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Why Read the Great Books?

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The Thinker, the Soldier, and the German: Reassessing the Sonderweg Debate and Hitler’s Path to Power

A Catalyst for Change: How the Economic Rupture of the First World War Redefined Brazilian Nationalism

Richard Pike and the Analogy of Divine Knowing

Robber Zhi and Daoism: A View from a Step Back

Cults, Drugs, and Secrecy: Mystical Allegory in Plato’s Symposium

The Case of Anne Conway: A Theologist Philosopher

The Function of Age in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Pushkin and Mandelshtam: A Diglossic Dialogue on Freedom from Within and Without

History of the Philodemic Society

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Dear Reader,

There is a dangerous new form of cultural discourse. Of course, it's not really new. In fact, like avarice and cruelty, it represents one of the basest and most fundamental qualities of man. And, upon further consideration, it doesn’t seem to be cultural either. Instead, it exists as one of the purest forms of anti-culture. Of cultural destruction.

The force I describe is the phenomenon of memes. Now, before you dismiss me as lame, inane, or some combination of the two, I should clarify that I don’t have as much of a problem with memes themselves as I do with the practice of mimetic discourse writ large. By this, I refer to a particular way of engaging with the world. A method of approaching and analyzing society. A new social priority that elevates simplicity and familiarity over comprehensive depth, complexion, and originality. A type of discourse whose raison d'être lies in a certain iterability—an ability for ideas to be packaged, replicated, and disseminated as widely as possible.

Such a process seems fundamentally antithetical to the very nature of cultural production. After all, culture exists as a displaced byproduct of human activity—the parsing of individual actions from their emotional and epistemological foundations. Through this great divorce—this rending of expression from experience—culture is born. Art, for instance, is elevated to a realm devoid of the grit and passion of its creation. The same holds true for myths; through the process of mythicization, the raw emotion that lends stories a sense of immediacy is drained away, replaced by an aestheticizing distance. In both cases, representations are displaced from the compelling and transformative constellation of emotions that beget them in the first place.

There are two modes by which such a process of displacement may occur. In the case of the first, the experiences which impress themselves heavily on the soul give rise to creative expressions—which are then treated with a sort of autotelic adoration. Great works that fall into this autotelic camp often embody something ineffable (but ubiquitous) in the human experience. They transcend the viewer, simultaneously convicting and resonating with her. The second mode, in contrast, is that of onanism. These works are placed firmly in the bounds of human comprehension. They exist as culture pursued as an end in and of itself—of the ineffable made attainable, of the transformative defanged.

Mimetic discourse falls firmly into this latter group. In this discourse I see something hollow and hubristic. It divulges a sense of apathy, an unwillingness to engage with more than superficial buzzwords, a fear of being transformed.

Indeed, while memes themselves are often largely innocuous, they are symptomatic of a larger shortcoming in society. In the process of creating a meme, an individual strips a facet of society from its context and elevates it to a place of faux glorification. Unlike many great works, which embody ideas greater than that of the artist herself, or satire, which takes seriously the ideas it critiques, mimetic dialogue encourages its interlocutors to approach the world with a sort of apathetic resignation. For those wearied from outrage at the world’s iniquities or fearful of the transformation that authentic encounters with others brings, mimetic discourse provides a type of escape. Through it, individuals can cherry-pick elements of the surrounding society, ridiculing and relegating them to pre-conceived ‘cultural’ schemas and heuristics.
This is the greatest danger that mimetic dialogue poses—and the characteristic that earns it its appellation of “onanistic.” Mimetic discourse is predicated on ‘cultural production.’ Gone are the experiences that beget that culture in the first place. Instead, these individuals seek to create taxonomies and conceptual models and then to populate them with atomized excerpts of popular discourse. In doing so, however, they both surrender themselves over to a sense of parochiality (in short, an inability to consider an argument in full) and render themselves incapable of being transformed by outside experience.

With *Utraque Unum*, we strive to defy this remanding tendency. In these fantastic pieces, the authors and editors worked to consider issues deeply, fully, and with a mind to the sense of transformation and discovery that true education brings. For this, and for the dedication and passion they brought to every word and phrase, I thank them immensely. In particular, I’d like to thank Professor Richard Boyd, Professor Thomas Kerch, and my editors: Mark McNiskin, Micah Musser, Emily Ren, Christof Kuehne, William Leo, and Carrie Connelly. Working with them for another semester has been an incredible honor.

As you read these pieces, I pray that you see them as products of humility and examples of an unremitting pursuit of truth. We wish to be transformed from without, and then to allow this transformation to inform our writing, ideas, and convictions. Thank you for reading this journal.

Best,

Jacob R. Dyson

*Editor-in-Chief*
Why Read the Great Books?

Professor Richard Boyd

Most readers know that the Tocqueville Forum for Political Understanding is mainly dedicated to studying the great works of the Western tradition for their insights into liberal democracy and the American regime. But in an increasingly global world, why bother reading “Great Books,” people often ask? A valid question—and one I will address momentarily—even if it is sometimes posed uninnocently. For the premise seems to be that there is no point in taking seriously the likes of Thucydides, Aristotle, Thomas Hobbes, or Alexis de Tocqueville, and indeed there may be a number of presumptive reasons for not reading them. They are all old—ancient in the cases of Thucydides or Aristotle. They and their canonical brethren are by and large white European males of what appear, at least from today’s vantage, to be conservative predilections. They often embrace, or seem to embrace, or at least write about arcane subjects such as monarchy, natural slavery, empire, and natural law that no sensible contemporary can countenance. They also don’t exactly scintillate usefulness along the lines of, say, econometrics, computer programming, or finance. One cannot blame skeptics who question their place in the curriculum. Why not jettison them for authors more germane to the preoccupations of 21st century liberal democrats or figures conspicuously missing from the canon of Western authors?

These questions may begin from the vantage of a hermeneutics of skepticism, but defenders of the canon nonetheless have an obligation to try to answer them. The salience of classical texts is a highly contentious but important topic in this day and age. What follows is my own modest attempt to sketch out some justifications for taking these works seriously as the centerpiece of a liberal arts education. This is not to say that these works should be read to the exclusion of numerous other worthy non-Western or non-canonical writers. It is only to make a plea for these texts as a common starting point for the liberal arts at Georgetown University.

The Distinctiveness of the Western Moral Tradition

As a Jesuit institution Georgetown University’s roots are to be found in a particular Western religious tradition. Insofar as Georgetown is committed to offering a liberal arts education, its mission remains inextricably tied to the ideas and texts that constitute that tradition. Non-Catholics such as myself respect Georgetown’s Jesuit inspiration for its secular virtues and its importance in underpinning a broader heritage of moral thinking, but many at Georgetown embrace this tradition as their own. Not even its most vociferous defenders, so far as I know, contend that Georgetown’s educational mission should be exhausted by its religious inheritance. And yet in its commitment to the dispassionate search for truth and the cultivation of the faculty of reason, its mission of caring for the whole moral person, and its aspiration to a life of public service, Georgetown’s motivations are deeply inflected by the ideas and thinkers of this tradition.

This tradition has peculiarities that are deserving of serious reflection. As someone who regularly teaches Aristotle, Aquinas, and Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr., I am constantly surprised by the unfamiliarity of that tradition to contemporary students—even many of those reared in Catholic and kindred Christian faiths. Understanding that tradition for many is to understand something important about themselves and their vocation during and beyond their time at Georgetown. Classical texts represent a gateway to apprehending the nature of one’s own regime—what distinguishes it, its virtues as well as its vices. Among the questions raised by these particular texts are the nature of law, its relationship to higher moral standards, and whether it may ever be legitimately resisted. They also help show why we possess a certain set of moral intuitions about justice, fairness, or equality.

Even so, it would be a mistake to dismiss the Western moral tradition as of no significance to those who come to Washington, DC from other national, religious, or cultural traditions. Wherever in the world one hails from, virtually every member of the Georgetown community has to some degree been affected—for better or worse—by the footprint of this same Western political and moral tradition. Whether by the vibrant intellectual cross-fertilizations in the medieval and early modern periods between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism; the direct or mediated effects of colonialism; the sway of Marxian ideas over various regimes in Europe, Asia, or Latin America; or the degree to which late modern political thought has shaped the ethos of modernity—Western civilization matters for all of us. Capitalism and liberal modernity are outgrowths of ideas, institutions, and practices of this particular tradition, and as such it is almost impossible to find a culture or nation untouched by its effects. The Western canon inhabits us all to varying degrees. We understand our condition by reflecting on its resources and liabilities.

The Universality of Human Experience

One rationale for studying Western civilization is its disproportionate influence on the contemporary world. Yet another possible argument rests on the way its texts reach toward a transcendent universality. One theme of ancient Greek political philosophy is its search for human experiences that cut across civilizational differences. Plato’s doctrine of the Forms suggests that certain truths exist outside the illusory reflections (and cultural variations) of the Cave. The Platonic Socrates evinces skepticism about mere opinions and laws while exemplifying a search for truth. Aristotle likewise aspires to find a standard of nature according to which existing institutions might be judged. They and others in the Western tradition operate on the assumption that some experiences are common to the human condition. Western or non-Western, ancient or contemporary, all societies struggle with problems of order, as Hobbes wisely counselled. John Locke asserted that human beings are all naturally free and equal, and the legitimacy of government depends on the consent of the people. Thinkers from Sophocles to Aquinas, Locke to King, maintain that the justice or injustice of laws can be adjudicated according to higher standards of natural law. And so it goes for countless themes and conundrums that reappear perennially in the history of political thought—Western and non-Western alike.

Why do these themes speak to an embracing universality? Because so often the considered reaction of readers of, say, Aristophanes or Hobbes or Tocqueville is how closely the questions they broached in their age mirror the dilemmas we confront in the here and now. Questions about whether there is one best regime or whether fitness and suitability matter; whether capitalism and liberal democracy ennoble or debase the human condition; whether the best human life consists in active political engagement or contemplative withdrawal—these and other themes remain very much alive today. In fact, it is doubtful whether our own answers have advanced much if at all beyond the very best efforts of the past. Most importantly these are human questions that resonate powerfully across multiple traditions.
Socratic Self-Examination

The dilemmas raised by the Western canon are obviously important for societal—even political—reasons. What can we learn about political ethics from Machiavelli or Thucydides, or about designing constitutional government from *The Federalist*? But our motivations for reading canonical texts may be deeply personal: that is, because they shed light on our own individual lives and experiences. How much of what we think we know is the product of contingency and acculturation? Are the beliefs that inform our day-to-day lives the products of reasoned validation and self-examination, as John Stuart Mill insisted they ought to be, or are they articles of faith we’ve adopted as the prevailing opinions (that is to say, prejudices) of our day?

Students of all religions, cultures, and backgrounds wrestle with basic questions about what it means to live a good life. About the nature of human happiness, and how it is most reliably acquired. Does human flourishing require a certain degree of economic self-sufficiency, as Aristotle maintained? Or does the untrammeled pursuit of wealth as an end in itself lead one away from truly important things, as Rousseau and Marx complained? Which among the many goods we desire can be classified as genuine needs as opposed to mere wants, and how does the modern society in which we live foster their multiplication and confounding?

These and other questions about how to flourish are perennial themes in the Western canon, and they speak to the lives and experiences of young people from all traditions and ways of life.

Canons as Confrontations with Difference

One common justification for disregarding the Western canon in favor of “global” or “diverse” authors is that by doing so one brings readers into contact with traditions that are unfamiliar. This view rightly objects to fixating on one’s own parochial tradition, and appreciates that wisdom can often be gleaned by examining things that are new and different.

However, the same argument about unfamiliarity just as easily underwrites the study of ancient or early modern texts such as Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine or even Hobbes. Upon first impression most readers find these canonical texts to be alien, if not altogether bewildering. Does a contemporary student feel any less disoriented when reading Plato or Aristotle—that is, “Western” canonical ancient Greek authors—than exploring the writings of Gandhi or Fanon? If the anthropological undertaking of exploring difference merely for the sake of sampling unfamiliarity is the sole justification for reading a text, most canonical authors from the 15th or 17th centuries are just as alien—if not more so—as Islamic, Hindu or Confucian writers of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Beginning one’s study with the canon need not preclude—indeed it seems to entail—the extension of that project to new vistas. Going all the way back to the ancient Greeks, the project of political philosophy was born from the activity of comparison. Plato’s Socrates and Athenian Stranger compare the laws of one city with those of another, learning from differences with an eye to constructing the best possible regime. That being said, we must be cautious that this broadening and inclusion not amount to a risible “survey” of other cultures and traditions just for the sake of tasting something new. One argument for an education centered around a canon is that it is only by commencing with knowledge of one tradition that we can undertake genuine comparisons, weighing something new and unfamiliar against something already known and understood. Without any common experiences to relate to we risk presenting difference merely for the sake of difference.

Canons and Crises?

The political theorist Sheldon Wolin famously suggested that much of canonical political thought was the product of crises. Political turmoil and social upheaval have a way of casting...
Why Read the Great Books?

all reigning orthodoxies, conventions, and even institutions into doubt. It is no accident that the Peloponnesian War, the fall of the Roman Empire, the English Civil War, or the American Revolution were periods of great intellectual fertility. Episodes like these cry out for far-sighted interpreters whose insights have a way of speaking to the ages. Moments of transition and turmoil demand new visions of social and political life, and as such these occasions are sources of especially powerful and enduring statements about the human condition.

One wonders if the rough converse of Wolin’s thesis does not underscore the urgent need to turn to the classics right now? That is, if crises tend to generate great political ideas, then maybe great ideas are of particular relevance in times of cultural and political upheaval?

Everywhere one turns contemporary pundits wring their hands over the fate of liberal democracy, lament the threat of populism, assert the fragility of political order, hypothesize the nature of totalitarianism, and debate the meaning of citizenship. No matter how novel or iconoclastic their contributions, these interventions in 21st century political commentary are part of a larger conversation that extends backward at least 2500 years. Where better to find knowledge of these subjects than in the most insightful writers of the past who confronted their own versions of these perennial political conundrums?

Conclusion

The so-called “Great Books” of the Western canon have fallen out of favor in some quarters, but I hope the preceding thoughts provide at least a few grounds for regarding them as the starting point—although by no means the conclusion—of a liberal arts education at Georgetown. They are deeply perceptive books that speak to common experiences and perennial questions that remain front and center in the 21st century. They offer an entryway into a larger transhistorical conversation whose latest chapter may be found in the very fine student essays included in this number.

Richard Boyd
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Rights to What Doesn’t Exist
Our Moral Obligation to Make Others’ Ends Achievable

Matt Maury

The question of just entitlements is central to both political and moral philosophy. In the political language of rights, many progressives contend that individuals have a “right” to such resources as food, housing, and healthcare. In the moral sphere, questions abound about the obligations of one with power over a resource to those who need that resource. This piece examines this issue in two general settings through the framework of Kantian morality. The first setting is the static case: it treats a particular arrangement of resource production and distribution as given. Conditional on such an arrangement, moral agents must determine what obligations they have for sharing resources with others. The second setting is the dynamic case. Here, the status quo is not given, and individuals decide to which plausible future reality they ought to aspire. The dynamic case requires the examination of not only what is, but what could be. It allows for the potential of new technologies, new entitlement schemes (the strict right to property being a subset of this), and an expanded stock of resources.

In this process I arrive at a central principle for approaching the issue of moral obligations. The resource button principle states that when an individual can push a button that will deliver resources necessary for others’ attainment of their ends, with some necessary restrictions, that individual is obliged to push the button. In what follows I will provide reasoning for this principle, discuss the conditions needed for its validity, and some of its implications for persons’ ethical resource obligations to others.

I. Background Principles

In this section I touch on four Kantian principles necessary for proceeding in this paper. These are the first Categorical Imperative, the Formulation of Humanity, the Principle of Benevolence, and, lastly, the Kantian legislative perspective. The first three all come directly from Kant, and the final one comes from the Kantian scholar Thomas E. Hill.

The first Categorical Imperative (CI) states that persons must “act only in accordance with that maxim through which (they) can at the same time will that it become a universal law.”¹ If some principle cannot be adopted universally by all agents in some scenario, that principle should not be adopted by any person in that specific scenario.

The Formulation of Humanity (FH) requires that persons always treat humanity as an end
in itself and never simply as a means.² The FH grounds the idea that each person possesses unconditional worth and inherent dignity. This dignity “is elevated above all price, and admits of no equivalent.”³ Ethical resource arrangements and obligations thus cannot ‘exchange’ the dignity of different persons, but must treat such dignity as inalienable.

Kant’s wide imperfect duty of benevolence states that persons must make the happiness of others, or rather the ends of others, their own ends as well.⁴ By “wide imperfection” of duty, Kant means that adopting the maxim of making others’ ends our own is a duty, however it can be put in action in varying ways depending on “what each human being’s true needs are in view of his sensibilities.”⁵

Finally, in the Kantian legislative perspective advanced by Hill, persons evaluate the ethics of actions and policies by acting as ‘legislators’ in the ‘kingdom of ends.’ An action or policy satisfies the demands of the legislative perspective if any rational being can stand in the legislative position, abstract from his or her own subjective ends, and uphold that the action or policy is justified. It is justified if it significantly promotes persons’ pursuit of their ends as rational beings.⁶ This principle too will be highly useful moving forward.

II. The Resource Button and Static Status Quo

I proceed in the static case as follows. I first touch on the resource obligations persons are strictly not obligated to have. This restrictive case gives a loose view of the sphere within which the resource button principle cannot apply, and in turn implies the cases where the principle may apply. I then proceed to argue for the resource button principle, discuss some of its implications, and specifically argue that the principle has non-trivial implications within the static case.

The clearest potential resource obligation persons must not have is one that undermines their dignity. The person living in abject poverty must not be obliged to share resources with the person living on marginally less. For the former individual to have any obligation to the latter would be to recognize the humanity in the latter person but not in the former. This clearly is not universalizable (it contradicts the CI). Moreover, in having any ‘less poor’ person needing to share resources with a ‘more poor’ person, we commit a second mistake of not honoring the former person as an end in himself. Indeed, such a transfer makes the former simply a means to the sustenance of the latter. This is the case here because the former person is still so poor that taking anything from him will necessarily constitute a preclusion of his own ability to meet his basic needs such as food and shelter. As such, transferring resources from one person to the other in this case creates a strict ‘him versus her’ dichotomy. Taking from him for her thus makes him truly a means for the sake of her. This comes close to being a verbatim negation of what the FH requires. I therefore conclude that the case outlined in this paragraph is an example of a potential resource obligation that could exist but in fact must not.

The extreme case mentioned above is but a specific illustration of a general class of impermissible material obligations to others. Such impermissible material obligations do not simply exist for ‘less destitute’ people interacting with the ‘more destitute.’ Impermissibility can exist in any instance where an obligation one would have undermines a person’s ability to achieve a specific, legitimate, and substantive end he or she sets. As such, a person who chooses to devote her life to art, when she alternatively could make a high income and give plentifully to others, simply does not infringe upon a moral obligation of providing resources to others. For her life choices to be such an infringement would be to preclude herself from setting an end presumably integral to her honoring the humanity in her own person. This also violates the FH. This example demonstrates the breadth of impermissible material obligations. It also hints at what in general constitutes an impermissible material obligation: an obligation to give resources when doing so precludes oneself from pursuing an
end integral to honoring the humanity in one’s own person. This impermissibility of material obligations clearly applies to any lifestyle that itself does not diminish the ability of others to set their own ends. I call this established result the obligation restriction.

Note that this is only the case where a person’s legitimate end runs directly at odds with a hypothetical material obligation. In so far as a person can set an end, live out that end, and still meet some level of material obligation to others, the end set does not undermine the material obligation. Take the case of Jeff Bezos. Set aside here arguments that his ends undermine some ends of others. Jeff Bezos can both start and run an innovative online retail company and use some of whatever excess wealth from that endeavor to satisfy some material obligations we derive. His end with his company and some types of material obligation do not mutually exclude each other: they can coexist. One can both live a specific lifestyle as an end he sets, and, should that lifestyle result in excess wealth, meet some forms of material obligation to others. There is a separation between the end set and the material obligation here.

It may now seem appropriate to extend the analysis to examine which ends a person can permissibly set given that others have set ends of their own. For the sake of germaneness and brevity, I avoid this discussion. On this I only comment that it is clearly non-universalizable for a collection of persons to set mutually exclusive ends. That is, such mutually conflicting ends violate the CI.

I now put forth the resource button principle. As before, I begin with an extreme case. Say that the static situation happens to involve a person with some stock of wealth that he will never be allowed to use. Moreover, this person is readily aware of some person who cannot achieve her set ends due to inadequate resources. The aforementioned wealth stock would be sufficient, or even merely necessary, for eliminating that person’s inability to achieve their ends. At the push of a button, the person with control of (without access to) the wealth can deploy these resources to those end-setters who cannot at present achieve the ends they set. Lastly, it is guaranteed that each member of this group would use the wealth to achieve their legitimate ends, should they receive the resources.

I have set up the problem in a way such that it would not be non-universalizable for the button-pusher to be obliged to push. That is, in pushing the button, the button-pusher does not undermine any ends of his, nor does he reduce his array of means for achieving a given end. He also does not threaten others’ ends in pushing the button: pushing the button only advances others’ ability to advance their ends. We can therefore say that if there were an obligation to push the button, it would not violate the principle we have already established for what a person cannot be obliged to do.

I now hold that the benevolence principle requires pushing the button. As stated above, the duty of benevolence is imperfect; it can be put in practice in different ways by different people (I call this pluralism of action). Even with this pluralism of action, to not push the button here would violate the maxim of benevolence. This being a violation of the benevolence principle follows for two reasons.

First, the existence of but two options of action transforms this issue from one of pluralism to absolutism. There is no wide spectrum here of different actions that all conform with (likely with varying degrees) the principle of benevolence. This absolutism means that if one option clearly and strictly violates the duty of benevolence, the other option must be the ethical one. The second reason uses the first and the claim that not pushing the button directly violates the principle of benevolence. The reason why not pushing the button strictly violates the benevolence principle is that one who has as her end others’ ends would push the button in order to fulfill this end. The reason for this is that the absolutism of this scenario - pushing or not pushing - leaves no spectrum of varying extents to which the benevolence principle can be
upheld. On one hand, the person can simply do something (not push) that fails to demonstrate the adoption of the benevolence maxim. On the other, the person can perform the sole other action available, which happens to also further the benevolence principle: push the button. This clarity of not pushing being an act that fails to actualize the benevolence principle, while pushing being an act that honors it, makes it the case that the benevolence principle requires pushing the button.

I now conclude that the combination of the benevolence principle requiring the pushing of the button, coupled with the universalizability of pushing the button (as the case has been set up - I make this argument above), in tandem make pushing the button obligatory. I have thus derived the resource button principle.

A comprehensive or exhaustive examination of persons’ moral material obligations to others would be impossible here. I aim only to touch loosely on the positive obligations to others that persons could reasonably have. The first principle established sets a large restriction on what such material obligations may entail. In contrast, the resource button principle sets the framework through which we can view whether or not someone has an obligation to another in a particular scenario. No doubt the example provided is extreme, unrealistic, and overly absolute. And yet it carries massive implications for material obligations generally. Again, with the case of Jeff Bezos (still extreme, but obviously more realistic): we have already established that it would not be inherently contradictory for Jeff Bezos to have some level of material obligation to others. I hold that the resource button principle makes it the case that Jeff Bezos has a material obligation to those without sufficient resources.

The question of whether or not Bezos should assist others with some of their resource necessities is actually not so different from the question of pushing the resource button. Bezos can still pursue his goals at Amazon (again, setting aside claims that Amazon inherently undermines others’ ability to pursue their ends), and also give some of the resources he has power over to those who need them. Moreover, him using some of the resources he has power over to hire people to decide how to apply those resources to assisting those who need them is more-or-less tantamount to creating the resource button. It now follows, by my reasoning for the necessity of pushing the resource button, that Bezos must then take the further step of giving some of his resources to those who need them (through the path formed by his initial step of first effectively “creating the resource button”).

The most notable counter here is that even if Bezos must push the button, I have not established his obligation to create the button. In extension, he therefore is not obligated to go through the process of creating and pushing the button (at least not based on what I have argued thus far). However, so long as Bezos lives in a world with countless charities to which he could donate at the push of a button, the resource button principle still applies. This is crucial, for it generalizes this obligation beyond multi-billionaires to anyone who qualifies for some level of material obligation not also contradicted by the obligation restriction (established above).

Recall that the resource button principle applies not only when a person pushing the button would transfer resources sufficient for recipients to achieve their ends. The resource principle applies also when the resources transferred are simply necessary for fulfilling the recipients’ ends. As such, we can apply the moral obligation principle to any person with sufficiently many resources that the obligation restriction does not apply.

This broadened applicability of the resource button principle introduces a huge array of questions involving what personal ends are sufficiently legitimate as to justify the inapplicability of the principle. The particulars of these questions largely rest outside the scope of this paper. I finish here by demonstrating the existence of ends not sufficiently legitimate as to put them above those of others. Specifically, I demonstrate the non-triviality of the resource button principle.
Hill’s legislative perspective helps make this demonstration. If there exist insufficiently legitimate ends, it must be that any person, including those with such ends, can stand in the legislative position and reason that they ought to give some of their resources to others instead of use them for the ends in question. This means that any person who abstracts from her subjective ends, and those of others, upholds that the end of the others has moral or substantive weight, while the subjective ends abstracted from do not.

I first note that Kant unambiguously condemns some ends as immoral; he regards some potential ends as carrying the obligation for us not to take up. This means that when we consider between one potentially legitimate end of a potential resource-giver and a legitimate end of a potential benefactor, we have already reduced the ends we evaluate from the entire class of ends a person can possibly set. Thus, an end of deceit or murder is categorically precluded here. So too is a pharmacy manufacture price-gouging medically-necessary drugs. Price-gouging rather clearly contradicts the FH as well as the Maxim of Benevolence. This trivially demonstrates that a person must forgo some ends for the sake of moral obligation to others. But is this the case for ends that are not categorically impermissible? What of “superficial” ones that might not strike all as unambiguously immoral? I will examine this in the case of consumerism for its own sake.

Moving back to Hill’s legislative perspective, it must be that any person, including those with the end of consumerism as such, upholds that consumerism must be curtailed when pitted against others’ ends—say, for example, of having their basic physical needs met. This is not and cannot be a mere “cost-benefit analysis,” however. If limiting the ability to achieve the end of consumerism is permissible, it must be that any person can stand in the legislative position and uphold that doing so increases the ends of persons in the kingdom of ends.

It is immediately clear that persons having their basic needs met who otherwise would not substantially increases their ability to further their ends. That is, limiting the end of consumerism overall promotes the end-setting abilities of persons in the kingdom of ends. Further, the person who can no longer pursue the end of consumerism to the same extent (a) does not have his dignity undermined, and (b) still has an immense array of ends available to him. Claim (a) results from the fact that dignity is intimately linked with regarding a person as an end in himself. A person can both be regarded as an end as such and also be restricted from purchasing an exorbitantly-priced watch. One can buy a more inexpensive watch and also pursue a wide array of other ends. Concisely, limiting consumerism does not seem to constitute undermining dignity. This claim is not, however, unambiguously true unless (b) also holds. (b) follows from the fact that the person in question is not, and in fact cannot, be obliged to limit just any end. Ends that do not so closely come at odds with those of others cannot be abandoned. Nor can ends to further specific talents one has (in fact, Kant argues that persons have a moral obligation to promote these).? This leaves immense opportunities for the consumer, who we already have assumed has sufficient resources to pursue many of such ends. The person can lead religious lifestyles, pursue art, interact with friends and family, make academic discoveries, and pursue business endeavors, among many other ends. All of these are more closely linked with who a person is, and hence whether or not she is regarded as an end in herself. These potential alternative ends also further provide a substitute for any gap left from reducing the ability to pursue consumerism.

To demonstrate once and for all that consumerism can be limited using the legislative perspective, I employ the fact that those in the legislative perspective must conform with the CI. It is not universalizable to permit unchecked consumerism, on the ground that it is an end, at the expense of the basic needs of others. Were this universalizable, a person with total control of all resources in a society could employ them solely to this consumerism, while the rest
starved. Such a result directly contradicts the FH and the Principle of Benevolence, therefore demonstrating the non-universalizability of unchecked consumerism as an end. This incompatibility of unchecked consumerism with the legislative perspective and the CI means that unchecked consumerism cannot always be a morally legitimate end. Using the legislative perspective to evaluate this feebly justifiable end against that of fulfilling basic physical needs makes it clear that the consumerism must be curtailed to satisfy others’ basic physical needs (resource button principle).

I have argued that the resource button principle applies—in some capacity—to all in the static resource case for resources in sufficient excess of what is needed for fulfilling basic needs. I have also demonstrated the non-triviality of this principle: that it at times requires one to forgo some subjective ends in promotion of those of others.

III. Implications of the Desert Principle for the Dynamic Case

Recall that in the dynamic case, the status quo is not given, and individuals decide to which new structure or setup (potential reality) of their controllable environment they ought to aspire. This case requires the examination of not only what is, but what could be. It allows for the potential of new technologies, new entitlement schemes (the strict right to property being a subset of this), and expanded stocks of one or multiple resources being achievable.

I now note that the benevolence principle does not depend on some basic resource scheme or reality being met. It requires no specific qualifications or standards to be valid. This characteristic, and the fact that it is the key grounding for the resource button principle, makes it the case that we can extend the resource button principle to the dynamic case. This makes examining material obligations in the dynamic case particularly convenient. Such obligations can often be taken as analogous to those in the static case.

