the reforms the Winter War spurred into action were the slight edge the USSR needed to fend off the German Invasion. Even if the improvements were minor, they shaped the Red Army into a fighting force capable of surviving an invasion from one of the world’s greatest professional armies. Therefore, the Winter War had a relatively significant, though indirect, contribution to the victory of the Soviet Union over Germany during the German Invasion of 1941.

The Soviet High Command was not the only party that noticed the Red Army’s shortcomings during the Winter War. Another unintended side effect of the conflict may have been a critical underestimation of the Soviet Red Army by Nazi Germany. In 1940, rising German-Soviet tensions and conflicts over territories in the Balkans made Hitler believe an eventual invasion of Soviet Russia was inevitable. However, the extent to which the Winter War played a part in that decision is a matter of discussion among modern historians. Many, such as Albert Seaton and John Toland, argue that the invasion would have very much happened regardless, and the Winter War was little more than a blip on Hitler’s radar. Others, such as Mikhail Semiryaga and William Trotter, instead argue that the Winter War was a significant enough example of the Red Army’s apparent incompetence that it was an important factor in Hitler’s decision to invade when and how he did.

Nazi Germany studied the Winter War in enormous depth and with great interest. From a foreign observer’s perspective, Finland was a tiny nation with a tinier population and a meagre, unprepared military. The Red Army’s failure to sweep Finland as quickly as Germany swept Poland — a country with almost ten times Finland’s population — was of considerable interest to German High Command, who then ordered a detailed evaluation of the Red Army. The conclusion of that evaluation read as follows:

In quantity a gigantic military instrument. — Commitment of the “mass” — Organization, equipment and means of leadership unsatisfactory — principles of leadership good; leadership itself, however, too young and inexperienced — Communication system bad, transportation bad: troops not very uniform; no personalities — simple soldier good natured, quite satisfied with very little. Fighting qualities of the troops in a heavy fight, dubious. The Russian “mass” is no match for an army, with modern equipment and superior leadership.

Furthermore, a German representative in Helsinki, Wipert von Blücher, concluded similar results during his stay in Finland. After seven weeks of warfare, the Soviet Army, which outnumbered the Finnish defense in men, armor, artillery, air force and equipment, had failed to accomplish any major gains on the Karelian Isthmus. As a result, Blücher optimistically reported that “Germany no longer need view the Soviet Union as a serious military or economic threat.” The truth was that Finland was not as helpless as it was deemed to be. Finnish troops were strongly motivated, heavily trained, and consistently resourceful, with a pernicious environment and lethal temperatures backing them up against the Red Army’s invasion. Nonetheless, the evaluation of the Red Army as disorganized, badly equipped, poorly led, and most assuredly inferior to the German Wehrmacht quickly became the Nazi consensus. A few months before
the start of the invasion of Russia, Hitler told his doubtful generals: “We have only to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down.”

Nazi analysts, however, failed to take into account the series of heavy reforms that followed the Winter War, deeming them “insignificant” or ignoring them entirely. This, along with a general underestimation of the Finnish defense making Soviet Forces look far less competent than they actually were, led to Germany attempting an invasion ignorant of the Red Army’s true strength. During the Nazi invasion, just as in the Winter War, the vast majority of Soviet losses were early in the conflict. The German army was extraordinarily successful during the initial blitzkrieg, but their failure to prepare for a long and drawn out war against an opponent as resilient and stubborn as Stalin’s Russia is what eventually led to their defeat. Had the Winter War not transpired the way it did, and Germany not underestimated the Red Army as a result, Hitler would have likely been far more prepared for what came after the kicking in of his metaphorical door.

The main counterclaim to the idea that the Winter War factored heavily into Hitler’s decision to invade Russia is simply that it would have happened regardless of whether the war in Finland had been fought at all. Nazi-Soviet tensions were at an all-time high, and as Hubert Menzel — a major in the General Operations Department of the Wehrmacht headquarters — later recalled, invading the Soviet Union as early as 1941 seemed to be the most logical course of action: “We knew that in two years’ time, that is by the end of 1942, beginning of 1943, the English would be ready, the Americans would be ready, the Russians would be ready too, and then we would have to deal with all three of them at the same time... We had to try to remove the greatest threat from the East.” Furthermore, Hitler’s strategy in Russia was very much similar in both practice and result to his other campaigns in Europe, favoring a concentrated, blistering thrust towards major cities instead of the more methodical advances of past wars. Blitzkrieg was just as devastating in Russia as it had been in Poland: in the first week of the invasion, Soviet Russia suffered over 150,000 casualties, contrasting with Germany’s 40,000. As outlined by Albert Seaton in The Russo-German War, The Winter War may have improved Hitler’s confidence, but there is little reason to believe he would have used different strategy considering how successful blitzkrieg had been for him up to that point.

However, even if Hitler’s strategy would not have drastically changed had the Winter War never happened, the fact remains that German analysts underestimated the Red Army as a direct result of the Winter War. The Wehrmacht went to war with the Soviet Union ignorant of its true capabilities and, in part because of its underestimation of Finland during the Winter War, failed to predict the Red Army’s ability to take devastating losses without defeat, thereby misconstruing it as being far less competent than it actually was.

So, to what extent did the Winter War have a strong influence on the course of the Eastern Front? While certainly not of momentous significance, the conflict had two important effects: it shaped the Red Army into a more effective and organized fighting force and perpetuated a rampant underestimation of the Soviet forces by Nazi Germany. The conflict’s importance is limited by the fact that there is no hard evidence to assume Hitler would use drastically different tactics had the war not happened, as well as the possibility that the main problems the Red Army faced during the Winter War might have not actually been solved by the post-war reforms. However, it cannot be denied that Nazi Germany underestimated the Red Army due to their underestimation of the Finnish defense, and that the Red Army was strengthened by the military reforms that were directly caused by the Winter War. The Winter War is often overlooked by modern academia in favor of more dramatic conflicts during the European war, but considering its effects is crucial to grasping a
full understanding of the Eastern Front. Indeed, the impact of small-scale events on larger concepts or situations is often underestimated, and as the Winter War shows, understanding them is inalienably required for a complete understanding of the larger picture.

Had the Winter War never happened, Soviet Russia would be a less prepared state and Nazi Germany a more knowledgeable one leading up to the German invasion. The Nazi approach and the Soviet response to Operation Barbarossa were considerably affected by the Red Army’s performance during the Winter War.

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The Christianization of Scandinavia during the Viking Age had immense religious, social, and political effects on all facets of Viking culture. However, no effect of this Christianization was more important to Viking society than its use by Viking kings to solidify their political authority, create a lasting name for themselves and their successors, and consolidate political control.

Throughout the arc of the Viking Age, commonly said to stretch from roughly the middle of the 8th century AD to the middle of the 11th century AD, the Christianization of Scandinavia was rooted in Viking political reform. Because of Scandinavia’s unique geographic placement in Europe and the nature of the Viking people themselves, many Viking traditions retained an inward focus that impeded and challenged any external reform. However, Christianity in Scandinavia began to grow as Viking kings adopted Christianity to augment their own political authority and model their reigns off of more prestigious and powerful mainland European kings.

One Viking King in particular, Sigurd I of Norway, launched the only Norwegian Crusade in 1107 and traveled to the Holy Land to aid the crusaders there. His leadership of the Crusade had tremendous political, economic, and social benefits for his kingdom, as Sigurd returned to Norway a religious hero with increased political authority and a strengthened capacity to rule. Sigurd’s Crusade demonstrates the significant role that Christianity played in the advancement of Viking royal political power both before and after the Norwegian Crusade and illustrates how the growing strength of Christianity came to change all facets of Viking life.

For much of the Viking Age, Vikings all over Scandinavia were pagan and followed the pagan teachings of their forefathers. Viking religion was unique because the local chieftain or king was both a political and religious figure, representing how important Viking paganism was to Viking culture: “Religion and political power were closely connected in the pagan period…the chieftains acted as cultic and religious leaders.”

Furthermore, the nature of the Viking religion was fundamentally different than that of Christianity. Vikings believed in an extensive Norse mythology that penetrated all aspects of their life, from farming to warfare to adventure. For example, kings and chieftains prayed to Odin, the Norse king god, for political stability and prosperity. The large majority of the Viking world idolized Thor, the down-to-earth son of Odin renowned for his unwavering physical strength and protection of humanity. The characteristics of the Norse pagan religion indicate that it played an incredibly active role in day-to-day
life of the Vikings. However, the complexity of the Norse religion, with its decentralized structure, demonstrates why Viking kings struggled so mightily in political consolidation before Christianization. Thus, Viking political authority relied on the personal skill of a Viking king to use paganism to consolidate his power, create alliances with other chieftains, and ensure the success of his reign. However, as time went on, the increased visibility of Christian missionaries and Christianity overall in Scandinavia from a variety of missionary and non-missionary sources presented certain enterprising Viking kings with a path towards increased political authority and consolidation: “But there must have been a very slow but steady trickle of Christian influence into Scandinavia throughout the tenth century, carried by returning Vikings, their slaves, and these unknown missionaries.” Christianity offered Viking kings the potential to upend a political situation that inherently did not afford them the opportunity to truly augment their political authority and create a lasting, powerful dynasty.

Because of the inherent interconnectedness of Viking political and religious life, the introduction of Christianity to Scandinavia prompted the beginning of a complete reform of Viking kingship and life. The process of Christianization in Scandinavia was gradual and slow, which demonstrated the immense difficulty for Christian missionaries who had to reform nearly all aspects of Viking life in order to create the necessary conditions for conversion:

The introduction of Christianity implied a thorough change of culture, even if it did not take place overnight. The whole way of life was changed. Pre-Christian religion was an integral part of society and life in all respects. The change of power demanded a new religion with an ideology that could legitimize centralized power, and this ideology was supplied by the Catholic Church. Since Christianization in Scandinavia represented an all-encompassing shift in Viking life, Christian missionaries faced tremendous obstacles in order to convince Viking kings and chieftains to forsake their pagan traditions. One of the earliest and most successful Christian missionaries was Ansgar, a 9th century Frankish monk charged by Emperor Louis the Pious of the Franks to expand Christianity northward to Scandinavia after successful Christianization in Saxony. Ansgar became known as the “Apostle of the North” for his wide-ranging and lengthy efforts to Christianize Scandinavia. For example, in 815, Louis found Denmark’s decentralized political system too tempting and wanted to expand his empire north; eventually though, Danish naval strength repelled Louis’ heretofore unbeaten Frankish ground forces.

However, Louis never forgot about his northern ambitions, and “in 831 [Emperor] Louis made Ansgar bishop of Hamburg, and helped him to create a powerful new center for the northern missions that would eventually have a profound effect on the history of Scandinavia.” That Louis saw Ansgar’s missionary work as a political goal for the Frankish empire demonstrates that Christianization in Scandinavia was a political matter both for the Viking kings considering conversion and for the Vikings’ European rivals who sought the expansion of their religion’s authority.

Additionally, the gradual adoption of Christianity throughout Scandinavia indicated that, “there [was] a seamless fit between the spiritual values of the Christian religion and the political struggles for sovereignty between the Scandinavians themselves…” Christianity was uniquely suited to be a political tool for the Scandinavian landscape because the core tenets of the religion prioritized centralization, leading to its aforementioned usage by warring Viking kings eager for glory and victory: “The process of conversion was from the outset closely connected with the strengthening of royal power and it helped to increase the centralization of power.” Furthermore, Ansgar’s missionary strategy of beginning the process of Christian conversion in Scandinavian commercial centers, such as Hedeby in Denmark and Birke in Sweden, indicates that early advances of Christianity were made possible by the tolerance of the local Viking kings.
Gradually, Viking kings began to recognize the political and economic benefits they could accrue for themselves and their domain if they converted to Christianity. Simultaneously, the scope of the Scandinavian world was changing; Vikings were increasingly coming into contact with other cultures around the Baltic and in Europe that broadened Viking thought about what was possible and how best to create lasting political authority: “...from the moment the Vikings began to venture beyond their borders, they were aware that Christianity was...a passport to wealth and power.”

Perhaps most important for Christianity’s success in Scandinavia was increased Viking exposure to the strength of European kingdoms: “The European idea of kingship had come to Scandinavia, and increasingly it fired the imagination of the Vikings lords.”

To this new class of ambitious Viking kings, the riches won from their ancestors’ traditional Viking targets of piracy and treasure-hunting paled in comparison to what could be gained from the political stability and economic boost that the Christian European kingdoms fostered. For example, the conversion of Hedeby and the success of Ansgar’s mission there prompted a direct growth in profits from Christian traders who had long avoided the region because of the religious intolerance: “The news from Ansgar’s successful mission had reached the ears of Christian traders. Until now, Hedeby, with its intolerant pagan king, had been dangerous ground for them, but soon they were arriving in a growing stream... Christianity was good for business.”

Viking kings, simply by converting to Christianity or instilling religious tolerance in their kingdoms, were able to harness increased economic activity to develop a strong, economically powerful state apparatus that was inherently stronger than the pre-Christian Viking pagan political structure of their forefathers.

Therefore, Viking kings began to see Christianity as a means to an end for the purpose of political consolidation, augmentation of personal kingly authority, and adaption of a new legal system—an implicit mirroring of mainland European Christian kings by the Viking kings:

For the Viking kings the new faith meant the strengthening of central power, in the short as well as the long term, as the Church was centrally organized and traditionally very dependent on the king. The priesthood took over the cult functions of the local chieftains, which weakened their power. The break in tradition also made it easier for kings to impose new social rules and new methods of government.

Additionally, the advancement of Christianity in Scandinavia meant that Viking kings would now benefit from the educated members of the clergy who saw the promotion of a Viking king’s central political authority as a necessity for the conversion of Viking people. Therefore, a Viking king’s political authority was supplemented by the Christian presence in their domains as their law-making authority was amplified and expanded throughout their society: “The role of kings as upholders of justice was emphasized by churchmen who also encouraged kings to act as law-makers, in the first place in the interest of the clergy and their churches.”

Both the clergy and the Viking kings benefitted from this symbiotic relationship. In this way, Christianity led to the creation of a Viking legal code that reaffirmed the power of the King while inhibiting the previously-powerful role of religious chieftains who had once dominated the Scandinavian political structure. While the process begun by Christian missionaries such as Ansgar did not follow a straight line towards success, the myriad ways in which Christianity could aid an ambitious Viking king in consolidating power and strengthening his rule proved convincing to many, even when compared to the allure of maintaining the familiar traditional pagan Norse religious practices of their predecessors.

Christianity was thus able to take hold in royal and religious centers around Scandinavia, such as Hedeby, Birke, and others, partly because of the proximity and support of a Viking
king to the Christian missionaries’ work. This also explains the failure of Christianity to overtake the traditional Norse pagan religion in remote areas of Scandinavia, such as the far-flung and sparsely-populated Trøndelag in central Norway where “Christianity did not take root,” and the power of the local political and religious chieftains proved to be relatively resistant to conversion.\(^\text{12}\) The geography of Scandinavia was a determining factor in where Christianity would have the most sway and natural applicability to the Viking people. Just as Denmark became the first Scandinavian kingdom to convert because of its geographical proximity to powerful Christian European kings in roughly 965 with the conversion of Viking king Harald Bluetooth, it follows that Trøndelag and other remote regions proved more difficult for Christianization because of their isolated locations.

Overall, the implementation of Christianity, “in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden...was effected from above, under royal leadership, and often by brute force.”\(^\text{13}\) For instance, Norwegian Viking King Olaf Tryggvason, who reigned from 995 to 1000, is largely credited with the introduction of Christianity to Norway with his brutality and sheer will. In addition, Viking kings who did not share Olaf’s authority found it more difficult to control their land. Thus, in places such as Trøndelag, it was harder for a Viking king to unilaterally assert his authority in comparison with a central, trade-center such as Hedeby, creating the opportunity for the continuance of thriving pockets of Norse paganism.

With the gradual adoption of Christianity in Scandinavia throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Pope’s importance and authority in the region grew exponentially. Thus, when Pope Urban II proclaimed in 1095 at the Council of Clermont his desire to see a Crusade undertaken by all able-bodied Christians in defense of Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem and the protection of the Holy Sepulcher, his words found new level ears in a previously-closed-off region. As the Viking kings used Christianity to consolidate power and create a lasting political dynamic, Urban called for a war where, “one aim was the liberation of people [Christian pilgrims] ...the other the liberation of a place [Jerusalem].”\(^\text{14}\) Additionally, Urban saw this crusade as essential to the, “liberation of the Church as a whole,” which now included some Viking kingdoms which had converted.\(^\text{15}\) For Viking kings who had slowly been using Christianity to establish greater political authority with increasing levels of success, Urban’s call to Crusade intended to increase Christian moral and political authority throughout the known world must have been convincing. Additionally, Urban’s message likely was received positively and taken seriously by many Viking kings and Norsemen because, “many Vikings on military expeditions, trading voyages, or diplomatic missions in Europe and the Byzantine Empire had seen churches or monasteries, listened to bishops and priests, and had understood some of the traditions and precepts of the Christian faith.”\(^\text{16}\) The increased exposure to Christian values and precepts made the dangers that Urban highlighted at the Council of Clermont real for the Vikings, which then encouraged them to devote themselves fully to conversion efforts at home and support the spread of Christianity abroad. Therefore, while not explicitly mentioned in Snorri Sturrlson’s *Heimskringla*, which detailed the adventures of Sigurd I the Norwegian Crusader King, “the First Crusade had to have been an important catalyst for the North adventure,” and the continued growth of Christianity throughout all of Scandinavia.\(^\text{17}\)

Sigurd the Crusader’s Norwegian Crusade from 1107 to 1110 represents a high point of the years of Christianization on the Scandinavian people and indicates that Viking kings had broadened their usage of the Christian faith from advancing their purely domestic progress to more global purposes. As discussed before, the tales of Vikings who travelled around Europe testifying to the wonders of the East played a large part in convincing Sigurd and his brother-kings, Eystein and Olaf, to undertake the Crusade in the first place: “The [Norsemen
returning home from Palestine and Byzantium] brought with them news of the wonders of the east...the people of Norway begged the young kings to sponsor an expedition. The kings agreed and decided Sigurd would lead the fleet.”

Furthermore, that Sigurd would even undertake an expedition of such importance demonstrates that the years of missionary work started by Ansgar and Poppo had led to an overall increase in the prominence and influence of Christian thought in Scandinavia. While Sigurd’s Crusade was a success, as he returned to Norway three years after his departure with riches and religious relics, increased prominence, and a solidified power base at home, for many Scandinavians, crusading to the Holy Land was simply untenable and unrealistic. However, the Crusades were not limited to the Holy Land, and the Scandinavians were uniquely situated to advance Christianity by crusading against pagan Slavs around the Baltic: “The renewed focus on the northern frontier [in the Crusades] was welcome to Scandinavians...to fight against the Slavs was therefore a welcome option, and still helped to support Jerusalem.” What would have seemed impossible to the early Christian missionaries who began the hard work of Christianization in Scandinavia in the 9th century now was a reality: Scandinavian Viking kings were not only using their Christian faith to augment their own power but to fight for the greater glory of God both in the Baltics and the Holy Land.

Sigurd’s journey to the Holy Land is unique because it is the only Crusade ever attempted on a large scale by a Viking king; the details of his adventures further indicate that religion served as an important, if not the primary, reason for Sigurd’s crusade. That Sigurd was motivated to undertake such a taxing and lengthy journey for the protection of Christianity in the Holy Land indicates that Sigurd recognized how important Christianity was to the strength of his kingdom. Sigurd, after consulting his brother-kings, decided that it was important for him to undertake the journey to the Holy Land for the glory of God, and three years into his reign, he departed Norway with a fleet of sixty ships. Sigurd’s Crusade to the Holy Land is also unique as, “the Norse were participating under royal leadership in a large expedition that appears to have been religious motivated,” providing further evidence that the Christianization of Scandinavia had thoroughly changed the nature of Viking kingship for the better, at least from the perspective of the Viking kings benefitting from the advancement of royal authority.

