Featuring

On the Passingness of Things
The Sublime Obligation of Virtue
How I Learned to Stop Worrying

Also:

Ideas in Community
Religious Toleration, Paternalism, and the Limits of State Authority
Distinguishing the Declaration
“The Peace of Babylon”
“Under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance
Education and the Malleability of the Soul in the ‘City in Speech’
“The Organization Kid’s” Saving Grace
Seals, Shields and Stained Glass
“Restoration” or “Reinvention?”
Statesmanship of the Many?
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Utraque Unum
A Journal of
Georgetown University’s
Tocqueville Forum on the
Roots of American Democracy
Georgetown University’s seal is based directly on the Great Seal of the United States of America. Instead of an olive branch and arrows in the American eagle’s right and left talons, Georgetown’s eagle is clutching a globe and calipers in its right talon and a cross in its left talon. The American seal’s eagle holds a banner in its beak that states, E Pluribus Unum, or “Out of Many, One,” in reference to the many different people and states creating a union. The Georgetown seal’s eagle holds a banner in its beak that states, Utraque Unum.

As the official motto of Georgetown University, Utraque Unum is often translated as “Both One” or “Both and One” and is taken from Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians. This motto is found in a Latin translation of Ephesians 2:14: ipse est enim pax nostra qui fecit utraque unum. The King James Version of the Bible says, “For He [Christ] is our peace, who hath made both one.” Utraque Unum is the Latin phrase to describe Paul’s concept of unity between Jews and Gentiles; that through Jesus Christ both are one.

In view of the Georgetown seal, the motto represents pursuing knowledge of the earthly (the world and calipers) and the spiritual (the cross). Faith and reason should not be exclusive. In unity faith and reason enhance the pursuit of knowledge.
Acknowledgments:

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The Tocqueville Forum promotes events and activities devoted to furthering and deepening student understanding of the American constitutional order and its roots in the Western philosophical and religious traditions. The Tocqueville Forum sponsors these activities solely through the contributions of generous supporters of its mission. If you would like further information about supporting the Tocqueville Forum, please e-mail tocquevilleforum@georgetown.edu or visit http://government.georgetown.edu/tocquevilleforum.

As always, we welcome your thoughts and comments regarding this journal. If you are or once were a Georgetown University student, professor or staff member we would welcome the opportunity to review your work for publication in *Utraque Unum*. We welcome the work of any friend of the Tocqueville Forum, as well. In addition to writers, we are looking for section editors, artists, graphic designers and web designers. Please e-mail the editors at utraque.unum@gmail.com for these inquiries.
The Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy

http://government.georgetown.edu/tocquevilleforum
Tocquevilleforum@georgetown.edu

Georgetown University
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Dear Friends,

As we begin a new year, I want to introduce myself as the new editor-in-chief. I also want to give great thanks to Eric Wind, the first editor of this journal who graduated last year. In the coming years we hope to maintain his high standards of excellence and his diligent efforts to find the best in student writing. Although my debt to his efforts is great, I look forward to attempting to maintain his efforts.

Edmund Burke once wrote: “To complain of the age we live in, to murmur at the present possessors of power, to lament the past, to conceive extravagant hopes of the future, are the common dispositions of the greatest part of mankind; indeed the necessary effects of the ignorance and levity of the vulgar. Such complaints and humours have existed in all times; yet as all times have not been alike, true political sagacity manifests itself, in distinguishing that complaint which only characterizes the general infirmity of human nature, from those which are symptoms of the particular distemper of our own air and season.” Burke’s words serve as fitting inspiration to consider Georgetown University as we prepare for another year.

As Burke would suggest, true sagacity lies in neither whimsical nostalgia nor destructive progressivism, but instead in determining those ways in which Georgetown today comes short of fulfilling its mission. For many Georgetown students, 2009 has been a difficult year. A major financial crisis has strapped many parents as well as young graduates seeking employment. However, this crisis also affords us an opportunity to consider the truly important things. Therefore, as we move to embrace 2010, allow me to posit the following New Year’s resolutions for a better Georgetown.