For brevity’s sake, I examine the dynamic case in one specific example: food provision in a society that does not presently have sufficient food to sustain all of its inhabitants.

Pushing the resource button seems meaningless when there are not resources for the button to signal to provide. In other words, it is nice to say that someone should get the food he needs when that food exists, but the statement is hollow, trivial, even annoying, when food cannot be provided because it simply does not exist. The food button principle’s applicability to the dynamic case can however shed insight into the obligations of persons in the food-insufficient society.

I now argue that when presented with multiple choices of action, with a subset of them allowing the potential of people actually (eventually) getting the food they need, persons have the moral obligation to do so. This argument applies independent of the extent to which a person has influence over whether or not the food-impoveryed persons eventually get the food they need. So, the argument applies just as much to a person deciding who to cast her vote for as it does to the decisions of an agribusiness CEO on business strategy and innovation endeavors.

The moral obligation to act in ways that advance the prospect of persons eventually getting the food they need, when presented with opportunities to do so, follows from a similar argument as that used to initially argue for the resource button principle. This already means that insofar as acting mutually excludes a wide range of ends one has set for herself, the obligation does not apply. However, in the still-wider sphere within which fulfilling personal ends and the obligation can coexist, the obligation still holds. The reasoning is simple: acting in ways that could eventually provide persons with the food they need is but an altered case of the initial one used when presenting the resource button principle. There is little substantive difference between doing something that will, with certainty, have a desired effect, and doing something that could eventually have that effect.

Insofar as some possible individual action upholds the benevolence principle, and another does not, the same original reasoning for the
resource button principle (in the static case) applies here. There are no doubt important questions about the extent to which the benevolence principle must be upheld in these sorts of cases. In extension, there are important questions about the specific actions that the resource button principle requires in the dynamic case. But the fact is that an array of choices being presented to a person, some of which upholding the benevolence principle and some of which not, creates some level of obligatory action of the person. As such, the resource button principle can and does extend to the dynamic case.

So, when a voter in a famished society has the opportunity to vote for a politician who promises to (try) and mitigate the problem of food, or for another who does not make such a promise, or does not treat the issue with comparable import, the voter has the moral obligation to vote for the former politician. This is analogous to pushing the resource button. And when the agribusiness CEO (considered independently of the shareholders and board with whom she must make decisions—and who of course also have these obligations) decides how to spend business resources, if one spending strategy will help the hungry meet their legitimate ends of obtaining food, be that strategy increased innovation on crop yields or expanded area of farming, the CEO has the moral obligation to do so.

These two cases give an initial taste of the requirements of the resource button principle when the a morally desirable result cannot immediately be actualized. I hope that my choice of examples demonstrates that the obligation applies to virtually all people, even if they are presented with differing degrees to which they can influence persons’ abilities to meet their ends. One does not need to have a guaranteed result to have an obligation to act in a way that could further the desired result. Further, the resource button principle allows for wide “means of compliance.” Different people have different ways that they personally must uphold this principle.

Finally, while avoiding discussing the matter in depth, I note that the same reasoning for the resource button principle’s non-triviality in the static case can extend to the dynamic one. The resource-button principle is non-trivial in both the static and dynamic cases.

IV. Conclusion

I have long found it strange to say that a person has a right to something that does not exist. It is kind to say that a person in a society without enough food has a right to have enough food, but it is trivial, and analogous with housing, healthcare, and medical treatments that have not yet been invented. In this essay I used Kantian moral philosophy to advance, defend, and explore the implications of a principle that works to address this issue. The resource button principle provides a framework in both the static and dynamic cases for what material obligations we owe. Most notably, it helps touch on the slew of questions raised by the issue of moral obligations to people whose ends require what does not currently exist.

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Temple of Augustus

The veneration of great statesmen is ubiquitous throughout history. Individuals who fill the quintessential roles of founder, conqueror, unifier, and peacebringer are rightly honored by their grateful nations. The veneration of such figures also serves as a source of unifying national pride; memorials expressing public gratitude to the individuals themselves serve as legitimizing forces for their political heirs, as well as symbols for the ideals of the state itself. In Ancient Rome, cults and accompanying temples were created to honor such great men as Julius Caesar and Augustus—emperors who were deified and became divi. In the United States, monuments, memorials, and works of art honor great American Presidents like George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and Thomas Jefferson.

The veneration of these figures via art and monumental architecture was inspired by classical forms and symbols: notably the Phidian Zeus, Egyptian Obelisk, Parthenon, Pantheon, and the mausoleums of Halicarnassus, Augustus, and Hadrian, as well as neoclassical structures like the Dome de Invalides. The monuments to honor these Presidents took on a similar role to that of temples to Roman divi, with both serving as focal points for “worship” and remembrance. This “worship” helped mythologize these Presidents and turn them into American divi, although the veneration of these figures never reached the same level of fervency that accompanied worship of Roman divi. In Rome, these men became literal gods; in the United States, these men nearly reached saintly status but are in no way worshiped as gods themselves. During the late republic and early imperial period of Rome, worshiping living people as gods was viewed as taboo, as figures were only elevated to godhood upon their death. This taboo and need to maintain the facade of Republican rule under the imperator help explain why even Augustus avoided declaring himself a god in the Res Gestae during his lifetime. However, many Romans saw a tangential association with divinity as an acceptable means of self-promotion, with Julius Caesar claiming Venus as an ancestor and subsequently building a temple to Venus Genitrix, and Augustus achieving much the same thing through the worship of abstract concepts like the Concordia Augusta, or the Augustan peace, while honoring his newly defied father Caesar. In the United States, meanwhile, taboos against worshiping heroic figures remain in place even after death.

This difference in veneration practice and attitude can be accounted for by the distinct cultural forces at work in the United States relative to early Imperial Rome. First, the separation of church and state, established by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, prohibits state religious action, thereby limiting the extent to which the state can encourage the worship of these figures (whereas, in the
Roman Empire, the Imperial Cults were heavily supported by the state). Second, the Christian monotheism of the early United States prevented the worship of gods in a polytheistic sense. The closest version of polytheistic worship by Christians is the veneration of saints espoused by the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, when we consider honored American figures and Roman divi, it may be useful to view Catholic saints as a sort of middle ground between the two, with these revered American figures serving as a sort of “civic saints.” The United States also possesses a strong cultural distaste for monarchy, and indeed owes the birth of our nation to a fight to escape the chains of monarchical tyranny. While Rome also shared this cultural distaste for kingship, the Roman world as a whole was much more culturally familiar with monarch worship, as evidenced by the deification of Hellenistic kings. Finally, the United States has a strongly proclaimed belief in egalitarianism—one which never really existed in the extremely hierarchical Rome. As a result, there has been a historic tension within the United States between remembering the greatness of individuals and seeking to maintain the importance of egalitarian ideals.

The clearest example of an American deity, if such thing exists, is George Washington. The American Cincinnatus has achieved a mythical status among Americans and is perhaps the most the well-regarded and unifying person in American history. More than that of any other person, the greatness of George Washington is conflated with the greatness of America itself; as such, any representation of Washington is seen as embodying the grandeur and power of the United States. Washington is regularly referred to and regarded as the father of his country and has hence been honored in more ways than any subsequent American. This honorific dates back to Republican Rome, during which the title of pater patriae would be conferred by the Senate onto those Romans who were determined to have served Rome in some extraordinarily eminent way (with Cicero being one notable recipient).² George Washington has reached comparable heights in the public consciousness, to such an extent that he is frequently viewed as more of a mythologized being than a man. Stories like his
honest confession to chopping down his father’s cherry tree are so fantastically apocryphal that they seem only matched by those fantastical stories found in ancient sources involving the likes of Caesar and Alexander’s formative years and early triumphs. Washington, like the man-made gods Caesar and Alexander, was seemingly predestined for greatness.

This greatness is memorialized by repeat depictions of Washington as a god-like figure: Horatio Greenough’s statue of Washington, Constantino Brumidi’s *Apotheosis of Washington*, and the gargantuan Washington Monument in Washington D.C. all provide evidence of this tendency. Greenough’s statue of Washington depicts Washington in the only way that Greenough believed worthy of such an incredible man: as a god (see figure 1). Greenough’s model for Washington was “what the neoclassical period believed was the greatest statue ever created, by the greatest sculptor who ever lived—the Elean Zeus of Phidias,” (see figure 2).⁴

This choice came despite the commission of Congress stipulating that the statue should be equestrian. The use of Zeus, the *pater deorum* of the Olympians, symbolically reflects the role Washington embodies as *pater patriae* when he forged the multitude of squabbling states into a single unified nation. The statue also crucially portrays Washington both as a soldier (via his holding of a sword) and as a statesman who graciously gives up power (represented by his offering up of the sword to the viewer). In this way, Greenough’s Washington embodies Washington’s most revered action: the peaceful surrender of power, first as general of the Continental Army, and then after serving two terms as President of the United States. However, despite the powerful symbolism in Greenough’s Washington and defenses by such notable 19th century classicists as Edward Everett, the statue faced fierce pushback immediately following its installation in the Capitol Rotunda. Simply put, the statue failed to acceptably meet the American public’s view of Washington as a modern warrior and statesman. Washington’s depiction as a partially-nude Zeus clashed fundamentally with the more heroic vision of a Washington on a white horse that the public expected. Rather than being viewed as sober, it was declared to be “a ridiculous affair, and instead of demanding admiration, excites only laughter.”⁵

If Greenough’s statue only alludes to Washington’s ascendancy to godhood; in the painting, Washington is seated among a plethora of classical deities, each striving to aid America in some way, while Washington himself wears his general’s uniform in combination with the purple toga of a Roman emperor. Interestingly, this fresco was met with greater public support than Greenough’s statue, despite being far more blatant in its divine associations. Perhaps it is the democratic representation of a myriad of prominent Americans among the Olympians: Minerva is seen instructing Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Morse, and Robert Fulton in their roles as inventors and Mercury aids the fledgling United States by providing gold to Robert Morris (an unsung hero of the war who in large part financed the Continental Army). Thus, the *Apotheosis of Washington* not only honors Washington but also serves as a Pantheon honoring other notable Americans. The greater public support for the fresco relative to Greenough’s Washington may also be attributed to the fact that Washington is...
clothed in the fresco. The public’s discomfort with
a partially-nude Washington and the resulting
scorn it generated cannot be understated—it led
to the removal of Greenough’s Washington from
the Capitol Rotunda. In contrast, the enduring
popularity of the *Apotheosis of Washington* is
clearly demonstrated by its continued display
inside the Capitol Rotunda.

The Washington Monument erected on the
National Mall proved to be the most troublesome
of the three works honoring Washington. For
instance, the enormous scale of the monument
ensured that it would engender much debate
and controversy. From the beginning, people
understood that erecting a vast national
monument to Washington would serve more
than a monument to a man—it would also
be emblematic of the nation as a whole and
seek to answer the question of sort of nation
America was meant to be. Was America an
imperial power bent on expansion and fueled
by slavery? Was America a simple Republic
built through the efforts of Jefferson’s “virtuous
yeomen farmers”? The struggle to resolve these
questions not only dogged the creation of the
Washington Monument, but also served to
highlight the quintessential connections that
especially early America had with Rome during
the early Republic and Imperial periods. Both
countries struggled to reconcile how to balance
the founding ideals of the state with the needs
and commercial interests of empire. Many in the
United States, including prominent figures Mark
Twain and Andrew Carnegie, struggled to accept
the increasingly imperialist policies enacted
by the U.S towards such states as Cuba and
the Philippines during the late 19th century as
consistent with the democratic ideals expressed
by the United States.

The original design for the monument,
created by Robert Mill, demonstrates this conflict
(see figure 4).

Mill’s design possessed the distinctive obelisk
we know today, although it was only conceived
as one feature among many. Mill originally
planned on having a Doric colonnade crowned
with Washington in a Roman imperial chariot
ring; the colonnade was intended as a Pantheon
for all the American revolutionary heroes, the obelisk a special tribute for Washington, and the chariot a symbolic representation of the United States’ unceasing expansion. This great monolith seems to ignore Washington the man and emphasize Washington the myth. Its vastness was the “ultimate act of monumental aggrandizement, outshining the capital and dashing the building’s claim to the comparative center” of Washington D.C.⁷

The Washington Monument designs changed dramatically following the Civil War. Mill’s ornate design was replaced with the blueprint for a colossal unadorned obelisk (see figure 5), the brainchild of Colonel Casey of the Army Corp of Engineers. This change in style reflects Casey’s more practical concerns regarding the engineering of such a vast monolith and the realization that attempts to consolidate the plethora of different designs for the Washington Monument would result in chaos. Casey’s refusal to add ornamentation to the monument was heavily criticized by contemporaries who believed that monuments should be didactic in nature and feature images or inscription. Many art critics suggested that friezes similar to those decorating Trajan’s Column be placed on the Monument because they believed that their absence would make the Monument little better than a “vast pile” or “mighty chimney.”⁸ However, by the time the Washington Monument was completed, the monument transcended both Washington as a myth and a man through its “technological ingenuity, scale, and strength.”⁹ No obvious reference is made to Washington by the monument; instead, the structure, completed a little over two decades after the end of the Civil War, demonstrates the “international power” and progress of the nation itself.

Following the Civil War, America owed Lincoln an enormous debt of gratitude. The admiration held for Lincoln has only ever been matched by the reverence shown Washington. For many Americans, Lincoln has come to embody a set of aspirational ideals involving American democracy, republican unity, sacrifice, and equality. The expression of these ideals represented the heart of the design process for the Lincoln Memorial (see figure 6).

As the architect Henry Bacon details, the monument was intended to have four main sections:¹⁰ the first section, or left ala containing the Gettysburg Address, was meant to commemorate the Gettysburg Address and the ideals of sacrifice and democracy expressed within; the right ala was meant to preserve Lincoln’s Second Inaugural and the aspirational ideals of equality it expresses; the exterior of the monument is meant as a symbol of the democratic Union which Lincoln so fervently strove to protect,¹¹ in which the exterior peripteral colonnade of thirty-six columns symbolizes the states that were part of the Union during Lincoln’s lifetime;¹² and the fourth and most important aspect of the monument serves as a memorial to Lincoln himself. Bacon argued that “the most important object is the statue of Lincoln” as a divus (see figure 7), which is modeled on ancient descriptions of the Statue of Zeus at Olympia and radiates Lincoln’s stoic determination (see figure 2).⁴ As Kirk Savage notes, “the colossal Lincoln holds a pose that is majestically upright, much like the olympic figure Taft, Roosevelt, and others wanted him to be.”¹³ The emphasis on the statue of Lincoln furthers the role of the Lincoln Memorial as a temple to a martyred hero who was killed before his vision for a unified nation became a reality.

Even with the memorial’s Greek inspiration, the Lincoln Memorial cannot help but be viewed as highly Roman in form. The
Memorial repeatedly utilizes Roman symbols of republicanism such as fasces and eagles; in Rome, the fasces represented the power of life and death that officers of the Republic (e.g., consuls or magistrates) possessed in their area of imperium, as well as the power of a united Republic (see figure 8). This symbolism, in turn, reflects Lincoln’s own occasionally heavy-handed use of executive power to maintain a united United States. The Memorial’s incredibly high podium allows visitors to the monument to trek up in order to visit the Great Emancipator, offering access to one of the best vistas in D.C. and giving visitors the chance to experience the breathtaking view of the Reflecting Pool, Washington Monument, and Capitol Building. The very existence of this vista also highlights a degree of frontality in the Memorial itself, which is reminiscent of Roman architecture. Bacon’s design purposefully evokes patriotic unity, bravery in the face of adversity, determination in the face of injustice, and, most importantly, enshrines Lincoln in the American national consciousness. Above the statue of Lincoln are the words, “In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.” The Lincoln Memorial has certainly fulfilled its purpose of enshrining Lincoln’s memory, and continues to serve as an unparalleled focal point for the cult of Lincoln.14

The Grant Mausoleum is unique among these buildings because it was designed as a mausoleum. Towards the end of his life, Grant was in a dire financial situation and was struggling to complete his memoirs just to provide for his family after his death. As such, he had no grand estates similar to Monticello or Mount Vernon to be buried at. As a result, the method of his burial became a somewhat open question, with various locales vying for the honor of memorializing Grant. Public outcry to create a suitable monument for Grant was immense. Unlike the Lincoln Memorial, the Grant Mausoleum was created in the immediate aftermath of President Grant’s death. The rapid memorialization of Grant is reminiscent of the deification process of Julius Caesar, in which the people of Rome almost immediately commemorated Caesar with the construction of a 20-foot tall column of Numidian marble. The monument possessed the inscription of parenti patriae or “To the Parent of His country.”15 Similarly, many Americans hailed Grant as “the greatest man of our century” after his death and, like Caesar, Grant was indelibly remembered as a “military victor” and “conqueror.”16 Like the Numidian Column, the Grant Mausoleum was a...
grassroots effort at memorialization rather than a top-down effort, in which the Grant Memorial Association ultimately raised an incredible $600,000. (In comparison, the Statue of Liberty had cost $700,000.) This massive fundraising drive represents the deep gratitude and pride ordinary Americans felt to Grant and serves as a reminder that many monuments do not simply come about via state efforts to strengthen itself through the use of symbols, but also as a result of the genuine feelings of a populace which wishes to honor an extraordinary human being.  

From the beginning, the Grant Mausoleum was intended to function almost solely as a monument to Grant himself. It was created in an atmosphere of frenzied monument building; following the Civil War, the nation witnessed an explosion of monuments to individual soldiers, generals, regiments, state militias, and battles. The most popular form for these monuments were so called “shaft” monuments consisting variously of pillars, square podiums or obelisks, and often crowned with some form of statue commemorating the fallen. One need only go to Gettysburg and see the ubiquity of small shaft monuments to individual regiments, along with the larger columnar monuments like the New York State Monument, to experience the popularity of “shaft” monuments. The Grant Memorial stands in specific contrast to this trend because many felt that using the ubiquitous shaft form would somehow belittle the man who many considered had done as much or more than Abraham Lincoln to preserve the Union and win the Civil War.  

Duncan’s explicit goal in designing the Mausoleum was “to produce an edifice which shall be unmistakably a Monumental Tomb, no matter from what point of view it may be seen,” (see figure 9). Unlike the Lincoln and Jefferson memorial, which were based on temples, the Grant Mausoleum is modeled on those great classical and neoclassical mausoleums that preceded it and honored such extraordinary figures as Hadrian and Napoleon. The clearest sources of inspiration for the Grant Mausoleum are the Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, the Mausoleum of Hadrian, and the Dome de Invalides. The Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, serves as inspiration for the square first floor topped with a colonnaded second floor. The
Mausoleum of Hadrian, which itself was inspired by the tumuli Mausoleum of Augustus, serves as inspiration for the circular drum shaped second floor (see figure 10). Both floors remain consistent with traditional Vitruvian principles by maintaining a set of Doric columns on the ground floor and ionic columns above them. Both also feature the proper corresponding ornamentations, including triglyphs and metopes for the Doric section and an architrave featuring three *fasciae* for the ionic order. A notable deviation comes in the form of the smallest set of engaged columns at the top of the structure; rather than the expected Corinthian columns, there are columns in the form of fases, crowned with an Imperial or American eagle. These columns serve as the monument’s most direct allusion to Roman republicanism. The use of the fasces is symbolically reminiscent of their use in the Lincoln Memorial and evokes Grant’s role as a unifier of the nation and as a military leader. The recessed sunken crypt for the sarcophagi of President and First Lady Grant was acknowledged by Duncan to be a derivation of “L. Visconti’s monumental design for the Tomb of Napoleon in the Dome de Invalides.”

The Grant Monument Association intended the Grant Mausoleum to be “generally evocative of the ancient world and the final resting place of a great leader.” In this, it succeeded: following its completion, the Grant Mausoleum became a place of pilgrimage for approximately 500,000 people a year until the cult and memory of Grant faded around the First World War.

The creation of the Jefferson Memorial highlights the inherently political nature of monumental architecture. The creation of monuments to Lincoln and Grant had served the crucial purpose of providing a powerful “origin story” and sense of legitimacy for the Republican party, just as the deification of Julius Caesar had aided Augustus and the deification and emulation of Augustus aided all subsequent emperors. Until 1922, the two monuments to Grant and Lincoln had been created to memorialize these two behemoth Republicans, but no similar monument had been created in Washington to honor a Democratic President; this changed with the creation of the Jefferson Memorial. The Senate Park Commission of 1902 described the Tidal Basin as a place worthy of a “great memorial,” and perhaps even “a Pantheon” (see figure 11). Initially, many monuments had been proposed for the Tidal Basin location until a monument to Jefferson was ultimately selected over one to Teddy Roosevelt. This choice was most likely the result of two factors: since FDR was in office at the time, it would have looked politically inappropriate for FDR to create a grand monument to his distant cousin and uncle-in-law; more importantly, the political leaders of the time felt a keen pressure to normalize the Democratic administration. In the 12 years that the Democrats held the presidency—between the end of Grant’s term in 1877 and the start of FDR’s in 1933—they had chiefly been known as the racist, anti-Lincoln, anti-Republican, party of the South. Memorializing Jefferson as a founder and “patron saint” of the Democratic party allowed Democrats to trace their lineage to more noble roots, just as Caesar sought to do by tracing his lineage to Aeneas and Venus. Memorializing Jefferson also highlighted an additional “origin myth” of the United States in the form of...

The members of the Jefferson Memorial Commission wished to exceed the classical grandeur of the Lincoln Memorial and create a new shrine to Jefferson. To do so, they selected the form of the Pantheon, the revolutionary Roman temple created by Agrippa and restored under Hadrian, as the Democratic answer to the Republican Pantheon. Initial plans by John Russell Pope, who had lost to Bacon in the design competition for the Lincoln Memorial, planned to make the memorial twenty-one feet taller than the Lincoln Memorial.\(^27\) Even members of FDR’s family objected to the monstrous size; Frederic Delano, FDR’s uncle, wrote to his nephew in horror about how “in an effort to outdo the Lincoln Memorial, [the Jefferson Memorial] is half again as large,” and “in an effort to be imposing, it proposes to have 57 steps up to the main floor.”\(^25\) This reluctance to outdo the Lincoln Memorial mirrors the supposed reluctance of Hadrian to outdo Augustus’s Mausoleum.\(^20\) Either effort would have been viewed as the height of arrogance by contemporaries.

The neoclassical plan was met with some resistance by Republicans, who did not wish to honor Jefferson, and by modernists, who opposed the neoclassical plan overall. Milton Horn, president of the American Sculptors Society, argued that the Jefferson Commission “has now elected to erect an empty shell… a hollow mockery of a spirit which embodies an ideal.”\(^30\) Others, such as the landscape architect Gilmore Clarke, argued that an imperial Roman temple was not in keeping with American values. Frank Lloyd Wright called the design an “arrogant insult to the memory of Thomas Jefferson,”\(^31\) and derided it as a piece of “feudal art” contrary to Jefferson’s “noble spirit of progress and freedom.”\(^32\) While these criticisms were overridden by the fervent support of FDR, who ended up favoring a scaled back version of Pope’s Pantheon plan, the strengthening opposition to neoclassical monumental architecture has been clearly manifested in the comparatively scant construction of such monuments since Jefferson’s. By the time FDR was memorialized in 1991, neoclassical memorials were a thing of the past; now, FDR’s memorial is much more accessible and egalitarian. People are able to walk through FDR’s presidency and stand before the life-sized and approachable statues, in contrast to the imposing statues of men like Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln.

Pope largely succeeded in creating an American Pantheon to Jefferson, although the creation of a Pantheon, or temple to all the gods, for a single man does seem ironic; however, it is worth recognizing in counterpoint that the memorial also memorializes Jefferson’s proudest achievements in the pursuit of American ideals. Quotations on the walls of the Jefferson memorial represent his support for freedom, found in the Declaration of Independence; tolerance, found in Virginia Act of Religious Liberties; progress, as detailed in a letter to Samuel Kercheval on the need for education; and opposition to slavery, as recorded in a number of different sources.\(^33\) Notably absent is Jefferson’s role as a slave owner. This omission again underscores the idea so prevalent in classical memorial architecture: that only the best of a man should be honored and with the more troubling aspects of a historical figure’s life whitewashed. Monumental architecture is particularly potent at this sort of whitewashing of history; the very nature of massive statues and marble temples create the
illusion that the figures commemorated within are super-human in quality and as perfect as the temples and monuments made to commemorate them.

Overall, Pope’s Pantheon shares the key features of its Roman inspiration in regards to its rectangular entryway, high podia, and distinctive circular structure (see figure 12), although he notably diverges from the Pantheon by failing to include an oculus. The decision to have the Memorial be unenclosed was a deliberate attempt to allow for its appreciation from all sides via a Greek-style peripteral colonnade. To maintain architectural consistency, ionic rather than Corinthian columns were used for the colonnade around the circular sections of the monument. While the monument’s peripteral nature is clearly Greek in origin, the use of these columns to create a colonnade is Greco-Roman and evokes the classical ideal that deep contemplation, the sort of contemplation this monument is meant to inspire, requires a serene place to walk and wonder about the world. This idea of a colonnade is further strengthened by the natural shaded portico in the form of the cherry trees which ring the Tidal Basin around the Memorial.

The choice of material for these monuments was also salient in the construction of the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials. The Lincoln Memorial includes the use of Massachusetts granite, Colorado marble, Indiana limestone, pink Tennessee marble, and Alabama marble. Beyond the strictly aesthetic considerations, these stones were chosen to represent the reunification of a country previously torn apart by war. In regards to the Jefferson Memorial, the choice of marble and granite from Vermont and Georgia reflects the “geographic extremes of the original 13 states,” while the use of stone from western states highlights Jefferson’s role in American expansion via the Louisiana Purchase. The use of stone from a variety of sources to illustrate power was by no means a new phenomenon, as the Pantheon featured a wide variety of stone from across the Roman empire. The marble floor includes exotic marble like Egyptian porphyry and Numidian marble. Even more impressive is the use of 40 Roman foot-long Egyptian granite columns, each of which was carved from a single piece of stone.

The neoclassical monuments which honor such immense American figures as Washington, Lincoln, Grant, and Jefferson are incredible to behold. Like the Roman use of their temples to divi like Julius Caesar and Augustus, these monuments evoke national pride and serve as a source of unity and strength for the nation while legitimizing the American democratic system. Their solemnity and majesty inspire us to ponder the ideals that make America great while also helping memorialize the men as heroes for our nation to aspire to. In attempting memorialize Lincoln, Grant, and Jefferson, the architects Bacon, Duncan, and Pope turned to classical architecture for inspiration and masterfully utilized and reinterpreted Greco-Roman forms and symbols. At times this proved controversial and seemingly at odds with American values, but in the end, the tools of antiquities’ greatest republic and greatest democracy were fittingly reused to commemorate four men who helped, in turn, to found our nation, defeat its enemies, and, perhaps most significantly, provide America with a “new birth of freedom.”

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Albert Speer, the chief architect and later Minister of Armaments and War Production of the Third Reich, referred to Adolf Hitler and his rule as “one of those inexplicable historical phenomena which emerge at rare intervals among mankind, whose person determined the face of the nation.”¹ This dictatorship has been seen as a “paradigm for the twentieth century,” and the “negative greatness” of the “unperson” Hitler has forced many of its survivors to not only attempt to come to terms with its actions, but also to try and trace its causes.² According to ‘Sonderweg’ historians David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, Hitler’s Germany of 1933-1945 has become “a standard by which historical enormities are measured and outrage registered,” acquiring a “moral dimension [that] is now one of the peculiarities of German history.”³

This paper explores the long- and short-term historical dimensions of the Sonderweg debate and identifies certain aspects of the German psyche and geopolitical history that particularly influenced Hitler to become the leader he was. In doing so, it takes the position that Hitler’s skills and sentiments allowed him to become something of a “perfect storm,” synthesizing both the distress of the indigent post-World War 1 German countryside and the multiparty chaos of the wavering country. Whether this perfect storm fulfilled or violated the prophetical Sonderweg theory is unclear, but we can clearly see that the figure of Adolf Hitler is no shocking outlier apropos of the prevailing opinions and sentiments of his time. Where he does stand out is his success in subverting the plans of the old German elite—a societal stratum comparatively unique to Germany who, despite patronizing many of his plans, nevertheless failed to exert influence over him.

The idea among German historians of a distinctive German ‘special path,’ or a Sonderweg, began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁴ This almost teleological view of “German exceptionalism”⁵ originated from both long- and short-term perspectives of Germany’s historical and geographical uniqueness (i.e. comprising both the immediate post-WW1 period and the time before then). On a higher level, nationalist historians emphasized an ideological difference between German ‘Kultur’ and Western ‘Zivilisation.’ Germans saw their ‘Kultur’ as superior to decadent Western civilization; one striking manifestation of this is evidenced in German economist Werner Sombart’s contrast of the German “hero” and the British “trader.” This common theme in German thought—the dichotomy of the spiritually wholesome, tasteful, ‘giving’ hero versus the shallow, opportunistic, ‘taking’ trader—was simultaneously embraced by such prominent German intellects as Thomas Mann and Martin Heidegger.⁶
Often referred to as the “ideas of 1914,” this positive, cultural variant of the Sonderweg reached its zenith with the end of the First World War, when it was revitalized by the German historians Otto Hintze and Ernst Troeltsch. For Germans taken up by the post-war ‘Kulturkrieg’ sentiment, American capitalism and Soviet communism appeared as “the same dreary technological frenzy, the same unrestricted organization of the average man.”