Furthermore, Sigurd’s various meetings with prominent Christian Kings and leaders throughout his journey, such as Henry I in England, then-Count Roger II of Sicily, and King Baldwin I of Jerusalem, demonstrate that Sigurd’s Crusade was noteworthy in the Christian world and provides further evidence that his expedition was religiously motivated. Sigurd’s meeting with Baldwin after his fleet landed in Acre undefeated in battle over the course of their journey to the Holy Land was particularly noteworthy, as Baldwin, “bestowed many relics upon the Norwegians, including, by permission of the patriarch of Jerusalem, a splinter taken from the True Cross.” According to Snorri Sturluson in his Heimskringla, the incredibly magnanimous gift of a piece of the True Cross to Sigurd was approved on “the condition that he...should swear to promote Christianity with all his power, and erect an archbishop’s seat in Norway if he could...” Thus, there was no question that one of the primary purposes of Sigurd’s Crusade was religiously motivated, and that upon his return to Norway, Sigurd had every intention of using his experiences from the Crusade to expand Christianity and foster the growth of his political authority. Furthermore, Sigurd’s experiences with the Christian kings on his journey must have informed his understanding of traditional European kingship and given him ideas on how to model his own reign off of the successful ones of these European kings.

After Sigurd and his Crusaders assisted in the victory at the Siege of Sidon, he charted a course back to Norway that journeyed through Constantinople to take an overland route north.
Upon arrival in Constantinople, the Byzantine Emperor joyously welcomed Sigurd and his Crusaders and gave them every honor for their heroic actions in defense of Christianity. The reactions of the Emperor and the other Christian Kings who encountered Sigurd on his return journey home indicate that the Norwegian Crusade was already being heralded as an unquestionable success (the Norwegians had not lost a battle throughout their entire journey) and evidence of the righteousness of the Crusades. The popular reaction to Sigurd’s Crusade is represented in its portrayal in the Liber Maiorichinus, a 12th century epic Latin poem that corroborated many of the stories present in the original Norwegian sagas: “The poem shows that Sigurd’s deeds were the topic of popular conversation well outside of Scandinavia.” Sigurd’s immense fame as a result of his daring Crusade to the Holy Land indicates that there were foreign benefits that Sigurd accrued from his Crusade independent of the obvious domestic Scandinavian advantages. While Sigurd clearly was motivated by his faith in the cause, it is interesting to consider that perhaps Sigurd partly embarked on his Crusade as a way of announcing Norway, and Scandinavia as a whole, on the European stage as a significant power to be reckoned with: “[Christianity] completed the transformation of the Scandinavian countries into modern states ruled by kings. It brought [Viking kingdoms] fully into the European fold, into the future.”

When he finally returned home to Norway, Sigurd directly benefitted from the fame and political authority he had gained from his long Crusade abroad; Sigurd is perhaps the clearest example of a Viking king who was able to harness Christian religious fervor to augment his political authority and consolidate power. While he was by no means the first Viking king to convert to Christianity and use it for political means, his Crusade represented a near perfect example of Christianity’s consolidating political power. Additionally, Sigurd’s success after his return in 1111 from the Crusade was aided by the efforts of his brother-king Eystein who had advanced Christianity, and therefore the political stability of the kingdom, throughout Norway via the creation of a ten-percent church tithe that allowed the Church in Norway to prosper. Sigurd, having learned from the efforts of the strong Christian Kings he encountered during the Crusade, created new Christian dioceses and kept a splinter of the True Cross as evidence of his political and religious authority. Sigurd’s reign represents the culmination of Christianization upon Viking kingship and the subsequent political power gained from conversion. Christianity was essential to Sigurd’s success in creating a stable kingdom for himself because he was able to harness the inherent consolidating qualities of the Christian religion while also using his crusading exploits to further his own political image. Sigurd’s example helped to further the perception of Christianity in Scandinavia as, “above all a victorious religion.” Sigurd ruled Norway through a period of strength and stability up until his death in 1130, but his example influenced the political and religious decisions of Vikings kings all over Scandinavia, who now knew that Christianity was an effective tool for the promotion of Viking kingship.

While no other Viking kings used Christianity as effectively as Sigurd the Crusader had, Sigurd’s example, coupled with the proven political consolidation of Viking kingship stemming from the Christianization in Scandinavia, inherently changed how Viking kings sought political power. While Sigurd was the only Viking king to undertake a crusade to the Holy Land, that did not mean that other Viking kings in Scandinavia following Sigurd did not recognize the strategic political benefits of crusading. For Viking kings who sought to expand their kingdoms, “…Christianity also gave the king an incentive to conquer new areas in order to propagate the new religion,” which made crusading in the Baltics a natural decision. Because Jerusalem was such a distant concern for the Scandinavians, Viking kings sought opportunities in the Baltics to eradicate the
pagans while at the same time following Sigurd’s model on a different scale. Soon, Swedish and Danish Viking kings were embarking on their own crusades against the Baltic Slavic pagans, primarily to expand Christianity’s moral authority to these pagan lands, but also to shore up political divisions at home: “apart from the obvious religious purpose of the crusade[s], the effect in Denmark [for example] was to unite the kingdom...” Therefore, Viking kings adapted Christianization to suit their own political and domestic goals, with the added benefit of the crusaders augmenting their religious piety and earning a better chance at salvation. In this way, the Viking kings emulated the model used most prolifically by Sigurd. By extension, the Viking kings were patterning their kingdoms around the model of nearby successful mainland European kingdoms. Christianization and crusading thus served to stitch the Scandinavian kingdoms to the rest of Europe in both religious and political affairs.

Viking kings’ usage of Christianity as a means to increased political consolidation inherently changed Viking society, as so much of Scandinavia’s original political structure was based on its pagan culture. Therefore, while the coming of Christianity to Scandinavia signaled the reform and advancement of Viking kingdoms’ political structures, it also served as the beginning of the end of what had made traditional pagan Viking culture unique: “Christianity changed everything for the Vikings...by becoming Christians, they cut the thread connecting them to all that had gone before. In every way that mattered, they would cease to be Vikings.” The Viking kings who were following Sigurd’s model and explicitly using Christianity to advance their kingdoms shared very little with their pagan ancestors, who had prioritized piracy and the pursuit of riches over territorial acquisition and the establishment of permanent political dominance. Thus, the Christianization of Scandinavia is a major contributing factor to the end of the Viking Age as it has been traditionally seen in recent years. Viking kings shared much more with their European counterparts after their Christianization than the Vikings who Adam of Bremen famously referred to as “some very ferocious peoples” in his Deeds of the Bishops of Hamburg. No longer did Viking leaders simply pursue easy raiding targets throughout the Baltic and Northern Europe as they had in the early days of the Viking Ages. Instead, through their new Christian faith, Viking kings were centralizing power, waging crusades for territorial gains, and establishing binding political ties with the rest of Europe.

Christianization in Scandinavia was closely tied to Viking kings’ pursuit of political power. Before Christianity was introduced to the region, paganism dominated all facets of Viking life. Therefore, when the Viking kings began to recognize the political benefits of converting to Christianity, they slowly began to erode traditional norms of Viking society in favor of a more strictly European Christian model. While the example set by Sigurd and his Norwegian Crusade is perhaps the clearest example of a Viking king benefitting directly from the fusion of Christianity into a Viking kingdom’s political affairs, Vikings kings both before and after Sigurd utilized the Christian religion to advance themselves and their kingdoms politically: “the conversion to Christianity was a calculated political move, a step taken because it was primarily good for business.” Thus, the Christianization of Scandinavia changed the concept of Viking kingship while also fundamentally altering the course of history for these newly Christian Viking kingdoms. While earlier Vikings had struggled with intense political division and destructive infighting within their kingdoms, this new breed of Christian Viking kings pressed Scandinavia into the future while binding the region to its European neighbors.

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A Political Woman

Brynlee Norton

In her memoirs, Anbara Salam Khalidi writes of her experiences in directing a women’s relief organization during the devastating Mount Lebanon Famine of the World War I era. The daughter of an influential government official, Salam was not personally subject to starvation and poverty, but instead, at the request of local government leaders, including the ubiquitous Cemal Pasha, assisted in humanitarian relief efforts. The connection between Salam’s class, gender, and occupation is no coincidence. In targeting Anbara Salam Khalidi to work in the refugee shelters and workshops, Cemal Pasha and other Ottoman leaders sought to direct her political activity in a way that would be useful, rather than subversive, to the state.

Though Anbara Salam Khalidi’s memoir is expansive, the third chapter, “An Engagement That Was Not Completed,” is the most relevant for the war and famine period in Lebanon. This chapter details Salam’s family connections to the political arena, her relationship with one of the revolutionaries murdered by Cemal, and her management of a state-sponsored charity organization in Lebanon. First, I will discuss Salam’s family history and her integration into the Lebanese political sphere. I will then discuss the context of the famine, followed by an analysis of Salam’s role in the state-sponsored women’s relief aid societies in Beirut.

As the daughter of a parliamentarian in the Ottoman government, Anbara Salam had access to political engagement from a young age. Her father, Salim Salam, vocally opposed Cemal Pasha’s policies—though he did not identify himself as a radical Arab nationalist, but rather as a reformist who argued for change within the Ottoman Empire. Anbara Salam recalls, “it appeared Cemal held a grudge against my father,” after her father did not agree with Cemal’s disparaging assessment of the Arab nationalist revolutionaries. Anbara Salam’s obituary notes that from the age of fourteen she argued for women’s participation in Arab nationalism in various nationalist newspapers. Her father and brothers, all of whom were politically active, encouraged her in this effort. Salam reinforces their support throughout the memoir, characterizing her father as “progressive and broad-minded in his views” on women’s rights and other social issues. Though it was not unusual at the time for elite Beiruti women to be well-educated, Salam was uniquely positioned to be an authoritative public figure from a very young age. In a society that was still very conservative in its treatment of women, without Salim Salam’s support and a network of prominent politicians, it would have been difficult for Anbara Salam to open the door to political activism so early in her teenage years.

Anbara Salam’s significance within the network of anti-Ottoman political activists is made clear after her first meeting with her would-be fiancé, ‘Abd al-Ghani al-`Uraysi. Salam notes that each had privately followed the activism of the other for years—he through her feminist articles in nationalist papers, and she through her father’s praise and al-`Uraysi’s own articles. Though they did not meet in person until she was nearly seventeen years old, their mutual admiration far preceded their relationship. Salam, rejecting contemporary marriage norms, insisted
on meeting and befriending al-`Uraysi before he pursued the consent of both families for an official engagement. A pair of mutual friends enabled this scheme by acting as chaperones at their home.8 Salam notes that her family lacked kinship or social ties with al-`Uraysi’s family; however, the network of political activists in Lebanon was so tightly knit at the time that there was still only one degree of separation between the two.9 The circumstances of their eventual meeting were not complicated or contrived, but quite easily accomplished with the cooperation of their friends. This anecdote speaks to the relative fame and political significance of both Salam and her fiancé, especially among other young revolutionaries and pro-Arab government officials.

In a futile effort to prevent further destabilization of the Ottoman Empire, Cemal Pasha cracked down on anti-Ottoman, pro-Arab politicians and activists. In his own memoir of the World War I years, he argues, “the two races, Arab and Turkish, should secure their unity while remaining separate nations, subject to the same Khalif…the Turkish and Arab ideals do not conflict. They are brothers in their national strivings.”10 Those who campaign for Arab nationalism he calls “treacherous” and “shameful.”11 For Salim Salam, `Abd al-Ghani al-`Uraysi, and others who favored Arab independence from the Ottoman Empire, this was a personal and political disaster. Cemal ordered `al-Uraysi’s execution, and Salam’s arrest.12 Thus, Anbara Salam became not only politically opposed to Cemal Pasha’s policies during his term as governor of Syria and Lebanon, but also personally implicated in his atrocities against dissenters.

Historians characterize the war period in Lebanon by the famine that upended society. As Salam writes, Ottoman authorities “adopted a policy of deliberately impoverishing the Arab countries, especially Lebanon.”13 To some degree, the Triple Entente’s military maritime blockade was at fault for the first famine; this restricted trade and constrained the amount of food in the Ottoman Empire during the period.14 However, numerous other factors contributed to the severity of the famine, including low crop yields, a locust infestation, wartime food requisitions, currency devaluation, and administrative failures among senior Ottoman leadership.15 Whether deliberate or not, these failures caused hundreds of thousands of deaths and forced millions more into extreme poverty and starvation.16 The Mount Lebanon Famine, as it came to be known, was truly catastrophic. Historians note that this was not “the time when famine happened, but the time in which nothing else happened.”17 Families sold their homes and possessions to buy food when it was still available.18 However, food shortages meant that the price of grain alone rose nearly 600% between 1914 and 1918. Furthermore, Ottoman currency devaluation indicated that the purchasing power of wages decreased. While before the war it took approximately 55 full days of work for an unskilled male worker to buy enough wheat to feed one person for a year, at the height of the famine it took over 300 full days.19 Even when people earned some money, it could not buy the food that they needed to survive. People resorted to alternative methods of survival. Survivors of the famine tell stories of children who picked seeds out of human feces, women who became prostitutes in exchange for bread, and, most disturbingly, mothers who ate the corpses of their dead children.20 Many of these images are explicitly gendered: the most horrifying anecdotes are the ones that pervert the natural family structure, especially the role of mothers in caring for their children.

Salim Salam’s privileged political and economic status meant that Anbara Salam and the rest of her family were mostly immune to the effects of the famine. Before his political career, Salim Salam had been one of Beirut’s most prosperous merchants.21 He had also directed the private Muslim humanitarian organization al-Maqasid, which under his direction sponsored several schools, for both girls and boys.22 Anbara Salam was likely deeply affected by her father’s progressive stance on education for women as
well as his history of advancing political aims through charitable organizations. As Salam indicates, her family did not want for food during the famine. She recalls inviting “any who could still walk to come [into her home] and accept food,” and remembers her mother carrying bread or other food to pass out to starving individuals every time she left the house.23 Not only did her family have enough to feed themselves, but they also had enough to care for friends and strangers in town, apparently without much hardship. In one instance, Salam describes buying a banana, while a group of hungry children fought over the peel. She quickly gave them the rest of the banana, recording “her heart bled” after seeing them in such poverty.24 Anbara Salam and her mother engaged in this kind of micro-level charity work throughout the famine, despite the ban on private charity that the Ottoman government had enacted in the early years of the war.25

Much to Anbara Salam’s surprise, after years of famine and destitution in Beirut with no relief from the state, Cemal Pasha asked her and the other elite “ladies of Beirut” to assist the Ottoman government in establishing several famine relief organizations in Beirut.26 Salam claims she had no intention of going to Cemal’s meeting for women. To meet with the man responsible for the death of her fiancé and others in her circle of political allies would be “more than [her] nerves could bear.”27 However, she conceded after Ahmad Mukhtar Bayhum, the president of the Beirut municipality and a close political ally—and personal friend—of her father, asked her to prepare a speech for the meeting.28 She was finally convinced when he reminded her that to speak at this meeting would be “like returning the favor done by the governor [’Azmi Bey, governor of Beirut] when he interceded to save [her] father from the gallows.”29 Salam’s personal and political lives intersect more at this moment than at any point in the chapter. She accepted, and gave her speech, recalling, “it was delivered with a repressed emotion almost bursting with rage.”30 Following the rest of the program, Cemal Pasha congratulated Salam on her speech, and asked her to teach Arabic to and learn Turkish from the prominent Turkish feminist, Halide Edip. Salam’s initial reaction was disgust: “studying the language of my enemies is all I need.”31 However, she did agree to assist in the state-sponsored relief schemes, despite her initial reservations about why the state had finally elected to provide aid after so many years of neglect.32

Anbara Salam, along with several other elite women connected to the most prominent male politicians in the city, formed a committee to direct the work of a refugee shelter in west Beirut.33 Though Salam portrayed this committee as an entirely new development, it actually rose from a pre-existing organization called the Syrian Women’s Association. Many of the same women—wives and daughters of Beirut political leaders—had organized the Syrian Women’s Association in early 1915.34 Rather than build new civil society organizations from the ground up, the Ottoman government under Cemal Pasha requisitioned the organizations that civilians had already developed for themselves. The state “provided food and supplied money for [the society’s] daily shopping needs” while leaving the daily management of relief work to the women.35 The Syrian Women’s Association had seen government assistance on the local level before Cemal Pasha granted it official sanction. ’Azmi Bey, the governor of Beirut, and the same man who had interceded on behalf of Anbara Salam’s father, had supported the institution from its inception.36 However, after the central Ottoman government intervened, the Association’s provisional relief centers became permanent, and it grew more expansive in its philanthropic efforts.37 Salam, who served as correspondent and accountant for one of the refugee shelters, writes that the shelters took hungry children off the streets, provided medical care for those that were ill or suffering too severely from starvation, and educated children—with a particular emphasis on girls—in reading, writing, and crafts.38
Though there was some precedent in the Ottoman Empire for elite ladies’ relief societies, the Syrian Women’s Association seems unique in its employment of women as the actual directors of the society’s work. Enver Pasha sponsored a similar organization in Istanbul called the Society for the Employment of Muslim Women. The Society aimed to “find employment for women and protect them by getting them accustomed to earning their lives with their own labor and honor.” The Syrian Women’s Association and the Society similarly hoped to help women provide for themselves in the absence of their male providers. Ottoman officials credited Enver Pasha’s wife, Nâciye Sultan, as a founding member of the Society. However, though the female “elite personalities and leading figures of Muslim Ottoman society” played token roles in the management of the organization, it was predominantly led by men—many of whom were officials in the Ottoman military. Conversely, though the Syrian Women’s Association was patronized by influential men such as Cemal Pasha and ‘Azmi Bey, by all accounts the female officers independently directed the Association’s work. Perhaps this disparity was due to Ottoman authorities’ relative neglect of Beirut until 1917. The lack of state infrastructure in Beirut, as compared to Istanbul, meant that there were fewer opportunities for the state to act as a surrogate husband or father to women who lacked a male protector at home. This relative openness paved the way for women to organize the Syrian Women’s Association on their own.

The Ottoman government did not understand the women’s relief organizations as political groups. Ottoman officials had outlawed or destroyed pre-war humanitarian organizations that had been led by men, including Salim Salam’s al-Maqasid. Within the context of elite wartime politics, this is somewhat understandable: the Ottoman state also prohibited foreign aid from France and other Western nations who purportedly sought political loyalty in exchange for charity. Men, such as Salim Salam, who were known to hold reformist political beliefs, were similarly threatening to the stability of the empire. The Ottoman state did not consider women to be politically dangerous in the same way. Melanie Tanielian writes, “the political allegiance of women was less important than it was in the case of men.” The women’s relief societies aimed to alleviate suffering and help women support themselves and their families through industry and craft. They did not engage in outward political advocacy. However, women’s relief organizations marked a transition in the role of women in the labor market, expanding the number of women who worked outside the home to support themselves. This higher degree of independence ultimately contributed to the burgeoning women’s movement in Lebanon—especially among the so-called elite ladies who were allowed to govern their organization independently.

Though the women’s charity societies ultimately proved to be empowering for women of all socioeconomic classes, they were inherently tied to the patronage of Cemal Pasha. For Anbara Salam, this is especially mysterious. A political reformer herself, she fiercely disagreed with Cemal Pasha’s policies in Lebanon and Syria. Coupled with her personal grudges against him for the mistreatment of her father, and the execution of her fiancé, it seems highly unlikely that she would willingly lead an organization that served to advance his image. Salam’s memoir reveals a tension between her intimation that her male relatives and political connections pressured her into accepting a position with the relief association, and her claim of personal agency in prioritizing relief efforts over anything else. Not only did Ahmad Mukhtar Bayhum personally approach her about supporting the organizations by speaking at Cemal Pasha’s meeting, he also invoked the authority of ‘Azmi Bey and her duty to her family to convince her. She noted that her “whole family joined together in supporting the view that [she] should accept the invitation” to speak. Against these political and personal pressures, it would have been difficult to refuse. However, Anbara Salam defended her agency:
when Cemal Pasha asked her to learn Turkish, she refused because she believed her “primary duty…is relief work.” She portrayed engaging in relief efforts as her own idea. Rather than helping a few people on the street, she wished to be in a position to help thousands of women learn skills and feed their families.

Salam also asserted her agency in the matter by maintaining her hatred for Cemal Pasha throughout her memoir. She refers to him as “the Blood-shedder,” and notes that he “exudes cruelty” at the women’s meeting. Despite her relatively privileged status within the Ottoman Empire, her memoir is decidedly anti-Ottoman; by no means does she wish to appear complicit in Cemal’s crimes through her activism. Certainly, her personal experiences with her father and fiancé led her to take this stance. However, at the time she wrote her memoir, she had also established a reputation as a feminist and advocate for Arab nationalism. In establishing her life’s narrative, she may have accentuated her personal political position—and potentially that of her father and the rest of her family as well—for the sake of consistency and in order to prevent her later advocacy from being overshadowed by her apparent tolerance for Cemal Pasha.