1. **Embracing public service as such.** If Georgetown has had one success in the past year, it has been the prominent placement of several of its graduates have received within the Obama administration. Additionally, Georgetown graduates continue to play critical roles in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. As today’s students seek to join these political ranks, they would be wise to remember the words of Bertrand de Jouvenel who warned that “the exercise of the sovereign authority engenders a feeling of superiority which in effect turns these ‘likes’ of the ordinary citizen into his ‘unlikes.’” It is difficult to walk from one end of the campus to the other most days without encountering a student fully dressed in a suit eager to make a difference in the world. Although Georgetown often teaches of the realities of politics, Georgetown should promote true servant-leadership in the model of its Jesuit traditions. The age of Obama has clearly demonstrated the effects of such a separation between demagoguery and service, and those who one day seek his shoes must understand the difference between true stewardship of the public trust and empty demagoguery.

2. **Promoting the role of the family.** Those who continue their walk around campus into running into the aspiring public servant are equally likely to encounter aspiring professionals of all stripes. Today’s university is focused around professionalism. Great attention is given to statistics on earning capacity after graduation, and many students are focused on their prospective careers.
Careers may be important, but they are not the ends of the man. Careers were once largely viewed as means to other ends, pursuing families, community leadership, and even personal hobbies which truly refine and enhance an individual’s experiences. Georgetown must contribute greater resources to developing *cura personalis* as more than a concept placed on signs about campus. It must become a guiding principle, focusing on students’ future roles as citizens, parents, spouses, participants, and leaders. Instead of focusing on narrow constituencies such as the LGBTQ community, our university would be better-served to promote resources which guide an individual through his different relationships in society. If we are to believe Aristotle and embrace that we are truly social animals, the university should play a formative role in habituating positive social interactions. Our students must realize that college is not merely a race to a top job on Wall Street or an eventual position with a top law firm. We are truly the individuals who must populate our republic from border to border and provide the local leadership which this nation desperately needs.

**3) A reassertion of Georgetown’s history and identity.** Students of this university have the great distinction of attending one of America’s older universities. As such, our university has a fascinating history centered around fundamental truths. In an age in which most religiously-affiliated universities have long since shed their religious identity, Georgetown has maintained its Jesuit identity in practice, if not always in spirit. I can think of few better ways to integrate Truth into Georgetown’s contemporary curriculum than a focus on Georgetown’s history and the Christian values which inspired it. Many students walk through Healy gates knowing names such as Healy, White, Gravenor, and Gervase as little more than names upon various campus buildings. There was a time when Georgetown offered courses on the University’s own history, and I hope we can see the process of learning the unique history of our university restored. Students should understand the values which shaped Georgetown’s past as an inspiration which guides its future.

In an age where things are increasingly off track, our readers can count on those of us here at *Utraque Unum* to continue to debate and express different versions of truth. As this issue demonstrates, we may not always agree upon the truth, but we vigorously seek it through writing and engagement. It is my hope that through these and other resolutions, we can build a Georgetown which overcomes the particular problems of our time and which better serves our University’s comprehensive educational purpose.

Sincerely,

Scott Gray
*Editor-in-Chief*
In his masterpiece *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that the greatest challenge facing modern democracy comes from one of its greatest achievements – individualism. Democracy liberates modern man from the old aristocratic bondages, and shatters many of the ancient collectivities that could be stifling to individual liberty and opportunity. At the same time, this blessing is simultaneously a curse: by separating individuals increasingly to “the solitude of their own hearts,” modern democracy fosters the source of its own self-destruction. Left increasingly weak and alone, modern democrats increasingly looked to the administrative State for succor, finding it alone the source of support that was once provided in families and communities. Democracy – the art of self-government – is eventually replaced by the tutelary administrative State. Tocqueville’s analysis is a bracing argument that democracy must be wary of its own inner logic, and needs to foster the “arts of association” in “artificial” ways to forestall the inevitable demise of self-government.