Many scholars have attributed a “[tendency] towards irrationalism, the glorification of martial virtues, the abject obedience of the ‘subject’ (Unterten), inwardness, and contempt for supposedly mechanical western values” to the “peculiar” German intellectual mind of the time—[these] were variously seen as characteristic German aberrations from enlightened western ways of thinking.”

These early German historians felt a sense of national superiority over the ideas of the French Revolution (although after the total defeat of Germany in 1945, this overtly positive opinion of the Sonderweg was largely discredited).

The post-1945 debate, meanwhile, focused more critically on the liberal-democratic genesis of German modernity; drawing from the theories of Friedrich Engels and Max Weber, historians in this period focused on the historical conditions leading to Hitler’s dictatorship. In particular, these scholars found themselves drawn to the question of why Germany, during the general crisis of the 1920s and 1930s, became fascist and totalitarian (while its developed peers in the north and west did not). These long-term developmental questions were always framed in a comparative context; as such, the western, parliamentary nations of England and France were used as ‘norms’ against which to compare Helmut Plessner’s ‘verspätete Nation’ of Germany. Historians emphasized Germany’s characteristic ‘lateness’ (and subsequent governmental peculiarity) when compared to its ‘western’ counterparts. In doing so, scholars like Hans-Ulrich Wehler, who believed that Germany had “suffered the stain of uniqueness stemming from a maimed path to modernity,” emphasized the delayed and weak parliametaryization of the German constitutional monarchy. According to this paradigm, crippled development led to a pronounced “strong statist tradition” in the German state; this, in turn, led to an association between social reform and efficient and sophisticated civil service—not the revolts of enraged masses like those of eighteenth century France. While the Stuarts, Bourbons, and Romanovs faced intense pressure from below, a Hohenzollern had never lost his head.

Another one of the “several continuities” that preserved the Sonderweg idea in German historiography was the post-industrial ‘Obrigkeitsstaat’ of the old Prussian Junker elite, the imperial ruling class. This authoritarian state combined with both the “traditional (‘pre-industrial’) norms, mentalities and life-styles (e.g. authoritarian patterns and the anti-proletarian claims of the lower-middle classes)” and “the militaristic elements in the political culture of the middle and upper classes – e.g. the ‘Reserveoffizier’” to beget a society receptive to the conception of a Sonderweg.

This thesis is somewhat challenged, however, by the presence of the Bürgertum middle class. Although some scholars contend that this group was weaker in influence and social capital than its peers in the rest of Europe (due to a failed social revolution in 1848-49), research also shows that these individuals comprised a vibrant ‘Mittelstand,’ and that the ‘Bildungsbürgertum’ (the “educated and cultivated bourgeoisie”) was “strong and clearly contoured,” with aristocratic influence on them no greater than in other parts of the continent. Scholars have further argued that the Kaiserreich, the second German empire, was “full of modern dynamism” — particularly in science, scholarship, art, and culture. Based on this view, the Bielefeld School historian Jürgen Kocka made the claim that Nazism was “less as a result of premodern residues and anachronistic traditions than as a phenomenon of modernity itself.” Despite this counterpoint, however, many historians still concede that the German bourgeoisie had less of
an impact on its society than that of France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.\textsuperscript{24}

Within the academic milieu, and particularly at a 1981 colloquium at the Institut für Zeitgeschichte (where Karl Dietrich Bracher, Ernst Nolte, and many other prominent historians were present), scholars began to take issue with the application of the “Normalwegen” concept to the study of state development.\textsuperscript{25} This normative view, beyond implying some sort of general western socio-political superiority through its presupposition of a ‘divergence from the West,’ could also imply that Germany “was only shocked into becoming a ‘normal’ liberal state by undergoing the purgative rigors of National Socialism.”\textsuperscript{26} Simply put, all serious scholars were cautious in terms of how closely they wished to link the long-term history of a people and their nation with the atrocities of Nazism. Many believed that the future of the German empire was "more open than we once thought," and not a necessary path to 1933.\textsuperscript{27} Blackbourn and Eley, meanwhile, provided a "necessary corrective to this 'uniqueness' argument" with their \textit{Mythen deutscher Geschichtsschreibung}, later expanded into English as \textit{The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and Politics in Nineteenth Century Germany}.\textsuperscript{28}

In the shorter-term, meanwhile, the Sonderweg was also evaluated in the context of Germany’s early twentieth century negative experiences: a humiliating and extremely punitive military defeat in World War One (a loss that was not realized or recognized by most of its citizenry);\textsuperscript{29} ignominy in international affairs and trade; and serious national, and later global, economic difficulties. These events, despite being immediate predecessors of National Socialism (along with the retrospective long-term forces of “late nation-building, illiberal cultures, [and] blocked parliamentarization”) are nevertheless not seen by many historians as “[leading] directly and necessarily to 1933.”\textsuperscript{30} As a result, much of contemporary scholastic debate has pivoted towards evaluations Adolf Hitler’s manifestation of the alleged German ‘characteristics’ and whether he was the natural consequence of “the lost war”— in short, whether Nazism was inevitable, or whether “even at the end of 1932 the run to National Socialism could still have been avoided.”\textsuperscript{31} In seeking to address this question, I will characterize this period as Hitler’s great opportunity for ascendancy—particularly because of the desire of the old elite to maintain influence.

Indeed, as the NS-Zeit (i.e. Nazi era), once seen as the great climax where “German and world history were tied more closely than at any other time in modern history,”\textsuperscript{32} increasingly became a relic of the past, practitioners of the Sonderweg paradigm began to address how this ‘special path’ could be applied to the Federal Republic and even to the defunct DDR. However, the relevancy of the Sonderweg in contemporary German society has often been refuted by historians; Blackbourn and Eley, for instance, claim that the end of the Third Reich and its integration into Western liberal consumerist democracy equally spelled the end of the notion of German particularism. Germany is perceived by many to have transitioned into another generic Western state, as evidenced by the ‘Stunde Null’ appellation imparted on the year 1945.\textsuperscript{33}

Though this ‘cookie-cutter’ impression exists, many historians sought and still seek vestiges of potential Sonderweg qualities in the national and social character of the German people. These qualities, positive and negative, often have to do with the stereotypes of Kafkaesque bureaucracy, impressive economic capacity, and morose outlooks on life. They do reflect a thought experiment among academics to not view 1945 as the ‘Sonderend,’ or the absolute end of Germany’s special path, but instead as a pre-history of the Federal Republic.\textsuperscript{34} Though problematic insofar as this line of thought could imply the Holocaust paved the way for a liberalized Germany, this idea stems from a general belief that “historians should stop staring at Hitler, free themselves from the ‘shadow’ of National Socialism, and develop a less constrained, more balanced view of German history as a whole.”\textsuperscript{35} The reality
is, however, that Hitler and his ‘Bewegung,’ or movement, were shadows of some of the most radical sentiments of the German people, brought to a head by extreme circumstances. The knowledge of Hitler’s intellectual influences throughout his younger years presents us with the seeds of these radical sentiments. Hitler the thinker can be clearly understood as a product of many contemporary German ideas, and his extreme applications, though irrational, are more in-keeping with his particular episteme than many would believe. Historians know, for example, that Hitler claimed to have grown up listening to the epic operas of the ultra-traditionalist Wagner (particularly the Götterdämmerung) in the very parochial town of Linz in Austria, and that his first experiences with true cosmopolitanism were during his stay in Vienna, which he described as “the granite-hard fundament of [his] later actions.” He later claimed to have left Vienna “as an absolute Anti-Semite, as a mortal enemy of the entire Marxist world view,” and during his stay, he came under the influence of a variety of political pulp that was circulated around the streets under the anti-Semitic mayor Karl Lueger.

These pan-German street publications, like the aristophical works of Guido von List and the anti-Semitic issues of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels’s Ostara (Liebenfels was known as the “man who gave Hitler his ideas”), have been reliably recorded as influences on Hitler. Liebenfels even recalled a haggard man, likely Hitler, arriving in his office in search of back-issues of his magazine. Combined with the radical Austrian pan-German von Schönerer movement, of which Hitler’s father was a supporter, and other more wide-spread nationalist/völkisch publications like the Deutsches Volksblatt, we can see that those relatively radical ideas, not at all far from the tone and affected aura of Nazism and certainly not original to Hitler, found their way into his ideology.

While it can be imagined that Hitler never completely fleshed out his Weltanschauung, or worldview, and that it was a vague set of pan-German notions completed instead by his subordinates as they ‘worked towards the Führer,’ one could state that he, once in power, “sought to expel that part of the German self that, in his view, was a source of weakness and taint.” He saw human history as a history of racial struggle, and thereby this sentiment was at “the epicenter of the Nazi assault on civilization.” This idea of internal weakness in a people was not original to him, and it was in fact a historical neurosis of many Germans. Though Hitler’s application was extreme, the culture around him and the periodicals he read fed him these powerful ideas.

One can clearly see this sentiment manifested in the history of German Southwest Africa, particularly in the relationship dynamic between the Herero and Nama tribes and the German colonials. Germany held present-day Namibia as a colony from 1884 to 1915, and in 2016 openly admitted that from 1904 to 1907 the German Empire committed the first genocide of the twentieth century on those two tribes after colonial conflicts broke out. This genocide involved the use of concentration camps and deadly forced labor, not unlike the intermediate steps of Hitler’s Final Solution. When contemplating a possible winding road from ‘Windhoek to Auschwitz,’ it is important to look at exactly how the Kaiserreich justified this behavior and how its colonists viewed Africans. In doing so, one can see the original psychological roots of Hitler’s racial program.

Southwest African tribes were not, at least initially, viewed as biologically inferior or ‘cultural destroyers,’ as the Jews were in NS-Germany. They were treated almost analogously to the later Russian POWs: as an individually expendable but economically indispensable servile workforce to be governed by an imperial German elite while on the quest for Lebensraum. Rather than “a biologically derived understanding of an intrinsic, genetic Germanity that stood to be polluted through racial mixing, […] race in colonial-era Germany was a marker of hierarchical distinctions that were essentially social
in nature." Miscegenation, or “going native” (verkaffern), however, was still viewed as disgraceful and sometimes unlawful, particularly more so by those residing in the colony than by those in the Berlin Colonial Office. This social differentiation between the Germans and tribes is believed to stem from “a far-reaching phobia of the Germans that they would lose their own identity and as a result lose political control” of the colony, as there had already been violent rebellions that were put down with extreme force by the military commander Lothar von Trotha.

More than racial ‘pollution,’ the Germans feared a loss of racial ‘prestige’: the prospect that their African servants would cease to respect their bosses. This “asserted socio-political inferiority” resulted in an anxiety over an “enemy within” the “internal frontiers” of the empire and a concern about the social and political allegiances of any ‘Mischlinge,’ or mixed race persons. It is this fear, turned toward many factions and demographics within Germany, that would inspire the idea of “being stabbed in the back” by internal subversives. It would also give rise to a “discourse of biological racism.”

While the WWI victors France and Britain were able to maintain control of their colonies, German experienced a “catastrophic failure... to maintain parity with or hegemony over other European powers” and “sought internal as well as external grounds” for this national failure. “The fear of [the Mischlinge] polluting the body politic,” theorized by the German eugenicist Eugen Fischer, would transfer into Hitler’s hatred of “blood-poisoning German Jews.” The language of the times even began to reflect later Nazi terminology, such as the colonial military commander Lothar von Trotha’s statement: “I destroy the African tribes with streams of blood [...] Only following this cleansing can something new emerge, which will remain” — a statement made as he carried out the Namaqua-Herero genocide.

The idea of Hitler as an influenced thinker can now be expanded with a greater qualification: that of Hitler the soldier as a politically motivated product of 1918. His military connection indelibly tied him to the old Junker elite, who were desperately trying to maintain significance in a swiftly-evolving Germany. Better known as the Obrigkeitststaat (the provider of reform and certainty), the state had been viewed paternally by its Bürger and had not failed them until the loss of 1918. Confused and defeated, the German population was done with the Kaiser, who went off into an exile of chopping trees and country walks. “Traditional state-oriented expectations” persisted among the lower middle classes, which boiled “into resentment against the new system when it proved to be incapable of protecting them against the forces of modernization.”

The failed liberal democracy of the Weimar Republic would replace Wilhelm II, while the old Beamtenstum and military remained discontentedly in the background, exerting influence wherever possible. Many historians have asserted that it was the populace’s reactionary tone toward the new government that eventually undermined it with consequences they could not foresee: the rise of a ‘bürgerlich’ Third Reich.

This was certainly true of the WWI general Erich Ludendorff, a Social Darwinist who, despite seeing great opportunity for the young Hitler (he was even present with him at the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch), later distanced himself from the ambitious young corporal. Ludendorff even went so far as to denounce Hitler after his ascension to power, stating that: “I solemnly prophesy that this accursed man will cast our Reich into the abyss and bring our nation to inconceivable misery. Future generations will damn you [Hitler] in your grave for what you have done.”

The nobles, like the Hanfstaengls, tried to make the parochial Hitler respectable with the eventual intent of taming him. This pattern is true of many of the old Junker nobles and military men of imperial Germany; angered by their lost legitimacy and the unfair punishment delivered to their land, these individuals “survived and contributed to the particular weakness of the Weimar democracy, and to the fact that it collapsed in the Great Depression while other,
more stable democracies in the west survived.”

Many, particularly exiled Kaiser Wilhelm II, hoped Hitler would win the war and create an anti-liberal, Christian, and Jew- and Briton-free United States of Europe. In a congratulatory May 1940 telegraph, Wilhelm told Hitler, “My Führer, I congratulate you and hope that under your marvelous leadership the German monarchy will be restored completely,” to which the maverick Hitler remarked to his valet, Linge: “What an idiot!”

Hitler was just the person to garner the support of the upset establishment, whether it be wandering first world war veterans like Erich Ludendorff and Hermann Goring, or any of his patron ‘Hitler-Muttis.’ He was a soldier with two iron crosses (however dubious his combat record was) and could easily empathize and commiserate with both his trench comrades and former leadership (who were brought closer together by the equalizing straights of war and)— particularly due to his role as a dispatcher between higher-ranked officers. A staunch advocate of the “stabbed in the back” post-war sentiment and trained by the remaining military to lecture against communism, he posed as a young ‘old-guard’ politician, formed completely by German history, who could appeal to all discontent classes in the republic (except perhaps the KPD (German Communist Party) members).

These influential sections of the Junker elite (the ‘stirrup-holders for Hitler’) began to form greater and greater numbers of professional paramilitary entities (e.g. the skeleton Reichswehr and Freikorps), distancing themselves from some previous aristocratic distinctions. The old elite saw in Hitler a necessary anti-system populist, indirectly related back to them, “to tacitly represent them against the liberal and left-wing elements of the ‘system’.” As the 1914 conservatives became Hugenberg’s German National People’s Party (DNVP), the pre-1914 Agrarian League became Weimar Reichslandbund, and the Kaiser abdicated to an eventual Hindenburg, Hitler stood as another candidate for the manipulative Junker continuity. What made Hitler special, as evident by Ludendorf’s later feelings, is that he “rode the tiger” of right-wing political demagoguery and then successfully broke the continuity planned by the Old Gang.

The journalist Konrad Heiden, who in 1936 published an early biography of Hitler, was the most on-point in his assertion that Hitler had been grossly underestimated. Using the old elite—the Papens, Hindenburgs, and Schleichers with their respective institutions—to gain social leverage, Hitler also would take advantage of the both efficient and coldly detached ways of the Beamtentum bureaucracy (though he dreaded the idea of becoming a civil servant, like his father, as a youth). In fact, the traditional civil service of Germany was just right for facilitating Hitler’s far-reaching and sometimes grandiose plans. Jürgen Kocka has observed that the German bureaucratic tradition “eased the early transformation into a social welfare state and reinforced this in the long-run, helping to provide this society with a degree of disciplined achievement-orientation that has much to recommend it and can in no way be taken for granted.”

This would carry on in Hitler’s acronym-ridden empire, as it has been speculated that this disassociated bureaucratic tradition, infamous for the quotes of “I was just following orders” and “That was not my department,” “helps to explain why there was so little resistance to government-sponsored atrocities in the 1930s and 1940s.”

Hitler’s ascent thereby resembles a typical ascent of a powerful leader within a group. He began as a nobody with strong convictions and a little training, a stalwart follower of an ideology, who entered an ideological group with the goal of honest service to further that group’s beliefs. Dissatisfied with the level of commitment and quality of the ideology of the group’s other members and its leaders, he began to take a more participatory and vocal role in the group and eventually gained the attention of those members and leaders, garnering both patronage and notoriety. It was from here that he went from “drummer” of the party to its Führer. To reiterate, military service was both the greatest
political motivator of Hitler and his greatest qualifier, as his post-WWI Reichswehr training both paved the nationalist route for the discontented corporal, and prevented the creation of another red-armband wearing Bavarian Soviet advocate (an idea with which Hitler had very possibly flirted while in attendance of the social democrat Kurt Eisner’s funeral procession).

With this ascent through the political elite came the support of the German capitalists, whose relationship to fascism can be best seen in the same way capitalism’s historically adaptable relationship with any government can be viewed: opportunism in order to survive and make a profit. In view of the terrifying collectivized “red spectre of the KPD,” the great German capitalist industrial dynasties, like Krupp and Siemens, sought to sow favor with the latest and potentially friendliest regime. Even more paternal than the Wilhelmine government, “with an impressive repertoire of tactics, including shop-floor discipline, black lists of militants, agitators, union joiners, and straightforward ‘trouble makers’, labour exchanges, compulsory welfare schemes, centralized employers’ associations, and company unions,” adopted regardless of internal corporate social or political leanings, these companies and their capital and product support (also results of the ‘German way’) fit well into Hitler’s scheme for a new and expanded German empire.

With these ideas in mind, it is fair to claim that the Sonderweg thesis, now viewed less seriously by the public and by academia, has been jettisoned prematurely. As evident in the deep structural analyses in the Blackbourn and Eley’s book, this continuity-focused approach has aided our research and understanding of Germany throughout these periods, teasing out subtleties that would have otherwise been lost to time. One of these subtleties is the cause of the ascendancy and then mentality of Adolf Hitler, thereby the long-term sources of Nazism tied to the deeper structures of German history. Whether or not it is accurate to view German history as a one-way street from 1848 to 1945, it is a fair point by some historians, like Theodor Hamerow, to remark that the ‘mistakes’ of the 1848 German middle class were not immediately “paid for in 1849, but in 1918, in 1933, and in 1945.” The ‘“pre-industrial traditions,’ which blocked the development of ‘modern political institutions,’” would exist during the 50 years after 1848 to 1871 as a time when “the bourgeoisie could only have participated in the political system as the junior partner of an aristocratic elite whose political dominance remained essentially intact.” The remaining traditional Junker class, one of the great idiosyncrasies of German history, strove in this way to remain influential in a modern world, and they made the great mistake to choose the anti-modern Hitler, a well-read racial pan-German, disillusioned veteran, and a more powerful ideological entity than they had realized, as their agent.

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Brazil’s involvement in the First World War is a topic all too often glossed over in the review of Brazilian history. Overshadowed by the towering impact of the Second World War and dwarfed by the relative absence of Latin America in WWI, the upheaval of 1914 has been largely relegated to scholars of Europe and the United States. Yet, although the impacts of the Great War on Brazil were less overt or dramatic than its successor, they were nonetheless extensive. As this paper will demonstrate, WWI acted as a catalyst for economic and political change in Brazil, one that marked a turning point in Brazilian identity. As Europe’s economic ties to the region were severed and its lofted image as the center of civilization tarnished, Brazil pivoted away from foreign dependence and towards industrialization and modernization, sparking a new era of economic and political nationalism that would be central in redefining what it was to be Brazilian.

To understand this transformation, however, it is first necessary to set the stage for the state of the Brazilian nation prior to WWI. As Bill Albert notes in his work, *South America and the First World War*, heading into 1914 the Brazilian economy was still largely rural and agrarian, with only 10% of Brazilians living in cities with more than 20,000 people. Central to this agricultural economy was the staple of Brazilian exports: coffee. As the crops of northern and western Brazil, most prominently sugar and rubber, began to suffer from international competition and internal stagnation, coffee filled an ever-larger role in the financing of Brazilian growth. Indeed, prior to WWI, Albert notes that coffee dominated 60.4% of Brazilian exports, rubber coming in a distant second at 17.4% and no other commodity even cracking 5%, a trend which fueled a process of industrial growth and economic expansion in Brazil’s coffee-laden south. Thus, heading into 1914, Brazil capitalized on a growing global market for its goods to finance a marked expansion in manufacturing and industry.

Still, this growth in the Brazilian economy suffered from two central and ultimately fatal flaws. The first was the lopsided nature of the industrial development which predated the war. Although production was expanding, Werner Bael and Annibal V. Villela note in their review of Brazilian industrialization that output was heavily concentrated on light industries such as textiles, clothing, and food. Indeed, as late as 1907, a mere 1% of Brazilian production was dedicated to capital goods, a figure in stark contrast to the 57% dedicated to light commodities and agriculture. This uneven expansion was complemented by an epidemic of foreign dependence within the Brazilian economy. In reflection of its colonial roots, Brazil relied on an economy of exchange with Europe whereby it exported raw materials in return for secondary goods and the ever-powerful “foreign capital, banks, shipping, and merchants” that came with them. Thus, the coffee-centric Brazilian system of exports filled an essential role within the design of the international economy: Brazil exported goods in exchange for a constant and consistent inflow of European capital and products.

A Catalyst for Change
How the Economic Rupture of the First World War Redefined Brazilian Nationalism

Ross Snyder
Central among these European trading partners was Great Britain, whose long-lasting economic ties to the region worked in tandem with London’s place at the center of the global economy to promote an outsized role in the financing of Brazilian growth. Indeed, Bill Albert notes that British banks were at the fore of international investment in Brazil, making up over 62% of incoming capital. Adding to the influence of this foreign dependence was the reliance on such funds for the provision and maintenance of “basic services,” such as electricity and transportation, meaning that foreign capital not only fueled growth within the Brazil economy, but provided the sparks that kept the systems of production running in the first place. Indeed, the basic functioning of the Brazilian financial system itself was heavily dependent on foreign support and influence. Foreign banks dominated local commerce, managing upwards of 46% of all local deposits and placing the controlling influences in Brazilian investment decisively on foreign shores. Thus, on the eve of the First World War, Brazil’s economy grew not on the merits of its own stability but through a complicated and overlapping system of foreign support and credit, one which left Brazil with little control over its own economic fate.

This dependence on foreign influence in everything from the financing of industry to the management of bank loans was far from accidental. Such direct involvement by European governments and banks stemmed from a deep-rooted allegiance among the Brazilian elite to the ideals of European civilization and modernity, with France filling an especially coveted role throughout South America. In this way, cultural emulation served to reinforce structural subservience as Brazil’s elites “believed that a European ideal of progress could be attained by their countries adopting the role assigned to them within a seemingly ‘natural’ world division of labor.” Thus, ties to European cultures and economies, even through a system of primary exports and cultural dependence, were vaunted as a powerful means of legitimation for the Brazilian nation.

Then came the First World War. Historically, the dominant narrative of Brazilian, and indeed of Latin American, involvement in the war is one of minimal participation. Although, as Percy Alvin Martin notes in his 1925 book, there was a greater degree of Latin American participation than typically acknowledged (with eight countries declaring war and five severing relations with Germany), the overall outlook south of the U.S. was one of neutrality, every country remaining neutral until 1917 and seven maintaining this stance throughout the conflict. Still, in a South America eager to distance itself from the bloody and expanding struggle between European powers, Brazil stood out as the only country to fully enter the war. Chief among the motivations for such engagement was the importance of inter-sea trade and communication for the Brazilian economy, a network of communication that was crucially severed when the German navy launched unrestricted submarine warfare in 1917 and subsequently sank a number of Brazilian ships in quick succession. Thus, despite an initial concern with German violations of international law, it took a decisive blow to Brazilian systems of trade and transport to finally goad the nation into a full proclamation of war on October 26, 1917. It had taken three years, but Brazil firmly entered the fray of international warfare, and did so, as Martin explains, compelled by “the defense of her national honor, the vindication of international law, and her belief in the principles of American solidarity.”

Nonetheless, Brazil’s military impact on the war was, to quote Percy Alvin Martin, “all but negligible.” Entering into the war far too late and with little military assistance, Brazilian troops provided minimal support for the fight in Europe, their primary role relegated to one
of food supply as Martin notes that agricultural production surfaced as the "most important contribution of Brazil toward winning the war." Thus, in many ways, Brazil’s emergence as the sole South American belligerent served more as a symbol of solidarity than anything else, a truth reflected in Brazil’s insignificant place in post-war negotiations dominated by the U.S. and other Allied powers. Indeed, Brazil’s ultimate exclusion from the Permanent Council of the League of Nations served to punctuate this relegation to the status of a secondary international player. Still, the question remains, if Brazil’s entry into the war was delayed, their military impact minimal, and their post-war political role stunted, why is the First World War of any note in the annals of Brazilian history? By what cause can historians like Bill Albert claim that "the war marked a major economic, political, social, and cultural watershed" for the region? As will be shown, the impact of WWI can most decisively be seen in the economic dislocation it caused, as Brazil’s vulnerable position in the global economy was thrust into public view, forcing a shift in Brazilian perceptions about their role as a nation and state on the international stage.

The First World War shattered the precarious optimism on which the Brazilian economy rested and exposed the fatal flaws of a permanent policy of foreign dependence. As Albert describes, “as soon as blood began to flow on the battlefields of Europe the war claimed an unseen, but important, victim – the international economy.” Crises beset the fields, farms, and factories of Europe and consequently the constant inflow of foreign funds, banking, and resources that had formed a staple of the Brazilian economy disappeared. The long-trusted system of capital and credit “dried up,” and the country’s economic outlook took an immediate and dramatic plunge. Disrupting the till-then typical relationship between European production and Latin American raw goods, Chris Wrigley notes in his review of the topic that scholars have deemed the war a split in the history of international trade, dividing one economic era from another – an outlook that was all too prophetic in the case of Brazil.

The impact of this rupture in the international economy was felt across all sectors of the Brazilian state, being first and foremost expressed in a dramatic decline in the sale of coffee. Despite being able to maintain relative stability following the outset of the war, Brazil’s coffee market plunged with the onslaught of German submarine warfare in 1917 as the number of ships coming into Brazilian ports dropped by 60% and global consumption of coffee decreased by 25% - the equivalent of five million bags. Brazil’s press claimed that such restrictions had made coffee “for all intents and purposes unsaleable,” a sentiment only reinforced when England (which already considered coffee a non-essential commodity) officially placed it on its foreign contraband list and thus cut off the massive markets of Germany and Belgium, which constituted a third of all coffee sales. This severing from European markets would prove fatal in more ways than one. As Thomas Skidmore reflects in his book Brazil: Five Centuries of Change, the precipitous decline in international trade predictably created a drop in access to the secondary and industrial products usually provided by Europe, German naval blockaders reinforcing a drought in the Brazilian supply of finished goods. This already precarious position was reinforced by injury to Brazil’s internal revenue supply as the import duties that provided a majority of the federal budget suddenly dried up. As a result, Albert cites that “import revenue dropped by over 40% and the federal budget deficit rose to almost $15,000,000,” a quadrupling of the 1913 deficit.

To punctuate this perfect storm of financial predicaments was the sudden and irretrievable loss of the foreign capital which so underpinned Brazil’s economy. With Brazil unable to prevent the cessation of European loaning as crisis spread abroad, the country was left at the mercy of foreign interests and banks, who invariably worked to reinforce the system of dependence and subservience upon which their power rested
— a conservative move which hampered Brazilian efforts to reorient their economy. All the while, England continued its efforts at economic warfare by issuing the Black List, a policy used to cut off trading between outside firms and German allies, which Martin notes had an outsized effect on the Brazilian rubber industry whose long-established links to the German economy were quickly targeted.

Thus, with the onset of WWI came a dramatic illustration of the “fundamental weakness in Latin America’s primary export capitalism,” one that Albert notes forced Brazilian citizens and leaders alike to reassess their position in the global economy and their path forward as a nation. The impact of this shock was first and foremost seen in a dramatic shift in the orientation of the Brazilian economy, as new efforts emerged to industrialize and localize production in order to decrease foreign influence. The debate surrounding the immediate impact of the war itself on Brazilian industrialization is perpetually divided. Some scholars, such as Andre Gunder Frank, claim that wartime industrialization increased due to efforts to replace restricted European imports as new factories emerged at a rapid rate during the war. Still others, such as Baer and Villela, hold that the loss of foreign imports actually hampered progress, as cement, steel, and capital goods all decreased in production. Nonetheless, it is often the overlooked post-war period that provides the starkest example of the rapid shift in the orientation of the Brazilian economy. As Skidmore observes, the post-war years saw a boom in the profits from coffee exports as demand recovered and international trade resumed, fueling an internal push for industrial investment and growth as “Brazil [used] much of its export earnings to finance the imports needed for industrialization...diversifying its economy away from dependence on agriculture.” Indeed, Albert goes so far as to claim that “[it] is almost impossible to refute...that early industrial growth was important in providing the basis for subsequent development,” a notion conceded to even by Baer and Villela, who, despite their harsh criticism of claims that industrialization increased during the war, note that metal, cement, and capital goods production all increased markedly in the decade following it.