Cemal Pasha and other Ottoman officials did not believe women’s relief aid societies were political institutions. However, Anbara Salam was already a well-known, anti-Ottoman political figure in Beirut well before the Ottoman government co-opted the societies. One could argue that Cemal simply didn’t take Salam and her politics seriously, so did not worry about her disloyalty. Alternatively, Cemal Pasha may have intentionally recruited Anbara Salam to be a key leader within the relief organizations to divert her energy into civil society. By doing so, he could mitigate the more substantial threat of her unbridled political activism.

Considering her affluence, connections to sympathetic political leaders, and established reputation as a writer and activist, Anbara Salam could very well have led more subversive efforts against the state if she were not otherwise occupied. She was well respected in opposition circles and had personal as well as political motives to take a hard stance against Cemal. Furthermore, her relationships with elite Ottoman politicians in Beirut ensured that her influence would extend beyond those she knew personally. Involvement in the Syrian Women’s Association, on the other hand, was incredibly time consuming and would leave little energy for rebellious activities. Salam writes that the women who supervised the workshops and shelters were “in a constant bustle,” even skipping meals because there was no time to pause and eat. After Enver Pasha’s experiment with the Society for the Employment of Ottoman Muslim Women, Cemal Pasha likely had some idea of the busy schedule that directing an aid organization would require. Given his history with Salim Salam, Cemal knew of Anbara’s political influence, and likely knew that to direct her into a busy occupation where she could engage in meaningful work would be to dilute the chances of other political activity. While the official Ottoman state believed women were apolitical, Cemal recognized that Anbara Salam’s history marked her as an aberration to this rule. As a political woman, Anbara Salam could only be nonthreatening if her power was limited to the context of civil society.

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The central element that all world religions have in common is faith. In the vast majority of cases, the particular dogmas of the world religions do not have the empirical evidence necessary to prove beyond reasonable doubt to a nonbeliever that their claims are true. For example, there is no way to prove that the Angel Gabriel visited Muhammad, which Islam professes to have happened, and no way to disprove the doctrine of reincarnation that many Hindus subscribe to. However, the most fundamental faith claim that the world religions hinge upon is belief in the existence of God. In this paper, I will establish the high-stakes nature of the question of God’s existence by reconfiguring the famous “Pascal’s Wager” and demonstrating that there is no dominant strategy. After doing so, I will advocate for responding to this reconfigured Pascal’s Wager by means of deriving faith from proofs and arguments as opposed to treating faith as a basic belief. My first objective will be to demonstrate that the question of God’s existence as well as our answer to that question hold important implications for all individuals. Upon completion of this first objective, I will present the above two approaches of developing an answer to the question of God’s existence and point out dangerous flaws that I believe weigh down the first approach of appealing to basic beliefs. If my concerns are justified, then we are left with only one option: to utilize proofs and arguments to answer the question of God’s existence. Finally, I will respond to the objections which I think pose the most serious challenges to my claim that proofs and arguments are superior to basic beliefs as sources of faith claims.

Before we determine how to approach religious belief, it is worth taking the time to ascertain why the issue matters at all in the first place. In order to establish the gravity of the question of God’s existence, I will appeal to Pascal’s Wager, which functions as follows. In this system, there are two possibilities: either God exists or God does not exist. In the face of this uncertainty, every human being has the freedom to choose between two courses of action: one may believe in God and earnestly try to live morally in accordance with that belief, or one may choose to not believe in God and live however one pleases. This peculiar situation forms a two-by-two matrix, resulting in four possible scenarios. If one chooses to believe in God and lives a morally upright life, and God does exist, then the theist will enjoy infinite happiness in heaven. If one chooses to believe in God and lives a morally upright life, but God does not exist, then the theist will enjoy a finite amount of happiness in his or her earthly life. If one chooses to reject the existence of God and lives without attempting to avoid sin or seek forgiveness, and God does exist, then the atheist will experience infinite suffering in hell. If one chooses to reject the existence of God and lives without attempting to avoid sin or seek forgiveness, and God does not exist, then the atheist will also enjoy a finite amount of happiness in his or her earthly life. For the purposes of this paper, I have slightly changed Pascal’s Wager to include a condition of living morally in order to go to heaven.
and living immorally in order to go to hell in addition to belief or disbelief, respectively. This modification is made to account for the Catholic Church’s *Constitution De Ecclesia*, which teaches that “salvation is open to [the non-Christian] also, if he seeks God sincerely and if he follows the commands of his conscience.”

Before I examine Pascal’s Wager further, however, I would like to dispel any concerns that I may be seeking utilitarian justifications for belief in God. Having to endure suffering for subscribing to atheism in a universe in which God exists does not give us any compelling reason that proves atheistic belief to be false. In a similar vein, being able to enjoy happiness for subscribing to theism in a universe in which God exists does not give us any compelling reason that proves theistic belief to be true. Furthermore, I will not attempt to take “probabilities” of God’s existence or lack thereof and insert them into an equation in order to formulate an empirical solution to guide our decision to believe or not to believe. Rather than providing us with a definite proof affirming God’s existence, Pascal’s Wager, at the very least, urges us to contemplate the implications of our answer to the question of God’s existence.

Although Pascal’s Wager reminds us that we may obtain a finite amount of happiness in our earthly lives if God does not exist, regardless of whether we choose to believe or not, it is necessary to delve deeper into those scenarios to better grasp what is really at stake. It is possible for living with utter and complete devotion to God in a world where God does not exist to be maximally defeating. To picture this, we can look to the countless people who have suffered and died from persecutions stretching from the Roman Empire about two thousand years ago to the Islamic State today. According to Matthew 16: 24-25, Jesus calls every Christian to “deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For… whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.” Thus, all those martyrs were doing what they were commanded to do by their religion. However, it would be horribly tragic for all those people to have sacrificed their very lives in obedience to a nonexistent deity for the sake of a nonexistent afterlife. Likewise, it is possible for living as one pleases in a universe without God to be maximally satisfying. For example, suppose there is a sociopathic serial killer who feels a large amount of pleasure from murdering innocent people and is extremely adept at evading the law. In the absence of any sentiments for others and an ultimate Justice that he cannot escape, it would be difficult to convince the serial killer that he should stop doing what he derives pleasure from. If there is no God and no ultimate Justice in the universe, then there is no deductive reasoning that can explain why we should bind ourselves to any moral obligations at all. These considerations may thus substitute the “finite happiness” scenarios in Pascal’s Wager for our purposes.

With these considerations in mind, I will reconfigure Pascal’s Wager from its original purpose, justifying belief in God, to a new purpose of urging us to take the question of whether God exists or not with unconditional seriousness due to the potential consequences of subscribing to an incorrect answer. If God supposedly does exist, non-believers may be in danger of losing eternal life with Him in heaven in favor of being eternally damned into hell. At the same time, if God supposedly does not exist, believers may be sacrificing the most precious gift they have, their finite lives, in service of a nonexistent deity. At the very least, believers would be disciplining themselves into following an array of moral precepts that may betray their desires for pleasure and convenience for no good reason. After all, in the absence of ultimate Justice that establishes an objective morality, it would be difficult to dissuade individuals from living according to their personal passions, pleasures, whims, and desires without any regard for the wellbeing of others. The original Pascal’s Wager argued that the dominant strategy in this two-by-two matrix is believing in God. My reconfiguration of Pascal’s Wager argues that, albeit to varying degrees, answering the question of
God’s existence incorrectly always leads to negative consequences. Therefore, there is no dominant strategy, and our only logical recourse is to strive to answer the question of God’s existence correctly. According to this reconfiguration of Pascal’s Wager, apathy with regard to whether or not God exists is the most irrational option.

Now that we have sufficiently established the importance of the question of whether or not God exists, I will now offer two approaches to answering that question. One may treat belief or disbelief in God as a basic belief, or a belief that is accepted but “not on the basis of any other beliefs.” Rather, basic beliefs are accepted if they are self-evident or evident to the senses. Conversely, one may ground belief or disbelief in God in proofs and arguments that use inductive reasoning to affirm or deny God’s existence. The fundamental problem with trying to determine whether or not God exists by appealing to basic beliefs is that basic beliefs are wholly subjective by their very nature. There is no way to comprehensively refute a belief an individual holds because he or she finds it to be self-evident. Furthermore, basic beliefs have no way of preventing personal whims and desires from manipulating one’s beliefs. One’s personal desire for an afterlife may encourage belief in a deity that promises eternal life, while another’s personal desire for no accountability for moral transgressions may discourage belief in a just deity. Finally, religious traditions lacking proofs and arguments have historically been susceptible to contradictory practices and even inhumane rituals, such as the worship of finite pagan deities among the ancient Greeks and bloodletting rituals among the ancient indigenous American peoples. Thus, trying to answer the question of God’s existence by appealing to basic beliefs leaves us vulnerable to several troubling considerations.

Proofs and arguments, on the other hand, are functions of human reason and are thus far more objective. Arguments such as St. Anselm’s ontological argument or St. Thomas Aquinas’s argument from contingency do not require preconceived notions of God’s nature or dependence on sacred religious texts or long philosophical treatises to inform one’s understanding of God. Instead, all one needs is an elementary understanding of basic logic and logical fallacies, which are far less contentious. Even if one’s inductive or deductive skills are undeveloped, one can work to improve them, whereas one may be helpless to grasp what someone else claims to be self-evident. Furthermore, since human reason is relatively more universally accessible than exposure to a religious or nonreligious upbringing or a profound spiritual experience, grounding one’s answer to the question of God’s existence in proofs and arguments better equips one to discuss the subject with people of other backgrounds. Through rational scrutiny and objective deliberation, we can exterminate, or at least mitigate, personal whims, desires, contradictions, and inhumane rituals. That is, the need to explain the coherence of a particular belief is more likely to enable the adherents to notice flaws in thinking if they exist. Due to the serious drawbacks inherent in trying to answer the question of God’s existence through self-evident basic beliefs, we are much more likely to arrive at the correct answer by appealing to proofs and arguments based on human reason.

It is worth clarifying that the scope of this paper is restricted to the question of God’s existence and how one should proceed in deciding which of the following beliefs to subscribe to: atheism or theism. Atheism and theism can be adequate answers to the question of God’s existence if one has convincing rational arguments(s) that lead to either of those particular conclusions. If the conclusion one rationally reaches is atheism, then a series of questions typically will follow, such as whether or not the universe has a purpose, whether or not morality and ethics matter, and how ought one to live. If the conclusion one rationally reaches is theism, then a different series of questions will follow, such as what is the best way to understand the nature of God, whether or not God is concerned with the universe, and to what extent should
a person endeavor to engage in a relationship with God. Oftentimes, plausible answers to these and other questions are offered by many of the world’s philosophies and religions. These answers may sometimes coincide but also may conflict, especially when considering the various denominations and schools of thought that exist within each religious and philosophical tradition, respectively. We may find that proofs will not be able to determine which religious or philosophical tradition offers the “best” answers and will therefore need to find other approaches in reaching a conclusion. However, since we are presently only concerned with the question of God’s existence, questions such as which religious or philosophical tradition to subscribe to are beyond the scope of this paper.

In response to this thesis, there are two objections that I feel raise the most pressing concerns about foregoing faith rooted in basic beliefs in favor of faith rooted in proofs and arguments. One may object that, if we need proofs and arguments in order to believe in God, are we supposed to criticize young children who are not yet ready for complex philosophical thinking for believing in God? Are we making a mistake by administering rituals of initiation such as Baptism to infants who cannot even speak? This objection may seem startling at first, but I offer an analogy to counter it: comparing God to sex. We generally all agree that it is important for members of society to be educated about sex, reproduction, and sexually-transmitted diseases. However, when a four-year-old child asks his parents where his newborn sibling came from, they typically do not leap at the opportunity to explain sexual reproduction to their child. Rather, they postpone this indispensable part of education until their child reaches adolescence and is better prepared, both mentally and physically, to understand that babies do not come from wishing on shooting stars. Likewise, it would not be wrong to refrain from teaching the sophisticated proofs and arguments for or against God’s existence until a time when the pupil has rationally matured and is better equipped to contemplate the intricacies of this question. As long as we fully intend to educate the young in this more complex aspect of religion at some point before adulthood, it would not be wrong to introduce faith more simply throughout childhood first.

One may also argue, as Alvin Plantinga does, that “if [the Christian believes on the basis of argument], his faith is likely to be ‘unstable and wavering…’ I shall have to keep checking the philosophical journals to see whether… a good objection to my favorite argument” has been found. This is certainly a strong objection, but it is at least partially rooted in sloth, for even Plantinga laments that studying arguments “could be bothersome and time-consuming.” If the question of God’s existence is as important as I have shown through Pascal’s Wager, then we should be more than willing to sacrifice the time and effort required to make a well-informed decision in choosing to believe or not. Nevertheless, Plantinga does raise an interesting point, which I will attempt to counter by using another analogy. If a police officer was suspicious of someone’s identity, he or she may ask the individual to show some form of identification, typically a driver’s license. If something seemed amiss with the driver’s license, the officer may then ask for other forms of identification. But upon successfully verifying the authenticity of the license, it would be quite unnecessary to ask for a passport, then a social security card, and then a birth certificate, and verify them all. Likewise, we do not need to master every single proof for God’s existence, research all the known objections, and formulate responses to all of them. It would be sufficient to learn and to be able to adequately defend just one argument in order for one’s belief to be rational. If there are flaws in one’s preferred argument, then he or she should attempt to address those flaws through research or reflection, or to learn a more convincing argument. This may not be easy, but we should not measure our responsibilities by their levels of difficulty.

Using Pascal’s Wager along with a deeper analysis of it, I have shown that the question of
God’s existence is of high-stakes value and thus it is a question that everyone should aim not to simply answer, but to answer correctly. In order to arrive at a correct answer, we are free to rely on basic beliefs or on proofs and arguments to prove or disprove God’s existence. Due to the subjective nature of basic beliefs and the serious flaws that stem from it, we should forego this approach in favor of proofs and arguments. Due to their foundations in human reason, proofs and arguments enable us to more clearly and objectively make conclusions and refutations to opposing claims, while also allowing us to cleanse religious beliefs of subjective whims and desires, illogical inconsistencies, and inhumane practices. Although not everyone, particularly children, may be able to engage in formal logic and argumentation, these are skills that can be honed with time and education. Relying on proofs and arguments does not force us to constantly shift positions and stances in light of new ideas, but rather challenges us to further solidify our beliefs. Although human reason does not guarantee us a verifiable answer to whether or not God exists, as evidenced by the plethora of proofs and arguments for both positions, it at least starts us off on the right path and in the right direction.

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As Plato defines it, philosophy is the pursuit of truth. In *Gorgias*, Plato claims that ‘what philosophy says always stays the same,’ or that philosophy only seeks and speaks the truth. It’s this pursuit of truth that leads Plato to explore the concept of justice and the ideal city-state in his *Republic*. The very idea behind the philosopher state is that the governing body should pursue *sophia*, or wisdom, and the ability to make objective decisions based on what is true. He proposes that those objective decisions based on truth would lead the ideal philosopher state to banish the poets, and presumably, all artists. He does so based on the premise that independent of reality, in an abstract realm, there exist perfect Forms of everything manifested in reality. These Forms epitomize absolute truth. Assuming they exist, Plato contends that the artist has no true knowledge of the Forms he attempts to depict. In his eyes, the artist and poet do not portray the whole truth in their work, but rather imperfect fragments of it. In other words, Plato believes that everything that exists is an imperfect copy of a perfect Form. Whereas these copies are at a second remove from the truth, artists further distance themselves by creating artwork that is at a third remove. In this way, the work of poets and artists must necessarily be less perfect than the copy of the Form. For this reason, Plato believes the pursuit of art is fruitless because it does not seek to find Truth; in the ideal philosopher state, individuals who purposely neglect the truth or its pursuit set poor examples. Plato believes that everyone should live a life devoid of ignorance, something which, in his opinion, artists make no attempt to avoid. Artists live ignorantly because they purposely recreate scenes that are necessarily untrue in order to muster praise from the audience. While Plato believes that art is fundamentally unproductive, he bans the artists because they seek pleasure in the applause they might receive, regardless of whether their creations actually find truth.

In order to understand why Plato banishes the artists, we must analyze his reasoning. Plato first charges that, in functioning at a third remove from the Form, and in obtaining his ideas from divine inspiration, the artist does not seek the truth. Secondly, Plato charges that, in experiencing divine inspiration, artists create an illusion of reality. They attempt to imitate what they see, which is a copy of the Form; thus, they are creating less perfect versions of the Form. These superfluously detailed replications create illusions which emotionally impact the audience, rendering realistic artwork a form of rhetoric and flattery, as defined in Plato’s *Gorgias*. Art thus undermines the ideal state because, instead of promoting the search for truth, it allows the regurgitation of divine inspiration, the creation of an illusion of reality, and the use of this illusion to manipulate audiences’ emotions and garner applause for the artist. Nonetheless, Plato begrudgingly bans artists from his ideal state, offering to reconsider if someone made a solid case in their defense. I argue that Plato’s reasoning does not apply to the artists of the cubist movement because cubists rationally create their work, do not attempt to copy observations, and have no interest in creating an illusion of reality to sway emotions or win approval. In addition, I
Cubism contend that Plato not only would have allowed cubists to stay in his philosopher state, but he would have embraced the movement because its work aims to analyze the world and seek the truth; it is a visual manifestation of the philosophy-based society that Plato advocates.

Traditionally, readers have understood Plato to contend that artists have no true knowledge of the Forms they depict because they are not craftsmen of those Forms. Even so, Robert W. Hall argues that there is a difference between the artist that imitates and the one that has right opinion. He goes on to argue that Plato would allow for an artist with right opinion to stay in his state. Whereas the imitator or impersonator holds up a mirror to reflect what is seen in the world, the artist's right opinion allows him to function at a second remove and therefore be closer to the truth. Hall applies this concept more specifically to the fine arts when he explains that Plato is criticizing the "impersonative artist who makes exact appearances of appearances... that he represents too realistically, that he impersonates. In being excessively realistic...the artistic product is further removed from what is real, the Form itself." Artists who recreate what they see function at a third remove. However, artists that possess some true opinion of the Form and create based on that opinion are able to create at a second remove because they eliminate the barrier of the copy that already exists in the world. As Plato explains in the Meno, "true opinion is in no way a worse guide for correct action than knowledge...as long as his opinion is right." While Plato argues that true opinion can be a useful thing, he also admits that they are not willing to remain long, and they escape from a man's mind, so that they are not worth much until one ties them down." According to this, then, while Hall is correct in saying that Plato would accept an artist with true opinion, it is limited to cases where the artist retains that true opinion.

In the Apology, Plato recounts the speech Socrates makes in response to the charges brought against him by Athens. In the Apology, Socrates argues that, in addition to lacking knowledge of the Forms, artists have no knowledge of their own work. Socrates claims "that poets do not compose their poems with knowledge, but by some inborn talent and by inspiration... [they] say many fine things without any understanding of what they say." Not only do realistic artists have no knowledge of the Forms that they portray, but Plato believes they have no knowledge of the end product either, that they create their work as mindless machines doing the will of the divine. This concept of divine inspiration is explained by Plato in his Ion, where he essentially argues that the divine speaks through poets; thus, the poet's words are not his own. Penelope Murray describes the concept of divine inspiration well in her book Plato on Poetry, where she says that "beautiful poetry can only be produced when the poet is devoid of reason and filled with divine enthusiasm...the god takes away the poet's senses and uses him...as a mouthpiece...so that the poems he utters are... divine and of the gods." This is problematic for Plato because he believes that individuals must live rationally. By regurgitating the divine's ideas, the artist necessarily fails to participate in the search for truth, or philosophy, and therefore does not contribute to a truthful society. Thus, in order for an artist to be free of divine inspiration, they must prove that they logically consider their composition without following the commands of some higher being.

Plato's first reason for banishing the artists is that they possess no true knowledge of the Forms because they create at a third remove and act out of divine inspiration. However, while Plato assumes that artists have no knowledge of the Forms and that they act out of divine inspiration, he also leaves room in his ideal state for the artist that acts on his constant true opinion. Thus, in order to acquit an artist of Plato's first charge, it must be proven that he at least possesses and retains true opinion and is inspired of his own mindful accord.