The Tocqueville Forum was created not only to ensure exposure to the ideas and philosophy of the Western tradition, but to strive to provide a form of community and belonging in what has become increasingly an individualistic campus – as well as a defense of the same. The attention of students are divided between activities too numerous to count, and the very strength of the location of Washington D.C. can also be a distraction away from campus life. Students often complain about feeling overly busy, isolated and unable to find a home away from home. The Tocqueville Forum has sought not only to provide intellectual sustenance, but interpersonal opportunities for a community of fellow seekers.

In the past academic year, the Tocqueville Forum settled into a new near-campus home, providing many opportunities for informal gatherings and ongoing conversation. It increased the number of informal meetings, meals, and discussions, and has seen a growing number of students attending these semi-regular gatherings. Also, in the Fall 2009, the Forum sponsored its first annual Retreat, a weekend away from campus where intense shared intellectual discussion and leisured relaxation provided a window into what a true college experience was intended to be. We strive as well to build a multi-campus community through the annual Student Conference, the third annual meeting of which will be held this Spring on the Georgetown campus, and which will this year include representatives from Princeton, Villanova and Boston College.

The health of democracy, Tocqueville argued, rested not only on defending Western ideas and ideals, but in fostering civic and political health through lively and active associational life. In an age in which family and community life exist under increasing strain and dissolution, it’s as important to provide an education in what Tocqueville called “the arts
of association” as providing an active exposure to the ideas in books that are in the great tradition from which liberal democracy arose. In this way we acknowledge and recognize the perennial wisdom and challenge of our namesake, Alexis de Tocqueville.

Patrick J. Deneen is a professor in the Georgetown University Department of Government and founding director of the Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy.
On the Passingness of Things

“There are very many places in the world no doubt, where something of this emotion is called up and something of this wonder that such great human things can utterly vanish; but nowhere do I find that lesson impressed as it is impressed upon the site of Carthage; upon the hillside above the sea where Carthage once was.”

— Hilaire Belloc, “The Hill of Carthage.”

“Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest.”


In the history of Rome, we find two contrasting views with regard to its major enemy, Carthage. The famous affirmation of Cato the Elder soberly read: “Cartago, delenda est”—“Carthage must be destroyed.” The other reflection is that recorded by the Roman historian, Sallust. He observed that with the destruction of Carthage, which the Romans carried out, the morals of the Roman people steadily declined because it had no major enemy to fear. As a result, its leaders and people saw no need for the old virtues, especially the ones that called for sacrifices and discipline on their part. On the one hand, Carthage, with its famous Hamilcar and his son, Hannibal, had crossed the Romans too many times. The Romans were patient up to a point. But cross them a third time, this was too much.

A famous Chinese saying reads, “Pray that you do not live in interesting times.” The burden of this phrase is that “interesting times” are war times. When dramatic things like the rise and fall of dynasties take place, much exists to record. But others claim that they would have been great had they only lived in such “interesting” times. Hegel, I believe, said that “a happy country has no history.” History, as it says in Scripture, is full of “wars and rumors of war.” It is full of famines, drought, political corruption, greed, ambition, envy, hatred. No nation, no era is exempt. If we do not know these dire things as a fact, we really are either naïve or inattentive. We have become accustomed to reading books about a future in which, we are told, such things will not happen. It remains, no doubt, wiser to read books about the past in which they actually did happen, in different times and places.

One is hard pressed to decide if more damage has been done to our kind by efforts to eradicate war and strife than by the wars themselves. Wars were often a product of some fancy theory.
of how to eliminate them. Moreover, just and noble causes of fighting do exist, without which tyranny would be widespread, more than it is. It was Augustine who warned us that war was not the real evil, but what went on in our hearts. In this sense, warriors do not cause wars, but philosophers do.

But this essay is not a reflection on war and peace, but on the passingness of things. We are told in the first epistle of Peter that we are “wayfarers and pilgrims” in this world. Psalm 102:3 reads: “For my days pass away like smoke....” This observation suggests that we are on a journey by the mere fact that we are alive. It also hints that the end of our striving may not be in this world. How can this thing be?