In this way, the war acted as a catalyst for a substantial shift in the economic outlook of the Brazilian nation. Awakened to the fundamental instability of their pre-WWI economic position, Brazil’s government took notable steps to rearrange the economic model upon which Brazilian prosperity perched. In many ways, this shift was more ideological than anything else: an opening up of Brazil’s willingness to depart from the European model of development and dependence. Even scholars such as Albert, who argue that the fundamental nature of Brazil’s primary goods-based economy remained firmly in place following the end of the war, still concede that the vantage point of Brazil’s decision making was reshaped after 1918, the political climate altered “in a way [that] favored subsequent industrial development.”

Beyond this expansion in Brazil’s industrial outlook, the shock of WWI on the international economy helped spur a fundamental shift in the orientation of Brazil, as it politically, ideologically, and economically departed from Europe. Importantly, as the “extent of the region’s external dependence became [increasingly] evident,” Albert notes that Brazil expressed a newfound national identity through the emergence of an “economic and cultural nationalism.” The roots for this nationalistic surge lay in the perceived fall of Europe’s vaunted position as the pinnacle of civilization, an image which had been irrevocably tarnished by the barbarity put on international display in the fields of Gallipoli and the Somme. Indeed, after watching millions of men fight over “seemingly meaningless meters of mud,” Skidmore notes that “[WWI] provided a catalyst to the efforts of the nascent nationalist movement in Brazil to spread the doctrine that Brazil could only survive and prosper by recognizing and playing on the separateness of its identity.” Brazilian character was emerging
from the shadows for the first time as a point of pride, instead of shame. Although it would stretch credulity to claim that the hold Europe (and subsequently, whiteness) had over civilization disappeared completely with the outbreak of the war (in many ways it still pervades to this day), WWI can be said to have placed the first crack in the glass castle of racial and cultural superiority.

The growth in a recognition of the value of an independent Brazilian identity, free from efforts for emulation, was further captured in an emergent cultural dialogue in the 1920s and 1930s. First and foremost, this departure is revealed by the blossoming of the Brazilian Modernist movement, which emerged in the heart of São Paulo following the infamous Modern Art Week of 1922. With “artists, writers, and intellectuals” on display, the divergence from Europe that WWI had spurred was fully realized as Modernists worked to proclaim “cultural independence…from Eurocentrism,” a move meant to “shock [Brazil] into a new consciousness” of national pride and awareness.

As Marshall Eakin notes in his book Becoming Brazilians, this movement for a “rediscovery of Brazil,” which would blossom in the 1930s, got its fundamental roots in the early 1920s. Central to this shift away from Europe was a debate about what Brazilian identity, sans European guidance, actually entailed. Although this question would later become the basis for the foundational works of Gilbert Freyre, in the midst of the Modernist movement of the 1920s talk of an identity formed from the “amalgam of the [three] cultural flows” which constituted the Brazilian state, began to emerge. “The Brazilian Modernists…fervently rejected…the ‘official’ history of the country [as] their works aimed to [encompass a Brazilian culture derived]…from Europe, Africa, and the Indigenous peoples.” With the departure of European ideals of civility came an embrace of a Brazilian nationalist rooted in an “intransigent attitude against further [cultural] subjection.” It was within this framework that Brazilian Modernism strove to fill the void of WWI with a new image of national culture, one that Marshall Eakin claims worked to “explicitly and loudly proclaim…independence from Europe.”

This pivot from European dependence, however, went beyond the radical revamping of national identity that followed the First World War. It was also tangibly, and crucially, expressed in both an emergent allegiance to the United States and the rising ideal of Pan-Americanism. First, WWI marked a watershed in the rise of the U.S. as an international superpower, a transformation which brought with it an increasingly dominant American interest in Brazil. Indeed, going back to the start of the war, Brazil had made concerted efforts to strengthen its ideological ties to its northern neighbor, Percy Alvin Martin remarking that Brazil’s wartime policy was “frankly American.” This shift in outlook was affirmed by the Brazilian government’s efforts to ensure that the “true import of [their] revocation of neutrality” did not go unnoticed – one government circular going so far as to assert that “no occasion could so unite the hearts of Brazil and the United States [as WWI].”

The U.S. government had fertile ground within which to plant their efforts for postwar economic expansion. Although the British remained the primary lenders to Brazil following the war, the inflow of U.S. capital ballooned massively, their investment in industry going from “$50 million in 1914 to $557 million in 1930.” As London was replaced by New York as the center of the international financial scene, the influence of Europe was markedly diminished and Latin America as a whole began to shift towards a tighter allegiance with their northern neighbor.

The extent of Brazil’s shift towards a more regional political alignment didn’t end with the growth of U.S. investment in the region – the corresponding rise of Pan-Americanism provided another key indicator of the decline in European
influence following WWI. As expressed by Martin, Pan-Americanism encompassed efforts for the “moral union of the independent states of the Western hemisphere based upon certain distinct principles which these states have in common and which they do not share...with Europe.” Thus, at its heart, the Pan-American movement was a rejection of the prominence of European culture – a divergence that worked to embrace the merits of a unique and differentiated Latin American identity. Where European influence declined, the shared customs and cultures of Brazil and its neighbors rose to take its place. The impacts of this ideal went beyond just an ideological shift, with political engagement surrounding Pan-Americanism becoming widespread from the very outbreak of the war – a Pan-American Union even getting its start in Washington to discuss the prospect of increased regional unity. It was at a discussion hosted by Clark University in Massachusetts in 1916 that Brazilian ambassador Senhor Mangel De Oliveira Lima argued that, despite the economic hardships of the war, WWI had “drawn...the South American countries...more closely together than anything else.” Such pride in the virtue of local culture, such an emergence in nationalist activity and thought, such rejection of European ideals of civility, would be hard to imagine before WWI.

For a war that Brazil was late to enter and had little to offer in, WWI had an outsized impact on the country. Despite the minimal role Brazil played in providing troops or aiding in the fight, WWI was cataclysmic for the Brazilian economy. Due to a loss of trade, a fall in coffee purchases, and a decline in foreign capital and finance, Brazil was forced to reckon with the vulnerability of the international position that it had staked for itself in the preceding century. As a result, Brazil reshaped its industrial economy in the 1920s, shifted its economic and political locus towards the United States, and most importantly, began an ideological departure from European values. Although the path towards economic independence would have to brave the challenges of the Great Depression and WWII, and although the development of a Brazilian nation that is one and the same as the Brazilian state is still in progress, WWI acted as a great catalyst for the many changes of the 20th century. From the fires of the First World War emerged a Brazilian nation and economy that was remade, if not reborn.

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One of the central problems in philosophical theology arises from the apparent conflict between God’s perfect knowledge of future contingent events and human freedom. This problem, deemed “the problem of divine foreknowledge,” threatens to collapse doctrines of divine providence as well as doctrines of sin and salvation. In this paper, I will present Richard Pike’s argument against the compatibility of divine knowledge and human voluntary action. I will then proceed to formalize some of the premises of Boethius’s doctrine of divine eternity and demonstrate that those premises render Pike’s assumptions incoherent and argument invalid. I will conclude with two suggestions for Pike sympathizers to respond to Boethius.

How can God have perfect knowledge of events involving free will? Human free choice with respect to acts of the will is a necessary supposition for moral agency and responsibility, as well as for understandings of sin and salvation in the Christian tradition. Moreover, it seems intuitive that God must have perfect knowledge of all things, even those things that happen at times future to the present moment. We call such knowledge divine foreknowledge (DF). Indeed, many theists claim that God’s omniscience is essential to God—that is, omniscience is a quality proper to God and only God. Herein lies an apparent contradiction: if God has perfect knowledge of all things, especially DF, it appears that human beings do not (and cannot) have free choice with respect to volitional acts in the future. It appears to be the case that no action can be contingent. If God has perfect knowledge of the world, the world must necessarily conform to the divine knowledge. In his article “Divine Omniscience and Voluntary Action,” philosopher Richard Pike formalizes this argument to elucidate what assumptions give rise to the problem of DF.¹ It will be useful for our purposes to reconstruct his argument to examine and ultimately critique his presuppositions. His argument can be reconstructed as follows.²

“P” premises refer to premises that come from Pike’s work; “B” premises refer to premises I develop out of Boethius’s *The Consolation of Philosophy*. “P’” premises will refer to revisions of Pike’s premises using the “B” premises:

(P1) God necessarily exists and is essentially omniscient. [definition of God]
(P2) Jones did X at t₂ and had the power not to do so. [definition of human free choice]
(P3) Necessarily, if Jones did X at t₂, then at some time t₁ < t₂, God believed Jones would do X at t₂. [definition of essential omniscience]
(P4) At t₁, God believed Jones would do X at t₂. [P1, P2, P3]
(P5) If Jones had the power not to do X at t₂, then Jones could make God’s belief at t₁ false. [P4]
(P6) Jones could make God’s belief at t₁ false. [P2, P5]
Richard Pike and the Analogy of Divine Knowing

(P7) Jones could not make God’s belief at \( t_1 \) false. [P1, definition of essential omniscience]

(P8) Jones both could and could not make God’s belief at \( t_1 \) false. [P6, P7]

(P9) Either P1 is false or P2 is false. [P1 – P8]

The genius of Pike’s argument is apparent: the premise that drives the entire argument is P3. Many theologians and philosophers of religion maintain that God must bear some degree of temporal relationship with the world.³ It seems to be a necessary presupposition for any Christian theologian who wishes to account for the unfolding of salvation history from the Fall to the establishment of covenants eventually to Christ’s birth, death, and resurrection. Moreover, a temporal relationship to the world seems to be necessary for God to act in the world: divine providence requires the unfolding of God’s plans in the passage of time. Naturally, then, at some time before an action \( X \) is performed, if God has DF, God must know (and hence believe)⁴ that \( X \) will be performed at its proper temporal locus. Premises P4 – P7 accordingly follow, ultimately generating the contradiction in premise P8. It appears to be necessary to either reject the premise that God necessarily exists and is essentially omniscient or the premise that human beings have free choice with respect to their actions. In the section that follows, I will endeavor to rescue premises P1 and P2 by introducing and subsequently formalizing Boethius’s doctrine of divine eternity.

In Book V of The Consolation of Philosophy, Boethius reiterates the classical understanding of eternity and provides a solution for the apparent contradiction between human free action and DF. To resolve the apparent contradiction, Boethius introduces the analogy of divine vision: “[God’s] knowledge, which passes over every change of time, embracing infinite lengths of past and future, views in its own direct comprehension everything as though it were taking place in the present.”⁵

Boethius’s idea is admittedly obscure in the Consolation and relies heavily on analogical reasoning. Consider this analogy. Imagine a line of six completely identical men who are standing in single file such that each man in the line cannot see past the man immediately in front of him. Now, imagine that the back halves of each of the men’s heads are painted different colors. Because each man is identical, a man in the line only knows the color painted on the back half of the head of the man directly in front of him. Now imagine a woman, perhaps a drill sergeant, who stands outside the file and can see each color painted on the men’s heads in their right succession.⁶ The knowledge of the men in the single file line is analogous to human knowledge. We order events according to temporally successive events. The knowledge of the female drill sergeant is analogous to the divine knowledge: God sees all things together as present and simultaneous. While God may be able to know the order, whether logical or ontological, within the presentation of all things in eternity, God knows all events as totally simultaneous. This knowledge originates from God’s “sight” from eternity.

I want to now introduce a series of premises that attempt to formalize Boethius’s metaphor of divine vision from eternity. The first three, B1 – B3, are propositions about the relationships among an agent \( F \) choosing to do an action \( A \) at \( t_1 \), God’s vision of \( F \) doing \( A \), and God’s knowledge of \( F \) doing \( A \).

(B1) God knows (believes) \( F \) does \( A \) at \( t_1 \) iff God sees \( F \) do \( A \) at \( t_1 \).

(B2) God sees \( F \) do \( A \) at \( t_1 \) iff \( X \) chooses to do \( F \) at \( t_1 \).

(B3) God knows (believes) \( F \) does \( A \) at \( t_1 \) iff \( X \) chooses to do \( F \) at \( t_1 \). [B1, B2]

Note that there does not exist any strict causal relationship among the three phenomena. While other philosophers, like Aquinas,⁷ are wont to say that God’s knowledge is the cause of all things, I avoid doing so. Not only does this prevent the free choice/DF contradiction from the outset, it focuses the formal language used to describe divine knowledge into the point of time with which Boethius is most concerned: the
present. This segues into the premise B4, which specifies the temporal locus of God’s knowledge of contingent events.

(B4) For any true proposition \( P \), God knows \( P \) as present.

To say that God’s knowledge of a proposition \( P \) (e.g. \( F \) does \( A \) at \( t_1 \)) is as present is also obscure. Consider the following comparison. Human beings can know propositions as past, present, or future. I know that Barack Obama was first inaugurated as President of the United States on January 20, 2009. This is knowledge of a proposition as past. I know that I will die someday in the future. This is knowledge of a proposition as future. I know that I am typing this word on my computer right now. This is knowledge of a proposition as present. God’s knowledge of propositions is of this last mode. Indeed, I would like to suggest that proposition B4 and the analogy of vision both imply a much stronger proposition shown below.

(B5) For the set of all time points \( \{t_1, t_2, t_3, \ldots \} \), God experiences each time point as temporally present without any temporal succession between them.

If all moments are present to God in eternity, God must experience each apparent time point equally as temporally present. Necessarily, then, there can be no temporal succession between them. This proposition is widely debated in both the Boethius scholarship and contemporary scholarship on DF.⁸ I want to note that when taken univocally,⁹ B5 appears completely incoherent. B5 must instead be taken analogically, in the tradition of classical and medieval theology. There is only a partial similarity between the metaphor of God’s vision and the reality of God’s knowledge.

I want to now contend that B5 renders Pike’s proposition P3 invalid. From above, proposition P3 reads “Necessarily, if Jones did \( X \) at \( t_2 \), then at some time \( t_1 < t_2 \), God believed Jones would do \( X \) at \( t_2 \)”. The obvious contradiction between B5 and P3 lies in the tense used to describe God’s mental act with a point in time in the past. B4 and B5 both contend that God’s mental acts are always located in the same point in time temporal locus: the present. The second contention between the two propositions concerns the clause “then at some time \( t_1 > t_2 \)”. B5 appears to imply that any temporal relationship between two times \( t_i \) and \( t_j \) that implies a greater than or less than relationship is nonsensical for God. For any two times \( t_i \) and \( t_j \), \( t_i = t_j \) for God. This is not to say that the times are identical; rather, the phenomenology of their temporality is equivalent in God. These two conflicts necessitate the revision of proposition P3 to P3’.

(P3’) Necessarily, if Jones does \( X \) at \( t_2 \), then at some time \( t_1 = t_2 \), God believes Jones does \( X \) at \( t_2 \).

The revision of P3 further necessitates a revision of proposition P4.

(P4’) At \( t_2 \), God believes Jones does \( X \) at \( t_2 \).

(P1, P2, P3’)

Proposition P5, “If Jones had the power not to do \( X \) at \( t_2 \), then Jones could make God’s belief at \( t_2 \) false”, does not follow from these two premises. This is because God’s belief at \( t_1 \) is one with his act of vision at \( t_2 \), and Jones’s choice to do \( X \) at \( t_2 \). They are all unified in the present-ness of both the action and God’s vision. Therefore, accepting Boethian eternity renders Pike’s argument for the incompatibility of divine omniscience and human free action invalid.

I will now suggest two possible points of attack for someone who does not grant that Boethian divine eternity solves the problem of DF. One way to attack the Boethian account of divine knowledge and eternity is to suggest that there are facts that are tensed, as Swinburne has previously done.¹⁰ While the existence of tensed facts or the irreducibility of tense is often mounted as an objection to a B-theory of time, this objection has direct bearing on the premise B4 as presented in this paper. If there are propositions that are indeed tensed, the Boethian God cannot be essentially omniscient. A defender of Boethius must then provide an argument that such tensed propositions are reducible to propositions are reducible to multiple tenseless
propositions and that reducing tensed propositions to tenseless propositions does not deprive the proposition of its force in its tensed articulation. Alternatively, a defender of Boethius could try to maneuver around the primacy of the temporal cataloguing of a proposition, instead arguing that tensed facts are only “tensed” insofar as they are ordered logically or ontologically.

A second problem arises when one asks a defender of Boethius’s metaphysics of time to provide an account of the human experience of the passage of time. If all moments of time are equally real, what explains the human experience of time’s passing from past to present to future? Perhaps one could provide a pseudo-Kantian account of time as a necessary feature of the human mind’s structuring of the world (i.e. the transcendental aesthetic). Obviously, a Boethian (or more broadly, someone who adheres to the classical concept of eternity) cannot be willing to grant the noumena-phenomena distinction as Kant does, but such an account of the passage of time would explain the experience of time’s flow without entailing that the flow of time is merely fictive. I am yet unsure whether such a view generates any major contradictions, but such a solution could present a challenge to the neo-Platonic, Augustinian understanding of the world’s revealing itself to the human mind. In the Christian tradition, theologians would have to be careful never to commit themselves to constructivist or even transcendental idealist accounts of the consciousness of time.

For committed theists across religious traditions, the coexistence of God’s perfect knowledge and human free will with respect to actions is necessary for doctrines of sin, salvation, and providence. In this paper, I present Richard Pike’s powerful argument against the compatibility of divine omniscience and human free action. I then present Boethius’s doctrine of divine eternity as a solution to the problem of DF in a formalized manner, ultimately showing how Boethian eternity makes one of Pike’s premises invalid. I then suggest two further possible objections to Boethian eternity with ways one who wants to defend Boethius could respond. Looking forward, I hope that this paper represents an attempt to push the bounds of analytic theology as it is currently practiced towards understanding God and His properties analogically, rather than purely univocally. As I see it, future work on this problem can take one of two courses. First, a philosopher could further develop the basic metaphysics of classical eternity and formalize it in premises as done briefly here. This purely philosophical research project would want to address the problems typically asked of classical accounts (and in modern terminology, B-theories) of time, including accounting for the passage of time and the so-called “preeminence” of the present (i.e. why is it that the present moment seems to be most real to us?). The second course is more explicitly theological. An analytic theologian of a classical persuasion could use this model and these premises to develop accounts of divine immanence, transcendence, and providence. This analogical breath of life into analytic theology only promises to enrich the conversations of theologians and religious philosophers in the 21st century.

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Robber Zhi and Daoism
A View from a Step Back

Paul Keh

Classical Chinese philosophy has often been broadly described as “Confucian,” but the “Confucian” label is largely a misnomer, owing to its overgeneralization of other distinct strains of classical Chinese philosophy. Daoism, of which Zhuangism is a subset, is major school of moral philosophy in classical Chinese philosophy alongside Confucianism, and although both emphasize humanity as possessing a quasi-telos which they called the Way (道), they differ in their assessment of how one is to attain this end. In brief, Confucianism can be seen as a system of virtue ethics which argues that the ideal person is one who focuses one’s life on moral cultivation through developing the highest virtue of “Goodness”, or genuine care for others, and who accepts and plays one role in society through ritual and duties to family and community. In contrast, Zhuangist-Daoist philosophy is very briefly summarized as advocating for a return to natural flourishing through the letting go of what it sees as “artificial” social constructs and norms. To the Zhuangist, moral systems cannot claim objective truth or goodness.

In the Zhuangzi (《庄子》), the foundational text of Zhuangist moral philosophy, a chapter entitled “Robber Zhi” (《盗跖》) stands out as a controversial text in classical Chinese philosophy. Despite being a short and rather minor chapter, “Robber Zhi” has long since attracted the attention of Confucian and Daoist scholars for its alternative portrayal of the otherwise sagely Confucius in his interaction with a fierce but surprisingly witty outlaw. While most literature on the Robber Zhi chapter either seek to undermine its validity as a Zhuangist work or emphasize its role as a direct, Yangist (psychological and ethical egoism) criticism of Confucianism, very little has been done in appreciating how the Robber Zhi chapter may be seen as an integral part of the Zhuangist tradition in communicating the inherent limitations of any moral framework. Through analyzing how the story of Confucius’s meeting with Robber Zhi fits into Zhuangzi’s greater narrative, I argue that the Robber Zhi chapter can be interpreted as communicating the need for intellectual and moral humility, and is a rejection of dogmatic, absolutist morality in a way consistent with Zhuangzi’s approach to the Daoist morality and the Dao. In doing so, this paper will first analyze the textual and contextual features of the Robber Zhi chapter as a minor chapter of the Zhuangzi, followed by a literature review of existing interpretations of the Robber Zhi chapter. Subsequently I will explain my interpretation of the Robber Zhi chapter and offer insight into how this interpretation is relevant for Chinese philosophy and its applications in modern society.

“Robber Zhi” is a chapter of the within a larger anthology entitled The Zhuangzi, written by Zhuangzi during the Warring States period (403 – 221 BCE) of China. The chapter describes a meeting between Confucius, a well-known sage and teacher of morality at the time of writing, and Robber Zhi, an infamous brigand who, along with nine thousand of his henchmen, terrorizes the countryside and commits all kinds of atrocities. In the story, Robber Zhi is described as the epitome of what might be describe as an “anti-sage”: literally too busy engaging in crime
and sowing disorder that he “forgot his own relatives, ignored his parents and siblings and neglected his ancestors.”⁴ Liuxia Ji, the older brother of Robber Zhi, is unable to convince his younger brother to give up his life as an outlaw, prompting an egoistic Kongzi to take matters into his own hands to bring the tyrant to heel.

In the ensuing conversation between Confucius and the brigand, Confucius flatters Robber Zhi, highlighting the brigand’s numerous “virtues” in being handsome and tall, witty and charismatic, and offers to be his envoy if he would only lay down his arms and be a feudal lord instead of an outlaw. This, however, fails to appeal to Robber Zhi, who launches into a critical discourse of the Confucian moral framework, making use of Yangist, Primitivist and Daoist arguments in refuting Confucius, who is left dumbstruck.⁵ In particular, Robber Zhi criticizes Kongzi for creating an artificial moral framework by cherry picking and warping ideas of the “sage kings” in service of a personal, ultimately hypocritical agenda of making an ideal moral society. Alluding to Confucian moral thievery in drawing an ultimately arbitrary line in the “sand of morality” for personal gain, Zhi exclaims “If they call me ‘Robber Zhi’, why don’t they call you ‘Robber Qiu’?”⁶ At the close of the parable, Robber Zhi expels Confucius from Mount Tai, and Confucius returns to Liuxia Ji admitting to have “taken some painful medicine when I wasn’t sick. I ran off to pat the tiger’s head and braid its whiskers, and I barely escaped its jaws.”

A preliminary observation about the Robber Zhi chapter is that vis-a-vis other chapters of the Zhuangzi text, the chapter contains numerous incongruities in its portrayal of Confucius, both of his character as well as his teachings. While the Confucius of the other stories of the Zhuangzi can be characterized as espousing a uniquely Zhuangist-Daoist moral philosophy of detachment, in the Robber Zhi chapter Confucius is seen to possess a more traditional Confucian moral philosophy, albeit one that has numerous inaccuracies. For instance, Confucius in the Robber Zhi chapter not only confronts a dangerous rebel with the explicit intention of reforming him, but he also puts up an awkward, Confucian ritualistic performance before an apathetic outlaw, “[shuffling] forward,” “[politely declining the offered mat, he retreated a few steps and bowed twice to Robber Zhi.”⁷ Instead of bringing himself as a Daoist “empty receptacle,” Confucius suggests in no uncertain moralistic and self-righteous terms that if only Robber Zhi gave up his life of banditry and took up his rightful position as a feudal lord, it would be “the act of a sage and wish of the world.”⁸ This echoes the classical Confucian idea that one can fulfill one’s 之道 Dao (or Way) by doing what one’s social position asks of you. These textual inconsistencies highlight the differences between the Robber Zhi chapter and other sections of the Zhuangzi, since Confucius is depicted in the Robber Zhi chapter as both non-Daoist in character and unable to do what he asks of others.

Lastly, the Robber Zhi chapter is problematic because it demonstrates hypocrisy on the part of Confucius, since Confucius is depicted as doing exactly what Confucianism argues one ought not to do. At the beginning of the meeting, Confucius flatters Robber Zhi by citing handsomeness, the ability to debate and leadership as the three virtues in the world, ranked from the highest virtue to the lowest virtue.⁹ This blatantly runs contrary to the standard Confucian treatise about the importance of inner moral values (zhong 忠 moral self-discipline and shu 許 moral discretion) as the means of becoming a 君子 Junzi,¹⁰ and the emphasis on superiority of internal principles and virtues which require cultivation over those which require no effort whatsoever. To the reader, this sudden change in Confucius’s stand on virtue throws a wrench into any comprehension of the kind of moral philosophy Confucius is trying to convey to Robber Zhi: initially it is evident that Confucius does not embody the Daoist ethic, but does Confucius even embrace the Confucian moral ethic in this situation at all?

Most literature analyzing the Robber Zhi chapter fall into two main categories: those which characterize the chapter as a Yangist text
that directly counters elements of Confucian morality, and those which discount the authenticity and hence usefulness of the chapter as a hallmark of classical Chinese philosophy. Works that characterize the Robber Zhi chapter as a Yangist exposition often cite a consistent Yangist thread in Robber Zhi’s monologue, noting that Robber Zhi argues against conforming and being controlled by structures and hierarchies of society and rails against artificial moral codes, which he sees as “[going] against [one’s] essence and nature.”¹¹ In his translation of the Zhuangzi, A. C. Graham labels the Robber Zhi chapter as a part of the “Yangist miscellany” (chapters 28-31), commenting that the stories basically have no place in Zhuangist thought and in fact represent the ideas of the Yangist school.¹² These sources also see the chapter as a direct attack on Confucianism.¹³ Harold Roth interprets the chapter as insinuating that the Confucian moral framework is a hypocritical argument for self-serving individuals. These individuals, ostensibly under the banner of bringing harmony to society, are willing to “reduce [their] moral requirement to a mere respect for the forms,” referencing Confucius’s offers to make Robber Zhi, already a de facto leader, a de jure leader without insisting on moral change.¹⁴

The other category of the literature suggests that the possible alternative provenance of the Robber Zhi chapter makes it an unimportant element of classical Chinese philosophy. Ivanhoe and Carr remark that a number of chapters which severely criticize Confucius are the work of pretenders and suggests that they are ultimately peripheral sources of classical Chinese philosophy, and highlight that this is especially true for the Robber Zhi chapter, which was “confidently identified as of rather late origin”.¹⁵ Chung Wu also notes reservations amongst various scholars over the authenticity of the Robber Zhi chapter, though most will concede the presence of a limited Zhuangist philosophy.¹⁶

With respect to the Yangist categorization of the chapter, while Robber Zhi’s monologue may appear to advance a Yangist agenda, the presence of other arguments from the anarchist, primitivist and even Daoist moral traditions suggests that content of the monologue is not as important as what it says about Confucius. As seen in earlier analysis of the chapter’s context, Robber Zhi’s criticism of Confucius includes a significant number of Yangist concepts, including that the prioritization of the self and an emphasis on genuineness.¹⁷ However, there are also numerous other references to different moral traditions, such as what A. C. Graham defined as the “primitivist” moral tradition, which advocates for a return to a “tribal Utopia in which men lived as spontaneously as the animals,” as seen in Robber Zhi’s reference to the pre-Yellow Emperor society as the true ideal, “They knew their mothers but not their fathers and lived together with the deer. They farmed their own food and wove their own clothes and had no idea of hurting each other.”¹⁸ In addition, Robber Zhi references a very Daoist critique of Confucianism at the end of his conversation with Confucius, calling it a “crazy, fraudulent, vain, empty, and artificial business.”¹⁹ Given that Robber Zhi cherry-picks elements from these to weave an argument against Confucianism, it seems rather unlikely that the focus of the conversation was on the Yangist principles that were present in it, but rather what the conversation says about Confucianism.

Furthermore, despite his passionate outburst which seemingly leaves the sagely Confucius at a loss, Robber Zhi can hardly be considered a champion for Yangism either. Objectively speaking, his acts of violence and terrorism are contrary to the Yangist goal of achieving peace and longevity through prioritizing oneself and abstaining from interference in the affairs of others.²⁰ As Ivanhoe and Norden commented in their translation, it is likely that “[t]he historical Yang Zhu probably did not advocate thievery and violence,”²¹ let alone encourage others to “minc[e] and munch on human livers. If the Yangist moral philosophy is not the focus of the Robber Zhi – Confucius dialogue, then perhaps we might say that the function of the dialogue...
was not only in highlighting that alternative moral philosophies are “available”, but that dogmatic and absolutist Confucianism, as personified by Confucius, can also be proven wrong sometimes.

Much of the literature has little to say about the Robber Zhi chapter as espousing a uniquely Zhuangist approach to morality, having focused mainly on the Yangist aspects of the story or its characteristics that ostensibly reduce its authenticity and therefore its value as a Zhuangist source. While I admit that these arguments in the literature are plausible, I argue that in a more holistic fashion, the Robber Zhi chapter of the Zhuangzi, complete with all its textual incongruities, plays an important role in communicating at a deeper level the limitations of the Confucian moral framework, or any moral framework for that matter, through its metanarrative. In addition, the chapter also highlights the self-defeating nature of moral fanaticism.