Cubism, then, does not fall under the first reason for banishment. First, the cubist's piece does not intend to make a perfect copy at three
removes. Rather, the cubist attempts to observe the most universal truths of his observation, or the most basic Forms themselves rather than the minute details of the second removed Form. Furthermore, the cubist makes decisions rationally and is inspired by his own life experiences and mind. Jerome Ashmore, in his article “The Old and New in Non-Objective Painting,” argues that non-objective painters are in fact reverting to the philosophies of Pythagoras because “non-objective painting, like Pythagoreanism... [believes] that in the external world things [are] reducible to pairs of opposites... [such as] definite and indefinite, odd and even, one and many, right and left... straight and bent, light and dark.”9 These opposites are strikingly similar to the Forms that Plato describes. A fundamental Form that the cubist observes, like Plato’s philosophy, “always stays the same.”10 Therefore, whether the cubist possesses knowledge of the Forms is irrelevant. It is fair to say that the cubist has true opinion about the geometric concepts he presents because the forms that he depicts are universally true and unchanging and because they are the most fundamental of shapes. This is true because the lines and shapes that the cubist presents are elementary in nature; they are shapes that even children can recognize and recreate. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude that cubists have true opinion, if not knowledge, of those Forms and that this opinion is not easily changed or replaced.

In addition, we can also clear the cubist of his divine inspiration charges because the mere ability to decipher between the minutia of his observations and the universal Forms that exist within them evidence a logical thought process that must occur within the cubist’s mind. This is especially true because most cubist artists, such as Pablo Picasso, were trained as classical realistic artists. The ability to undermine these years of training to focus on the universal Forms is not methodical as is the re-creation of a scene; rather, it takes a conscious effort on the cubist’s part. This shows that the cubist does not conform to the commands of the divine when creating art.

A manifestation of the cubist’s true opinion and logical thought process is Piet Mondrian. Starting as a realistic artist, Mondrian’s work evolved drastically over the years. While this is the case for many cubists, Mondrian’s series of trees nicely shows the conceptual changes that make cubism Platonically sound. Below are some pieces throughout his career; notice that as the series continues, Mondrian’s work becomes increasingly basic.

Whereas at first Mondrian depicts realistic, imitative scenes, he later begins to look more closely at those truths that exist in every tree, and later in everything. This active analysis of the world shows that Mondrian did not experience divine inspiration; rather, he made rational decisions as to what is and is not universally true. Furthermore, Mondrian’s evolution as an artist is proof of skill in his craft. While it is
arguable that Mondrian did possess knowledge of the most basic Forms by the end of his career, we need not show this in order to acquit him of Plato’s charges. It is sufficient to observe that beyond the first two pieces, Mondrian was either knowledgeable and skilled enough to forgo his prior reliance upon an existing scene or he possessed enough true opinion to mindfully decipher between what is and is not a universal Form in the scene he was observing. Moreover, a lack of reversion to realistic portrayals shows a retention and consistency in his true opinion of the basic geometrical Forms.

Constantine Cavarnos simplifies the issue into a struggle between true and pseudo art in her article “Plato’s Teaching on Fine Art.” She says that Plato “speaks of the true artist...as [directly portraying] the divine realm of ideas or forms...The true painter, for example, delineates with consummate art a perfectly beautiful man—a man such as may never have existed. The pseudo painter, on the other hand, imitates a particular man, and the phenomenal world in general.” This precisely explains the difference between the cubist and the realistic artist. Whereas the cubist sees only the Forms within the scene he observes, the realistic artist attempts to exactly recreate the imperfect forms that he observes. This puts the cubist at a second remove and the realist at a third remove, thereby forcing the realist to create an illusion with the use of persuasive and superfluous detail. While the artist may be incredibly skilled in mirroring reality as a painter, his re-creation cannot be perfect; therefore, he is ignorant for even trying to create a perfect rendition. Furthermore, in realistically re-creating, he necessarily uses visual rhetoric to create an illusion meant to emotionally impact the audience.

This leads us to Plato’s second charge against artists: that in lacking knowledge of the truth, they create illusions to inflame the passions of the audience. As Hall puts it, realistic artists attempt to be “like Zeuxis who painted grapes so realistically that birds attempted to pluck them.” While Hall’s example speaks to the viewer being deceived into believing the painting is real, Plato argues that the mere creation of a false reality has the potential to evoke emotions within a viewer and earn praise for the artist. This applies especially to the art of Plato’s time because the scenes embraced fantastic and mythical themes. Take for instance the Parthenon Frieze, likely created between c. 447 and 432 B.C.E. under the supervision of Pheidias (see figure 2). The marble relief atop the Parthenon is considered the epitome of ancient Greek classical style. While many have attempted to interpret the sculpture, it has long been considered an exaltation of Greek civilization, its culture, and its victories. The lucid detail that we can imagine the relief once flaunted was a vehicle to evoke emotions of pride and grace. Alternatively, some have interpreted the Parthenon Frieze to be a depiction of a foundation myth and sacrifice. In this case, the elaborate detail evokes disgust in a contemporary audience. In either case, the emotion cultivates admiration for Pheidias’s ‘talent.’ While the audience may very well be aware that the mythical scene did not actually exist, the scene nonetheless aims to provoke emotion. Just as Plato is opposed to the artist acting mindlessly and without reason, he believes that the emotional manipulation of the viewer is a form of flattery and rhetoric because it encourages the viewer to mindlessly attribute praise.

Furthermore, with realistic art, society perpetuates a value in illusions and “appearance tyrannizes over truth and is lord of happiness.” Plato believes that with the presence of illusions,
people think it becomes acceptable to justify the indulgence of their basest emotions by telling themselves that the piece evoking the emotion is fantastic, and therefore, so are those feelings. In this way, not only does the indulgence of base emotions become acceptable, but it becomes norm “to seem only, and not to be.” According to Plato, the ideal state needs to foster the pursuit of sophia and teach its citizens to be virtuous, not to seem it. This idea is based in his Gorgias where he suggests that society ought to make the citizens as good as they possibly can be. With this belief at the core, it becomes evident that Plato’s issue with illusions lies more within the ramifications of their presence rather than the illusions themselves.

How, then, does Plato define an illusion? As discussed in Gorgias, Plato likens illusions to a form of rhetoric or oratory. Thus, it is fair to say that his definition of rhetoric is akin to that of an illusion. Plato compares rhetoric and philosophy as “two types of persuasion, one providing conviction without knowledge, the other providing knowledge.” Plato says that rhetoric persuades the audience to firmly believe without having any knowledge about what they believe, whereas philosophy provides that knowledge. Thus, rhetoric is an illusion because it perpetuates the façade that the orator is knowledgeable when in fact, he is simply winning the audience over with the beauty of his language. Socrates says in Gorgias that philosophy is that which “[does] not aim at gratification but at what’s best. [It doesn’t] aim at what’s most pleasant.”

He further explains the difference between rhetoric and philosophy by using the metaphor of the pastry baker. He explains that flattery is when a pastry baker is able to use language to convince people that his products are healthier than the doctor’s, which Plato later calls shameful. Where philosophers speak the truth which they have knowledge about, orators create the illusion that they are knowledgeable in order to be praised.

Nonetheless, Charles Karelis, in his article “Plato on Art and Reality,” attempts to refute Plato’s conclusion by first arguing that no realistic piece of art is truly deceptive because the audience always has collateral evidence to show that the scene is just a painting. Although Karelis’s assessment is likely correct, it is largely irrelevant because Plato does not actually believe that the artist is trying to deceive the viewer into thinking the scene depicted is real. Rather, Plato believes illusion leads the audience to believe the artist is actually knowledgeable, thus earning the artist false applause and fame. The second point Karelis discusses is Plato’s opposition to artwork three removes from the perfect Form. Karelis also argues that, in a painting of a carpenter, Plato would believe that “the [carpenters] conjured up by painters are imposters who merely appear to be experts [in carpentry].” However, Plato is not concerned with the actual creation of an imperfect rendition as much as that creating illusions of reality sway the audience’s emotions. Plato’s leaving room for the artist with consistent true opinion, and failure to only allow artists with absolute knowledge, demonstrates his indifference to the actual quality of work, but concern for artists creating illusions to elicit emotion and praise.

Cubists, however, remove the details that create illusions in realistic art. Roy McMullen, in “Painters’ Painting: Cubism” explains that cubists embrace the two-dimensionality of the canvas and remove the superfluous luxury that exists in realistic artwork. He explains that much of the illusion that Plato witnesses among realistic art stems from the realistic artist’s need to convey important conceptions about such august indivisibilities as gods, saints, mana and ancestors.” Because realistic artists have a burden of portraying such fantastic themes, they overindulge the detail of their work and attempt to create a false reality. Instead of using the two-dimensional canvas to create a piece that is entirely new and that shows the artist’s knowledge or true opinion, the realist forces his painting to show three dimensions on a surface that is immutably flat. These realistic paintings, although not necessarily illusions of reality because of the
collateral evidence that Karelis mentions, suggest that the realistic artist has knowledge of the Forms. In reality, classical artists are just acting as mirrors and have no true knowledge, as Plato suggests.

Classical artists fit the framework proposed by Plato to define rhetoricians because when they recreate the full scene, they lead the audience to believe that the realistic artist has knowledge of the Forms within the scene. However, they are actually mindlessly regurgitating everything they see or what the divine tells them to create, as Plato proposes. Ashmore contributes to this idea. He says that in realistic art the universal forms “are secondary or auxiliary to a representation stylized or natural, of some common physical object. Whereas in non-objective painting they are used of themselves as a primary thing with their own being; they have objective life and prime meaning in the composition.”

When the classical painter creates a piece, his focus on perfectly recreating an imperfect scene blinds him to the truth that he actually is able to see, or the elementary Forms. The cubist possesses knowledge or constant true opinion because he is able to consistently decipher between the universal Forms and minute details. He then is able to ignore the details to portray what he actually knows and understands.

For instance, in his piece Les Demoiselles d’Avignon (see figure 3), Pablo Picasso was inspired “by memories of a brothel.” Rather than directly looking at the object he painted, Picasso recalled his true opinion of the universal forms that comprise the body and mindset of a prostitute, such as “the square breasts…the dislocated noses… [and] the dark depravity in the damsels’ eyes.” Now, one might say that in conveying the damsels’ emotions Picasso aims to create an emotional illusion, like the realistic painter. However, Picasso does not create a perfect scene with the intention of evoking emotions or praise from the audience. When one looks at Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, he is not overcome with the same emotion or admiration that he would experience when viewing Peter Paul Reubens’s Massacre of the Innocents (see figure 4). Whereas Reubens ignores the universal truths hidden within the details and intends to convey the emotions of the scene with graphic detail of babies being slaughtered, Picasso reasonably works from his true opinion to show the universal truths of his experience at the brothel. As Ismail Tunali puts it, Picasso’s work “attempts to reduce the world of phenomena to its essential structural form, to its eidos.” In this way, the cubist’s work only shows what he actually knows or has true opinion of; he does not persuade people with the conviction of knowledge or true opinion, as do the orator and realistic artist.

Having proven that the cubist neither creates from divine inspiration nor creates the illusion of knowledge, we must consider how the cubist would benefit Plato’s philosopher-state. Plato advocated a life of “conversing and testing...
[yourself] and others, for the unexamined life is not worth living for men.”30 Because Plato believes that realistic artists do not converse and test, that they only mirror, he bans them from his ideal state. However, the cubist does live Plato’s examined life. The cubist doesn’t succumb to society’s bias towards realistic art but perseveres to live and practice what he believes is right and what brings him closer to the truth. For instance, Socrates says in the *Apology* that he is a gadfly to Athens, that he “never [ceases] to rouse each and every one of [the citizens of Athens], to persuade and reproach [them] all day long and everywhere [he finds himself] in [their] company.”31 In the same way, the cubists were gadflies to society. They challenged the hegemony held by realism and classical art in order to promote a method that analyzes the scene and looks for universal truths, rather than exactly copying its external details. McMullen comments that the cubists have altered so much of the artistic world that today, “critics feel safe in assuming that a painter is minor if he indulges in such obsolete tricks as classical human proportions, mathematical perspective and heroic story-telling.”32 Due to the questioning that cubists initiated, we now expect artists to somehow analyze the universal Forms and think logically about their composition. For instance, Picasso, although trained as a classical artist, saw the value in examination and therefore took that route even though his abstract art was not valued highly for the majority of his lifetime. The same is true of Mondrian. The cubists’ continuous dedication to logical portrayal shows the unwavering nature of their true opinion and the confidence they had in their perspective.

Cubists are like philosophers because they seek the unchanging truth and do so through questioning. The forms that cubists convey “are not beautiful in relation to something else. They are eternal, they exist by themselves.”33 Artists of the cubist movement seek to find truth by analyzing the scene they observe, by questioning the validity of ultra-representational art, and by working without concern to what others think of their art. In this way also, cubists are like philosophers. They substantiate their argument by remaining dedicated to their cubist work despite the lack of support from the public. Plato idealized these values in his philosopher state. Therefore, if the cubists existed in ancient Athens, it would have been in his best interest to allow them to stay in his society.

Plato’s philosophies not only help us understand our society today, but much of the world is still defined with the ideas of philosophers like Plato. Tunali argues in his second thesis that we attempt “to bring past standards to bear on the present,” and that “it is this adherence to the past that poses the question of the validity of modern art.”34 My thesis refutes Tunali’s point because in looking at cubism through the framework of Plato’s philosopher-state, we are effectively and productively applying the past to value the present. When looking at the world from a broader lens, we see that as more changes, more actually stays the same. Although Plato argues on behalf of the philosopher-state thousands of years ago, his ideas are relevant to us because the questions that we try to answer today are not remarkably different from those that Plato tried to answer in ancient Greece. Just as we find justification for cubism in Plato’s banishment of artists, within history we find evidence and trends that parallel the present and future.

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 Truly a Person

An Examination of Vatican II in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

MyLan Metzger

In 1962, Pope John XXIII convened what would become known as the Second Vatic an Council (Vatican II) in an effort to examine and address the relations of the Catholic Church to the modern world. Many of the Vatican II-era documents—particularly the papal encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, the Pastoral Constitution on The Church in the Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, and the Declaration on Religious Freedom *Dignitatis Humanae*—resulted in profound changes in the Catholic Church’s relationship to the ideals of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. Indeed, some scholars have attributed the “third wave” of democratization to Vatican II. These scholars, most notably Samuel Huntington, note that most majority-Catholic countries—including Brazil, the Philippines, and Guatemala—had remained resistant to democracy for centuries, but quickly democratized following Vatican II. Using this analysis as a foundation, these scholars go on to argue that such democratic changes would not have been possible without the Church’s shift in stance towards liberal democracy.

Drawing from these ideas, other historians and theologians have argued that Vatican II represented a change in the values of the Catholic Church as they relate to modernity. For example, Charles Curran, a scholar of Catholic social teaching argues that Vatican II was “dramatic change in theological ethical methodology.” In his book on Catholic social teaching since 1891, Curran describes the importance of preconciliar Catholic social teaching, but he nevertheless highlights the novelty and changes of Vatican II, suggesting that it was a complete break from the past. Samuel Huntington also argues that during Vatican II, the Catholic Church changed some of its core beliefs in order to become open to democracy. He contends that the change in geopolitics initiated by the “third wave” of democratization was only possible because of the Catholic Church’s reversal of many of its previous teachings.

It is clear that Vatican II represented a substantial shift in the Church’s relationship to liberal democracy and the modern world. However, it does not follow from this notion that the Council actually reversed any previous teachings or otherwise altered the fundamental doctrinal nature of the Church. Indeed, Vatican II is best viewed as being one component in an evolving body of Catholic social teaching, a term which generally refers to Church hierarchical documents addressing social, economic, and political issues. Although all Catholic social teaching draws from the work of theologians such as Thomas Aquinas and is ultimately rooted in the Bible, especially the Ten Commandments and the Gospels, most scholars date the beginning of Catholic social teaching to the 1891 publication of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Seventy years of Catholic social teaching laid the groundwork for Vatican II, and though the Vatican II documents reversed earlier encyclicals’ suspicion of liberal democracy and religious freedom, an analysis of these documents and their predecessors shows that Vatican II did
not and was not intended to fully reverse the Church’s doctrinal stance on any of its previous teachings.

A Reversal of Position?
Democracy in the Eyes of the Church Before and After Vatican II

Admittedly, Vatican II inaugurated deep shifts in the Catholic Church’s approach to the issues of democracy, human rights, and religious freedom, and it is important to acknowledge the magnitude of these shifts. Almost the entire history of the Catholic Church prior to the experience of World War II is marked by an outright hostility towards liberal democracy, a hostility that appears to have been directly contradicted by Vatican II. Even as late as Quadragesimo Anno, an encyclical of Pius XI published on the fortieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum, the Church stated that a primary duty of all rulers is to uphold Catholic teachings. 9 Though this can be partially explained as an attempt to persuade Catholic governments to take the emerging social teachings seriously, earlier encyclicals were even more direct in their condemnation of liberalism and democracy. In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI published Mirari Vos (“On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism”), which condemned the idea that everyone should have liberty of conscience. 10 In Syllabus Errorum (“Syllabus of Errors”), published in 1864, Pope Pius IX fought against the idea that Catholics should not be the established state religion in all countries, with all other religions banned. The encyclical also condemned the idea that people should have the unlimited freedom to express their opinions. 11

When it came to religious freedom, the belief was that “error has no rights,” meaning that a false religion, i.e. anything except strict adherence to Catholicism, had no right to be protected or validated in society. 12

While this level of opposition to liberalism may strike us as extreme, it is explainable in two ways. First, the Catholic Church perceived a fundamental ideological difference between its own claims and those of liberal thinkers, many of whom expressly attacked Catholicism. John Locke’s Letter Concerning Toleration, for instance, seemed to imply that a tolerant, liberal state should not itself tolerate Catholics. 13 Indeed, many early liberal theorists—including Hugo Grotius, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke—demanded some level of state control of religion, often expressly for the sake of limiting the influence of the Catholic Church. 14 It was therefore easy to believe that the goal of liberalism was to create a secular state in which the Church had no public function or role. Second, the historical experience of the Church’s encounters with liberalism taught it to be highly suspicious of liberal democracies. Liberalism emerged most fully in Protestant countries such as Germany, England, and the Dutch Republic, often while those countries were at war with Catholic countries. Indeed, the French Revolution—a revolution theoretically underpinned by the values of liberalism—was noted for its extremely harsh anticlericalism. 15 Thus, the Catholic Church had ample reason, based both on suspicion of the actual claims of liberalism and historical experience with liberal countries, to be suspicious of liberalism.

And yet the Vatican II-era documents overwhelmingly embraced the ideals of human rights, democracy, and even religious freedom. Pacem in Terris, Pope John XXIII’s encyclical to “all men and women of good will” (the first encyclical not to be addressed to the Catholic clergy and laity), promoted the concept of human rights for the first time, principally the right to life, including the necessities or social services to promote life. 16 The document also lists support for the right to choose freely one’s state in life, the “opportunity to work” and to own private property, the right of meeting and association, the right to emigrate and immigrate, and the rights of refugees. 17 Perhaps most surprising was the inclusion of the right to civic participation and the acceptance of a right of every person to worship “in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience, and to profess his religion both in private and in
public,” clearly quite different from the principles espoused in Mirari Vos or Syllabus Errorum. In 1965, Gaudium et Spes was released as a pastoral constitution, giving it the highest level of authority of all the Vatican II-era documents relating to Catholic social teaching. This document upheld the acceptance of human rights in Pacem in Terris and went further to argue that human nature requires juridico-political structures to advocate for the common good and to allow for their free vote; similarly, it warned against dictatorial regimes and totalitarianism. Of course, it also added that “all citizens, therefore, should be mindful of the right and also the duty to use their free vote to further the common good.” Finally, at the very close of Vatican II, the Council issued its Declaration on Religious Freedom, Dignitatis Humanae. This document expressed unqualified support for the promotion of religious freedom in all circumstances, stating that “the human person has a right to religious freedom.”

Each of these documents seems to be in contradiction with the practices of the Catholic Church that had been crystallized in the nineteenth century in response to the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. In many ways, they ran contrary to the Catholic Church’s practices since the Reformation and the establishment of confessional states in both the Protestant and Catholic sections of Europe. The apparent chasm between the Church’s teachings on democracy, human rights, and religious freedom has led many to conclude that Vatican II represented a shift within the doctrines of the Catholic Church. However, although it explains the apparent differences between pre- and post-Vatican II practices, this argument neglects the important ways in which Vatican II represented a continuation of Catholic social teaching dating back to 1891.

The Roots of Catholic Social Teaching

The origin of Catholic social teaching, defined as consisting of those Church hierarchical documents that directly address economic, political, or social life, is generally dated to Pope Leo XIII’s publication of the encyclical Rerum Novarum (“On Capital and Labor”) in 1891. Rerum Novarum is considered the primary and most impressive official document on modern Catholic social teaching to this day. Pope Leo XIII wrote the encyclical to “speak on the condition of the working classes,” and to “define the relative rights and mutual duties of the rich and the poor, of capital and of labor.” Though the issues in this encyclical—especially the relationship of capital and labor—had been discussed before, Rerum Novarum gave them an official framework which would be developed over the course of the twentieth century. In particular, Rerum Novarum maintained that the working class should be treated with a certain level of respect and be protected from the oppression that could come with both capitalism and socialism.

Granted, neither Rerum Novarum nor any other encyclicals from before Vatican II (such as Quadragesimo Anno) promoted, explicitly or implicitly, the values of liberal democracy. However, Rerum Novarum did clearly root its message in a belief that all people possessed inherent dignity which was, at the time, gravely endangered by rampant capitalism and socialism. Moreover, it established the principle that the Catholic Church as an institutional body was willing to comment on and criticize prevailing political, economic, and social arrangements. Long before Vatican II, Rerum Novarum expressly discussed the concept of “rights,” an important step that laid the groundwork for Pacem in Terris and the other Vatican II-era documents.

Indeed, those present at Vatican II expended a great deal of effort attempting to demonstrate that they were not clearly contradicting tradition by endorsing democracy, human rights, and religious liberty. There is nothing that an institutional church fears more than appearing as though it is contradicting its past self and, by extension, its own legitimacy. The problem was most apparent with Dignitatis Humanae, as before Vatican II, the Church had spoken consistently
against the principle of religious freedom, particularly in *Mirari Vos* and *Syllabus Errorum*. As a result, this Pastoral Constitution rooted its endorsement of religious freedom in two main arguments as articulated most significantly by the American Jesuit John Courtney Murray, both of which were consistent with Catholic social teaching up to that point: first, that the fundamental dignity of every human being as made in the image of God and saved through Christ generated a corresponding set of rights which all governments were obligated to respect; and second, that all faith, in order to save, must be held by the believer as genuine and sincere, and that a coercive government could stand in the way of the sincerity of its citizens’ belief.27 Because neither of these notions was necessarily a break from Catholic social teaching, *Dignitatis Humanae* could be viewed as a development in the history of Catholic social teaching, and not necessarily a break from the past.

These facts generate support for two seemingly contradictory positions. On the one hand, the documents of Vatican II sought to position themselves as continuations of previous teachings, and in some important respects, their new positions were prefigured by older documents such as *Rerum Novarum*. And yet, it is completely undeniable that before Vatican II, the Church did not support democracy, and after Vatican II, it did. In order to understand the consequence of Vatican II and its relation to previous teachings, what is needed is not only a description of the history of Catholic social teaching, but a hermeneutical tool with which to interpret it.

**“The Signs of the Times”**: The Extent of Vatican II’s Reach

This hermeneutical tool is provided in the text of *Gaudium et Spes*, which charged the Church with the duty of “scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in light of the Gospel.”28 Although superficially a simple claim, this statement has profound implications. The second part of the sentence, which refers to the “light of the Gospel,” exhorts the Church to remain true to a core set of beliefs that is fundamentally unchanging and eternal. However, if the “light of the Gospel” could be stated and fully explained in precisely the same way at all times, it would be unnecessary for the Church to continually scrutinize “the signs of the times”; instead, any development in doctrine would proceed wholly in the realm of theology, without reference to political or social developments in the real world. By exhorting the Church to perform this continual scrutinization and re-interpretation, *Gaudium et Spes* establishes that, though the Gospel message cannot change, some of the ways in which it is expressed can be revised, dependent upon developments in the world as a whole. For instance, regimes that were formerly viewed with hostility can become acceptable if historical events cause them to become better vehicles for the deliverance of the Gospel.

In fact, it was precisely the historical events associated with the rise of fascism and communism in Europe that precipitated the Church’s embrace of democracy in Vatican II. The rise of totalitarianism in the first half of the twentieth century forced the Church to adopt “a newfound consciousness of the value and dignity of the human person, and a new exploration of this venerable theme in Christian anthropology.”29 The forces of totalitarianism and communism alarmed the Church, due both to their extreme anticlericalism and their near-total disregard for the dignity of human life. These experiences caused the Church to shift its focus away from the concerns of the collective and towards individual human dignity and conscience, which it had previously avoided emphasizing because of an entrenched association with liberalism.30 As a result, the Church’s views on the role and form of the state and the meaning of the common good were altered. The Church began to emphasize solidarity,31 and Christian democrats began to support liberal ideas such as freedom of speech and press.32

At the same time that totalitarianism and communism were proving horrendous to the
dignity of the individual, historical experience was demonstrating that Enlightenment-style liberalism and a separation of church and state in America were not necessarily preventing the Church from preaching its mission in society.\textsuperscript{33} Nor was the Church’s increased appreciation of liberalism simply a result of its new fear of the alternatives: the secular conceptions behind religious liberty had also been evolving, making liberalism itself less hostile to Catholicism than it previously had been.\textsuperscript{34} John Locke had argued that the principle of toleration could not be expanded far enough to include Catholics, yet in 1960 a Catholic was elected president of the United States. Thus, liberalism appeared to be softening its anti-Catholic streak, even as the Soviet Union was persecuting religious believers with unprecedented intensity.\textsuperscript{35} These changes permitted John Courtney Murray and Bishop Emile-Joseph de Smedt, the bishop of Bruges and the vice president of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, to argue that the scope of previous papal statements’ opposition to the establishment of free societies (such as in Syllabus Errorum) needed to be interpreted in light of the political situation in which they had been written.\textsuperscript{36} Thus, the Vatican II-era documents could be regarded as a reformulation of past doctrines in light of new political realities, not a break with the past.

It seems, then, that the Church changed its position on democracy and religious freedom not so much because it suddenly “discovered” the truth of liberalism, but rather because “the times” themselves changed in such a way that it became for the first time possible for the Church to promote liberal values without undermining its own existence. This line of reasoning would seem to demonstrate that the Church’s promotion of democracy in 1965 need not necessarily be viewed as contradictory to Pope Pius IX’s attacks on liberal values in 1864; the doctrine of the Church did not necessarily change, yet because the times did, it was possible for the Church to speak differently. Still, while this interpretation may establish that the Church’s new promotion of democracy was not necessarily in contradiction with its former teachings, it does not prove that the Church’s new stance was actually in accordance with its former teachings. Even if the Church can change the manner in which it preaches the Gospel, it cannot, under the principle given by Gaudium et Spes, change the “light of the Gospel” itself. If democracy is inherently wrong in one age, it cannot become inherently good in the next; and if democracy is inherently good in one age, it cannot have been inherently bad in the former.

Yet a close examination of the Vatican II-era documents and their predecessors indicates that the Church did not grant—and continues to not grant—unqualified support to liberal democracy. Pacem in Terris was the first “full-blown discussion of human rights in Catholic social teaching,”\textsuperscript{37} but it conceptualized rights quite differently than did most philosophers of liberalism:

Any well-regulated and productive association of men in society demands the acceptance of one fundamental principle: that each individual man is truly a person. His is a nature, that is, endowed with intelligence and free will. As such he has rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable.\textsuperscript{38} Pacem in Terris marked the end of the Church’s opposition to democracy and human rights. However, Pope John XXIII’s discussion of human rights is still different than that of the liberal individualism, because key to the Pope’s discussion of human rights was his discussion of duties. Duties are of the utmost importance; in fact, rights are only deemed worthy of protection insofar as they provide individuals with the ability to fulfill their duties:

In human society one man’s natural right gives rise to a corresponding duty in other men; the duty, that is, of recognizing and respecting that right. Every basic human right draws its authoritative force from the
natural law, which confers it and attaches to it its respective duty. Hence, to claim one’s right and ignore one’s duties, or only half fulfill them, is like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.39 Even as he encouraged the spread of democracy and human freedom, John XXIII demanded that people use their freedom to fulfill their duty to protect the common good and dignity of others through service. As a result, the Church’s list of rights is quite different from those in the United Nation’s Declaration of Human Rights. This discussion of rights and duties is actually quite similar to that of Leo XIII in Rerum Novarum, which also spoke of rights, not as individual protections and freedoms, but as necessary empowerments for individuals to fulfill their duties as human beings.40 Pacem in Terris expanded on what the nature of these rights and duties were, but this expansion could not have occurred without the precedent laid by the pre-Vatican II encyclical.

A similar theme is presented in Dignitatis Humanae, which established the right for religious freedom. As with all the rights that Vatican II declared fundamental to the human person and human dignity, this right came with a corresponding duty. Human beings, according to the Declaration, are meant to use their reason and free will to seek the truth, to which they are bound by a “moral obligation.”41 They are then charged with the task of living their lives in accordance with this truth. Thus, although other religions possess what is in essence a right to exist in society, the statements of Dignitatis Humanae make clear that the Church still believes that each person has an obligation to become Catholic. To do otherwise is “to claim one’s right and ignore one’s duty,” which is “like building a house with one hand and tearing it down with the other.”42 However, a person’s failure to meet their obligations (in this case by becoming Catholic) cannot justify a limitation by the government of their corresponding rights; thus, for practical purposes, the Declaration of Religious Freedom established the doctrinal position of the Catholic Church that all governments should protect the rights of all people to practice the religion of their choice. This important discussion of the conjoined nature of rights and duties establishes Dignitatis Humanae as an alternative to liberalism, not as an endorsement of it. It upholds human dignity and freedom and points society to a “model of democratic government rooted in a richer vision of humanity and society” without embracing the “subjectivism, agnosticism, and indifferentism” that it believed defines liberalism.43

The text of Gaudium et Spes further establishes the fact that the Catholic Church did not believe that it was changing its own mission through the documents of Vatican II, nor that it was contradicting its past teachings:

She [the Church] will even give up the exercise of certain rights which have been legitimately acquired, if it becomes clear that their use will cast doubt on the sincerity of her witness or that new ways of life demand new methods. It is only right, however, that at all times and in all places, the Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to teach her social doctrine, to exercise her role freely among men, and also to pass moral judgment in those matters which regard public order when the fundamental rights of a person or the salvation of souls require it.44

Two points are remarkably clear in this passage. First, the Church does not believe that its mission—to preach the “light of the Gospel”—has in any way been changed by Vatican II. Second, the Church’s support for democracy is a qualified one: it will only support democracy and liberal institutions so long as such institutions do not undermine its core mission. Because Gaudium et Spes makes the Catholic Church’s support for democracy conditional, it indicates that Vatican II did not suddenly proclaim democracy as the best form of government. It advocated for democracy not because it was the best type of government, but because at the time of the Council, it was the best type of government for the promotion of Catholicism.
Conclusion
It is clear that Vatican II was a “watershed” in the history of the Catholic Church’s relationship with the modern world. Prior to Vatican II, the Church had expressed hostility and suspicion towards liberal democracy and especially the principle of liberty of conscience, yet between Pacem in Terris, Gaudium et Spes, and Dignitatis Humanae, by 1965 the Church supported democracy, human rights, and religious freedom. This seeming reversal has led many to conclude that Vatican II marked a reversal in the Catholic Church’s relationship with the modern world, in the sense that the Church willingly contradicted its past teachings in order to embrace democracy.

Yet such a view ignores the extent to which the Vatican II-era documents were rooted in previous social teachings dating back to Rerum Novarum. In reality, the changes in the Church’s approach to democracy must be appreciated as attempts to “scrutiniz[e] the signs of the times . . . in light of the Gospel.” The Vatican II-era documents do not reveal an unqualified support for democracy, but instead support liberal values only insofar as they prove to be most conducive to the proclamation of the Gospel. Because the Vatican II-era documents did not proclaim democracy as the best form of government, they did not therefore fundamentally contradict former teachings, including those of Mirari Vos and Syllabus Errorum. The Church’s sudden endorsement of liberal principles in Vatican II should therefore not be interpreted as a change in the Church’s own internal doctrines so much as a change in historical context—with the softening of liberalism’s anti-Catholicism and the growth of totalitarian regimes—which made it possible for the Church to provide limited support for democracy. Nevertheless, this limited support in democracy seemed drastically different as it brought about significant changes in Catholic majority countries such as the Philippines or Poland and continues to impact the way the Church interacts in the modern world.

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The experiences of grief and tragedy, though central to the human condition, are inherently personal, making it difficult to derive commonalities from these experiences and how they are processed. Through their poetry, Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Wordsworth, and Gerard Manley Hopkins exhibit personal introspection as they process loss, grief and tragedy. In the collection of lyrics that comprise *In Memoriam*, Alfred Tennyson writes in response to the death of his dear friend Arthur Henry Hallam, processing feelings of depression, shock and deep grief. In *In Memoriam*, Tennyson documents his exploration of these feelings as well as his process of reconciliation regarding the existence of God and an afterlife. In *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, William Wordsworth writes about the experience of returning to the banks of the Wye River and about re-experiencing profound natural beauty in a new context. The poem addresses a return that is equal parts physical, emotional, and spiritual. Within the poem, Wordsworth questions how a person can encounter spiritual things in ways other than religion. In *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, Gerard Hopkins depicts the SS Deutschland, which carried five Franciscan nuns expelled from Germany, being destroyed in a storm—a catastrophe that killed all five passengers. Hopkins’ account of the shipwreck is strongly rooted in accurate historical detail, which lends a particular gravity to his central question of God’s place in such a terrible tragedy. All three of these poets invoke prayer, a distinctive literary genre, in their poetry as they grapple with where God and spirituality can be found amid tragedy and loss. These three poets approach prayer in distinctly different ways—both in its religious/spiritual context and as a poetic vehicle. Taken together, the usage of prayer in *In Memoriam*, *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, and *The Wreck of the Deutschland* provides a richly diverse understanding of prayer’s usefulness in poetry as an art form and in the human experience of processing grief and tragedy.

Alfred Lord Tennyson employs anaphora in lyric L. of *In Memoriam*, repeating the phrase “be near me” at the beginning of each stanza, which imbibes the lyric with a prayer-like quality. There is assonance in the three repeated vowel sounds present in this phrase. Tennyson is renowned for his attention to sound, and his use of aural effect here lends a lyrical quality to the line similar to that which might be present in a well-known prayer or verse. The phrase “be near me,” accompanied by Tennyson’s use of parallel structure, serves to reorient the reader at the beginning of each stanza—a repeated reminder of Tennyson’s need for the presence of his friend or God. The phrase holds a commanding tone, similar to that which might be present in a prayer of request; as such, it is likely indicative of Tennyson’s feelings of frustration and anger towards being abandoned by his friend and potential feeling of having been abandoned by God. While this phrase ultimately establishes Tennyson’s need for guidance and strength, it is unclear exactly who he is addressing; Tennyson might be speaking to...
Hallam here or he could be calling out to God. This ambiguity is likely intentional, as it allows Tennyson to address Hallam and God as a singular entity, coupling them in a sense. While *In Memoriam* is in some ways religiously orthodox, the work also shows Tennyson questioning his faith; he wrestles with the question of whether or not God exists and whether there is a life after death as taught in the Christian tradition. Given this uncertainty in the wake of his friend’s death, it is fitting that Tennyson may be unable to directly pray to God at this stage in his process of grief and questioning. However, the prayer-like quality of the lyric, coupled with its content and use of parallel structure, seems to point towards Tennyson’s prevailing belief in God.

Lyric L. of Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* opens with the line “Be near me when my light is low” and marks a turning point in the work as Tennyson begins to think about his own morality in the context of his dear friend’s recent death. Prompted by his reflections on the sudden and unexpected death of his friend, Tennyson begins to explore both the immanency and potential of his own death. The phrase “my light is low” appears to reference Tennyson’s inner light or soul. This reference to this spiritual aspect of himself highlights Tennyson’s persistent faith in God and belief in spirituality, further confirming the necessity of prayer in this lyric. The alliteration in the corresponding “l” sounds of “light is low” gives this phrase a comforting sense of familiarity which might indicate a commonality in the experience of a faltering of one’s inner light. Such ontological musings are mirrored by Tennyson’s purposeful use of pronouns, which serve to alert the reader to the different facets of being. In the first stanza, Tennyson references “the blood creep[ing],” “the nerves prick[ing] and tingl[ing],” and “the heart [being] sick.” In this case, the pronoun “the” references the physical aspects of his being. In contrast, Tennyson uses the pronoun “my” to reference his “light being low” in the first line of the poem and to reference his “faith being dry” in the ninth line of the poem. This alternation in pronoun usage allows Tennyson to differentiate between the mortality of his physical being and the infinite nature of his soul and faith. Tennyson’s use of the possessive pronoun when describing his “light” and faith lets him demarcate these things as more essential to his greater sense of being. In the wake of Arthur’s death and faced with his own fears regarding the uncertainties of God and afterlife, Tennyson meditates on the more infinite components of his being.

In the fifth paragraph of William Wordsworth’s *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, the poet introduces his sister Dorothy; in doing so, he clarifies for the reader why the natural landscape that he re-encounters holds a particular power and poignancy for him. After all, Dorothy Wordsworth is portrayed as a lover of nature—a characterization mirrored by the natural terms the poet uses when describing her. Indeed, Wordsworth makes a point of referencing “the shooting lights of [his sister’s] wild eyes”—an adjective, connected to the untamedness of nature, that seems to impute a sort of spiritual wildness upon his sister. In the last line of the poem, Wordsworth addresses Dorothy and explicitly states that the pastoral landscape he is revisiting now holds a special significance to him; after all, although the surrounding scene possesses an inherent beauty, the memory of his sister’s wild nature lends the raw power of the surrounding scene a more personal connection.

In lines 35-36 of *Tintern Abbey*, Wordsworth addresses Dorothy directly, writing “Therefore let the moon shine on thee in thy solitary walk.” These lines are the beginning of the segment of the poem that reads as a prayer of sorts. The word “let,” for instance seems particularly redolent of the language of a prayer. In contrast, the word “therefore,” employed earlier in the poem, seems to belong more fully to the realm and language of logic. Wordsworth’s invocation of prayer appears to stem from a line of logical reasoning. Both his usage of the literary genre of prayer and the way in which he connects logical reasoning and an instance of prayer are seemingly uncharacteristic, given
Wordsworth’s spiritual divergence from the Church of England. Unlike Tennyson who ultimately affirms the existence of God and invokes God’s help in the midst of his grief-induced religious questioning, Wordsworth seems to be addressing his prayer to nature. It is possible that he is praying to a living presence of sorts in nature, a figure loosely akin to the God of Wordsworth’s Anglican heritage. In doing so, he is expanding his conception of spirituality to a range of experiences that are not stereotypically religious. Wordsworth’s curious invocation and formulation of prayer forces the reader to question why he deems prayer a necessary vehicle for this segment of the poem. Given his religious upbringing, Wordsworth was likely familiar with prayer being used in situations of similar poignancy and, with an expanded conceptualization of spirituality, likely considered prayer to be the necessary and natural way to both convey and act upon his feelings.

In stanza twenty-four of Gerard Manley Hopkins’ *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, one of the nuns is depicted to be calling out “Oh Christ, Christ, come quickly.” These are the words of the woman who came to be known as the “tall nun” in the news stories following the shipwreck. Hopkins was committed to being historically accurate in his depiction of the shipwreck and wanted to write a poem rooted in truth. Therefore, this factual detail, like all others recounted in the poem, had been printed in the newspaper. By including the nun’s prayerful cry of desperation, Hopkins emphasizes the prominence of prayer and a need for God even, or perhaps especially, in times of intense fear and uncertainty. The nun’s prayer of desperation exemplifies how she ultimately retains her faith in the midst of a disastrous event. Exactly what the nun meant by this well-publicized line is of paramount importance for Hopkins in his exploration of this tragedy. As a Jesuit priest, Hopkins held a much more orthodox perspective than Tennyson or Wordsworth. Even so, Hopkins appeared perplexed by what the nun meant by her desperate cry to God. In the ensuing stanzas, Hopkins explores whether the nun was asking for Christ to save the ship and its passengers or if perhaps she was praying for Christ to put an end to their misery and suffering on the stranded ship in the frightful storm. That Hopkins does not pretend to know the intentions of the tall nun indicates his commitment to preserving the historical accuracy of the tragedy, and thereby not diluting its poignancy. Additionally, that Hopkins is unable to fully decode the nun’s desperate exclamation of a prayer demonstrates the way in which prayer is inherently and intensely personal—a permanently private exchange between an individual and God.