Firstly, we see that Confucius’s meeting with Robber Zhi is mainly motivated by a rigid adherence to Confucian ideas of social duties in a way that does not fit the situation he is resented with. From the beginning of the Robber Zhi chapter, it is evident that Confucius embodies some elements of what we understand as the Confucian moral philosophy. This Confucian moral philosophy, typified by a focus on achieving one’s 道 Dao through the fulfillment of one’s social roles and responsibilities [君君臣臣，父父子子], is expressed in Confucius’s remarks to Liuxia Ji. Confucius decision to meet Robber Zhi is to fulfill what is expected of him given his role in society, as prescribed by a Confucian moral philosophy. Confucius’ decision to confront Robber Zhi, therefore, demonstrates that an adherence to a dogmatic, absolutist moral philosophy is sometimes nothing short of unthinking fanaticism, encouraging one with good intentions to charge blindly into a situation which, upon taking a step back, may not have been pragmatic at all, let alone the best course of action. This pattern of adherence to the prescriptive Confucian moral philosophy also plays out in Confucius’ conversation with Robber Zhi, where he demonstrates to have failed to “fast his mind” when he parades the Confucian moralistic and self-righteous philosophy in front of an apathetic Robber Zhi through his flattery.

Analyzing this series of events from the standpoint of the larger Zhuangist metanarrative, we see that the Robber Zhi chapter cannot be simplified as a mere criticism of Confucianism or Confucius himself. Rather, we see that the failure begins not with Confucius’s ritualistic flattery of Robber Zhi, but with the dogmatic, prescriptive moral framework that not only convinced Confucius that converting Robber Zhi is in accordance with the Way, but also convinced Confucius to parade a set of rigid rituals and moral philosophy in front of a battle-hardened brigand. At the heart of Zhuangzi’s Daoist approach is the “fasting of the mind” and detachment, and in doing so enable oneself to respond spontaneously and flexibly to situations that transpire. Seeing Confucius’s awkward rigidity before Robber Zhi, we might have reason to believe that had Confucius chosen to “fast his mind,” his options, decisions and possibly his results would have been different.

Nevertheless, this does not amount to a direct refutation of Confucianism. While one might interpret this as highlighting a limitation of Confucianism, given that Confucianism was what provided these prescriptive moral norms in the first place, I see this rather as a reference to the larger concept of undoing fixations, given that at the end of the chapter, Confucius admits that the experience was “painful medicine,” not poison. Furthermore, Robber Zhi himself can hardly be considered a protagonist in this story, given that the author made a point to highlight the morally objectionable features of the brigand, such as his blatant disrespect for his kin and cannibalism. The lack of a clear protagonist in the story, coupled with Confucius’ remark of the meeting as “medicine,” suggests that the metanarrative focuses less on putting down Confucianism or championing any other. Rather, it highlights, through a Zhuangist-Daoist lens,
how Confucianism could be improved and better practiced.

Another textual feature that contributes to this larger metanarrative of a need for detachment from rigid moral frameworks is Robber Zhi’s criticism of the Sage kings, whose moral example in a large part grounds the moral philosophy of Confucianism. In The Analects, Confucius bases much of his moral philosophy after the good moral example of the Sage Kings of the Xia and Western Zhou dynasty, such as King Yao, King Wen, and the Duke of Zhou, whose memory in the eyes of the people served as an existential justification for Confucius’s moral teachings. Revered by Confucius, these figures are described as “semi-gods” in the analects, depicted as people who have and could do no wrong, for instance remarking “How great was Yao as a ruler! So majestic! It is Heaven that is great, and it was Yao who modeled himself upon it.”

In the Robber Zhi chapter, however, Robber Zhi directly attacks Confucianism by highlighting that these Sage Kings also committed atrocities, thereby debasing the Confucian premise of an ideal society based on the example of perfect Sage kings. In the A. C. Graham translation, Robber Zhi stresses that “Yao was not a good father, Shun was not a good son, Yu became paralysed down one side, T’ang banished his sovereign, King Wu smote Chow.” But beyond the immediate criticism of Confucianism, however, this exposé also contributes the greater Zhuangist metanarrative that history and morality is ultimately perspectival, and that it sometimes becomes counterproductive to become fanatically fixated on what is eventually only perspectival. To be fixated on a moral framework and to insist on its prescription to society is akin to drawing a line in the sand and insisting that one side is better than the other, when in actual fact the line itself is arbitrary and that good and bad may exist on either side of the line.

However, it is equally important to note that this does not suggest moral relativism, or the view that there is no right moral framework (just as there is no wrong moral framework). I would agree with numerous scholars that Zhuangzi was not a moral relativist, but rather advocated for individuals to embrace a Daoist moral philosophy of detachment and the undoing of fixation so that one might better be able to embrace a decisions with a clear and composed mind, rather than one clouded by judgements and values that are prescribed and not authentically embodied and comprehended.

In fact, as Ivanhoe suggests, Zhuangzi was rather open to the idea that even a Confucian or Mohist could embody this Daoist ethic of detachment. The larger metanarrative that I see in the Robber Zhi chapter, is that prescriptive moral norms and dogmatic moral frameworks have their limitations, and that it is essential for everyone, including Confucius himself, to learn to take a step back and contemplate before binding ourselves to path dependent approaches to complex moral issues.

In sum, this paper sought to demonstrate that the Robber Zhi chapter can be interpreted as communicating the risks of dogmatic, absolutist moral frameworks, and that as a whole, the chapter is consistent with the largest Daoist message of detachment as seen in the rest of the Zhuangzi. While the chapter contains numerous contextual incongruities that make it different from other chapters of the Zhuangzi in term of its portrayal of Confucius, I argue that these incongruities ought not to be read superficially, but rather as part of a larger metanarrative that the author weaves to support the Zhuangist approach. Through the use of these contradictions in the course of the chapter, the story highlights a metanarrative of the need to, in a very Daoist fashion, “take a step back” when making decisions, lest an adherence to a dogmatic moral framework blind us to into making decisions that are unwise.

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Academia traditionally values the Symposium for being an eloquent series of encomia about eroticism that provides Plato’s views on love. Plato opens the dialogue by proposing that each speaker “make a speech in praise of Love.”¹ This is the only explicitly stated goal within the Symposium. While the dialogue does seem to be openly concerned with this objective, there is another major part of the Symposium that should not be ignored: the mystic element. In this paper, I will expose the connections between the Symposium and the ancient Cult of Demeter by exploring Phaedrus’ speech and Diotima’s ladder of love as allusions to the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Plato obscures the religious dimension of the Symposium because the Eleusinian Mysteries were supposed to be kept secret.² The Eleusinian Mysteries were the initiation rites held biannually to gain membership into the Cult of Demeter at Eleusis. Non-initiates could not participate or witness the ceremonial initiation rites. Although the rites were secret, the Cult was not. The Cult existed for nearly two thousand years, from around 1450 BCE to 392 CE, and nearly all ancient writers and thinkers, including Plato and Socrates, were initiates. Anyone could be initiated, including men, women, and even slaves. The two restrictions were that you could not be initiated if you had killed another human, and you had to speak Greek. Despite these promises of openness, initiation was realistically only available to some, as initiates were required to travel long distances and spend days at the ceremonies.

Divulging the Mysteries was punishable by pain, exile, or death, even for the most famous of worshippers.³ Anyone who attempted to disclose the secret rites at Eleusis would be charged with “profaning the mysteries” and tried. Alcibiades, the famed Athenian general, drunkenly imitated the rites and was condemned with all of his property confiscated.⁴ Diagoras of Melos, the poet and philosopher, was condemned after telling the secrets of the Mysteries, and the Athenian people issued enormous rewards for his capture and death.⁵ Poets and artists could not explicitly provide any details about the secret initiation ceremonies in their work, because they feared being accused of profaning the Mysteries. Notably, some individuals associated with Plato and Socrates, including Alcibiades, Aristomene, and Diogenes, were tried for profaning the Mysteries.⁶ Alcibiades is even featured in the Symposium and briefly references the Mysteries when he compares Socrates’ prose to the music that “reveals those who are in need of the gods and of initiation rites.”⁷ Plato was hyper-aware of the consequences of profanation, and thus explains why he went to such great lengths to obscure the Mysteries in the Symposium.

Phaedrus’ speech, which scholars traditionally dismiss as contradictory and unimportant in relation to the discussion of Eros, offers the dialogue’s first glimpse at the Eleusinian Mysteries by incorporating thanatos, or death, into an account of Eros.⁸ Phaedrus believes that the greatest measure of love is self-sacrifice, or dying for a loved one’s sake. He states that “only those in love are prepared to die for one another”
and illustrates this using the familiar myths of the sacrifices made by Alcestis and Achilles for their loved ones.⁹ Although Phaedrus insists that dying for love is a virtue worthy of the highest praise, neither Alcestis nor Achilles actually died. Alcestis’ soul was returned and Achilles ventured on to the Isle of the Blest instead of the Underworld.¹⁰ By choosing examples of individuals who do not actually die to support a point about the value of dying, Phaedrus clarifies that he is referencing the self-sacrifice of the body, not the soul, as being the most virtuous of all acts.

Like Phaedrus’ myths, the Cult of Demeter is concerned with the death of the body. The Cult is based on the story of Demeter’s separation and subsequent reunion with her daughter Persephone. This story was recorded in the Homeric Hymn of Demeter, written in 600 BCE, which remains our only surviving written record of the Cult. Long ago, when gods walked the Earth, Plouton, the god of the underworld, stole Persephone from her mother, Demeter. Demeter reacted violently and Zeus forced Plouton to return Persephone to her mother. Plouton tricked Persephone into eating pomegranate seeds to keep her in the underworld, but Zeus struck a deal between Demeter and Plouton so that Persephone would spend a third of the year in the underworld, and the rest with her mother.¹¹ Initiates of the Cult were taught to identify with Persephone as she passed back and forth between life and death. Initiates took on the belief that although the body dies, the individual lives forever in reincarnated states.¹² Those who joined the cult no longer feared death, as they understood that they would simply venture into the next life. Thus, Phaedrus’ view on the ends of Eros is remarkably similar to the ends that result from initiating into the Greater Mysteries.

Plato further associates Phaedrus’ account with the Cult of Demeter through his subversion of the pederastic relationship. Pederasty in Athens was a sexual relationship between an adult male and an adolescent boy, commonly practiced by intellectuals. Phaedrus evaluates pederastic relationships in the same way that the Cult assesses the relationship between the initiate and their guide during the Mysteries. It was paramount that all initiates had guides, or teachers, who would instruct them in the ways of the cult and show them how to complete the rites. Phaedrus’ account concludes with the claim that although the gods recognize the honor that arises out of passionate love, “it is those cases where the beloved shows his devotion to his lover rather than the other way round that they appreciate and reward […], because a lover has a god within him and he is thus more akin to the divine than the beloved.”¹³ Here, Phaedrus places value on the pederastic relationship over the passionate one, emphasizing the importance of a connection which incorporates learning. Further, Phaedrus subverts Athenian norms by noting the significance of the beloved, similarly to the way that value would be placed on the initiate more than the guide in the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries. This surprising aspect proposes an alternative evaluation of pederasty that deviates from the norms set forth by other speakers in the dialogue and connects Phaedrus to the Cult of Demeter.

While Phaedrus and other speakers offer various interpretations of Greek myths in support of their arguments, Diotima is the only one who Plato definitively associates with religion. After introducing her into the dialogue, Plato identifies her as a priestess. Priestesses interpret “petitions and sacrificial offerings” for the gods from humans and “instructions and favors” for humans from the gods by communicating through spirits.¹⁴ Socrates indicates that Diotima is a priestess by remarking that on “one occasion in particular, before the plague, she procured for the Athenians, after they had performed sacrifices, a ten-year postponement of that disease.”¹⁵ Because she instructed the Athenians on which sacrifices to make to postpone the plague, she must be a priestess, even if she is not directly named as such. Whether or not Plato based her a real figure, her presence in the dialogue reminds us of the priestesses who would have been present at the rites of the Greater Mysteries.¹⁶
Diotima’s account of Eros is exclusively connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries rather than with any other Athenian cults or rites in general. Halfway through her speech, Diotima references the Eleusinian Mysteries, stating that there are “aspects of the Mystery of love that […] Socrates might be initiated into. But for the final initiation and revelation, to which all this has been merely preliminary for someone on the right track [she is not sure if Socrates has the capability].” Here, Diotima’s account is divided into two sections, mirroring the division between the Lesser and Greater Mysteries that make up the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Diotima’s speech, like Phaedrus’, makes claims about death that mirror the Cult’s attitude. Diotima expands the end of Eros from simply the beautiful to the beautiful and the immortal. She explains that human beings, as well as animals, are always directed towards immortality through various activities on Earth, the most obvious being procreation. Procreation is aimed at immortality “because procreation is a kind of everlastingness […] for the mortal creature, as far as anything can be.” Diotima’s procreation does not refer only to the generation of offspring, but to the generation of “Wisdom and the rest of virtue” in general. This wisdom can take the form of virtuous laws, “good ordering of cities and households,” or poetry, techne, commonly translated as craftsmanship, and wise military ventures, to name a few. She states that although a man may be the “same person, he never keeps the same constituents; he is always being renewed, while things like hair, flesh, bones, blood – in fact the entire body – are constantly passing away.” Initiates took part in the rites of the Eleusinian Mysteries because they were considered to be essential to humanity’s survival, as they maintained harmony among birth, growth, death, and the regeneration of humans, crops, and nature. Plato invokes the Cult through Diotima’s concern with birth and rebirth.

Diotima’s connection with the Mysteries is further revealed because her version of Eros and the Mysteries are both aimed at the same end: happiness. Through a conversation with Socrates, she elucidates that the lover of beautiful things wants to possess the beautiful forever. When Socrates cannot determine what the lover of beautiful things will gain by possessing them, Diotima shifts the focus of the conversation from the lover of the beautiful to the lover of the good. This change is unannounced and easy to miss if reading quickly. While it may seem as if she is changing the subject matter from the good to the beautiful, she is simply making a comparison that Socrates will understand as a philosopher who has devoted himself to studying what constitutes a good life. When she reformulates the question in this way, Socrates can conclude with Diotima that end of loving is happiness. Diotima uses the elenchus, a dialectical method, with Socrates to subtly assert this bold claim. She presents it as an undeniable fact rather than a proposition. Similarly, according to the Hymn of Demeter, the end of the Eleusinian Mysteries is happiness. The Hymn explains that after a person has experienced the final ritual of the Mysteries, “olbios among earth-bound creatures is he who has seen these things.” By promoting the same ends that arise from initiation into the Mysteries, Plato connects Eros to the Cult.

Plato presents the Greater Mysteries through Diotima’s ladder of love. Diotima’s ladder connects to the Eleusinian Mysteries in its form and in its end. Both ladder and the Mysteries require stepwise progressions towards a final Truth. In order to reach Diotima’s truth, one must first ascend the ladder in order of the seven steps she presents. First, he will fall in love with one beautiful body and there beget beautiful ideas; second, he will realize that the beauty of one body is akin to the beauty of all bodies and congregate with beautiful souls in order to give birth to beautiful discourse; fourth, he will learn to see the beauty in customs, activities, and laws, and transcend beyond the focus on bodies; fifth, he will see the
beauty in all branches of knowledge so that he is no longer content with individual things; sixth, he will gaze upon the vast sea of beauty and give birth to beautiful discourses and thoughts out of a love for wisdom; seventh, he will know the Form of Beauty by glimpsing it through the eye of the soul, and finally beget true virtue. In order to reach the Greater Mysteries’ Truth, initiates would first walk twelve miles from Athens to Eleusis. Next, initiates would walk into the sea to cleanse and purify themselves. They would bring a swine into the sea with them and sacrifice it after exiting the water. Finally, initiates would say a password that their guides had taught them, take communion through a drink called kykeon, and see the final vision of Truth. Initiate testimonials are readily available that explain the effects of being initiated, even though the final vision itself has never been divulged in writing. Initiates would experience “the renewal of his or her humanity and also the renewal of their connection to divinity, nature, community, and the cosmos. As the rites concluded, initiates returned home with a new vision of life, blessed by the mysterious gifts of beauty and love.”

Several specific similarities liken Diotima’s ladder to the Mysteries. Both the Mysteries and the ladder of love rely heavily on aspects of guidance. In both the Mysteries and the ladder of love, the guide must educate their student about each level. Additionally, both the Mysteries and Diotima’s ladder emphasize an individual’s soul as transcendent, while their body is irrelevant. Diotima’s “vast sea of the beautiful” leads the experiencer to discern a unique knowledge of beauty. The Eleusinian Mysteries also involve the sea in the journey towards Truth. During the Greater Mysteries, initiates would gather at the call, “Alade! Mystai!”, which translates as, “To the Sea, Initiates!”, and parade to Athens’ seashore. The sea was believed to purify the soul and ready it for the experience of seeing the final rite. Although Diotima does not describe the sea as having purifying factors, she does say that it strengthens and invigorates those who are contemplating, and it is the penultimate step towards begetting true virtue. Diotima could have used any kind of language to refer to the object of contemplation, but she chose the sea. The purifying dip into the sea that takes place during the Greater Mysteries did not require secrecy, so most of the men at the Symposium would have easily made the connection between the Mysteries and the ladder themselves.

One of the most easily overlooked aspects of Diotima’s ladder of love is the necessary presence of the eye of the soul. She does not explicitly identify it as the mind’s eye, but Plato deems it as such in the Republic, a Socratic dialogue on politics. Diotima urges Socrates to understand that it is impossible to glimpse the Form without this so-called eye, stating that the Form must be contemplated “with that faculty by which it has to be viewed” (emphasis mine). This strange description seems to offer the ascender a degree of agency in using the eye that he is not offered elsewhere on the ladder; he can either utilize it and glimpse the Form, or not and never see the Form, even if he has conformed to every other guideline. We can better understand this mysterious eye and its capacity for sight by looking at its equivalent in the Mysteries: kykeon. Kykeon was made of boiled barley water and mint that likely had psychotropic properties. This explains why the final rite was described as if it were totally immersive state of ecstasy; the initiates were experiencing psychedelic hallucinations. Diotima’s implication that an agent must be present to allow for the onset of the final Form invites the connection to be made between the eye of the soul and the kykeon.

In describing the final step of the ladder of love, Plato comes closer to divulging the substance of the final rite of the Great Mysteries than he does anywhere else in the dialogue. Diotima’s language in this section is as poetic as she gets during her entire speech. She details that the Form is eternal, completely unique, “marvelous in its nature” and “the very thing [...] for the sake of which all the earlier labours were undertaken. This devotional language indicates that the Form is completely awe-inspiring and
unlike anything the ascenders would have ever seen before. It is eerily similar to the testimonies given by Ancient Greeks who experienced the final rite of the Greater Mysteries. Plutarch, a famed Greek biographer, describes the experience of being initiated by remarking that “at the moment of quitting it come terrors, shuddering fear, amazement. Then a light that moves to meet you, pure meadows that receive you, songs and dances and holy apparitions.”  

Plutarch describes initiation with the same level of devotion and awe as Diotima, while also failing to describe the final rites depicted in the initiation. Without knowing any specifics of the rites, the only thing we can definitively conclude is that Diotima’s glimpse at the Form is abstract. Perhaps this is because there is no language that can accurately describe the experience of kykeon or, perhaps it is simply because Plato did not want to profane the Mysteries. Either way, Diotima’s description of glimpsing the Form is intimately and unequivocally linked to the experience of the final rite of the Greater Mysteries of Eleusis.

Plato’s Symposium is not just a record of what love is like. It is a dovetailed record of many of Plato’s views that reveals a secretive underside to the dialogue. When these claims are fully brought to light, they clarify why there are so many mystic elements in the Symposium and they elucidate contentious aspects of the dialogue. I hope to have shed some light on the Symposium and its hidden spheres of knowledge by connecting the dialogue to the Eleusinian Mysteries of the Cult of Demeter through Phaedrus and Diotima’s speeches.

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The Case of Anne Conway
A Theologist Philosopher

Madeline Jones

In this paper I will analyze the exclusion of Anne Conway and her ontology throughout philosophical history and argue that her ontology should be interpreted as a coherent metaphysical system rather than disregarded as a theodicy. I will first offer a short history of Anne Conway’s life, which will include explanation and analysis of her various religious influences. This will lead into a discussion of her metaphysical system, and how her radical spirituality affected both her writing style and her philosophical ideas. Through close analysis of Conway’s ontology, I hope to reveal the cohesiveness of her metaphysics and justify why her work is philosophical, rather than just religious. This paper will argue that the historical significance of Conway’s treatise can be understood in a contemporary philosophical context by analyzing her metaphysics through the lens of her religious motivations, rather than disregarding her work because of them. The value of Anne Conway’s philosophical work has been unjustly diminished throughout the history of philosophy due to her uncommon spiritual and religious influences.

The Life of Anne Conway
Anne Conway was born in London in 1631 to a family of modest economic means, with strong political and academic connections. There is little known of Conway’s formal education, but her philosophical training can be closely followed through her letters with her brother’s tutor, Henry More. Henry More was one of the most renowned members of the Cambridge Platonists, a philosophical tradition that originated at Cambridge University in the seventeenth century. Conway is often classified as a Platonist because of her association with More, however, much of her treatise is dedicated to refuting many of More’s claims—specifically his concept of substance dualism. More often referred to Conway as his “heroine pupil,” as he was extremely impressed by her intellectual abilities. Conway’s relationship with More and the Cambridge Platonists introduced her to the discipline of philosophy, but she found her chief influences elsewhere.

Many of the ideas in Conway’s treatise can be attributed to her life experiences. She suffered from lifelong incurable headaches, and is arguably better known as a medical subject than as a philosopher. In her search for a cure, she came into contact with several of the most famous physicians of her time, such as Robert Boyle and Francis Mercury van Helmont. Yet, Conway’s medical condition, in part, undermined her philosophical work—she was viewed as an incurable subject rather than an intellectual. These headaches caused Conway much suffering throughout her life, which influenced the extensive discussion of purgative suffering in her treatise. Furthermore, Conway’s affectionate relationship with her husband, Edward Conway, may have prompted the emphasis on universal and sympathetic love in her ontology.
The Case of Anne Conway

Influence of Quakerism and Kabbalism

While Anne Conway did find inspiration in her personal life, the two most significant influences on her metaphysics were her introduction to the Kabbalah by Henry More and Francis Van Helmont, and her conversion to Quakerism. The English translation of the Hebrew Kabbalah, which is derived from Judaism, gained much traction in England during Conway’s time. Conway was introduced to the Kabbalah through More and van Helmont’s correspondence with Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, a German Kabbalism scholar. Both Conway and More viewed the Kabbalah as a “source of ancient truth,” and when analyzing Conway’s metaphysics closely it becomes clear that many of her central axioms have Kabbalistic influences. In the Kabbalah there is a notion of the “Celestial Adam” or the son of God, as an emanation, or representation, of an infinite God. This principle is quite similar to Conway’s notion of “Middle Nature” that will be discussed in the following section.

Conway was simultaneously introduced to Quakerism by van Helmont, and converted late in her life to the dismay of her family. As she engaged with these two uncommon religions, her admiration of radical spirituality and mysticism increased. Conway was introduced to Quakerism around 1674, and quickly began correspondence with Quaker leaders such as George Keith and William Penn. Conway’s attraction to Quakerism is often attributed to the similarities she found between the immense suffering of early Quakers, as their religious sect was detested in England, and her own personal suffering from her incurable headaches. In 1676, she wrote to Henry More:

“they have been and are a suffering people and are taught from the consolation [that] has been experimentally felt by them under their great trials to administer comfort upon occasion to others in great distress...the weight of my affliction lies so very heavy upon me, that it is incredible how very seldom I can endure anyone in my chamber.”

Conway viewed the perseverance of the Quakers through their immense suffering as inspirational, and admired their patience and fortitude. The Quakers believed that suffering was necessary for salvation, which is reminiscent of Conway's concept of and justification for human suffering in her treatise. It is difficult to distinguish the effects of the Kabbalah and Quakerism on Conway’s life and work from one another, as both religions had mystical influences and similar understandings of suffering as “spiritually medicinal.”

Conway’s interpretation of these two theologies was a driving force behind her metaphysics and ontology, and thus it is both unreasonable and irresponsible to separate these influences from her work. Yet, Conway’s radical spirituality, resulting from her interest in these nontraditional religions, makes it difficult to digest her religiously saturated writing and isolate her fundamental metaphysical principles from her mystical ones. Furthermore, both Kabbalism and Quakerism were marginal ideologies during Conway’s time, and remain atypical today, which is another complicating factor in her ontology. The overwhelming religious imagery in Conway’s treatise makes it daunting to many modern readers, and has caused her work to often be classified only as a religious theodicy, rather than a philosophical ontology. The next section of this paper will outline the main tenets of Conway’s The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy in order to confirm, regardless of her immense religious influence, that her treatise is both a theodicy and an ontology.

Conway’s The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy

The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy outlines Anne Conway’s ontological system, and acts as her response to the dominant ontologies of the time. In this treatise, Conway responds to and contests the philosophical beliefs of her mentor, Henry More, and of the Cartesian system—the dominant ontological system at the time. The Principles offers an “alternative cosmology to
the mechanistic worldview popularized by Descartes,” by proposing a cosmological ontology focusing on morality and the relationships between all forms of nature. Conway found inspiration from the Cambridge Platonists and Henry More, Descartes, Spinoza, and Hobbes, but the majority of her treatise focused on disproving their metaphysics and finding a solution. A driving force behind Conway’s work was her desire to reconcile pain and suffering with the existence of God. The incorporation of this theological concept into her ontological system resulted in a work that is simultaneously theological, moral, and metaphysical. Yet, this unfortunately caused The Principles to be religiously dense and difficult for modern readers to penetrate.

Conway’s metaphysical perspective can be described by both vitalist monism and monistic vitalism. Vitalism proposes that all living things are fundamentally different from non-living things because they contain a certain “distinctive spirit.” Monism proposes that there exists only one substance or “nature” in the world, which counters Descartes’ dualist claim that body and mind are composed of different substances. All things in the world are just different modes or articulations of the same particular substance, regardless of appearance, form, shape, or density. Conway’s ontological system has a tripartite hierarchy of “species” consisting of (1) God, (2) “Middle Nature” or Christ, and (3) Creation. God is infinite, unchangeable, independent, infinitely good and wise, and the highest “most perfect” spirit. “Middle Nature,” which is similar to the aforementioned Kabbalistic concept of “Celestial Adam,” connects God with his creation. Creation is “one entity or substance…so that it only varies according to its modes of existence.” Thus, Conway’s conception of God’s creations affirms her monism, as she believes that body and spirit are of the same substance, but have modal differences in regards to their corporeality or physical articulation.

Many of Conway’s contemporaries use the terms “mind,” “soul,” and “spirit” interchangeably, however Conway tends to use only “spirit” and “soul” in her treatise—likely because of her mystical Quaker influences. Conway’s conception of body and spirit differ greatly from many philosophers of her time. She believes body and spirit are both more or less extended, divisible, and penetrable, whereas the Cartesian system asserts that only the body has these qualities. Conway refers to the particles that compose bodies and matter as “monads,” which she believes are the least-extended, most simple particles of nature, whose infinite multiplicity expresses the infinity of God. Additionally, the “creation” in Conway’s system is not only body or only spirit, but rather body and spirit together: every body must have a spirit and each spirit must be connected to a body. This concept can be attributed to Kabbalism, as the Hebrew word for spirit, ruach, also means “air.” Thus, Conway asserts that “because air has such swift motion, all the swiftness of motion is attributed to the spirit which is in a moving body.” The spirit is in constant motion, and is the moving force behind the body. This claim is consistent with vitalism, as all bodies require a “distinctive spirit.”

It is quite difficult to separate Conway’s monism from her vitalism, as her justification for vitalism is grounded in monism, and vice versa. Conway presents three specific arguments for vitalism in her treatise. Firstly, she believes that all creatures must, in some aspect, be similar to God. Secondly, she asserts that “matter has assumed an infinity of motions from the slowest to the fastest, on account of which it becomes better by virtue of a certain inner power to improve itself.” Here Conway argues that the “inner power” of matter is the spirit, and that the spirit encourages its connected body to improve to become closer to God. Conway’s third argument for vitalism is grounded in her “likeness principle,” or what she calls “the great love and desire which spirits or souls have for bodies.” She argues that the basis of all love is that (1) two things are of the same nature or substance, (2) are similar in some aspect, or (3) that one was created by the other. Conway’s vitalism requires a monist system, as in order for creatures to be
like God, or for spirits to love bodies, there must be similarities between them. This argument proposes three types of love: universal love between all creatures because they are of one substance, particular love between similar individual creatures, and divine love between all of God’s creations and God.

Conway’s vitalist and monist system is derived from the infinity and immutability of God, which was not unusual for a philosophical system at this time as most seventeenth century ontologies necessitated an infinite God. Rather, it is Conway’s extensive discussion of suffering and transmutation that make her ontology difficult to digest. Conway, through her likeness principle, denies the existence of true death and “dead matter.” There can be no matter or body without spirit, regardless of whether or not a “death,” in our common understanding of such, occurs. Every creature must share some attribute with God, and there exists no dead attribute of God: God is infinitely alive.25 Thus, dead matter cannot exist in Conway’s ontological continuum because it shares no common attribute with God. Conway believes that when a body “dies,” the spirits within this body divide: some smaller spirits remain with the physical body, while the “dominant spirit,” which determines species, transmutes into another body. Thus, there is no metaphysical sense of “true” death for Conway, as dominant spirits are mutable and can inhabit any of God’s creations.