The quoted prayer of the tall nun bears an uncanny resemblance to a particular biblical parable, and the religious significance of this line is heightened by the biblical allusions that Hopkins makes in the bookending stanzas. The nun’s exclamation into the “black-about air” seems to parallel that of Jesus’ disciples in the gospel story in Matthew where the disciples are stranded on a boat in a storm and Jesus saves them by miraculously walking on water. In the previous stanza, meanwhile, Hopkins employs imagery that alludes to the book of Revelations, comparing a particularly desperate moment aboard the ship to the end of the world. In contrast, in stanza twenty-five Hopkins references “original Breath,” an allusion to Genesis and the creation story in which God breathes life into Adam. The biblical allusions tying the end of time to the very beginning of mankind that bookend the nun’s desperate, prayer-like exclamation elevate the poem’s register here, highlighting the power and importance of this moment and its resemblance to a prayer. Hopkins’ reliance on biblical teaching to make sense of the events of the shipwreck is understandable, given his religious training, and can be attributed to his desire to view God as being present in all things—a distinctly Jesuit notion.

Prayer can be powerfully employed as a literary form, as exhibited by Alfred Tennyson, William Wordsworth, and Gerard Hopkins. In religious contexts, prayer is viewed as a
powerful means of communication and devotion; however, prayer and spirituality are not limited to orthodox religious spheres. In Alfred Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* piece, Tennyson uses prayer to address both Arthur Henry Hallam and God in the wake of Hallam’s death. Overcome with intense grief, Tennyson’s faith wavers as he questions God and the existence of an afterlife. Tennyson’s invocation of prayer at the stage of his grieving process depicted in stanza L. of *In Memoriam* demonstrates the persistence of his faith. William Wordsworth incorporates prayer into *Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* to address his late sister Dorothy. Wordsworth’s prayer seems to be addressed to nature rather than God, indicative of his expanded conceptualization of spirituality as well as the power and potency that Wordsworth attributes to nature. As a British poet commonly acknowledged as being dismissive of the Church of England, Wordsworth’s usage of prayer as a literary form is indicative of both the universality of prayer and its usefulness in helping one cope with grief and loss. In his portrayal of the shipwreck of the SS Deutschland in his piece *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, Gerard Hopkins places a special emphasis on the desperate prayer of the “tall nun” that had been published in the newspapers following the tragedy. In addition to exploring the meaning of the nun’s prayerful cry, Hopkins bookends the stanza containing a depiction of this scene with stanzas containing biblical allusions to the Revelation and Genesis stories. In contrast with the other poets, Hopkins is more orthodox in his religious beliefs, as he holds prayer in high regard and attributes elevated religious significance to the nun’s words and actions in the midst of the shipwreck. All three poets use prayer in their depictions of grief, loss and tragedy. This prevailing commonality suggests that in times of grieving, there is a universal need for additional strength and support, and perhaps only that which can be provided by God or some analogous superior presence.

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The triumphs and struggles of Harold Abrahams in Hugh Hudson’s movie Chariots of Fire explore what it means to achieve excellence as a Jewish athlete in a non-Jewish country. Like the ancient Greek lyric poet Pindar in “Olympian 1,” Hudson uses the Olympic Games to frame his exploration of athletic excellence. Unlike Pindar, Abrahams does not share the tragic view that the blessing of a single day may be the highest glory an athlete can achieve in a universe governed by fickle gods. For Abrahams, achieving excellence in sports seems less a momentary glory than a continuing secular battle against the prejudice of anti-Semitism that hinders him from fully integrating into post-World War I British society. While Hudson’s film decries the anti-Semitism Abrahams faces, it also curiously indulges in its own anti-Semitic stereotypes that establish Abrahams’ alterity as a Jewish athlete in Anglo Saxon and Protestant Britain. In its apparent desire to mythologize Abrahams’ resistance against prejudice, Hudson’s film also elides the historical fact that Abrahams may have used his athletic excellence more as a stepping stone to integrate into British society than as a combative means to preserve his Jewish identity. Indeed, Hudson’s film fails explicitly to mention that Abrahams abandoned his Judaism when he converted to Christianity. This tension between the creative license of Hudson’s film and the historical facts of Abrahams’ life creates a dialectical conflict between assimilation and religious self-identity. The composite Harold Abrahams that arises from this clash is both a cinematic myth and a flawed man—a Jewish athlete who affirms his patriotic assimilation with inspirational victories that ironically result in the surrender of his religious identity.

Hudson’s cinematic conceit of using the Olympic Games to examine Abrahams’ athletic excellence has a strong literary antecedent in the work of the ancient Greek lyric poet, Pindar. In Hudson’s film, as in Pindar’s “Olympian 1,” the Olympic Games serve as a trope for what is highest and best in athletic competition. Lord Birkenhead, one of the leaders of the British Olympic Committee in the film, explains the nature of this excellence when he describes how the Olympics will allow Abrahams and the other “favored few” on the British team “to face the world’s best” athletes in “robust and combative” competitions that feature “young and ardent” men of every race who are “fleeet of foot and strong of limb.” For Pindar and his hero Hieron in “Olympian 1,” the greatness of Olympic competition likewise arises from its primacy in the athletic sphere. As “gold, like a blazing fire in the night, stands out supreme of all lordly wealth,” the light of the Olympic Games excels the radiance of the other Hellenic games just as the “sun shining by day through the lonely sky” outshines the brilliance of each celestial body in the sky. Thus, the Olympics provide Pindar’s Hieron as well as Hudson’s Abrahams the most fitting venue to inspirationally exhibit their athletic excellence.

Although Pindar and Hudson both use the Olympics to frame their works, they reach different conclusions about the true nature of human athletic excellence. For Pindar, an athlete’s success arises from what appears to be the tragic...
fragility of human happiness. While winning brings the “victor … honeyed calm,” it does so only to the extent “contests can bestow it” in a universe where human success is fleetingly dependent upon capricious gods. The gods who benevolently act as Hieron’s “guardian” and lead him to victory may “desert [him] soon.” As a result, there is a radical uncertainty about athletic success in Pindar’s poem – one that more broadly reveals the tragically transient nature of human happiness. Only a razor’s edge seems to separate victory from defeat for Pindar. Indeed, “at any given time the glory of the present day is the highest one that comes to every mortal man.”

Hudson, however, expresses far different views about the nature of athletic excellence in *Chariots of Fire*. For his Abrahams, winning a gold medal at the Olympics is neither a gift from the gods nor even a manifestation of the fleeting nature of human glory. Instead, this striving for athletic glory is part of Abrahams’ continuing political and social struggle against anti-Semitism in the film. As Abrahams says, he lives in a “Christian and Anglo-Saxon” England that acts with “jealously and venom” to prevent him from fully entering “her corridors of power.” Abrahams is not content merely to turn the other cheek in the face of this social injustice. Instead, he “exhibits” what the scholar Ori Soltes calls “a sense of anger that never leaves him.” Not surprisingly, Abrahams regards his running as a “weapon … against … being Jewish.” He even announces to his best friend Aubrey Montague that he intends to use this figurative weapon to “take on” those who persecute him “one by one and run them off their feet.” As a result, the scholar David Dee observes that Abrahams “runs to overcome anti-Semitism and is fanatical in his training because of his desire to provide a retort to the bigotry he faces.”

By contrast, Eric Liddell, the Scottish sprinter who is Abrahams’ greatest rival, runs to glorify God in the film. For Liddell, excellence in sports results from a “muscular Christianity” that exalts God through athletic success. Though Liddell’s sister urges him to abandon sports to fulfill his religious duty as a missionary in China, Liddell’s father believes Liddell has a “sacred duty … to run in God’s name and let the world stand back in wonder.” Liddell himself regards his running as a form of religious worship. Indeed, he compares his “faith to running in a race” where “the power to see the race to its end … comes from Jesus who said, ‘Behold the Kingdom of God is within you.’” Thus, Liddell tells his sister, “I believe that God made me for a purpose. For China. But he also made me fast. And when I run I feel his pleasure. To give it up would be to hold him in contempt.” By contrast, running does not bring Abrahams pleasure, let alone religious joy. Instead, Abrahams competes in the film because he feels a “compulsion” to win the figurative race against anti-Semitism. As such, Abrahams petulantly announces after he loses a pre-Olympic race to Liddell, “I don’t run to take beatings. I run to win. If I can’t win, I won’t run,” presumably because running would no longer provide him the opportunity to beat anti-Semitism.

While Abrahams uses his athletic excellence to fight anti-Semitism in the film, he never completely overcomes his alterity as a Jewish man living in Britain during the immediate aftermath of World War I. Abrahams recognizes he is the son of a “Lithuanian Jew” as “foreign as a frankfurter” in Britain. And he bitterly understands how his “alien” otherness as a Jew subjects him to anti-Semitism. Abrahams concedes that being Jewish does not stop him from “setting up shop” at Cambridge, “the finest university in the land.” Nevertheless, anti-Semitism prevents him from being fully accepted there no matter how many records he sets or races he wins for Cambridge. This contrapuntal movement between admission and exclusion becomes evident in the film on Abrahams’ first day at Cambridge when the head porter of his college welcomes him and then snidely remarks, “One thing’s certain. Name like Abrahams, he won’t be in the Chapel Choir, now, will he?” It is true that Abrahams’ otherness as a Jew does not prevent
him from becoming good friends with his Protestant teammates or winning the love of a Protestant woman. In the film, however, excelling in sports never enables Abrahams to gain complete acceptance at Cambridge no matter how many times he affirms his desired identity by singing “He is an Englishman” in the university production of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *HMS Pinafore*.23

Abraham’s outsider status as a Jew is evident throughout the film. As Abrahams stands ready to become the first person in 700 years to complete the College Dash at Cambridge, one of his classmates urges Abrahams to run “for Israel,” not Caius, his Cambridge college.24 And the Master of Caius himself says that Abrahams “runs like the wind” only to disparagingly add that Abrahams is “defensive to the point of pugnacity … as they [the Jews] invariably are.”25 At times, Abrahams feels the temptation to deny the existence of this anti-Semitism. He says, “Hey, steady, on, you’re imagining all this.”26 Then he experiences his otherness as a Jew through anti-Semitism that repeatedly manifests itself “on the edge of a remark” or the “cold reluctance in a handshake.”27 Even the Prince of Wales in the film greets Abrahams with icy reserve immediately before Abrahams achieves athletic glory by winning the gold medal in the 100 meter dash at the 1924 Olympics. The result is that Abrahams lives in what he calls a “semi-deprived” state – one where members of the British elite “lead him to water but won’t let him drink” notwithstanding his excellence as an athlete.28

Though the film criticizes this anti-Semitism, it nevertheless creates its own “negative … stereotype … regarding Jews and business,” according to Soltes.29 This becomes readily apparent when the Master of Caius College disparagingly characterizes Abrahams’ financier father as a money lender in a seeming allusion to Shylock, the Jewish money lender in William Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice*.30 Then Sam Mussabini, Abrahams’ professional coach, further connects Abrahams’ athletic success to money by using two coins to represent how Abrahams defeats himself in a race against Liddell by over striding. When Mussabini asks, “Have you got another two coins, Mr. Abrahams,”31 the implication is that these two coins will make Abrahams an even more formidable runner – one better able to exact what Shylock might call his “pound of flesh” from the anti-Semites who bedevil him.32 The two Cambridge College Masters in the film reinforce this negative Jewish stereotype by criticizing Abrahams for being nothing more than a “tradesman” in his approach to achieving athletic excellence.33 Indeed, they believe Abrahams stands outside the tradition of the gentleman amateur they valorize because he made his “running … a business” by hiring a professional coach.34 Abrahams, however, rejects what he calls their “archaic values of the prep school playground” for his “pursuit of excellence.”35 And when he presciently observes that his approach will “carry the future,” the Master of Trinity College remarks how Abrahams, as a Jew, has “a different god, a different mountaintop.”36

This negative Jewish stereotype becomes even more evident in the distinction the film draws between Abrahams’ monomaniacal ambition and the fair play of his friend, Lord Andrew Lindsay. Where Abrahams, as noted above, values winning above all else, Lord Lindsay believes winning is less important than how a gentleman plays the game. Thus, as Lindsay has already won an Olympic medal at the 1924 Paris games, he graciously relinquishes his spot in the Olympic 400 meter race to Liddell just as Liddell is on the verge of withdrawing from the Olympic competition because his religious scruples will not allow him to run his 100 meter race on the Christian Sabbath. In real life, however, Lord Burghley, upon whom the fictional Lord Lindsay character was modeled, “went out in the first round of the 1924 Olympics, though he won medals in 1928 and 1932.”37 Moreover, Liddell knew about “the race schedule … months in advance [so] he had ample time to swap events and train for the 400 metres.”38 In thus bending the historical truth, Hudson’s film creates a normative choice between Lindsay’s
selfless sportsmanship and Abrahams’ ruthless competition. As a result, Soltes observes how “the viewer” of the film “is more likely to walk away with a negative sense of [Abrahams’] ethics.”39 Put otherwise, the film suggests that “Jews who defy the stereotype of being physically weak do so by being morally weak.”40

This stereotype of Abrahams is not the only creative license Hudson and his script writer, Colin Welland, take in the film. According to Dee, “Abrahams’ desire to succeed in sports owes much more to his aspiration to integrate” than a wish to preserve his Jewish identity by fighting anti-Semitism.41 While Abrahams did face anti-Semitism, “being involved in sport and achieving success at the highest level” enabled him to become “an accepted and celebrated figure … within mainstream society.”42 In other words, Dee argues that Abrahams was not regarded so much as a Jew but as a successful and thoroughly Anglicized British athlete who happened to be from a Jewish background. Thus, “the Daily Mirror” referred to Abrahams as the first Englishman to win this race at the Olympic Games and applauded the efforts of the ‘old Can- tab’ without referencing Abrahams’ religion.43 And Abrahams himself eschewed Judaism when he “argued that athletes should be devout to the ‘religion’ of training and excelling in their sport … not to religious laws and customs.”44

As such, Abrahams sets a materially different example than other twentieth century Jewish athletes such as Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax, two American Hall of Fame baseball players. Where Abrahams rejected what he called “a strict adherence to Judaism,” Greenberg and Koufax balanced the competing demands of major league baseball and their Judaism without abandoning their religious beliefs.45 Greenberg refused to play on Yom Kippur in 1934, “the holiest and most somber day of the Jewish year,” even though his team “the Detroit Tigers were neck-in-neck with the New York Yankees in the race for the American League pennant.”46 Yet, he played on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, when a rabbi “scoured the Talmud” and declared Greenberg could do so “since Rosh Hashanah is supposed to be a day of joy [on which] it would be OK for Greenberg to play the joyous game of baseball.”47 Following Greenberg’s example, Koufax did not play the first game of the 1965 World Series because it “fell on Yom Kippur.”48 By contrast, Abrahams did not allow Jewish traditions to impede his progress as an athlete. This was especially true regarding competing on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. Thus, where Liddell refused to run on the Christian Sabbath, Abrahams always ran on the Jewish Sabbath.49 In this manner, Abrahams subordinated religious observance to the secular demands of sports.

Abrahams’ failure to act upon the demands of his religious conscience became troublingly evident when he opposed the unsuccessful effort to stage a British boycott of the 1936 Olympic Games in Nazi Germany. As someone from a Jewish background, Abrahams found the “negation of liberty in Germany” under the Nazis to be “deplorable.”50 Nevertheless, he appeared to feel a stronger duty to his king and country than to his fellow Jews suffering under the yoke of Nazism. As such, he seemingly allowed his perceived public duty to promote British Olympic sports to trump his private reservations about legitimizing Hitler’s virulently anti-Semitic regime.51 By contrast, Hank Greenberg wrote “in his biography that ‘I came to feel that if I, as a Jew, hit a home run, I was hitting one against Hitler.’”52 That was a powerful message indeed because Greenberg almost broke “Babe Ruth’s single-season home run record” in 1938, the year of the infamous Kristallnacht when the Nazis broke the windows of Jewish businesses and brutally attacked Jews throughout Germany.53 Thus, where Sandy Koufax and Hank Greenberg honored their religion and attained athletic greatness, Abrahams met the challenge of being a Jewish athlete in a Christian country by subordinating his Judaism to the demands of his sport.

Perhaps the most intriguing fiction in Chariots of Fire is the way Hudson’s film elides the historical fact that Abrahams converted to Christianity in 1934—eight years after a broken leg led
him to retire from competitive sports. Having depicted Abrahams as a Jew who uses his sports to combat anti-Semitism, Hudson’s film does not mention Abrahams’ conversion to Christianity. Instead, its opening and closing scenes only obliquely refer to his conversion when they depict, without explanation, scenes from Abrahams’ funeral services in an Anglican church. These scenes provide a cinematic subtext for the historical context that Abrahams lived most of his adult life as a Christian who married a Christian, worshipped at a Christian church, and was buried in a Christian graveyard beside his wife.54 Indeed, they suggest that Abrahams did not use sports as a weapon against anti-Semitism so much as a stepping stone to renounce his Judaism and gain further acceptance into British society. The ironic result is that the Abrahams, who wins races to defeat anti-Semitism in the film, marginalizes his own Judaism by converting to Christianity in real life. Instead of defeating anti-Semitism, Abrahams’ conversion suggests that he attempted to de-other himself by eliminating his otherness as a Jew. Where Hank Greenberg and Sandy Koufax affirmed their Jewish identity, Abrahams arguably shrouded it under the cloak of his Anglicization to a far greater extent than Hudson’s film depicts.

Given the apparent extent of Abrahams’ Anglicization, it seems especially appropriate that a church choir sings William Blake’s poem “Jerusalem” at Abrahams’ Anglican funeral in the film. The performance of this song, which many consider an unofficial national anthem in Britain, signals that Abrahams died as an Englishman.55 What’s more, it expresses what may have been Abrahams’ secular desire to “build[d]” a kind of new “Jerusalem / In England’s green and pleasant land.”56 As a member of the Jewish Diaspora, Abrahams, like generations of Jews before him, had been exiled from Jerusalem. Where other Jews had been strangers in strange lands, a more tolerant, albeit still anti-Semitic, Britain offers Abrahams a chance to find a real home. So, Abrahams seemingly uses sports as a springboard to become the “true Englishman” he and his immigrant father desire him to be.57 Hence, the England that was Blake’s “Jerusalem” may have become Abrahams’ New Jerusalem, as he seeks to achieve social acceptance through sports and find a place for himself in British society. In the film, Abrahams’ story ends when the film itself concludes with the church choir singing Blake’s “Jerusalem” as Lord Lindsay and Aubrey Montague leave Abrahams’ funeral service. In the eulogy to Abrahams that begins the film, Lord Lindsay announced his intention to honor “the legend” of Abrahams’ life.58 So, it’s fitting for Lord Lindsay and Montague to affirm the myth of Abrahams in the movie when they say, “He ran them off their feet.”59 In Hudson’s film, Abrahams wants to “take on” anti-Semites “one by one and run them off their feet.”60 In his real life, Abrahams converted to Christianity and lost his religious identity as a Jew. In this manner, Abrahams as a man and a myth presents two competing paradigms. As an historical person, he demonstrates how the desire for assimilation can result in the loss of religious identity. As a myth, he reveals how success in sports can enable athletes marginalized by their religion to fight against prejudice. As both a man and a myth, he illuminates the dialectical tension between assimilation and religious self-identity that Abrahams struggled to synthesize.

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Any analysis of the Duffer brothers’ Netflix show *Stranger Things* must consider both the historical context in which the plot is set, the 1980s Cold War, as well as the context in which it was created, post-9/11 America. The show employs several conflicting values, oscillating between the social and political values it reifies, criticizes, and mystifies. The show mirrors a Western colonial power dynamic in which the colonizers expect to be able to enter the “Other” space with no pushback from the colonized. When instead the colonized “Other” does push back, the threat of reverse colonization becomes manifest in the initial colonizers’ psyches. Through this, the show reflects the anxiety surrounding reverse colonization within American political discourse; this fear is an ongoing, implicit narrative, one that occurred in Cold War paranoia and remains present in post-9/11 Islamophobia. Ultimately, the text showcases the fallacy of imperialist hubris and the unexpected agency of the colonized.