Conway’s conception of death and transmutability relate closely to her understanding of suffering. Conway believes that suffering is a necessary channel of purification and restoration. She argues that “every degree of evil or sin has its own punishment, pain, and chastisement appropriate to the nature of the deed itself, by means of which evil turns back again to good.”26 Creatures share in the goodness of God through the nature of their existence, and suffering occurs when a creature falls away from God’s goodness. Creatures of God are constantly changing from good to evil, evil to good, or good to better, as spirits are constantly active and in motion.27 Additionally, a creature, throughout the process of changing from one type of creature to another, can become infinitely more spiritual and good through suffering, but cannot become infinitely more evil.28 Evil cannot be infinite because God is not evil, but bodies can become infinitely more spiritual, as this brings them closer to God—the highest spirit. Conway’s understanding of suffering, death, and transmutability are central to her treatise, and her radical spirituality becomes clear through these concepts. Her mystical theories of spirits and their transmutability offer an uncommon understanding of death and salvation, but clearly offer a reconciliation between the existence of God and human suffering.

Conway’s ontological system is fraught with unfamiliar mystical influences, however, she succeeds in providing a cohesive, albeit very religious, ontological system. She argues for her ontological beliefs that God has created the world and all of its creatures, and that God is infinitely good and perfect—as he does not create annihilative death nor infinite evil. She explains the loving relationship between spirit and body through the likeness principle, and explains why all bodies must have a spirit through her vitalist arguments. However, these axioms are difficult to separate from her religious language and constant references to God. Her emphasis on love, suffering, and salvation, which is motivated by Kabbalism and Quakerism, distracts from the metaphysical content of her work. Many philosophers of Conway’s time found influence in religion, but Conway’s text is overtly more religious than works of her contemporaries which has led many to exclude The Principles from the philosophical cannon. Although it is quite difficult to separate her religious beliefs from her philosophical ones, her metaphysical system is comprehensive. Conway’s treatise should not be viewed only as an irrelevant theodicy because of her religious influences, as she produced an original and innovative, yet religiously saturated, ontological system that explains her philosophical understanding of experience, being, and reality.
Reception of Conway: Then and Now

The authorship of *The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* was not widely attributed to Anne Conway until almost a century after its initial publication. In 1690, eleven years after Conway’s death, a Latin translation of her treatise was published anonymously in Amsterdam. Two years later, an English translation of *The Principles* was published anonymously in England. While no author was listed, the preface explained that the treatise was written “not many years ago, by a certain English Countess, a Woman learned beyond her Sex.” However, Conway’s authorship of *The Principles* was not kept a secret amongst early enlightenment philosophers such as Leibniz. Conway was eventually acknowledged as the author of *The Principles* in 1784, when a British magazine revealed her as the author of the work.

It is important to note that Anne Conway’s treatise was published posthumously. It is unknown who had her treatise published, but it is widely assumed that Francis Mercury van Helmont urged its publication. As previously mentioned, the language of Conway’s treatise is religiously saturated and quite difficult to dissect. This could have resulted from her varying religious influences, or because her treatise was not written for publication. Regardless of Conway’s intentions to publish her treatise or not, it was still highly regarded by some of her contemporaries. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, a major canonical figure, was quite inspired by Conway’s treatise. Leibniz adopted the term “monad” from Conway when creating his own monadology, and was also philosophically influenced by the Kabbalah. Although Leibniz supported Conway’s religious ontology, her work has still failed to receive much recognition today.

Anne Conway’s work has only recently begun reappearing in academic and intellectual spaces with the publication of *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher* in 2004. This was the first, and remains the only, philosophical biography to be written on Conway. In the centuries since *The Principles* was posthumously published, there have been immense changes in the discipline of philosophy. There is now a focus on rationalism, rather than on empiricism or religious philosophy. Conway’s spiritual understanding of nature and existence are hardly reconcilable with the modern scientific notions of nature. *The Principles*’ mystical influences also make it difficult to classify Conway as a rationalist, which has caused many philosophical scholars to accept her status as a marginal, rather than a canonical, figure.

Conclusion

The philosophical discipline no longer praises the incorporation of theological influences in ontological treatises, and more significantly those with influences from unpopular and scarcely practiced religions. In *Anne Conway: A Woman Philosopher*, the author proposes that Conway “employs the philosophical idiom of thinkers and philosophers no longer regarded as frontline, and in some cases considered distinctly defunct.” This makes understanding Conway within the context of the present-day philosophical tradition extremely difficult. The tendency of the current philosophical discipline to disregard highly religious works causes modern philosophers to disregard Conway’s piece as a theological theory. Contemporary philosophers fail to find importance in Conway’s work because it is highly religious, and more so because her philosophical idiom is no longer considered “frontline.” A trend has formed within meta-philosophy of omitting crucial philosophers from the canon because of their association with antiquated idioms and traditions. In sum, Conway’s religious and mystical influences, from Quakerism and the Kabbalah, undermined the historical and philosophical value of her work.

In this paper, I offered an overview of Conway’s personal life and religious influences as a preface to an explanation of the main tenets of her ontological system. *The Principles of Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy* offers a spirited and
innovative metaphysics that is extremely important within its historical context. When Conway wrote *The Principles*, the Kabbalah had been recently translated into English, Quakers were at odds with the Anglican Church, and there were various competing ontological systems circulating around Europe. Conway offered an original ontological system that was innately more spiritual and mystical than others due to her Quaker and Kabbalistic influences. However, I have shown how the radical spirituality of Conway’s treatise has caused her philosophical work to become overlooked by the scholarly philosophical community. The impossibility of isolating Conway’s metaphysics from her religious influences should not discredit *The Principles* entirely, as it is historically significant. While Conway’s ontological system cannot be separated from her Quaker and Kabbalistic influences, close analysis of *The Principles* reveals that this work is indeed philosophical, rather than just theological. The philosophical significance of Conway’s highly religious ontology can only be recognized by analyzing her work in the historical, social, and religious context of the late seventeenth century.

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W
hile critics have noticed the obvious descriptions of age in Sir Ga-
wain and the Green Knight, their broader significance has been neglected. Age in
the poem goes far beyond a “generation gap” between the Green Knight and King Arthur’s
court at Camelot. Instead, both literal and symbolic references to aging cast the entire narrative
in terms of the human life cycle. With this reading, the poem’s adventures symbolically bring
Gawain through the process of aging, beginning with youth at Camelot, continuing to old age,
and concluding with metaphorical death at the Green Chapel. The Green Knight’s active role in
provoking and framing this symbolic development suggests that he and Morgan le Fay want
to test how the young knight reacts to the experiences of aging and death, while the poem’s
conclusion suggests that he will pass his experiences along to Camelot’s other residents. I will
begin by tracing how the poem’s events line up metaphorically with the human life cycle as it
was conceived of in the Middle Ages.

In Fit I, Arthur’s court comes across as care-
free and even immature. By setting the opening
scene during the New Year’s holiday, the Gawain
poet is able to show the amusing ways in which
Arthur’s knights and ladies spend their time,
including “feasting and fellowship,” jousting
tournaments, and “carol-dancing.” While none
of these activities are unusual for a medieval
court, they are all examples of the lighter side
of life in the Middle Ages. There is no mention,
for instance, of war or the actual business of gov-
erning a kingdom. The poet presents this merrymaking as typical of Camelot at New Year’s,
telling us that “in peerless pleasures passed they
their days.” The world of Camelot, then, is akin
to youth itself, where the more serious concerns
of adulthood can be deemphasized in favor of fun. Larry Benson emphasizes the innocence of
Camelot, observing that it “has no troubles…it
is isolated completely from the world of nature
outside its confines.”

Arthur himself fits well as the ruler of this
childlike court. The king is “light…and a little
boyish,” and his behavior confirms the character-
ization. Just before the Green Knight enters, the
poet gives a good example of Arthur’s personal-
ity. It is the king’s custom to wait for “some fair
feat…or far-borne tale of some marvel of might”
before beginning a feast, a whimsical tradition
that fits with Camelot’s youthful frivolity. Arthur’s conversation also suggests immaturity; he
discusses “trifles fair” with his companions, not
serious matters.

The Green Knight’s entrance brings these
characterizations to the foreground by contrast-
ing his physical maturity with Camelot’s youth.
The intruder has bristling eyebrows and “a
beard big as a bush,” which indicate that he
is middle-aged. He highlights this difference

The Function of Age in Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Jack Brownfield
himself by calling the knights “beardless children,” and also draws attention to his beard when he issues his beheading challenge and when Arthur accepts it. These specific references to their age difference show that the Green Knight is aware of his greater maturity. Additionally, by drawing attention to his age, he frames the conflict by showing he is older and more mature than Arthur’s court.

The Green Knight’s entrance not only highlights the court’s immaturity, it begins the process of ending its innocence. The conflict provokes, as Piotr Sadowski notes, “Arthur’s loss of temper, his boyish rashness to seize the Green Knight’s axe, and the court’s ineptness to handle the crisis.” Sadowski analyses these elements as the three chief manifestations of Camelot as a metaphorical childhood, one which had until this point avoided the adult world. The Green Knight’s maturity clashes with Camelot’s innocence and immediately sparks a change. We learn that Arthur’s “heart had wonder” at the shocking events, though he tries to conceal it behind the same kind of amusements that his court had enjoyed before; the looming presence of the beheading axe during the rest of the feast suggests that the Green Knight’s intrusion has cast a shadow over the festivities. Later, during the All-Hallow’s Day feast that proceeds Gawain’s departure, Camelot’s previous fun has become a façade. “Many a mournful man made mirth for his sake,” but to no avail; the courtiers still suffer “much secret sorrow.” This portrayal of spring, with its mention of flowers just beginning to grow, emphasizes the new life of the season and its connection to youth and innocence. This was Camelot’s condition before the arrival of the Green Knight. But spring soon yields to “the season of summer with the soft winds,” a time that brings with it both the growth of crops and the “golden sun.” It is analogous to young adulthood, a period of physical and mental development. Next comes autumn, and here the poet gives hints that he is not only speaking about the year. He mentions how “wroth winds in welkin wrestle with the sun,” slowly weakening youth’s vigor, and even explains that “the grass turns to gray, that once grew green.” Seasonal change has brought Camelot from the new life of spring to its gradual decline in fall, corresponding to maturity. There is a terse mention of winter at the section’s end: “the year moves on in yesterdays many, / And winter once more,” but its significance as a metaphor for old age, life’s final stage, is left until later.

Bookending this description of the year are two feasts: the happy festivities of New Year’s
and the mature, gloomy All-Hallow’s Day. These feasts, as has been noted, demonstrate the change in Arthur’s court. Its inhabitants are no longer the carefree young people that greeted the new year playfully; they have become sorrowful and metaphorically aged as the seasons have passed.  

Narratively, Gawain’s impending departure is the cause of their gloom, and it is his travels through the wilderness that symbolize the onset of old age; Gawain’s physical journey through the hardships of winter corresponds to the temporal journey through the years. He, as a representative of Camelot and the poem’s protagonist, will experience the rest of the symbolic aging process. We hear first about the monsters that the knight must fight on his quest, but “savage wolves” and “giants that came gibbering from the jagged steeps” are not his greatest challenge. Instead, the most difficult trial comes from winter itself. The poet gives us a wonderful description of Gawain’s misery:

And if the wars were unwelcome, the winter was worse,  
When the cold clear rains rushed from the clouds  
And froze before they could fall to the frosty earth.  
Near slain by the sleet he sleeps in his irons  
More nights than enough, among naked rocks,  
Where clattering from the crest the cold stream ran  
And hung hard icicles overhead.  
Thus in peril and pain and predicaments dire  
He rides across country till Christmas Eve.[31]  

The passage emphasizes the discomfort Gawain endures. He is tormented above all by the cold, given tangible form by the repeated mentions of icy rain and streams. But he must also sleep in his armor, an uncomfortable necessity that would be taxing to his health. It is neither difficult nor uncommon to connect winter’s pain and physical discomfort with common experiences of old age, both in our own time and as they were perceived in the Middle Ages. Byrhtferth, for example, described winter as “cold and moist” and related this to how old men are perpetually “cold and snuffly.” Gawain’s discomfort and presumably poor health correspond perfectly to both his surroundings and this line of thought. Medieval thinkers associated physical suffering with old age in general, as Shulamith Shahar has pointed out. Age was “a source of suffering and misery…[the elderly man] was as good as frozen and had no pleasures left.” The misery of traveling through the winter wilderness symbolically turns Gawain into an old man, complete with the suffering and discomfort of age.  

Medieval thinkers also noted the “growing awareness of approaching death” in old age, which corresponds to the natural world’s death in winter. Gawain passing his nights among “naked rocks” whose vegetation has withered with the cold fits well with this conception. These bleak surroundings are a constant reminder of his likely death at the Green Chapel and contrast with Camelot’s idyllic, happy youth.  

Fit III emphasizes Gawain as a symbolic old man through his interactions with Bertilak and his wife. In a reversal of the earlier dichotomy, Gawain is now the elder and Bertilak the younger. The latter has a “broad, bright…beard, of a beaver’s hue” and “lusty” manner, which show him to be middle-aged and vigorous. Gawain, by contrast, seems elderly, weak, and infirm; he is told by his host to “lie abed late” to recover from his hardships, lack of sleep, and ill-nourishment. Bertilak, meanwhile, will spend the coming days hunting. The distinction is clear, and the poet spends a great deal of the fit contrasting Bertilak’s strenuous activity with Gawain’s virtual imprisonment in bed. The hunters, for example, rise before daylight, while Gawain sleeps in long past the sunrise. This keeps in line with medieval thought on the proper care of old people; the weakness of literal old age, like Gawain’s winter-induced weakness, should be mitigated by “the rest and benefit” of sleep. Medieval physicians also recommended
that the aged refrain from “all labor...all anxiety and excitement,” just as Bertilak directs Gawain to rest.40 This frames Gawain as symbolically old and therefore in need of care, a characterization which Gawain does nothing to reject. Bertilak thus plays an active role in Gawain’s aging process, just as he played the decisive role in sparking Camelot’s maturation with his entrance.

The seduction scenes between Bertilak’s wife and Gawain also fit within the medieval view of old age. Just as the aged were supposed to avoid physical exertion, they were advised to abstain from sex. Medically, the elderly were believed to lose their sex drive,41 and, even if remained, sex was viewed as a dangerous excitement for the frail old body that should be heavily discouraged.42 But the more serious danger was moral, based on their supposedly lessened sex drives. With decreased temptation, it “ought therefore to have been easier for the whole person...to avoid sin and to repent.”43 Old people who still had sex were thus especially wicked, and to their lust was added the additional sin of not acting one’s age.44 This was even worse; the old man who acted like he was still young “violated the laws of nature and behaved like a madman.”45

Sexual activity in the elderly was also linked to vanity; if they had no libido, then only the sinful desire to feign youth could be responsible.46 This staunch disapproval of sex in old age operates in the background of Bertilak’s wife’s attempted seduction. The surface-level justification for Gawain’s refusal to have sex remains his devotion to the virtue of chastity and his courtesy as a sworn knight, but these reasons can co-exist with the medieval, moralistic view of sex in old age.47 Gawain, the bedridden, symbolically old man, cannot in good conscious consummate his relationship with the young woman; it would be both morally wrong and physically dangerous. Sex is linked with youth and vitality, not with elderly frailty, and so to have sex with Bertilak’s wife would be tantamount to subverting his own symbolic age and with it the natural cycle of human life. The poet even gives us a hint of the connection between Gawain’s refusal and his coming death: “the warrior had / the less will to woo, for the wound that his bane must be. / He must bear the blinding blow.”48 That is, it is Gawain’s “growing awareness of approaching death,” a key hallmark of old age, that makes sex unappealing.49 We learn later that Bertilak instructed his wife to seduce Gawain, making these scenes another way in which he frames the symbolic aging.50

Gawain’s transition to symbolic old age by Fit III is also evident in his physical weakness, shown primarily in the kisses he and Bertilak’s wife exchange. Gawain is not the active initiator of the kisses, as we might expect of a young knight; instead, she “takes him in her arms / Leans down her lovely head, and lo! he is kissed.”51 The entire episode evokes the image of a young girl kissing her ailing grandfather.

The natural and inevitable conclusion to the process of aging is death, and so Gawain’s symbolic life cycle concludes with his mock execution at the Green Chapel. On the way, however, Gawain’s guide gives him a warning about the danger he faces from the Green Knight which sheds light on how we ought to interpret the scene. It is worth quoting in full:

None passes by [the Chapel] so proud in his arms
That he does not dash him down with his deadly blows,
For he is heartless wholly, and heedless of right,
For be it chaplain or churl that by the Chapel rides,
Monk or mass-priest or any man else,
He would as soon strike him dead as stand on two feet.
Wherefore I say, just as certain as you sit there astride,
You cannot but be killed[.]52

The Green Knight eventually kills everyone who reaches him, regardless of their social class or morality. He is cast as the grim fate that awaits all humans: death itself.53 The emphasis on the universality of death, while still resonant today, was especially common in the poetic
imagination of the Middle Ages. Depictions of
the “Dance of Death,” for instance, showed peo-
ple of every social rank dancing with a skeleton
to emphasize death as the common “reaper and
leveler” of humanity. Thus Gawain’s coming
death at the Green Knight’s hand is not only the
narrative consequence of the beheading game
from Fit I; it is an instance of the universal ex-
perience of mortality that inevitably concludes
our lives.

The Green Chapel itself is reminiscent of both
a funeral barrow and hell. These images evoke
thoughts about death itself and what might
come after, which fits logically as the next step in
the aging sequence. Gawain himself notes how
“bleak” and “hideous” the place is, while de-
tails like the mention of a “cold stream” subtly
hint at the same seasonal aging metaphors used
throughout the poem.

The moment of death itself is important in-
somuch as Gawain proves willing to suffer it;
while he shies from the first blow, he steadies
himself and receives the second. We might inter-
pret this straightforwardly as Gawain embracing
the inevitability of his death were it not for the
girdle that he has chosen to wear as a last
hope of survival. But, as Brewer has remarked,
the presence of the girdle does not destroy the
dramatic ending or lessen our appreciation of
Gawain’s bravery. We never get the sense that
Gawain “can now afford to be complacent.”

Instead, the girdle operates in the background,
relevant but not determinative in our under-
standing of the scene. Gawain bears the killing
blow, which does indicate a willingness to die,
but he also maintains a chance of surviving.

How then are we to judge his actions? We can
look to the Green Knight’s own evaluation: he ac-
knowledges Gawain as “a man most faultless by
far / Of all that ever walked over the wide earth”
but chides him for “lack[ing]…a little in loyalty”
through his deception with the girdle. Even this
infraction is mitigated because it was motivated
by Gawain’s desire to prolong his life. The Green
Knight’s tone here is important. He is play-
ful and warm throughout his exchange; we are
told that Gawain’s actions “please him well.” It
seems clear that Gawain has faced down death
and passed whatever test the Green Knight was
conducting, the girdle notwithstanding.

To understand this test, we can begin by ex-
amining the Green Knight’s explanation for his
actions. It was Morgan le Fay, the “old withered
lady” of Hautdesert, who instigated the behead-
ing challenge to frighten Queen Guinevere.
Readers and critics have often found the Green
Knight’s rationale bland or hollow, but it at least
points us to one more satisfying. The poet de-
scribes Morgan as an embodiment of old age,
one that contrasts sharply with Bertilak’s young
wife. Fit II contains a litany of physical descrip-
tions, including how her “flesh hung in folds”
and a reference to her eyes as “unsightly to see,
and sorrily bleared.” That such an “ancient”
woman caused the poem’s events is significant
because of the process of symbolic aging which
Gawain has undergone. That is, Gawain’s tran-
sition from Camelot’s carefree youthfulness
through old age to his symbolic death is ulti-
mately Morgan’s doing. She guided the Green
Knight to Camelot to confront its childlike in-
ocence and test how its people would respond
to the loss of that innocence. How would they
respond to the discomforts and difficulties of old
age and death itself? These unpleasant aspects
of human life were absent from Camelot, but by
symbolically bringing Gawain through the life
cycle, Morgan and Bertilak can observe how a
young person grows up and whether he can face
his own mortality with maturity.

The Green Knight’s active role is key. The
symbolism of youth, old age, and death comes
as the consequence of how Bertilak sets up and
frames Gawain’s quest. He provokes the shift
from childhood to maturity with his entrance
and frames Gawain’s age in Fit III. By both leav-
ing him out of the hunting trips and showing his
symbolic inability to have sexual intercourse, he
casts Gawain as old and weak. Finally, he is the
personified experience of death at the Green Cha-
pel. The Green Knight plays the instigating role
in almost every key scene of Gawain’s process of
symbolic aging. He also calls attention to age at
other important moments of the poem, such as
his jeering label of Arthur’s knights as “beardless children.” These details indicate the intentionality of aging for Morgan and Bertilak’s purpose: through a series of adventures, they are deliberately putting Gawain through the universal experiences of aging and death to test his reactions.

With this in mind, and remembering the Green Knight’s jovial approval of Gawain’s performance at the end of Fit IV, we can conclude that Gawain has passed: he has responded to old age and death in the proper way. But how should a person react to his own mortality? In the Middle Ages, at least, the standard response was mixed. “The didactic literature of the period,” Shahar explains, “called on the old person to be ready to die, to prepare to die, not to fear death nor yet to wish for it.”

This is a fair description of Gawain’s actions: he is willing and ready to face death at the Green Knight’s hands, but certainly not eager. The morning before, for instance, he can barely sleep, and yet he does not accept his guide’s offer to escape. The green girdle is the ultimate sign of Gawain’s mixed attitude toward death. He uses it as a last hope to stay alive, but, as noted, still takes a considerable risk in facing the killing blow. That the Green Knight believes Gawain’s desire to stay alive excuses keeping the girdle shows that his, and the poem’s, attitude towards death matches the typical medieval view. Bertilak cannot fault Gawain for wanting to stay alive, especially since this desire did not prevent him from persevering through the difficulties of old age and coming to the Green Chapel.

As the focus of the poem’s final stanza, the girdle functions as the symbol of the knowledge and maturity that Gawain has gained through his experience: that, while old age and mortality are inevitable, there is no need for either despair or enthusiasm for death. The girdle will also pass along that knowledge to the other residents of Camelot. Gawain has been their “representative in the adventure,”67 the young person who directly experienced the symbolism of aging, but by agreeing to wear similar belts,68 the others take on these experiences.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight’s use of both literal and symbolic descriptions of age are not just cosmetic features or minor details; they can be read as integral to the text’s meaning. Morgan and Bertilak test Gawain through the human life cycle, from innocent youth to death, and then send him back to share the experiences he has gained with the youthful court. “Gawain, like us all, must confront death in establishing his maturity,” a confrontation that, among its other facets, gives the poem deeper meaning.69

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Within Russian culture, few individuals can claim as esteemed a place as Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin (1799 – 1837). Indeed, “Pushkin is our everything” is a very well-known and often-quoted phrase in Russian. In 1836, during the summer before his untimely death, Pushkin composed a series of short poems on Kamen-niy Island, St. Petersburg. These poems are: “II. The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women,” “III. An Italian Stylization,” “IV. Worldly Power,” and “VI. From Pindemonte.” Collectively, these poems are known as the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle. In the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle, Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin uses Lenten liturgical and Biblical subtexts, along with Slavonicisms, to illustrate that spirituality is the path to true, inner freedom - the answer to a theocratic and illiberal State ideology. This is a notion that Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam (1891 – 1938) continues eighty-five years later, in 1921, in his poem “Below the Domes of Aged Silence, I Love...” that shaped the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle. One can easily notice that all five of these poems are written with a simple rhyme scheme: rhyming couplets. But the most foundational link between Pushkin’s Cycle and Mandelshtam’s poem is the meter: iambic hexameter, also known as the alexandrine verse. The alexandrine verse is characterized by consisting of six bi-syllabic feet in which the second syllable is stressed and a caesura, i.e. a break between feet that corresponds with the end of a word, after the third foot. Although different literary cultures understand and interpret the significance of meter and rhythm differently, we will give priority to manner in which they are understood within the Russian literary tradition, as all the poems here are products and participants of that tradition. Within the Russian tradition, individual meters create particular subconscious rhythmic associations among poems written in that specific meter. In addition to the alexandrine verse, Slavonicisms are prevalent in each of the poems. A Slavonicism is a word of Old Church Slavonic (OCS) origin that is being borrowed...
for use in standard Russian. OCS, marked in its ninth-century lexicon, morphology, and syntax, is the language used to this day in the prayers and worship services of the Russian Orthodox Church. As such, although not exclusively, Slavonicisms are usually borrowed into Russian to invoke liturgical connotations for the Russian audience, since the words, grammar, and syntax are reminiscent of a language only heard at church services. This technique also creates diglossia within the text. Diglossia is defined as “a situation in which two languages (or two varieties of the same language) are used under different conditions within a community, often by the same speakers. The term is usually applied to languages with distinct ‘high’ and ‘low’ (colloquial) varieties.” This is precisely the relationship between Russian and OCS, with the former being considered low-style and the latter being considered high-style. Additionally, all these poems often invoke religious and spiritual references, usually liturgical and/or Biblical sub-texts. In particular, there is a definitive Lenten theme present within the Kamennooostrovskiy Cycle. The second half of “The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women” is a reformulation of the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem, which Orthodox Christians pray often during Lent. “An Italian Stylization” and “Worldly Power” are both situated during Good Friday. Mandelshtam continues this Lenten theme by situating his poem during Holy Week. Finally, Mandelshtam is arguably making as much of a claim about Church-State relations in his poem as Pushkin is, particularly in his “Worldly Power.” Mandelshtam’s deliberate use of these elements indicates that he is engaging in a dialogue with Pushkin on the poetic terms Pushkin established eighty-five years earlier in his Kamennooostrovskiy Cycle.

The first step to understanding the Kamennooostrovskiy Cycle is ascertaining the historical conditions in which Pushkin lived when he wrote these poems, particularly in regards to Church-State relations in Imperial Russia. In 1721, Tsar Peter I abolished the Moscow Patriarchate and established the Most Holy Governing Synod, which “was made up of clerics, but it was itself subjected to state control, and its individual members at a given moment may have reached their ecclesiastical positions by state action… The Synod was not a body of the church but of the state.” “All laws on ecclesiastical matters were expressions of the emperor’s authority, sometimes drafted by the Synod, yet at others prepared by a special non-synodal committee for submission to the emperor by the overprocurator — not necessarily after the Synod had studied them. Legislation drew its force solely from imperial confirmation, and not from the authority of the Synod.” After ecclesiastical landed property was secularized in 1764, the Church had no option but to depend on the tsars for land and money. In return, “the clergy had to proclaim imperial manifestoes, statutes, and decrees in the churches, and the Church had… to use its authority to silence or at least weaken all opposition to the government.” In essence, during Pushkin’s time, the Russian Orthodox Church seemed to be little more than a political tool of the tsars to influence and maintain control over Russian society.

The second step is to unpack the theology that Pushkin poetically presents in the individual poems of the Kamennooostrovskiy Cycle while simultaneously keeping in mind the remaining poems. In “The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women,” Pushkin equates the lust for power with the serpent that tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. Firstly, Pushkin considers this sin distinct from the others, i.e. desperate idle-ness and idle speech, as this is the only one that is enhanced by a symbol. Secondly, the symbol itself elevates the gravity of this sin, for Pushkin is calling to mind the sin that was responsible for humanity’s fall from grace. This symbol and its corresponding sin have implications for the State’s grasp for power, particularly ecclesiastical and moral authority. After all, part of the serpent’s temptation to Eve was the ability to know good and evil. Failing to respect the independence and ecclesiastical integrity of the Orthodox Church and instead using it to weaken opposition to the State manipulates a spiritual reality that should only be faithful to God into
serving the tsar’s self-interest and political ambitions. This subjugation is clearly an overreach of the empire’s power in Pushkin’s eyes. Secondly, Pushkin recognizes who God is by addressing Him as “Master,” but he also asserts his own freedom by abstaining from referring to himself as God’s slave, as the Lenten Prayer does. Finally, by asking God to revive the virtues of humility, patience, love, and chastity in his heart, as opposed to granting them as St. Ephrem asks, Pushkin implies he already has these virtues. Nevertheless, Pushkin recognizes man’s desire for inner, spiritual freedom from sin and his need for divine grace by making the supplication and acknowledging God’s lordship in the first place.

At first glance, “An Italian Stylization,” seems to be a fantastical account of Judas’s fate after committing suicide. The poem itself establishes a beautiful polemic, implicitly contrasting the execution on the cross, the resurrection, and the ascension into heaven of Jesus with the suicide on the tree, the revival, and the flinging of Judas “into the throat of hungry Gehenna.” Indeed, Judas’s revival is poetically marked in the Russian original. In Russian, Dkhnl zhizn’ (“Breathed life”) contains the very first spondee in the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle, accentuating the action. These and other dualistic polemics are discussed at length in Davydov’s article “Pushkin’s Final Lyrical Cycle: An Experiment of Reconstruction.” However, what Davydov’s analysis fails to address is how this poem fits within the larger context of the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle beyond its Lenten subtexts. Indeed, what might this poem have in common with poems that speak about spiritual freedom, State interference in religion, and political freedom?