*Stranger Things*, through its setting in 1980s America, exemplifies the importance of using past events to assess contemporary ones. Much like the historical novel, commentary on troubling events in the present is often only possible by analyzing the past. In his article “Postcolonialism and the Historical Novel: Epistemologies of Contemporary Realism,” Hamish Dalley explores the postcolonial historical novel, and claims it acts as “a kind of allegory,” asking one to “read imaginary characters as abstractions of historical phenomena.”1 Examples of such allegories are abundant in literature; Arthur Miller set his 1953 play *The Crucible* in the witch hunts of the seventeenth century, even though it actually served as a metaphor for the frenzied hunt for communists during the 1950s Red Scare. As author and professor Christopher Bigsby noted in his introduction to the play, Miller took great risk in writing even a masked politicized work. The House Un-American Activities Committee demanded Miller appear before it, where “he was stung into insisting on his patriotism while defending his right to challenge the direction of American policy and thought.”2 Furthermore, he was later “cited for contempt of Congress, and received a fine and prison sentence, later quashed on appeal.”3 Similarly, Shakespeare set his play *Hamlet* in Denmark, which allowed him to implicitly comment on the political climate of Elizabethan England. Like these two cultural texts, the characters and plot of *Stranger Things* can be understood as “abstractions of historical phenomena.”4 Though there is no longer the explicit threat of punishment in America if an artist criticizes political authority, the historical text can still illuminate current hypocrisies.

In framing *Stranger Things* as a historical postcolonial text, one must analyze both the histories it invokes, as well as the commentary it subsequently provides. In his article “The Historical Interpretation of Literature,” literary critic Edmund Wilson advocates for the study of cultural text using “the idea that human arts and institutions were to be studied and elucidated as the products of the geographical and climatic conditions in which the people who created them lived.”5 Thus, it matters not only where and when the show is set—1980s Cold War America— but also the context in which it
was created: post-9/11 America. In examining both contexts of the historical text, a “dialogue between past and present is created and past experience is actualized.”

In *Stranger Things*, the contexts of both the past and present reproduce American ambitions and fears of reverse colonization. In doing so, the show explores the imperialist ethos of the United States, such as its attempts to homogenize democracy throughout the world. As the United States sought to limit the spread of communism during the Cold War, through measures such as the CIA’s attempt to prevent the election of a socialist president in Chile in 1970, its interference into the affairs of other states constituted a violation of the democratic principle of sovereignty. At the root of such ideology is the desire for power and the impulse to stave off the ‘unknown,’ with the connotation of ‘unknown’ being ‘non-Western.’ Similarly, *Stranger Things* mirrors this imperialist impulse through the scientists of Hawkins, Indiana, who make contact with a dark, alternate dimension and open a passage between the human world and the one later termed “the Upside Down.” The expectation present in these explorations and attempts to conquer is that the inhabitants of the colonized space will not be an obstacle to colonization, and that the colonizer has the power to act with impunity. During the Vietnam War, the United States sprayed the toxic chemical Agent Orange over South Vietnam, which had lasting health and environmental impacts. In order “to fight an invisible enemy who hid in the jungles while living of the land, some 5 million acres of... forest were defoliated, while 500,000 acres of crops were destroyed.” This disregard for the agency of the colonized also appears in *Stranger Things*, as the Hawkins scientists reach into the Upside Down. In producing this narrative, *Stranger Things* seems to replicate the colonizing ethos of the United States during the Cold War.

When the colonized reaches back, however, horror ensues. The antagonist of the second season of *Stranger Things* speaks to the American fear and guilt surrounding reverse colonization. Though humans reached out and poked the “Demogorgan” first, opening the gate, they fear the Upside Down’s power to take control of the human dimension. When the protagonists discuss the threat posed by the Mind Flayer, Mike explains that “it wants to spread, take over other dimensions.” To drive the point home, Lucas adds, “We are talking about the destruction of our world as we know it.” This totalizing rhetoric expresses a fear of reverse colonization and the desire to reestablish boundaries between the two worlds.

Such hyperbole, not unlike the 1949 films *The Red Menace* and *I Married a Communist* which were propagated to garner patriotism and anti-Soviet sentiment, now mirrors the current pervasive Islamophobia within American political discourse. Despite increased attention to the problem of Islamophobic rhetoric, studies report a “153% increase in workplace discrimination claims against Muslims after 9/11.” As certain American media sources and politicians began to associate Muslims with the violence of reverse colonization, such fear-mongering led to increased instances of Islamophobia. This distrust of and prejudice against Muslims reflects a wish to demarcate boundaries between a collective and a perceived outsider.

The fear of reverse colonization often manifests through a demonization of the colonized—a process mirrored in the quasi-Manichean dichotomy of good and evil in *Stranger Things*. This is not to say that the Demogorgan or the Mind Flayer directly represents ISIS terrorists or communist spies; rather, they symbolize the fear the American people have of those whose borders they transgressed, transgressing their borders in return. In his article “The Occidental Tourist,” postcolonial critic Stephen Arata notes that the narrative of reverse colonization “expresses both fear and guilt...as the colonizer finds himself in the position of the colonized, the exploiter becomes exploited, the victimizer victimized.” The fear and guilt present in the show reflect that same postcolonial cultural anxiety.
Furthermore, portrayals of reverse colonization manifest in the outsider’s unseen entry into the colonizer’s territory. When Chief Hopper digs in the field and hops into a tunnel he discovers, the camera rotates to depict his figure physically hanging upside down; this maneuver serves as an indication not only that Hopper has entered a chaotic and terrifying domain, but also that the terror has been below ground the entire time. Implicit in Hopper’s discovery and entry is the notion that if humanity remains unsuspecting and inattentive, a poisonous monstrosity will silently grow and spread among us. The camera angle posits the Upside Down’s growing dominance over how Hopper, the Hawkins residents, and humanity at large occupy a space that is no longer only theirs.

Such a process of subliminal, insidious reverse colonization is often epitomized by the term “fifth column”: “a clandestine group or faction of subversive agents who attempt to undermine a nation’s solidarity.” Notions of the fifth column reflect the cultural anxiety surrounding the unseen Other. During McCarthyism, the term served as a part of the “public discourses that were deployed during the Cold War to name specific individuals and communities… as subversive and un-American.” It can be applied to analyze cases of subversive individuals seeking to undermine a collective.

Similarly, the tunnels that Hopper discovers symbolize a physical version of the fifth column. Stranger Things stylistically depicts the “fifth column” through making the cavernous tunnels running silently below the town, chipping away at its stability while also becoming a part of its infrastructure. In the map that Hopper shows Hawkins scientist Dr. Owens, he reveals the gradually widening radius of the contamination affecting the forest. The film thus invokes a sense of the evil’s underground movement, invisible to the human eye, but poisoning all it touches. The only clue of its growth is the poisonous rot setting in above ground, similar to how Americans sought and seek external markers of communist or terrorist activities. This imagery further reiterates an American paranoia of the unseen, terrifying Other, be it Arab terrorists or Russian spies.

Moreover, the concept of the fifth column manifests in Will’s character as he transforms into an unwitting spy for the Mind Flayer. When the Mind Flayer inhabits him as a host, Will becomes an intersection between the human world and the Upside Down. The threat moves from the external to the internal, from mere physical colonization to a colonization of the mind. Such fear of psychological betrayal was a fear often present in the Cold War: Americans constantly remained on guard against an “infiltration of sympathizers into the entire fabric of the nation.” As political activist Verne Kaub observed, the greatest perceived threat to the nation came, not from communists, but from “those who [had] been influenced’ by communist ideas, but [did] not know it.”

Will thus becomes a point of intersection between the human world and the Upside Down—a spy figure who perfectly epitomizes the fear of mental colonization that can grip a populace. When Will expresses his distress to Mike about the Mind Flayer’s presence inside of him, mentioning the growing awareness he has of its “now memories,” Mike reassures him by telling him he can be a spy against the monster. Once the Mind Flayer gains more power, however, the situation reverses and Will becomes its unwitting agent. He is, in short, a homegrown threat. He represents the past fear many Americans had of the communist incognito, as well as the present anxiety surrounding the idea of a domestically radicalized terrorist. It is a process of subliminal infiltration, a blurring of the lines between self and Other, that many Americans and the boys of Stranger Things fear.

In the face of an ostensible national security threat, public displays of sympathy—particularly sympathy directed towards the essentialized “Other”—are often decried as ‘treasonous’ and ‘unpatriotic.’ This process, which is evidenced in the Cold War castigation of ‘red’ sympathizers and the animosity many contemporary
Americans feel towards Muslims, is mirrored in the second season of *Stranger Things*. In the second season, Dustin Henderson discovers a small reptilian creature in his garbage can. Naming the creature “Dart” and bonding with him over a shared love of nougat, Dustin happily takes care of Dart. Upon his friends discovering that Dart is likely from the Upside Down, however, they admonish Dustin’s sympathy toward Dart and try to persuade him to get rid of him. In defense of his pet, Dustin says, “Even if he is [from the Upside Down], it doesn’t automatically mean that he’s bad.”20 Dustin’s sympathy is perceived as irrational and his friends become angry with him for trying to complicate their perceptions of good and evil.

Like the unthinkability of sympathizing with communists in the light of the Soviet threat to American security, compassion for anything from the Upside Down becomes untenable in *Stranger Things*. One must condemn or disprove the sympathizer, in order to affirm who is loyal or a traitor. The Other may exploit any sympathies; additionally, fighting the Other becomes more difficult when facing the gray area presented by the sympathizer.

The sympathizer in the show, Dustin, is not punished per se, but his feelings are somewhat proven to be false. Dustin’s view of a creature who has not yet demonstrated to be evil runs counter to the majority of the group; they assume that any being from the Upside Down must also be demonic and violent. As baby Dart grows into a fully developed Demogorgan, a threat to humanity, the show portrays Dustin’s sympathy as ridiculous. The show complicates the Upside Down through Dustin’s relationship with Dart, but ultimately confirms Mike’s suspicion of the Upside Down’s unequivocal threat.

The paradigm of assuming guilt based on appearance or a similar origin mirrors America’s post-9/11 Islamophobia. Such anxiety about the invasive other is not new; prejudices against Arabs due to Islamophobia makes up part of a trend in which Americans impute fears onto those with visible difference. Indeed, as the threat of reverse colonization increases, many individuals use visual appearance as a heuristic to demarcate good and evil. A study by the European Monitoring Center for Racism and Xenophobia, for instance, found that across fifteen European nations after 9/11, “one of the biggest predictors of discriminatory behavior and acts was visual appearance as a Muslim.”23 Even the aesthetic of the *Stranger Things* monsters reflects this expectation that the Other will manifest itself in some horrifying or quasi-mythological way. The Demogorgan, for instance, has no face. Such an anonymity erases any individual characteristics with which individuals might relate, and mirrors general practices of stereotyping and dehumanization. External markers thus form a significant basis for fear and violence against the Other.
Although people often fear the Other based on its physicality, a more deeply rooted psychological suspicion cements the Other’s total alienation. Like the Demogorgan, the Mind Flayer is faceless and terrifying physically; however, it also has a huge, towering presence that represents the fear of psychological colonization, which can be understood as the Other indoctrinating people to become aligned with its ideology or objectives. The first season’s Demogorgan is dwarfed by the larger threat of the second season’s Mind Flayer, as the latter poses the danger of conquering the human world, both physically and mentally. Likewise, such simultaneous fears of geographic and psychological colonization characterized Cold War paranoia in America.

Like the monsters of the Upside Down, many Americans regarded communists not as members of a political category but as dangerous psychological colonizers. In Witness, Chambers raises the point that communism “occurs in man’s mind before it takes form in man’s acts.” Rather than only fearing physical colonization, Americans dreaded the breaching of ideological boundaries. Stranger Things also visually represents the importance of boundaries within reverse-colonization anxiety. When the scientists at Hawkins lab realize the Upside Down is spreading into Hawkins, for instance, they begin to burn it daily, with the intention of maintaining boundaries between their world and the Upside Down. This procedure allegorizes the imagery and rhetoric of “containment,” President Harry Truman’s Cold War policy aimed at preventing communism from expanding beyond its established borders. Dr. Owens informs Jonathan and Nancy of the lab’s goal: “We can’t seem to undo our mistake. We can, however, stop it from spreading.” This impulse to contain the colonized reflects a fear of the colonized returning the colonizer’s initial transgression, and marks the colonizer’s realization of “the ease with which [its civilization] could be overcome by the forces of barbarism.” The colonizer emphasizes such barbarism, whether it exists or not, to justify the containment of a purported monstrous Other.

This inclination to “contain” the other and ward off its advances is neither fictitious nor a thing of the past. Today, President Donald Trump speaks of his intent to bar all immigrants from certain Muslim majority countries from entering the United States. The discussion of the monsters of Stranger Things is reminiscent of the demonization of communists and Muslims in the colonizer’s desperation to define and maintain strict boundaries.

Within Stranger Things, the Other is the Upside Down and all that emerges from it, such as the Demogorgan and the Mind Flayer. Though one might assume that the show reinscribes the fear of the unknown Other in its adamant demonization of the alternate dimension, several tensions are present. Dustin’s bond with Dart complicates the narrative of evil having a common origin. Though the characters fear the alternate dimension and seek to destroy it, one also cannot forget that humans opened the gate first. Hawkins Lab lies at the center of the spreading poison, and its scientists sought out the alternate dimension due to human hubris and imperialist ethos.

Thus, Stranger Things reveals the fear of the Other and portrays it as an external threat, but the Other emerges from within the self. This metaphor occurs on a micro level when Will coughs up the slug-like creature from the Upside Down into his sink. The event later leads the viewer to believe that the slug was Dart, the baby Demogorgon. Symbolically, the monstrosity has emerged from within an innocent human, much like how experiments in Hawkins lab led to a monster breaking from within. This reiteration points to how processes portrayed as innocent human endeavors, such as science and exploration, may have monstrous and malevolent consequences. What colonizers perceive as an invasion is often a response to their own provocation, and thus whatever monstrosity emerges, originates from the colonizer’s actions.
Stranger Things as a cultural text evokes many different emotions rooted in colonialism and history to produce meaning. It both affirms and critiques the American fears of reverse colonization through the terror it creates. In doing so, the show illuminates the tension between curiosity and fear of the Other, as well as portrays Americans’ anxieties surrounding invasion and reverse colonization. The monstrous Other remains a key figure in historical and postcolonial texts, demonstrated by the physical threat of the Demogorgan and the psychological threat of the Mind Flayer. Indeed, the Other is the entity against which the constructed, collective “we” understand “ourselves”; in short, there is no “us” without “them.” As long as the Upside Down exists, humans remain the “Right-side Up.” People fear any blurring of the boundaries between the Other and the self, as a strict division lends itself to a sense of security and stability. When the colonized returns and threatens the colonizer, systems of power are upended and the structure in which one understands oneself is endangered. In this vein, the show reveals Americans’ continuous effort to maintain a boundary between what is acceptable and what is outcast, between themselves as the colonizers and the external “them” as the colonized.

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Georgetown’s Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library is widely mocked today. When the building first opened in April 1970, however, it received considerable attention and praise from critics—including a declaration in *Georgetown Today* that the new library represented “the most significant Main Campus development in the 20th century.” In order to understand this transformation of the library’s repute, we must contextualize its design and construction within the history of Georgetown University in the 1960s, as well as the brutalist architectural theory of which it is a product.

I will attempt to do just that in this essay, arguing that Lauinger Library is the perfect “period piece” from one of the most important decades in the university’s history. The library possesses enduring importance and unconventional beauty because it so authentically reflects Georgetown’s historical tension between tradition and modernity.

**Georgetown Meets Modernity**

The decade leading up to the opening of Lauinger Library in 1970 was a transformative one for Georgetown. The essential character of the university’s campus and undergraduate program—which had long been small and overwhelmingly Catholic—remained relatively unchanged from its founding in 1789 until the early decades of the twentieth century. At the outset of the Second World War, Georgetown’s undergraduate curriculum was still based on the *Ratio Studiorum*, developed by the Jesuits in 1599, and Jesuit priests continued to constitute the vast majority of its faculty and staff. It was the Second World War itself that began to reshape the institution, more than doubling the student population between 1946 and 1948 as thousands of returning veterans enrolled under the G.I. Bill. At the same time, the post-war rise of national accrediting organizations forced the university to reform its curriculum, create centralized departments, and otherwise professionalize its policies and resources. Thus the 1940s and 50s were times of expansion and modernization.

It was the 1960s, however, that ushered in radical transformation. Inspired by the Second Vatican Council’s efforts to modernize the Catholic Church, a group of American Catholic university leaders, which included Georgetown President Rev. Gerard Campbell, S.J., met at Land O’ Lakes, Wisconsin in 1967 and vigorously declared that “the Catholic University today must be a university in the full modern sense of the word.” Their statement, which is considered a turning point in Catholic higher education, emphasized the importance of research, public service, and the “institutional autonomy” of universities from the Church.

Within months, Georgetown’s Board of Directors replaced the Society of Jesus as the corporate entity responsible for the university’s governance, and four non-Jesuits, including three laymen, were elected to the Board for the first time since the university’s founding. Over the next few years, the university hired its first Rabbi, its formerly-regional admissions department began to recruit nationally, and women...
were integrated into Georgetown College, the university’s oldest and last all-male undergraduate school. Like many of its peer institutions, Georgetown also experienced racial integration and formidable student activism in the 1960s, and lost many of its students and alumni in the Vietnam War.5 “We have experimented. We have adopted new practices and discontinued old ones,” wrote University President Rev. Robert Henle, S.J. in 1970. “How, in this new permissive, uncertain and changing society, to assist young adults to grow in free and firm commitments and understandings is not so clear.”6 When Fr. Henle gave voice to this uncertainty, Georgetown University had become a fundamentally different institution—in its mission, governance, culture, and composition—than it had been just a decade earlier.

As the university’s leadership steered it into a new, modern era, it became clear that its academic and residential facilities would have to be modernized as well. First in line was the library. Georgetown’s main library in the 1960s was still Riggs Memorial Library, which had been constructed in 1889 to hold 105,000 volumes and had long since outgrown its capacity.7 Riggs was so old and so small, in fact, that the university feared it would lose its institutional accreditation as a result. In preparation for a 1960 accreditation visit by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the university conducted an internal review which determined that the library’s collection was “insufficient to support the graduate teaching and research programs of the university, especially in the sciences.”8 In 1963, University President Rev. Edward Bunn, S.J. finally made a commitment to construct a new library. Over the seven year process of fundraising, design, and construction that followed, university administrators continued to tell The Washington Post and other publications that progress on plans for the new library was critical to retaining the university’s accredited status.

Shortly before the end of his tenure in June 1964, Fr. Bunn convened six faculty, six administrators, and two students for the aptly-named New Library Planning Committee, which was chaired by Rev. James B. Horigan, S.J., Director of Libraries and Dean of the Graduate School. The New Library Planning Committee met for the next year to develop “a set of general service and organizational principles” for the library, which were intended to guide the architect’s eventual plans.9 The committee’s product was to be, as described by Richard McCooey in The Georgetowner, a “word picture” of the new library.10 The word picture they ultimately produced was meticulous, including everything from broad principles about the library’s design and capacity, to lists of the audiovisual and technical services that it should include, to a section titled “exclusions” which stipulated that there should not be a vending machine room, a cloak room, an art gallery, an auditorium, or a faculty lounge in the new library.11 The committee considered multiple sites for the building, including the block bounded by 36th, 37th, N, and O Streets NW—the current site of Alumni Square—before agreeing upon a site between Healy Lawn and Prospect Street NW that housed tennis courts at the time.

In addition to developing a thematic and spatial outline of the library, the members of the New Library Planning Committee were responsible for finding an architect and submitting their recommendation to the University President. They chose Georgetown resident John Carl Warnecke, who had recently gained prominence as the architect of John F. Kennedy’s gravesite at Arlington National Cemetery. In addition to his prominence, Warnecke was a strategic choice because of his membership on the Fine Arts Commission, from which it was notoriously difficult to gain approval for construction projects in Washington, D.C., and because of his prior experience designing a large academic library for the Naval Academy in Annapolis. Due to his local residence, expertise with regulatory processes, and experience at the Naval Academy, it was expected that Warnecke would be able to effectively lead the design and construction process
for a library project of the size and complexity necessary at Georgetown.

Most important to the hiring decision, however, was what the Washington Post called Warnecke’s “demonstrated ability to harmonize modern design with traditional settings.” Georgetown University embodied tradition, but the new library it desired was supposed to cement its embrace of modernity. Warnecke had gracefully balanced these seemingly competing interests at the Naval Academy, as well as in Washington, D.C.’s Lafayette Square, where he had designed a plan, at President Kennedy’s request, that would accommodate new office buildings while respecting the square’s small scale and historic townhouses. Warnecke and his firm, John Carl Warnecke and Associates, were selected to conduct the same balancing act at Georgetown.

Designing a Brutalist Library

Warnecke and his team chose an architectural style well-suited to accomplishing their ambitious task: New Brutalism. The term itself, which was still relatively new when Warnecke embraced it in 1965, was coined by British architectural critic Reyner Banham in an Architectural Review article called “The New Brutalism” ten years earlier. Banham traced New Brutalism’s roots to The Independent Group, a loose association of writers, artists, and designers connected to London’s Institute of Contemporary Arts which convened throughout the early 1950s. The group included Banham as well as architects Alison and Peter Smithson, who are often credited with founding New Brutalism. In truth, no individual “founded” the movement, but the artistic, cultural, and moral ideals espoused by The Independent Group during its short lifespan formed a key part of New Brutalism’s intellectual foundation.

The Smithsons expressed The Independent Group’s ideals most vocally in Parallel of Life and Art, a 1953 exhibition that was called “polemical” and “anti-art” by its critics. By deliberately including technical diagrams, images from scientific books, and other items that were not considered beautiful in the exhibition, the couple challenged establishment attitudes about what belonged in art galleries. Their approach to architecture was similar, with a particular reverence for the French-Swiss architect Le Corbusier and his convention-breaking Unité d’habitation housing development in Marseille.

In his Architectural Review article, Reyner Banham synthesized The Independent Group’s “anti-art” approach to art and architecture, tendency to draw inspiration from Le Corbusier, and awareness of le béton brut—the French phrase for raw concrete—into the bilingual pun “New Brutalism.” Over time, Banham’s New Brutalism would be shortened into the more simple “brutalism” and developed into a coherent architectural philosophy applied by people like Warnecke. At the time of Banham’s writing, however, it was simply a label he applied to a body of architectural work which appeared to have certain core principles running through it.

The first principle of brutalist architecture, according to Banham, was clear exhibition of a building’s structure. This quality can be understood as the dominance of topology over geometry, in which the different constituent parts of a building and the pathways of connectivity between them are clearly visible from the exterior. It can also be understood as an extreme manifestation of a principle central to all modernist architecture: that form follows function. It was in this spirit that Georgetown’s New Library Planning Committee developed their “word picture” for a new library before Warnecke drew an actual picture of it, and it was in this spirit that the committee wrote in 1965 that “the exterior design [of the library] should not be allowed to interfere with the interior design.” Warnecke took the mandate to prioritize function in stride, designing a building whose exterior would be defined primarily by columns of trapezoidal study carrels jutting out of its façade. The building’s exterior would also include stacked group study rooms, easily visible from the outside because of their large window bays, and a large
tunnel-like entrance to easily control visitor access. These features are what led Washington Post architecture critic Wolf Von Eckardt to call the library’s form “honest” in 1970. His use of that word must have pleased Reyner Banham, who wrote in The Architectural Review that “honesty in structure” was a moral imperative.

Banham’s second principle of brutalist architecture was the valuation of materials “as found,” or honesty in the use of materials. This form of honesty was particularly tied to le béton brut, which had long been used in construction but was concealed by paint, glaze, and other decorative elements. Brutalist buildings were the first to wrest concrete from its architectural hiding place and feature it on their exteriors “as found,” stark and gray. Warnecke’s design for Lauinger Library followed suit; the building is stark and gray, refusing to cover up its core materials. Any casual observer can ascertain that Lauinger Library is made of concrete and glass. Together with its honesty in structure, Lauinger Library’s honesty in materials seems to suggest that the building, like all brutalist buildings, has nothing to hide.

The third and defining principle of brutalist architecture, according to Banham, was “memorability as an image.” Banham distinguished the concept of image from that of beauty, defined by Thomas Aquinas as quod visum placet (that which seen, pleases). In contrast, “image may be defined as quod visum perturbat” (that which seen, affects the emotions). Unlike Aquinas’s definition of beauty, Banham’s image is not an abstract quality that a building might possess, but rather a set of emotive visual characteristics held by the form of the building itself, intimately related to honesty in structure and material. Buildings that are images are “immediately apprehensible” visual entities, in which the façade as seen is “confirmed” by the internal form of the building as experienced. Richard McCooey was describing exactly this feeling when he wrote in Georgetown Today in 1970 that the exterior of Lauinger Library “excites the eye and demands of the mind.” Lauinger is exciting because its form is memorable and apprehensible, and it is demanding because, with the exception of its towers, its form is revealing of its internal elements. It is demanding because it is ugly, too, as if it is asking passersby to give it a second look and figure out what its architect was trying to do. Visitors to Georgetown’s campus may not find Lauinger Library aesthetically pleasing, but they remember it nonetheless, which is precisely the purpose of a building as a brutalist image.

Reyner Banham’s principles of brutalism, which were merely descriptive at the time he first declared them, had thus become a coherent and prescriptive architectural philosophy by the time that John Carl Warnecke designed Lauinger Library. Despite being rooted in The Independent Group’s activities in the early 1950s, brutalism was in reality a radical philosophy best suited for the 1960s, which were defined, both on Georgetown’s campus and around the world, by counterculture and social change. Banham was ahead of his time, therefore, when he concluded his Architectural Review article by invoking modernity:

Remembering that an Image is what affects the emotions, that structure, in its fullest sense, is the relationship of parts, and that materials ‘as found’ are raw materials, we have worked our way back to the quotation... “L’Architecture, c’est, avec des Matières Bruts, etablir des rapports emouvants;” but we have worked our way to this point through such an awareness of history and its uses that we see that The New Brutalism, if it is architecture in the grand sense of Le Corbusier’s definition, is also architecture of our time and not of his, nor of Lubetkin’s, nor of the times of the Masters of the past. The quotation referenced by Banham is Le Corbusier’s from 1923, roughly translated as “architecture is to establish moving relationships with raw materials.” Banham’s point was that, for all true architecture, the nature of its moving relationships and the materials used to establish them are dependent on historical context. Paul Pelz thus designed Riggs Memorial Library to
be four stories of cast iron because, at the end of the nineteenth century, Georgetown University was evolving from a college into a university and aspired to boldly assert its greatness. In contrast, Warnecke designed Joseph Mark Lauinger Memorial Library to be brutalist because, in the middle of the twentieth century, Georgetown University was answering the Land O’ Lakes Statement’s call to be “a university in the full modern sense of the word.” Brutalism, an architectural philosophy more modern than modernism, was the best way to get there.

In a ceremony featuring Simon and Garfunkel’s “Scarborough Fair” alongside the traditional Latin invocation *Veni Creator Spiritus*, Lauinger Library opened its doors seven years after Fr. Bunn first announced the university’s commitment to replace Riggs. The National Capital Planning Commission and the Fine Arts Commission, from which Warnecke ultimately had to recuse himself during discussions about the project, slowed down the construction process by almost two years with a litany of concerns about the library’s site, design, and impact on the Washington, D.C. skyline. Fundraising for the project was also slower than anticipated, with 30% of the building’s $6 million cost ($43 million in 2014 dollars) ultimately coming from federal grants under the Higher Education Facilities Act, and the rest coming from private donors. The building’s name was decided just a few months before its opening; departing from a long tradition of memorializing Jesuits, the university chose to name the library after Joseph Mark Lauinger, an alumnus who had graduated in 1967 and been killed in 1970 while fighting in Vietnam.

When the building finally opened in April 1970, however, it received almost universal praise. Student reporter Wes Christenson wrote in *Georgetown Today* that “the reaction from students has bordered on the effusive.” After wrestling with different elements of the design, Wolf Von Eckardt declared in *The Washington Post*: “O.K., Jack Warnecke. I guess you win.” And in 1976, Warnecke and Lauinger Library received an award of merit from the American Institute of Architects. The building is not on the National Register of Historic Places, as it is claimed to be by many Georgetown students and faculty, but its opening was nonetheless historic.

**Lauinger’s Transformation**

Despite all the care displayed in its design and the fanfare that surrounded its opening, Lauinger Library is persistently lampooned today. *The Hoya’s* editorial board has called the building “physically ugly, outdated and decrepit,” a “monument to mediocrity,” and “a mark of shame on [Georgetown’s] campus.” The *Washington Voice* recently called it an “ugly edifice of evil” and “a hulking, concrete behemoth [that] visually assaults thousands of students every day.” According to *The Atlantic* in 2014, Lauinger Library is “nothing short of soul-crushing.” Even *The Washington Post*, which praised the building upon its completion, recently referred to it as “a bludgeoned hulk of exposed concrete.” The building’s reputation has clearly not withstood the test of time.

Modern commenters err in their criticism of Lauinger Library, however, by insisting on a framework of beauty—a framework deliberately rejected by John Carl Warnecke, who sought to construct a brutalist *image* that would provoke rather than please, that would make a statement about Georgetown and modernity by breaking with architectural convention. In meeting these goals, Warnecke was particularly successful. Lauinger Library is the boldest and most self-assured building on Georgetown’s campus as a result.

The interior of the library, however, is more deserving of its criticism. Lauinger Library was built primarily to fulfill “the functional requirements of a great university library,” which by the 1960s could no longer be fulfilled by the aging Riggs Memorial Library. But the functions of university libraries have changed significantly in the half century since Lauinger’s construction, and its interior spaces and passageways have not been updated at the same pace. Their declining
usefulness was highlighted by a 2014 survey of Georgetown students, which found low use of the study carrels that are the central element of Lauinger’s façade.33

A brutalist library for the digital age would focus both its form and its function on computer-based research, special collections, and spaces for group study and teaching. When Lauinger is ultimately renovated, perhaps it will do as much. For now, however, its interior makes it a brutalist library for the 1960s.

Critically, it is also a brutalist library of the 1960s—particularly of Georgetown University’s institutional and cultural revolution during the decade. Regardless of its misunderstood form and increasingly anachronistic function today, Lauinger Library is an architectural masterpiece of its time and a constant physical representation of the tensions that defined one of the most formative periods in Georgetown’s history. For that, it should be revered.

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Endnotes

From the Editor’s Desk

ABOUT THE TOCQUEVILLE FORUM
Free Speech and the Contemporary University

THE FORUM
Global Inequality and Open Borders
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 226.
5 Carens, The Ethics of Immigration, 226.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid., 225.
9 Ibid., 227.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 230.
12 Ibid., 227.
16 Miller, National Responsibility and Global Justice, 81.
17 Miller, “Justice and Global Inequality,” 196.
18 Miller, National Responsibility and Global Justice, 251.
19 Ibid., 66.
20 Ibid., 247.
21 Carens, The Ethics of Immigration, 238.
26 Ibid., 19.
27 Ibid., 8.
29 It is useful to briefly note another long-standing dispute between Carens and Miller: cosmopolitanism versus compatriot partiality. Miller supports compatriot partiality, or the prioritization on one’s fellow citizens, and he attacks Carens as a cosmopolitan. However, Carens and Miller cannot agree on what the terms cosmopolitanism and compatriot partiality mean, so any debate on the value of either is destined for failure. Both theorists allow for the prioritization of compatriots, as long as that is limited by a cosmopolitan concern for human rights. For more, see Miller’s Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016) and Joseph Carens’ “Why Do Political Philosophers Disagree? Reflections on David Miller’s Strangers in Our Midst,” (paper presented at the Berkeley Workshop in Law, Philosophy, and Political Theory, University of Toronto, September 8, 2017).
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32 Ibid., 160.
35 Ibid., 39
36 Ibid., 16
37 Ibid., 59
38 Ibid., 97.
39 Ibid., 33.

Ibid., 171.


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6 Ibid., 77.

7 Ibid., 78.

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9 Ibid., 82.

10 Ibid., 78.


13 Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Volume 1*, 207.

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25 Ibid., 107.

26 Ibid., 108.
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2. Trotter, A Frozen Hell.
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6. Trotter, A Frozen Hell.
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30 Ibid.

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3 Peter Sawyer, The Oxford Illustrated History of the Vikings (Oxford, New York: Oxford Uni-
versity Press, 1997), 222.
6 Else Roesdahl, David M. Wilson, From Viking to Crusader: The Scandinavians and Europe 800-
8 Rohan, Scott, The Hammer and Cross, 35.
9 Ibid., 30.


12 Roesdahl, *The Vikings*, 165.


16 Roesthal, *The Vikings*, 158.


19 Forte, Oram, Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 384.

20 Doxey, “Norwegian Crusaders and Balearic Islands,” 141.


23 Doxey, “Norwegian Crusaders and Balearic Islands,” 151.

24 Oliver, *The Vikings*, 223.


27 Forte, Oram, Pedersen, *Viking Empires*, 384.

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30 Oliver, *The Vikings*, 224.

**A Political Woman**


9 Ibid.


11 Ibid., 237.


13 Ibid., 68.


17 al-Qattan, “When Mothers Ate Their Children,” 725.

18 Ibid., 727.


20 Al-Qattan, “When Mothers Ate Their Children,” 720, 728, 731.


22 Ibid., 187.


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25 Tanielian, “Politics of Wartime Relief in Ottoman Beirut,” 74.


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51 Tanielian, “Politics of Wartime Relief in Ottoman Beirut,” 75.
52 Khalidi, Memoirs of an Arab Feminist, 72.

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3 Hall, “Plato’s Theory of Art: A Reassessment,” 78.
5 Ibid., 97e.
11 Figure 1: Piet Mondrian, *Farm scene with Tree in the Foreground and Irrigation Ditch* (c.1900), *The Red Tree* (1908), *Silver Tree* (1912), *The Flowering Apple Tree* (1912), *The Tree A (Arbre)
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14 Pheidias, Parthenon Frieze, c. 447-432 B.C.E., marble, London, British Museum and Athens, Acropolis Museum, Figure 2.
16 Ibid., 360.
17 Plato, Gorgias, 514a.
18 Ibid., 454e.
19 Ibid., 521d.
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22 Karelis, “Plato on Art and Reality,” 318.
25 Figure 3: Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles D’Avignon, (1907).
26 McMullen, “Painters’ Painting: Cubism,” 433.
27 McMullen, “Painters’ Painting: Cubism,” 433.
28 Figure 4: Peter Paul Reubens, Massacre of the Innocents, (1612).
30 Plato, Apology, 38a.
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34 Tunalí, “The Validity of Modern Art,” 163.

Truly a Person: An Examination of Vatican II in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

1 Pacem in Terris is an encyclical letter written by Pope John XXIII in 1963. While it was published during the time of Vatican II, it is not a Vatican II document because it was written by the Pope and not the Council. However, it was influential document for the era and impacted both Vatican II and the role of the Church after the Council so it will feature prominently in this paper.
2 The concept of the “third wave” was originally coined by Samuel P. Huntington in “Religion and the Third Wave,” The National Interest 24 (1991).


6 Huntington, “Religion and the Third Wave.”

7 Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 15.

8 *Ibid.*, 6. See also pages 2-3 for a discussion of the relationship of Catholic social teaching to the writings of Thomas Aquinas and the Bible.


13 In the *Letter Concerning Toleration*, John Locke states: “That Church can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate which is constituted upon such a bottom that all those who enter into it do thereby *ipso facto* deliver themselves up to the protection and service of another prince. For by this means the magistrate would give way to the settling of a foreign jurisdiction in his own country and suffer his own people to be listed, as it were, for soldiers against his own Government.” Insofar as Locke would have understood the Catholic Church to demand allegiance to the Pope, this principle would exclude Catholics from toleration or protection by the prince. See John Locke, *Letter Concerning Toleration*, trans. William Popple [1689], accessible at https://socialsciences.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3113/locke/toleration.pdf, 35.

14 One of Hugo Grotius’ major works, *De Imperio Summarum Potestatum Circa Sacra* (“On the Relations Between the Religious and Secular Authorities”) effectively sought to pursue a policy of Erastianism in the Dutch Republic, which would have effectively stripped religious officials of power and subordinated them to the state in order to grant the state the power to enforce religious toleration. Although primarily directed against certain Calvinist sects, this policy clearly would have prevented Catholics, or at least Catholics who continued to uphold the authority of the Church hierarchy, from being tolerated. See Harm-Jan Van Dam, “*De Imperio Summarum Potestatum Circa Sacra,*** ” in Hugo Grotius, *Theologian – Essays in Honor of G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes*, eds. Henk J.M. Nellen and Edwin Rabbie (New York: E.J. Brill, 1994). For a discussion of the relationship of early liberalism and Catholicism in England, see Clement Fatovic, “The Anti-Catholic Roots of Liberal and Republican Conceptions of Freedom in English Political Thought,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66, no. 1 (2005), 37-58.


Ibid.


See note 5, above.

Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 6. Catholic social teaching is generally agreed to begin with *Rerum Novarum*, though of course it was not the first encyclical to address issues of a social, economic, or political nature. Leo XIII is often considered the first Pope to expressly craft Catholic social teaching because he began the practice of utilizing neoscholastic approaches to theology and philosophy in order to develop his teachings, a practice that would continue with subsequent popes, albeit with some modifications.


Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 217.

Ibid., 224.


Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 153.

Ibid., 152.


Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 153.


Ibid.

Ibid., 39-40, 196.

Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 218.


Ibid., §30.

Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, 217.


Grasso and Hunt, “*Dignitatis Humanae*,” 3.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, §76.
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The Power of Prayer: Analyzing a Literary Medium for the Expression of Grief

4 Tennyson, lines 1-2.
5 Wordsworth, lines 119-120.
6 Ibid., line 103.

Alterity or Assimilation: The Myth and Life of Harold Abrahams

1 Chariots of Fire, directed by Hugh Hudson, script by Colin Welland (1981; United Kingdom: Warner Brothers and 20th Century Fox, 1981), DVD.
4 Pindar, 1-2.
5 Ibid., 3-4.
6 Ibid., 98-99
7 Ibid., 106, 109.
8 Ibid., 100-101
12 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Soltes, God and the Goalposts, 292.
32 Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice, 1.3.161-62, 4.1.100.
34 Soltes, God and the Goalposts, 292.
36 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 Soltes, God and the Goalposts, 282.
40 Ibid.
42 Ibid., 870.
43 Ibid., 878
44 Ibid., 282.
45 Ibid., 782.
46 Soltes, God and the Goalposts, 214.
48 Ibid., 217.
50 Ibid., 686.
51 Ibid., 686-687.
52 Soltes, God and the Goalposts, 214.
53 Ibid., 215.

56 Blake, “Jerusalem (from ‘Milton’),” 15-16.


58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

Stranger Things: Who Is the Invader?


3 Ibid.


9 The “Demogorgan” is the primary monster of the first season of Stranger Things: a faceless creature that eats humans.

10 The “Mind Flayer is the primary antagonist of the show’s second season: an enormous spider-like monster that disrupts the boundaries between the human world and the Upside Down.


15 Duffer, S2:E4 43:00.


20 Duffer, S2:E3 35:55.

21 Duffer, S2:E9 39:15.


26 Duffer, S2:E4 27:38.


THE CLOCK TOWER
The Past as Prologue: John Carl Warnecke and Georgetown University’s Landmark to the Sixties


Curran, A History of Georgetown University.


Ibid.


Le Corbusier, born Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, was a Swiss-French architect and urban planner who pioneered modernism. His Unité d’habitation principle (translated as “Housing Unit”) guided the construction of several major housing developments in France in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. The Unité d’habitation development in Marseille was his first, and it became particularly famous for its raw concrete exterior and functionalist interior which was intended to mimic an indoor city. Le Corbusier and his Unité d’habitation are widely seen as founding influences in the development of brutalism.


Ibid.


Banham, “The New Brutalism.”

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McCooey, “Georgetown University’s New Library An Architectural Landmark.”

Banham, “The New Brutalism.”


“Warnecke to Design Georgetown’s Million Volume, $6-Million Library.”

26 Von Eckardt, “Part of the Setting, Like the Ivy: Critique.”
33 Emily Guhde, “Re: Research Question,” email received by author, November 14, 2017.