The answer lies in the protagonist of “An Italian Stylization,” Judas Iscariot, who is never mentioned by name but rather identified as “the traitor disciple.” Judas traveled with and learned from Jesus for three years, just like all the other apostles. During this time, Jesus did many things that upset both the political and religious authorities of His time, e.g. forgiving sins, performing miracles on the Sabbath, claiming superiority over the law of Moses. But despite all the miracles he saw, all the teachings he heard, and the sacraments he could have been empowered to perform, Judas sold his Lord out to the officials whom He threatened. Moreover, he committed his act of treachery for the sake of just thirty silver coins. Lastly, he betrayed Christ with a kiss, a symbol of love. For the sin of selling out God to please the authorities, Judas is destined for, according to Pushkin’s poem, eternity in hell with Satan and his demons. Within the context of the following poem in the Cycle, “Worldly Power,” which illustrates another Lenten event taking place on the same day and applies it to Church-State relations, “An Italian Stylization” also can be interpreted to comment on the same topic. That is, the figure of Judas can be interpreted as symbolic of the Russian Orthodox Church, which is supposed to be apostolic, i.e. adherent to the authority of the apostles’ successors, just as Judas was an apostle, but has instead succumbed to the State authorities rather than maintain fidelity to Christ. The Russian Orthodox Church has not been entirely abolished but has been revived underneath the oversight of the Most Holy Governing Synod, becoming a sort of “living corpse,” i.e. an oxymoron. Moreover, now it is no longer submitting to the “Lord” whom Pushkin alluded to in “The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women,” but now serves and is embraced by this new “accursed lord.”

“Worldly Power” begins where “An Italian Stylization” left off by depicting the scene of Christ on the cross on Good Friday but then shifts from first-century Palestine to Pushkin’s own nineteenth-century Russia. Here we encounter the literary construct of chronotope. Conceived of by Russian literary scholar Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, chronotope comes from two Greek words, chronos and topos, which mean “time” and “space,” respectively. Analyzing chronotopologies involves acknowledging the connectedness of these two dimensions, temporal and spatial, and recognizing how they can be layered upon each other. In “Worldly Power,” Pushkin maintains the visual of the crucifix from the first century but brings it to the nineteenth century.
century, where the crucifix is a symbol of the Russian Orthodox Church, and Mary Magdalene and the Blessed Virgin Mary have been replaced by “two terrifying sentinels.” The image is particularly poignant because, according to Matthew 27:62-66, Jesus’s tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers after His burial. In this example, Pushkin uses time to inform time, i.e. using the events of the first century to shed light upon the events of his contemporary nineteenth century. Pushkin is drawing a striking parallel between the Roman soldiers who were responsible for Christ’s death and the imperial sentinels who are supposedly guarding His Church.

As the poem moves from this chronotopic scene onto the rhetorical questions, each markedly beginning with a spondee on Il’ (“Or”), it falls into a literary genre called Menippean satire. Unlike traditional satires which tend to take aim at specific individuals, Menippean satires criticize mindsets and attitudes, often by manipulating perspectives. The second half of the poem criticizes the Russian government for its theocratic practices and intrusion into the religious realm by posing them as insults to God, e.g. calling Christ’s sacrificial death “the baggage of bureaucrats.” Specifically, Pushkin questions why the Russian Orthodox Church needs “the sentinel guard” of the State in order to exist. Then he sarcastically asks the State authorities if they believe they are honoring “the king of kings” through their commandeering of the Church. Pushkin’s next satirical question serves as a vivid reminder of the suffering Christ endured precisely at the hands of the State authorities of His time but also by His free will. That is, if Christ is unafraid to “obediently hand over his flesh to his torturers’ scourges, nails, and a spear,” then His Church should be prepared to obediently follow His example. In the end, Pushkin’s final rhetorical question points out that this interference of the State into the Church has resulted in the exclusion of “the simple people” for the sake of “the strolling masters.” There is no greater disgrace to Christ’s sacrifice than to impede His encounter with those whom He died to atone.

While it may be granted that “From Pindemonte” seems far more concerned with politics than religion, the reason for this shift may be explained by what is present, and what is absent, in the rest of the Cycle. In the preceding poem, “Worldly Power,” Pushkin made an internal shift between the scene of the crucifixion, an intensely religious event, to asking satirical political questions about nineteenth-century Russian society. Considering that the shift away from explicitly religious did not begin with “From Pindemonte” but rather within “Worldly Power,” the final poem of the Cycle does not stand out as much. Finally, it is also important to keep in mind the numeration of the poems. Particularly, “Worldly Power” is “IV.,” while “From Pindemonte” is “VI.,” implying that there is a missing “V.” poem. It stands to reason, since we know the content of “IV.,” and “VI.,” that Pushkin intended on writing another poem that would continue the transition begun in “Worldly Power” from explicitly religious to increasingly political, perhaps even involving Christ’s resurrection on Easter to conclude the Lenten theme. If this is the case, then “From Pindemonte” likely would not have stood out as much from the rest of the Cycle.

Pushkin offers a deeply personal view of freedom in “From Pindemonte.” Specifically, he admits that he is not particularly concerned with democratic rights, e.g. having a say in taxation (likely a reference to America), opposing wars, and freedom of press. Instead, all of these are just flimsy words to him. “Depending on the tsar… [or] on the people,” i.e. autocracy and democracy, respectively, is of little concern to Pushkin. What matters to Pushkin is freedom of the inner, spiritual variety. In lieu of political rights, Pushkin wants the right to “not bend neither his conscience, nor his thoughts, nor his neck for power or for livery.” In lieu of political freedom, Pushkin wants the freedom “to be enthralled by the divine beauties of nature” and “joyfully tremble in raptures of tender emotion before works of art and inspiration.” Simultaneously in all these declarations, Pushkin acknowledges the role of God in his worldview. When
it comes to giving political power to the people and the tsar, Pushkin uses an idiom to dismiss the significance of both, but the idiom contains a spondee on Бог ("God"). This spondee hints at Whom Pushkin thinks one should "depend" on. When emphasizing the freedom to experience and marvel at nature, Pushkin directly acknowledges God as the source of the beauties of nature with the word "divine." Furthermore, the reaction to natural and artistic creations that Pushkin describes sounds strikingly much like wonder and awe, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in Christian theology. While "From Pindemonte" may seem to be the least religious poem in the Cycle, its theme is intimately related to that of the most religious poem in the Cycle, "The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women,": internal freedom, a topic subsequently adopted by Mandelshtam.

Mandelshtam’s "Below the Domes of Aged Silence, I Love...," begins by introducing St. Isaac’s Cathedral in Leningrad, Russia in the twentieth century, during the rise of the Soviet Union and its persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church. Within this first stanza, Mandelshtam’s reflection on the moving power of prayers gives us echoes of Pushkin’s similar reflection at the very beginning of “The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women.” In the second stanza, Mandelshtam more specifically situates his poem within the context of Good Friday due to the liturgical subtext referring to “the procession of the burial shroud,” a Good Friday service. While maintaining the twentieth-century Leningrad cathedral as a base setting, Mandelshtam constructs a chronotope in this stanza by imposing onto this base a reference to first-century Palestine, i.e. “And [I love] the Galilean gloom of Holy Week in the ancient/dilapidated fishing net.” Here, Mandelshtam is using the events of first-century Palestine to inform and contextualize the events of twentieth-century Leningrad. Specifically, he links St. Isaac Cathedral’s funeral and Good Friday commemoratory services with the gloom of Holy Week, i.e. Christ’s death on the first Good Friday. In addition to imposing temporal realities upon each other, Mandelshtam blends together different spatial realities in these lines as well. “The ancient/dilapidated fishing net” seems to be a reference to the apostles, most of whom were fishermen on the shores of the Galilean Sea. But the image, understood only in this way, makes little sense – how can the gloom of Holy Week be in this fishing net? However, if the apostles were fishermen, then churches can be thought of as fishing nets, i.e. what the apostles baptized people into. After all, Christ told his first apostles in Matthew 4:19, “I will make you fishers of men.” Furthermore, the Russian word for cathedral, “собор,” contains connotations of people being gathered in. In this sense, St. Isaac’s Cathedral is the ancient or dilapidated fishing net containing the Galilean gloom of Holy Week. The word ветхом is a Slavonicism because it means “ancient” in OCS but “dilapidated” in contemporary Russian. This example of diglossia furthers the chronotope temporally yet again because we do not know which meaning to ascribe, i.e. the archaic or the contemporary. Through these chronotopic impositions of Good Friday in first-century Palestine onto Good Friday in twentieth-century Russia, Mandelshtam harkens back to Pushkin’s “Worldly Power,” which also involves a chronotopic application of Good Friday.

The second half of Mandelshtam’s poem begins with praises for “The eternal cathedrals of Sophia and Peter,” i.e. Hagia Sophia in Constantinople and St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. One may initially be inclined to think of these cathedrals and the cities they are located in as famous centers of Christianity. However, were that the case, Mandelshtam surely would have picked a Moscow cathedral, e.g. St. Basil’s Cathedral or the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, instead of a Leningrad cathedral. After all, Moscow was often referred to as the Third Rome after the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453. If the cathedrals are metonyms for the cities they are located in, what connects Rome, Constantinople, and Leningrad? They are all capitals of Christian empires that have
fallen: Rome in 476, Constantinople in 1453, and Leningrad in 1917. Thus, these cathedrals are not so much symbols of glory but of tribulation. But Mandelshtam is confident that “in times of heavy woes, it is to here... sorrowful wolf prints drag.” That is, those persecuted who face wolf-like loneliness can come to St. Isaac’s Cathedral, and Mandelshtam pledges that “we will never betray [them].” Where does Mandelshtam’s confidence and intense faith come from? The answer is in the next line: “For free is the slave who has overcome fear.” What has enabled Mandelshtam to overcome fear? “The gain of deep, complete faith, preserved beyond measure in cold barns.” In these concluding lines, we hear echoes of Christ’s words in John 12:24: “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit.” The persecution of the Church and the deaths of martyrs have produced immeasurably resilient faith “in cold barns,” likely a reference to the cold climate of Mandelshtam’s country. Pushkin taught us in the Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle that the only thing that can counter the State’s constraints on external freedom is inner freedom. Mandelshtam’s “Below the Domes of Aged Silence, I Love...,” teaches us that we achieve inner freedom, in turn, by overcoming fear in “Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”⁸

The four poems of Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin’s Kamennoostrovskiy Cycle put forward his own theology on topics as diverse as the human person, freedom, and Church-State relations. “The Desert Fathers and Blameless Women” acknowledges the lordship of God and man’s search for strength “amidst the storms and battles of life” as possible only through Him, as evident through his reconfiguration of the Lenten Prayer of St. Ephrem the Syrian. Read within the larger context of the Cycle, “An Italian Stylization” draws parallels between the “traitor disciple,” Judas, who handed Christ over to the authorities of his time, and the nineteenth-century Russian Orthodox Church, which has submitted to the authority of the Russian Imperial State instead of maintaining faithfulness to Christ. “Worldly Power” satirically questions the State for its intrusions into the life of the Church, introducing the construct of chronotope to superimpose the events of nineteenth-century Russia onto Christ’s crucifixion on Good Friday in first-century Palestine. Finally, “From Pinde-monte” offers Pushkin’s comprehensive view on the nature of human freedom not as something grasped through the rights that the State bestows upon its people, but as something found within oneself. Specifically, rights, in Pushkin’s view, consist of not needing to betray one’s mind and conscience and instead being able to be “enthralled by” and “tremble” in the presence of God in all of creation, both natural and artistic. Throughout all of these poems, Pushkin incorporates a number of stylistic and thematic elements that characterize the entire Cycle: the alexandrine verse, diglossia through lexical, syntactical, and morphological borrowings from Old Church Slavonic, Lenten subtexts, and a focus on freedom amidst troubling Church-State relations. All of these elements are adopted and synthesized by Osip Emilyevich Mandelshtam in his poem, “Below the Domes of Aged Silence, I Love...”, initiating a dialogue between the two poets. Mandelshtam’s poem, written predominantly in the alexandrine verse, diglossically laments the Soviet persecution of the Russian Orthodox Church, symbolized by St. Isaac’s Cathedral in Leningrad, and chronotopically links it with Good Friday. While Pushkin argues that the nineteenth-century Russian State has gone morally astray by becoming too involved with the Church, Mandelshtam argues that the twentieth-century Soviet State has done the same by persecuting the Church. In the end, both poets are asserting the same thing: a State with a theocratic regime is just as repugnant as a State with an atheistic regime, and freedom from both of these external constraints is to be found within “the seed of deep, complete faith.”

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1830 was late in the day to found a debating society devoted to the lofty concepts of eloquence and liberty at Georgetown College. Georgetown, the oldest Catholic college in the United States, had been founded over four decades previously, amidst the surge of educational institutions established in the heady days following the founding of the new American republic. For a literary society, 1830 missed the rush of extracurricular frenzy which surged in the last decades of the eighteenth and first decades of the nineteenth century, when such extracurricular clubs usually sprouted up within years of a school’s founding. But predominantly Catholic students at Georgetown founded in that year a debating society devoted to literary pursuits, quickly choosing for itself a name, “Philodemic,” whose etymological roots translate to “love for the people.” They may have been late, and the club itself was not unique—largely adapting the debating practices, oratorical exercises, and constitutional frameworks of other college literary societies of the day—but what was exceptional about this debating society in particular was its rather un-Catholic commitment to American and enlightenment-based ideals, captured by its motto “Eloquence in the Defense of Liberty.”

Catholic-Americans in 1830 were still a small minority in the United States, concentrated in only a few states, especially Maryland and Louisiana. Yet this existing demographic minority—unlike the wave of immigration from Catholic countries, especially Ireland, that would begin in the 1830s and 1840s—was fairly well integrated economically and socially into the American polity. Despite a long-standing discomfiture among many Protestant Americans—including many of the Founding Fathers—about the status of Catholics in the new Republic and their potential political inclinations and loyalties, Catholics had increasingly begun to assert themselves as legitimately American, on par, and even in accordance with their religious identity. The Philodemic Society of Georgetown College, drawing its membership from elite Catholic families in the surroundings of the nation’s capital and from those farther afield who could afford to send their children to Georgetown, was a prototypical expression of this national aspiration.

Philodemicians, in the three decades before the Civil War and in the immediate years succeeding the conflict, sought to define themselves as more American than Americans, aspiring to contribute a positive Catholic-American citizenship to this new country devoted to religious freedom and democratic, tolerant liberal ideals. Their quest to do so was not just opposed by the bigoted biases of non-Catholic Americans; it was also in contradiction to the ideology of the Catholic Church in Europe, and even among many prelates in the United States. Yet they persevered nonetheless, using a variety of media innate to the collegiate debating society—festivals,
celebrations, patriotic anniversaries, orations, toasts, dinners, debates, resolutions, and eulogies—to proclaim their simultaneous American-ness and Catholicism, the former marked by a definite commitment to the ideal of liberty, supposedly unhindered by the latter.

In the following pages, I give an overview of the college debating society of the mid-nineteenth century and how Georgetown College and the Philodemic fit into this phenomenon. Future installments will examine how the Philodemic handled and manipulated subjects such as slavery, religious freedom, and post-war reconciliation. Although each installment will address a distinct forensic theme of the Philodemic Society, the common media involved—speeches, commemorative festivals, and weekly debates—as well as the unique demographic and geographic position that the Philodemic represented—largely Catholic students at a college in the nation’s capital—make it a distinctive and rare institution to study. Moreover, in its unifying principle of “Eloquence in the Defense of Liberty,” the Philodemic committed itself to a specific political, national, and social ideal, nuanced and evolving over the decades, but always broadly in tune with what its members believed to be the core of American republicanism. The nineteenth century debating society offers an ample pool of evidence, with a tremendous amount of written and printed material that describe and record its activities. From the Philodemic Archives at Georgetown, I compiled over 1200 debate resolutions and decisions from the years 1830 – 1875, along with the meeting minutes for those years; 46 printed orations for events like Commencement, Washington’s Birthday, Independence Day, and the Celebration of Catholic Pilgrims; and a mass of other materials like letters, officer and committee reports, financial records, calligraphed constitutions, specially composed poems, and even, in one case, a musical tune entitled the “Philodemic Grand March.”¹

I. The Nineteenth-Century Literary Society

The literary society was a particularly American institution in the nineteenth century, a form of student organization that had grown out of the need for students to shape their own extracurricular life out of the narrow, restrictive confines of academic university life. Beginning in the colonial period,² and gaining momentum in the university “rush” after the Revolutionary War, they quickly became the primary form of student organization outside of the classroom, and maintained this status until fraternities eclipsed them in the years after the Civil War. Chroniclers of literary societies have generally ignored societies at Catholic schools in favor of those at Northern, Protestant institutions, which offer another particularly rich site for analysis.³ Not just groups that met for debate, they encompassed a broad range of activities, forming almost a “college with a college” as one scholar put it:

Elaborately organized, self-governing youth groups, student literary societies were, in effect, colleges within colleges. They enrolled most of the students, constructed—and taught—their own curricula, granted their own diplomas, selected and bought their own books, operated their own libraries, developed and enforced elaborate codes of conduct among their members, and set the personal goals and ideological tone for a majority of the student body.⁴

Another historian has called them “virtually little republics, with their own laws and a democratically elected student administration.”⁵ Despite a multitude of activities, debate was their central activity, occurring on a weekly basis in these groups. This was where students could address, in a formally outlined process, the leading political debates of the day on the same stage with the philosophical, religious, and moral questions that were more intimately connected with their day-to-day studies. The debates were the primary vehicle for students to aspire to not just personal
edification and intellectual maturity, but also to greater heights of citizenship and civic engagement, or what a chronicler of pre-war Southern student societies, Timothy Williams, calls “intellectual manhood.”⁶ For Williams, these societies helped men on the brink of adolescence and adulthood make their transition, finding the skills to “speak like men, not boys” and to acquire the practice of public, virtuous citizenship in the republic. The students took their exercises deadly seriously, to a point that seems, to a modern eye, more befitting the activities of an actual legislature than a undergraduate student club. (And one, it should be recalled, whose members were much younger than today’s undergraduates, perhaps with an average age of sixteen or seventeen.)

This unique form of organization—however limited to the elite, educated students of the day—gives us an invaluable look into student opinions, philosophies, moral outlooks, and personal concerns, on a scale reached by few other mediums or forms of social organization. This is not least the case because of how strenuously (and self-consciously) the students recorded their own exertions, printing speeches for wide distribution, recording meeting and debate minutes, writing down celebration toasts, and organizing the printing of reports of their celebrations in newspapers and periodicals. This presents for the historian a treasure trove of documents of different varieties, purposes, and intentions for the same group of people over the course of many decades, allowing us a close look at a concentrated population in a way few other documentary sources can. Although the extremely self-aware and intentional nature of many of these records necessitates a critical reading on the historian’s part, and may detract from a careful reading of what these students believed, they concurrently give us a much better sense of how they wished to be perceived in the context of their time, and perhaps to prosperity as well.

II. The Founding and Operations of the Philodemic

The Philodemic Society, although sharing a broad degree of similarity with fellow societies at non-Catholic schools, nonetheless differed substantially. For one, although it possessed its own library and handed out diplomas to graduates starting in 1839, it sponsored a significantly smaller degree of extracurricular activities than comparable societies, founding no literary magazine or newspaper and requiring no quasi-academic exercises like compositions. Instead, debates and public speeches formed the core of its activities. Instead, debates and public speeches formed the core of its activities. Its founding was another important example of its differences from other societies. Not only was it founded later than similar clubs at comparable institutions, it also did not grow out of a need for student autonomy and was instead founded in part by a Jesuit professor, Fr. James Ryder S.J. In fact, the Philodemic decreed in its constitution that its presiding officer would always be a Jesuit professor, revealing a degree of willingness for faculty involvement that few other societies had. This may seem unimportant, but it is vital to keep in mind that student autonomy in these groups was not just advocated for its own sake, but also because it helped these societies resemble more closely the constitutional structure of the United States. Some societies took this very seriously; in 1840, for instance, the American Whig Society at Princeton (then the College of New Jersey) reorganized and rewrote its constitution to base itself directly on the U.S. Constitution, with a Senate and House of Representatives (for graduate students and undergraduates respectively).³ Much like Congress and following in the footsteps of other societies, the Philodemic appointed committees of investigation, elected officers, and passed resolutions of respect upon the deaths of eminent alumni or community members like the President of the United States; it even conducted...
treaties with other debating societies in the college. Various subsidiary debating societies were founded at Georgetown in the decades after the Philodemic’s establishment, going by names like Philaleutherian, Philhistorian, and Philonomian. Georgetown differed from other schools, however, in that it decreed that only students of the three highest classes—Poetry, Philosophy, and Rhetoric—could join the Philodemic, while the students in the younger grades would join the other groups which were essentially societies-in-training for the Philodemic.

The curriculum at Georgetown was also different from that of other schools. Structurally, Georgetown in the antebellum period comprised multiple divisions including a preparatory and collegiate division, only the last of which admitted students to the Philodemic Society. That meant that although Georgetown might have possessed an enrollment of around 300 students in the 1840s or 1850s, only forty or so would be old enough and sufficiently academically advanced to join the Society. And the classes at Georgetown—structured around the traditional Ratio Studiorum of the Jesuits—were more flexible than those at non-Catholic schools. The Jesuit plan of education put a particular emphasis on active learning in the classroom, as opposed to passive memorization and recitation. Nevertheless, the Georgetown curriculum, like other nineteenth century American colleges, was primarily focused on the Latin and Greek classics, with little discussion of issues of contemporary social or political importance. Joining the Philodemic offered the opportunity to debate recent or contemporary issues like dueling, temperance, or the Napoleonic Wars.

Yet Georgetown students did not turn to the Philodemic Society because they were starved of rhetoric. Forensic exercises were the main focus of two of the top three classes from which the Philodemic drew its members. In the decade in which the Philodemic was established, for instance, a student in the class of Poetry could expect to read Cicero, Livy, Virgil, Horace, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, Thucydides, and Homer, and in the class of Rhetoric, authors included Cicero, Quintilian, Horace, Demosthenes, Sophocles, Juvenal, Persius, and Tacitus, as well as some English and American authors.⁹ In 1831, students in the upper classes were supposed to spend five hours per week in preparing classroom recitations, on top of their own English compositions and any society activity they might do.¹⁰

So why were these students apparently speech-crazy? A number of answers can be posited. One is the broader feature of the importance of public, civic-minded speech in the early Republic, as young citizens reveled, self-consciously, in their republican freedom to opine on public topics of their choosing. The spread of printed media in the first decades of the nineteenth century as well as the slow but steady growth of political partisanship gave way to public festivals of all variety with a special emphasis on rhetorical exercises like speeches and toasts that could be recorded and printed in publications for after-the-fact dissemination.¹¹

The Philodemic took part in this national trend, inaugurating annual celebrations of Washington’s Birthday, Independence Day, and the College’s annual Commencement, following which speeches were printed as early as 1831. Even the festivals without an explicitly patriotic emphasis, like the college Commencement, were generally expected to take on national themes in their addresses, and capture an ideal related to the Society’s motto of “Eloquence in the Defense of Liberty.”

As much as printed speeches from annual events form a significant degree of the rhetorical records that survive, the hallmark of Philodemic—like other societies—were its weekly meetings. Weekly debates offered an important change from academic life or formal festivities in their emphasis on extemporaneous speech. Each weekly meeting saw a debate chosen for two weeks out, the assignment of keynoters (who would prepare speeches to open that debate), and a debate itself. The order of activities, preserved on the cover of one of the Philodemic’s
minute books, gives an idea of their weekly activities as they stood in 1859:

“Order of the Day”
1st: The calling of the roll.
2nd: The reading of the last meeting’s proceeding’s, which shall be considered adopted if no objection be made at the time of their reading.
3rd: The debaters shall be chosen for (Sunday) two weeks hence.
4th: The subject which they shall debate.
5th: The weekly report of Librarian, Treasurer, and Censors.
6th: Quarterly reports upon days when due.
7th: On the second Sunday of October, January, and April the reading of the Constitution and by-laws.
8th: Miscellaneous business.
9th: The debate for the day.12

The thrice-yearly reading of the Constitution by-laws gave the members of the Society the added feeling of permanence and allegiance—again, with similarities to the Constitution of the United States—although this did not stop them from frequently altering its provisions as they saw fit. Debates could drag on for several days, whether for lack of time, special interest in the topic, or particular long-windedness of certain rhetoricians. A debate on February 5, 1832 on the topic “Which is the better life, that of a Farmer or that of a Lawyer?” continued on for another five consecutive nights, before finally being negated by a vote of 4-12.13

Ten months later, a December 1832 debate on poetry continued on six more nights, pausing on the following Sunday to debate the topic that had been previous assigned for that night; the resolution that had inspired so much focus was “A comparison between Ancients and Moderns with regards to Poetry?”14

What topics did students most often choose to debate? A broad variety of classical, sociological, philosophical, political, and religious topics, among others. A typical entry in the Philodemic minute books, for October 9, 1831, shows that debaters proposed the following debates for two weeks out:

A comparison between Cyrus the Elder King of Persia and Philip of Macedon?
Is the Tariff beneficial to the U.S.?
Who is the greater Orator, Cicero or Patrick Henry?
Which makes the more impression upon man, Fear or Joy?15

Ultimately, the society chose to debate the last topic. Certain favorites that were debated frequently over the antebellum periods included variations on the following:

- Whether duelling is justifiable?
- Whether the Crusades were beneficial?
- Should the verdict of a jury be unanimous in criminal cases?
- Ought Horatius have been put to death for murder of his sister?
- Is republicanism or monarchy more conducive to a nation’s happiness?
- Is it right that a man should be imprisoned for debt?16

A particularly common form of debate pitted great men against each other, whether contemporaries or not. For instance, certain pairings include Caesar vs. Pompey, Constantine vs. Charlemagne, William Wallace vs. Robert Bruce, Cardinal Richelieu vs. Wolsey, and perhaps most famously, the society’s inaugural debate, “Whether Napoleon Bonaparte or General Washington was the greater man?” Although Washington was a popular topic in the Society’s speeches, Napoleon held the primary focus of historical interest for Philodemicians in their weekly debates, a similar charisma that he seemed to hold for many college debaters of this era. Napoleon was the subject of 53 debates out of around 1200 between 1830 and 1875, a significantly large number not surpassed by any other individual topic, and one which does not even include debates on related topics such as the French Revolution. Why was Napoleon such a draw for these young debaters? According to one scholar of college debating societies, Bonaparte “could offer unique lessons for self-construction and heroism... framing their own pursuit of manhood, especially tensions between impulse
Napoleon, unlike Washington, was a better figure to debate, rather than simply praise or emulate. His military prowess and patriotism, for instance, could inspire imitation, but his perhaps excessive pursuit of glory could raise questions about how much emulation was deserved.

The Society neglected debating or even discussing issues of local interest or college level controversy at commemorative events; Philodemics preferred the broad, national, international, or abstract debate. Yet the Philodemic strenuously avoided debating issues of partisan controversy, adopting a provision in their Constitution in 1832 prohibiting discussion of “religious or political subject[s].” In practice, this restricted allusion to political parties or partisan issues, and several debates over the years re-litigated what this prohibition meant. At one point it was understood to refer to no political topic “of a date later than the year 1800” and “no religious subject whatsoever.” By 1840, it meant no “religious questions of a controversial or sectarian character, [or] political questions of a party nature.” These prohibitions were common, if not uniform, at other college debating societies, and took on special relevance at Georgetown, a college run by the Society of Jesus, but which had a substantial percentage of non-Catholic students in the antebellum period, forming on average about one third of the student body in the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, but perhaps even reaching a small majority for a year or two in that last decade.

Debates could get divisive, but not necessarily for the reasons that might be expected. In the spring of 1832, the Philodemic’s minutes record two altercations taking place, one during a debate about the Crusades and the other during a debate comparing William Wallace and Robert Bruce. In 1850, the Society was the cause of a school-wide riot after choosing to meet during the “late studies” period despite the prohibition of the Prefect of Studies. When the Prefect attempted to expel three of the guilty students, they raised a ruckus throughout the school and led several dozens of students off campus in protest at the measures of the faculty. The uprising ended several days later when the administration, after threatening to tell the student’s parents, worked out an agreement with the campus exiles, taking them back on condition of formal apologies for their misconduct. In the spring of 1859, as the Civil War approached and sectional tensions ran at an all-time high, a debate on the topic of slavery rendered a full out brawl between members of the Philodemic in the Society’s meeting room. A member from Mississippi sprang at the Vice-President—a Louisianan—and other such interstate fisticuffs ensued between students. The fight only ended when a Jesuit came down in his nightgown to put out the candles and, by darkness, forced the scuffle to cease. This brawling earned the Society a three-month suspension from the president of the College that terminated the Philodemic’s debates for the remainder of the year—a rather paternalistic end to a serious, national debate.

III. Conclusion: Liberty and Patriotism in the Philodemic

Liberal societies in the antebellum period were a focal point of student efforts for autonomy, though this was as much as product of the fact that they enrolled a majority of students and constituted the major form of extracurricular activity at many schools as it was due to any particular inherent quality or activity of these societies. On account of this, many histories of individual societies have used them as a central framework from which to understand student life and opinions in the nineteenth century. Given this, it is worthwhile to compare the ideological missions of different societies against each other. The mission statement of one society at Yale, for instance, held as its objects “to promote friendship, Social Intercourse, and Literary Improvement,” whereas its school rival declared its objective “to promote the intellectual improvement, the gentlemanly character, and the mutual good will of its members.” A Colby College society’s purpose was to “secure religious information, discuss
practical topics in Christian living, and afford mutual sympathy and restraint.” By contrast, the 1840 version of the Philodemic Society’s constitution announced in its first Article that “This society commenced in the year of our Lord 1831 and the 53rd of the Independence of the United States, and is essentially a debating society, having for its objects the Cultivation of eloquence, the promotion of Knowledge, and the preservation of our Country’s liberty.”

This special focus on patriotism, national liberty, and eloquence in the service of national goals was the crucially defining aspect of the Philodemic Society. As students of Georgetown, a university founded in the conscious desire to integrate Catholics in the new Republic, Philodemicians aimed to give off an air of deliberately cultivated patriotism. One laudatory newspaper report from 1870 about a Philodemic celebration of George Washington’s Birthday gives an idea of the ideal Philodemic celebration that expressed unabashed patriotism:

A fervid tone of exalted patriotism pervaded all their addresses, and gave ample proof that the learned Jesuit Fathers, while instilling into the hearts of their students true principles of morality, and enriching their minds with treasures of knowledge, are equally mindful to inculcate a warm and generous love of country—thus stamping with falsehood the silly charge that their teachings are inimical to public liberty. It is questionable whether, throughout this broad land, a more fervidly patriotic remembrance of the great a good Washington, or a more generous appreciation of the noble principles he taught, was manifested to any
gather on the 22nd February, than that which graced the memorable Georgetown College of Tuesday afternoon last.

One easily imagines the joy on the part of the Philodemics members on being able to prove, and be validated in print, the success of their own cultivation of patriotism. In order to be patriotic, Philodemicians needed a central American idea—which, for them, was liberty. Liberty bridged religious and ethnic identities, and united patriotic Americans in a national community of republican zeal.

Philodemics members were neither exclusively Catholic, nor exclusively American, nor citizens of their state and region, and indeed, in reading over the myriad documents of these students, one arrives at a new respect and appreciation for the multiplicity of their identities and the appeals that they perceived throughout the course of their student days. Their interests stretched far beyond the narrow confines of American and Catholic identity to all manner of political and philosophical question. But it is nonetheless remarkable to what degree the Philodemicians from the 1830s through the period of Reconstruction paid much more than lip service to their dedicated motto of “Eloquence in the Defense of Liberty.” Liberty—so variously defined, frequently in the context of physical altercations that caused debates to extend over multiple nights—was the central organizing principle of these young men, growing up in a fast-changing country.

Jonathan Marrow graduated from the College in 2018. He studied History.
Harriette Hemmasi is the new Dean of the Library at Georgetown University. Before she joined Georgetown in August 2018, Dean Hemmasi was the Joukowsky Family University Librarian at Brown University and held leadership positions in the libraries of Indiana University and Rutgers University. Prior to her career as a university librarian, she received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in music and taught music in Iran. Recently, Dean Hemmasi sat down with *Utraque Unum* to discuss her background in music, librarianship, and how she has used technology to curate knowledge over the course of her career.

Q. You received a bachelor’s degree in music from Baylor and a master’s degree in music from Indiana University before you received your master’s degree in library and information science from the University of California, Berkeley. Music has been a major area of your scholarship, which includes reviews of The Charles Ives Tunebook and The Coming of Age of American Art Music, among others. Some of your scholarly work, such as your work on the music thesaurus, integrates both music and librarianship. How would you say your background in music impacts the work you do today as a librarian?

A. I was the youngest child in our family and had two older brothers. It always seemed like they were a lot smarter than I was, and I refused to accept that it was just because I was younger. I thought, “I don’t know everything they know, but I should!” At age ten I started taking piano lessons. Right away, I felt a different connection with music than I had with learning other things. For example, in the third grade we were supposed to learn the names and capitals of all the states, and somehow my brain refused to remember those facts. But with music, learning came easily. Music also released a wave of creativity that was like magic. It allowed me ways and permission to express my own interpretation of loud, soft, slow, or fast. Practicing the piano every day made a huge difference in my progress, and I began to understand that hard work was an essential building block in my development. The ability to learn music gave me confidence in learning other things, and it also made me realize that people have different kinds of strengths. This combination of determination, creativity, and “otherness” were key for me, and they have been key to everything I have done since.

After completing a master’s in music, I married and moved to Iran. We lived in Shiraz for nine years, and during that time I taught music at the university. Teaching Western music to Iranian students who had only a vague idea of their own popular music at the time was challenging. To help bridge the gap, I developed a course comparing basic elements of Persian and Western music. This allowed me to connect with students in a much more meaningful way and also helped me learn about the people and culture around me.

As the Iranian Revolution and war with Iraq began to have serious implications on daily life,
we returned to the States. Not long thereafter, I went back to school at UC Berkeley and got a master’s in library science with a specialization in music librarianship. I had also begun working with computers, taking a few programming classes. I was curious about the concept of computers and their projected impact on society. Before returning to school in the late 1980s, I had taken a class where we talked about the future of computers, such as how they’d eventually allow you to order groceries from home. At the time, nobody believed it!

Q. You just laugh, looking back on it.

A. Yes, exactly. Yet, learning and imagining the future of computers opened a sense of possibility for me, for all of us. I see this same possibility, drive, and anticipation in you and in the students around us. You and other students are the main reason I treasure being part of higher education: the possibilities for your future are so great, and you have so much creativity and imagination. Of course, there are limits, but far fewer than we typically impose on ourselves.

Q. Did technology, and specifically your interest in computers, form a bridge between music and librarianship?

A. Yes. Before I went to Berkeley, we lived in Humboldt County, California and it was during that time that I was taking computer classes and working as a paraprofessional in the library. I realized that I wanted to be a librarian, but a different kind of librarian. I was interested not only in books and other analog collection but more especially, what might be beyond books, beyond analog. When we think about the ways libraries are changing today, the focus goes far beyond content and access. Making content come alive, making it reusable and transferrable to new knowledge-making is as elemental to libraries and to the future of teaching and learning as a library full of books. It is not enough just to be able to read and write in the traditional sense; we also must be able to read, write, and create new knowledge using the evolving digital affordances of our time. This is the business of libraries and their universities.

Q. The image people often have of a librarian is that of a cataloger who merely sorts information, but you see the librarian’s work as interpretive work?

A. Yes, and creative work. If we think about the past, students and faculty came to the library as consumers and absorbed the content so they could write their own interpretation or findings. Today, however, the research and learning processes are much more active, going beyond consuming and moving into recreating and creating anew. The processes are also about learning to use and judiciously making use of the digital tools and methods that are available to us. We need to encourage students to use their social media skills and other technologies to express and share their scholarly ideas and questions. These are the practices that are changing librarianship as well as teaching and learning.

Q. In your time at Brown, you took a very proactive stance towards integrating technology into the library. You worked with the Committee on Online Teaching and Learning, to help guide Brown towards greater use of online classes. You also worked on updating physical spaces in the libraries to reflect the role that technology could play in the digital age. In your time at different institutions of higher education, how have you seen technology change the way that students and scholars do research and use the library?

A. During my first library job at Rutgers as a music librarian, I was very interested in online searching. Searching music was plagued by a lack of specificity in search vocabulary and also much less sophisticated search engines, resulting in either finding too much or too little. Even with Google’s amazing advances, we still have
trouble refining a search so that it limits and retrieves the results that we really want. To help address the problem of searching music, I worked on an early version of a music thesaurus built on terminology found in the Library of Congress music subject headings. LC subject headings were composed of pre-coordinated strings (such as “Middle Eastern Music, Songs – Iran – 19th century”). My work involved using a computerized program to help deconstruct 50,000 LC music subject headings and rebuild the valuable single-concept terms into hierarchies – such as geographic terminology, or chronological terminology, or genre, instrumentation, etc.

Q. How did you do that?

A. In addition to using computers, some of it had to be done manually. Bound terms, like “Middle East” needed to remain adjacent and the hierarchical structure had to be planned. The thesaurus was my first major initiative using technology to help reconstruct a very basic library and scholarly tool into something more flexible and usable. We face many of the same challenges today. It is no longer enough just to have access to a printed, scanned, or born-digital page. We want (and need) to be able to search that page, analyze its text and other qualities, compare the page with other content, and incorporate related images, data, and video, etc. This kind of deconstruction-to-reconstruction is important because it allows users to interact with the content in whatever ways are most meaningful for them as scholars.

Q. I’m struggling with that in my dorm right now.

A. Right. We don’t have any option except to be technology-savvy. Information is coming to us so quickly and so diversely that the question is not whether we are going to be learning online, but rather -- what can help us filter, absorb, and coordinate all that information. This is another area where libraries can help us. So-called “fake news” provides an excellent example. We need to think critically about what we are reading. Even if the text is “legitimate,” we must ask ourselves whether it is a point of view that we agree with and whether it might be useful to the topic we are studying or researching. We need to be continually aware of the information we are encountering and how we are dealing with it. Having the opportunity to meet and talk with peers and professors on campus, to receive their guidance and feedback, and to participate in shaping each other is an invaluable part and privilege of our educational system.

I would like to once again return to the idea of those early readings about computers in the 1980s, and the inconceivable projection that we wouldn’t need to go to the grocery store in the future. Every generation struggles with predicting and preparing for the future, but we can see
certain trends. A current trend is how the sense of presence is changing with the use of Skype and Zoom and other kinds of technology. As technology improves, the sense of “virtual presence” is becoming more real. Over time, the images will look even better and more natural and we will become more accustomed to this type of interaction. The evolving sense of presence and reality is crucial to understanding the ways in which technology is changing our lives and creating new realms of possibility and acceptance.

Q. It seems that a typical criticism of technology is that it causes us to lose a sense of presence with one another. You are taking the opposite perspective: that technological progress will enhance our sense of presence.

A. I believe technology is already enhancing our sense of presence. I also believe that for certain schools, like Georgetown, the human connection will become more important, in part because it will become less common. As technology continues to pervade our lives, the premium on human interaction will increase. Think about the experience of going to a high-end store. Part of the value of the experience is the personal interaction you have with a dedicated employee who helps you sort through the options. When you go to a big-box store, you see tons of merchandise, but it’s hard to find what you are looking for. That is why I think the human touch will remain a central part of specialized environments like Georgetown. It will become even rarer and more sought after, even as it becomes more and more expensive.

Q. In the initial newsletter in which Georgetown announced your hire, Provost Groves emphasized what he describes as your “transformative work at Brown.” You expressed a desire to turn the library into an intellectual and social center on campus. What are you most excited to work on at Georgetown, and what do you see to be done to Georgetown’s libraries?

A. I have had the chance to talk with a number of students at Georgetown, and one of the things that I have heard most often is that the student body has a sort of love-hate relationship with Lauinger Library. At Brown, I saw that when we improved the spaces, students came to the library because they wanted to, not because they had to. And the updated spaces were not fancy; we just made them more comfortable and functional. The students felt that it was their space. On Lau 2, you see how much students like and use that space even though it’s in desperate need of updating. Students seem to like the space because they have a feeling of ownership and control. I think this feeling needs to be encouraged broadly within the library. The library should serve as a gathering place on campus, a place where every student comes. We need to create a more welcoming and comfortable environment in our libraries at Georgetown.

Q. It could be more here.

A. Agreed. Creating more meaningful partnerships with faculty and students will also be helpful. My goals are to invite partnerships into the library and to ensure that the library goes out and interacts with the rest of campus. We are an integral part of this community, with a lot to offer and a lot to learn.

Q. I am excited to see some of those changes before I leave Georgetown. Thank you very much, we are honored to have had the opportunity to interview you.

Mark McNiskin is a junior in the College studying Philosophy.
THE FORUM

Rights to What Doesn’t Exist: Our Moral Obligation to Make Others’ Ends Achievable

2. Ibid., 4:428.
3. Ibid., 4:434.
5. Ibid., 393.

Temples to American Gods: Classical Influence on the Veneration of American Presidents

2. The Res Gestae serves as one of the most crucial sources for the acts of Augustus. It was written on his Mausoleum in Rome and copied all across the empire. Augustus meant it to be the definitive list of his accomplishments.
Bacon modeled the monument after the Parthenon of Athens in order to provide an allusion to the birthplace of democracy (see figure 7).

These columns are Doric in form, maintaining the consistency of the allusion to the Parthenon.


The Lincoln Memorial has reportedly more visitors per year than St. Peter’s Basilica, the Pantheon, and the Parthenon combined.


Ibid., 212.


Ibid., 227.


Ibid., 230.

To this day, Republicans frequently call themselves the “Party of Lincoln.”


Savage, *Monument Wars*, 244.


This decision may have been as a result of Pope’s desire to protect the statue of Jefferson, and possibly the Declaration of Independence, from rain and direct sunlight. Moreover,
due to the open nature of the monument, which allows greater access to natural light, there
exists no real necessity for an oculus.


36 Timothy M. O’Sullivan, “Walking with Odysseus: The Portico Frame of the Odyssey
stable/27566674.

37 “Construction of the Lincoln Memorial,” National Parks Service, accessed April 14, 2018,


THE ARCHIVE

The Thinker, the Soldier, and the German: Reassessing the Sonderweg Debate and Hitler’s
Path to Power


2 Ibid., xxxv, xxxvii.

3 David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, The Peculiarities of German History: Bourgeois Society and

4 Jürgen Kocka, “German History before Hitler: The Debate about the German Sonderweg,”

5 Jürgen Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg,”

6 Ibrahim Kalin, “German ‘kultur’ versus Western ‘civilization,’” Daily Sabah,
german-kultur-versus-western-civilization.

7 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 3.

8 Heidegger, Martin, Gregory Fried, and Richard F. H. Polt. Introduction to Metaphysics. New

9 Blackbourn and Eley, The Peculiarities of German History, 5.

10 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 3-4.

11 Ibid., 4.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, “The Pre-History of the Holocaust? The Sonderweg and Historik-
ertreit Debates and the Abject Colonial Past,” Central European History 41, no. 3 (2008): 481,

15 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 3.

16 Blackbourn and Eley, Peculiarities, 40.

17 Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison,” 43.

18 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 5.
19 Blackbourn and Eley, *Peculiarities*, 43.
20 Some pieces of such research include Cf. H. Kaelbe’s “Wie feudal waren die Unternehmer im Kaiserreich?” and H.-U. Wehler’s “Deutsches Bildungsbürgertum in vergleichender Perspektive: Elemente eines ‘Sonderwegs’?”
21 Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison,” 44.
22 Ibid., 45.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid., 46.
26 Fitzpatrick, “Pre-History,” 481.
28 Fitzpatrick, “Pre-History,” 481.
29 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 4.
30 Ibid., 11.
31 Ibid.
32 Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison: The Case of the German Sonderweg,” 47.
35 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 7.
38 Ibid., 221.
39 Ibid., 165.
43 Fitzpatrick, “Pre-History,” 499.
44 Ibid., 495-6.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 497.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 497-8.
49 Ibid., 499.
50 Ibid., 500.
51 Ibid., 501.
53 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 6.
54 Ibid.
57 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 6.
60 This phrase was actually coined during a conversation between Ludendorff and Sir Neill Malcolm shortly after the armistice. See Roger Parkinson, *Tormented Warrior: Ludendorff and the Supreme Command* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1978): 197.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 25.
65 Hamann, *Hitler’s Vienna*, 188.
67 Kocka, “Asymmetrical Historical Comparison,” 46.
68 Kocka, “German History before Hitler,” 13.
71 Ibid., 28.
72 Ibid., 107.
73 Ibid., 34, 43.
74 Ibid., 51, 89.

**A Catalyst for Change: How the Economic Rupture of the First World War Redefined Brazilian Nationalism**

1 Bill Albert, *South America and the First World War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 18. Albert is a professor at the University of East Anglia.
2 Ibid., 18-19.
3 Ibid., 19-20, 185.
4 Werner Baer and Annibal V. Villela, “Industrial Growth and Industrialization: Revisions in the Stages of Brazil’s Economic Development,” *The Journal of Developing Areas* 7, no. 2
(January 1973): 218-219. Baer is Professor of Economics at Vanderbilt University, Villela is Superintendent of the Research Institute of the Brazilian Planning Ministry.

5 Ibid., 219.
6 Albert, South America and the First World War, 186.
7 Ibid., 5.
8 Percy Alvin Martin, Latin America and the War (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1925), 33.
9 Albert, South America and the First World War, 135.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 21.
12 Martin, Latin America and the War, 5.
13 Albert, South America and the First World War, 5.
14 Thomas Skidmore, Brazil: Five Centuries of Change (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 94.
15 Martin, Latin America and the War, 1.
16 Skidmore, Brazil, 94; Martin, Latin America and the War, 45.
17 Skidmore, Brazil, 32; Martin, Latin America and the War, 67-68.
18 Martin, Latin America and the War, 30.
19 Ibid., 2.
20 Ibid., 92.
21 Ibid., 98.
22 Skidmore, Brazil, 96.
23 Albert, South America and the First World War, 319.
24 Ibid., 37.
25 Ibid., 1.
26 Ibid., 37.
28 Albert, South America and the First World War, 58; Wrigley, The First World War and the International Economy, 79-81.
29 Albert, South America and the First World War, 40; Wrigley, The First World War and the International Economy, 58; Martin, Latin America and the War, 39.
30 Skidmore, Brazil, 38.
31 Albert, South America and the First World War, 48.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 43, 124, 126.
34 Martin, Latin America and the War, 42.
35 Albert, South America and the First World War, 37.


38 Skidmore, *Brazil*, 97.


40 Albert, *South America and the First World War*, 198.

41 Ibid., 4.

42 Skidmore, *Brazil*, 93-94.


44 Ibid., 57.

45 Ibid., 56.

46 Eaken, *Becoming Brazilians*, 57, 4.

47 Ibid., 57.


50 Martin, *Latin America and the War*, 57.

51 Ibid., 62, 64.

52 Skidmore, *Brazil*, 96.


54 Martin, *Latin America and the War*, 19.

55 Ibid., 20.


**THE SANCTUARY**

**Richard Pike and the Analogy of Divine Knowing**


2 Thanks to Dr. Mark Murphy for his notes on Pike’s argument.

3 Proponents of divine temporality include John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, John Calvin, Alan Padgett, and William Lane Craig.

4 It would appear to be the case that knowledge is a species of belief. The debate over whether God can have beliefs is a relatively recent one, spurred by the 20th century definition of knowledge as justified true belief. For more, see William P. Alston, “Does God Have Beliefs?” *Religious Studies* 22, no. 3-4 (1986): 287-306.

After an analogy employed by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Disputed Questions on Truth*, q. 2, a. 12.


That is, taken without the analogy provided by Boethius.


Robber Zhi and Daoism: A View from a Step Back


Zhuangist philosophy is a major element of Daoism, and in brief it can be summarised as advocating for a return to natural flourishing through the letting go of artificial social constructs.

Yangist philosophy can generally be described as advocating for egoistic individualism, viewing the pursuit of self-interest as a desirable.


Ibid., 371.

Ibid., 372.

Ibid., 371-2.

In classical Confucianism, the 子 Junzi is broadly defined as a moral and upright gentleman.


Roth, Companion, 90.

Ivanhoe and Norden, Readings, 372.

Ibid., 374.

Roth, Companion, 201.

Ivanhoe and Norden, Readings, 370.

See Ivanhoe and Norden, Readings, 370: “[Confucius says] Now you are one of the ablest men of your generation, but your brother is Robber Zhi, a menace to the whole world, and you can’t set him right. Excuse me for saying it, but I’m ashamed for you. May I go and talk to him?”

Ibid., 371-372.

Ibid., 374.

Ibid., 370-371.


Chuang-Tzu: The Inner Chapters, 238.


Ibid., 207.

Cults, Drugs, and Secrecy: Mystical Allegory in Plato’s Symposium


Mylonas, Eleusis, 224.

Ibid., 225.


Plato, Symposium, 215c.
Plato published the *Symposium* exoterically and would not have included Phaedrus’ account if it was irrelevant, especially considering that many of the speeches that occurred at the symposium were not recorded in the dialogue. Apollodorus remarks that he only conveys what seemed to him to be “particularly worth recording from the most memorable speeches” (178a).


Ibid., 179c.


The specific language of reincarnation is never used in the myth, but I have utilized it here because it conveys the effect of the myth and can be understood by modern audiences reading this paper.


Ibid., 202e-203a.

Ibid., 201d.

For more information on the Eleusinian priestesses, see: Mylonas, *Eleusis*, 232.


Ibid., 206c-207a.

Ibid., 207a.

Ibid., 209a.

Ibid.

Ibid., 207d-e.


The shift occurs when Diotima becomes frustrated with Socrates inability to grasp what she is saying. At his failure to answer the question “what [does one] gain by possessing beautiful things?” she says, “suppose one changed the question and asked about the good instead of the beautiful?” (204e).

Harvard professor Gregory Nagy translates olbios as blessed, blissful, or fortunate. It means prosperous on the surface and blessed underneath. If one is prosperous as well as blessed, then I am making the jump that they are in turn happy. See: Gregory Nagy, “Olbios,” Harvard University, sites.fas.harvard.edu/~lac14/glossary/olbios/index.html.


Plato, *Symposium*, 210e.


Plato, *Symposium*, 210e.

Plato, *Symposium*, p. 50, footnote no. 201.


Plato, Symposium, 211a-b.


**The Case of Anne Conway: A Theologist Philosopher**


6. Ibid., 24.

7. Ibid., 161.


10. Ibid., 179.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., 181.


14. Hutton, "Lady Anne."


18. Ibid., 41.


20. For the purposes of this paper, I will use only the term “spirit” when referring to mind, soul, or spirit.


23. Ibid., 46.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 45.
Ibid., 42.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., 2.
Ibid.
Ibid., 8.
Ibid., 7.
Ibid., 6.

THE PARLOR

The Function of Age in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

2 Ibid., 40-43.
3 Ibid., 50.
5 *Sir Gawain*, 86.
6 Ibid., 93-94.
7 Ibid., 107.
8 Ibid., 305.
9 Ibid., 182.
10 Ibid., 280.
11 Ibid., 306.
12 Ibid., 334.
15 *Sir Gawain*, 467-473.
16 Ibid., 477-480.
17 Ibid., 542.
18 Ibid., 558.


22 *Sir Gawain*, 492.

23 Ibid., 506.

24 Ibid., 516.

25 Ibid., 518-520.

26 Ibid., 525.

27 Ibid., 527.

28 Ibid., 529-530.

29 Sadowski, *The Knight*, 64. Sadowski also discusses how All-Hallow’s Eve, as a celebration of the dead in Christianity, is particularly suited to convey the “sorrowful and funereal atmosphere” that precedes Gawain’s departure.

30 *Sir Gawain*, 720-723.

31 Ibid., 726-734.


35 *Sir Gawain*, 730.

36 Ibid., 843-846.

37 Ibid., 1093-1096.

38 Ibid., 1126, 1180.


40 Ibid., 40.

41 Ibid., 71.

42 Ibid., 40.

43 Ibid., 78.

44 Burrow, *The Ages of Man*, 156. Burrow includes the popular medieval notion of the “boy of ninety years;” a comical but pathetic old man who still indulges in all the passions of youth, including sex, that he should have long outgrown.


46 Ibid., 79.

47 Brewer, *Symbolic Stories*, 76.

48 *Sir Gawain*, 1284-1286.


50 *Sir Gawain*, 2361-2362.

51 Ibid., 1305-1308.

52 Ibid., 2104-2111.
55 Sadowski, *The Knight*, 209-210; *Sir Gawain*, 2185-2188.
56 *Sir Gawain*, 2189-2190.
57 Ibid., 2231.
59 *Sir Gawain*, 2362-2263, 2266.
60 Ibid., 2335.
61 Brewer, *Symbolic Stories*, 80. Brewer, for instance, calls the explanation “extraordinarily bland” and notes that the poem gives no further “apology or reason” to make it more compelling.
62 *Sir Gawain*, 953, 963.
63 Ibid., 948.
64 Ibid., 280.
68 *Sir Gawain*, 2516-2518.
69 Ibid., 2395-2399.
70 Brewer, *Symbolic Stories*, 89.

**Pushkin and Mandelshtam: A Diglossic Dialogue on Freedom from Within and Without**

1 Darya Kholina’s article, “О семантике стихотворного размера: семиотический, интертекстуальный, переводческий аспекты / O semantike stikhovtovornoi razmera: semioticheskiy, intertekstual’nyi, perevodcheskiy aspekty / About the Semantics of Poetic Meter: the Semiotic, Intertextual, Translation Aspects” describes a particular example, the trochaic pentameter:

2 В работах Р. О. Якобсона и К. Тарановского отмечается связь пятистопного хорея и целого ряда семантически сходных стихотворений, самыми яркими из которых являются: «Выхожу один я на дорогу…» М. Лермонтова; «Вот бреду я вдоль большой дороги…» Ф. Тютчева; «Выхожу я в путь, открытый взорам…» А. Блока; «До свиданья, друг мой, до свиданья…» С. Есенина; «Снег идет над голой эспланадой…» Б. Поплавского. Р. О. Якобсон описывает их как цикл лирических раздумий, в котором присутствуют динамическая тема пути и скорбно-статический мотив одиночества и грядущей гибели.”

3 In the works of R. O. Yakobson and K. Taranovskiy is observed a connection between the trochaic pentameter and a whole array of semantically similar poems, the clearest of which are: M. Lermontov’s “Vykhozhu odin ya na dorogu…”; F. Tyutchev’s “Vot bredu ya vdol’ bol’shoy dorogi…”; A. Blok’s “Vykhozhu ya v put’, otkrytyy vzoram…”; S.
Esenin’s “Do svidan’ya, drug moy, do svidan’ya...”; B. Poplavskiy’s “Sneg idet nad goloy esplanadoy...”. R. O. Yakobson describes them as a cycle of lyrical reflections, in which the dynamic theme of a path and the mournfully-static motif of loneliness and impending doom are present.”


7 Marc Szeftel, “Church and State in Imperial Russia,” in Russian Orthodoxy under the Old Regime, ed. Robert L. Nicholas and Theofanis George Stavrou (University of Minnesota Press, 1978).

8 Ibid., 137-138.

THE CLOCK TOWER

History of the Philodemic Society

1 Philodemic Society Archives, Box 5, Folder 4, Georgetown University Archives.

2 Historians generally date the foundation of the first such society to the establishment of the “Spy Club” at Harvard in 1722. See David Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges; an Historical Survey, 1642 to 1900 (New York: Teacher’s College, Columbia University, 1944).

3 This glaring omission is most tellingly invoked in the most comprehensive history of nineteenth century societies to date, by Thomas S. Harding, who casually notes in a closing footnote: “the author regrets that he was unable to include at least one Roman Catholic college literary society in this study.” Thomas S. Harding, College Literary Societies: Their Contribution to Higher Education in the United States, 1815-1876 (New York: Pageant Press International, 1971), p. 321 n. 20. Harding, however, on p. 319, notes to future historians: “Another such study [that could be made] would be that of the literary societies of Roman Catholic colleges before the Civil War. The latter should be especially rewarding in ascertaining the reaction of Roman Catholic college students to the attacks made upon their religion, and to the criticisms of the societies of Protestant and State-supported colleges and universities.” This thesis is an attempt to answer Harding’s call to interpret Catholic college student societies according to their confessional identity, although the broader historiography on these societies should include Catholic societies in their larger analyses.


5 Harding, College Literary Societies, p. 1.

“Amanuensis Book, October 7, 1838 – March 8, 1840” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 2, Folder 6, Georgetown University Archives, see entries for April – June 1839.

Harding, *College Literary Societies*, p. 147.


Ibid., 123.


“Amanuensis Book, October 2, 1859 – June 24, 1866” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 4, Folder 7, Georgetown University Archives.

“Amanuensis Book, September 18, 1831 – February 10, 1832” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entries for February 5 – February 10, 1832. A note on debate decisions: when a resolution was not phrased in a yes/no format, “affirmative” referred to the first clause of the resolution and “negative” to the second; for instance, in the debate regarding farmers and lawyers, “affirmative” referred to the life of a farmer and “negative” to the life of a lawyer.

“Amanuensis Book, November 19, 1832 – February 27, 1833” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entries for December 9 – December 17, 1832.

“Amanuensis Book, September 18, 1831 – February 10, 1832” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entry for October 9, 1831.

A full list of debates by topics relevant to this thesis, along with their dates and decisions, is given in an appendix. For the citation of debates throughout this text, see the explanatory note on sourcing. For a thorough, comparative sampling of debates from nineteenth-century *college literary societies*, by topic, time period, and region, see Harding, *College Literary Societies*, pp. 336-537.

Harding, *College Literary Societies*, p. 138.

“Amanuensis Book, November 19, 1832 – February 27, 1833” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entry for February 28, 1833.

“Amanuensis Book, November 23, 1834 – December, 1835” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entry for October 27, 1835.

“Amanuensis Book, October 1, 1837 – November 26, 1848” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 2, Folder 2, Georgetown University Archives, entry for July 1840, “Constitution of the Philodemic Society.”

Curran, *From Academy to University*, p. 184 and pp. 369-394.

“Amanuensis Book, February 12, 1832 – May 15, 1832” Philodemic Society Archives, Box 1, Folder 1, Georgetown University Archives, entries for March 22, 1832 and April 10, 1832.


The two best studies of this kind are those of the University of Virginia and the University of North Carolina. See Williams, *Intellectual Manhood*; Thomas L. Howard III and Owen W. Gallogly, *Society Ties: A History of the Jefferson Society and Student Life at the University of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017).

Harding, *College Literary Societies*, 34. The Philodemical often got its founding date wrong in the years following its founding, variously reporting it as January 17, February 22, and sometimes reporting its year of foundation as 1825 or 1831. The cause of the January 17 and February 22 confusions seems to have been due to, for the former, the choosing of the Philodemical’s name, motto, and badge on that date in 1831, and for the latter, the Society’s choice to celebrate the Society’s “anniversary” on that date, starting in 1832.

“Amanuensis Book, October 1, 1837 – November 26, 1848” Philodemical Society Archives, Box 2, Folder 2, Georgetown University Archives, entry for July 1840, “Constitution of the Philodemical Society.”

Newspaper cutout (Newspaper cutout, February 27, 1870), Philodemical Society Archives, Box 7, Folder 10, Georgetown University Archives.