A famous phrase from Aquinas goes as follows: *Homo non naturale sed supernaturale est.* What does this sentence mean? It explains something about us that, in a way, we recognize in ourselves, namely, that nothing natural that we encounter is sufficient to satisfy us. It does not mean that such things that we encounter are not good. *Omne ens est bonum.* Every thing that is good. It may not be goodness itself, but it is good. This limited goodness means that we can also use the good we encounter for a purpose it was not designed for. We can put it in a context where it does not belong. The point is that “we” can do this. Once we understand what this “we can do this” means, we can also understand that we need not do it, though we can. Some things exist in the universe that are the result of our own doing, our own human making.

Our present is what it is because of what is not present, because of what was or was not done in the past. Not so long ago, I came across an article of a man at Oxford about a walk he recently took along the Cherwell. Christopher Howse said that undergraduates at Oxford today do not really understand that “In the 19th century,” Oxford was “the Established Church at study.” Howse on his walk saw St. Clement’s Church, where Newman was a curate in 1824.

As he goes on, Howse now sees from the churchyard of St. Clement’s a new Mosque, partly financed by the Saudis. This sight led him to recall a passage in Gibbon’s famous book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,* a book mindful of Augustine, whose thesis Gibbon wrote to refute. Gibbon evidently remarked that, were it not for the Battle of Tours in 732, “perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pupils might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet.” (Telegraph, 3/29/09).

Contrary to most of what we are taught, battles—who wins, who loses, who fights them, who does not—make an enormous difference in how we, even now, live and are allowed to live, in where we find the truth, in where the truth is to be found. Oxford has “given up its Anglican preferences.” Howse concluded. “The vacuum will be filled, if not by liberalism, then secularism, but not yet Islam.” The words in those sentences are of interest—“given up,” “preferences,” “vacuum,” “will be,” “not yet.”

II.

The “passingness” of things is a graphic expression. It was Burke, I think, who said that if you want to keep something, you will have to keep changing it. I think of the efforts of the citizens of Georgetown to keep the buildings and streets in the area looking old and quaint. But at the same time, they desire area inside to be livable and convenient. You have to keep painting old buildings, keep changing pipes and lines in old water systems. But, of course, the main thing is that, to keep something, the first thing necessary is that you have to know what you want to keep and why you want to keep it. If you know neither of these small details, the whole keeping enterprise is not worth the effort.

I receive a journal from Perth in Australia called *The Defendant,* after one of Chesterton’s earliest and most memorable books. The latest
issue of The Defendant carried a comment of Chesterton from his book, A Handful of Authors, of 1953. As Chesterton died in 1936, this book, which I do not have, must have been a later Sheed & Ward collection.

In any case, a passage entitled “Social Change” is taken from this book. And since “social change” seems itself to be a tool to make things pass faster, Chesterton’s comments are worth a look, as they always are. “Social change” is often a phrase designed to accomplish something called “social justice,” one of the world’s most curious political notions, a phrase with an even more curious history. Thomas Sowell recently, with some wit, remarked: “Envy is always referred to by its political alias: ‘social justice.’” (03/28/09).

Basically, Chesterton says that we do not easily see the great changes happening in our very midst. They usually do not yet have a name, but everyone feels them taking place. This feeling is, no doubt, the import of Howse’s walk at Oxford. “Every man feels the faith or the sin, but every man feels it as something peculiar to himself,” Chesterton wrote.

It is the most secret part of every separate man that makes up a real social movement. The general philosophy is drawn not from what everybody says. But rather from what everybody does not say, but feels the more. Public opinion is made up of all the most peculiarly private opinions. Hence we always find a paradox in the fashion of speech and thought. The changes which men in any age are always talking about are never the changes that are really going on. The changes that are really going on are not those that men pompously applaud when they get together, but those which they vigorously promote when they get by themselves.

Needless to say, we have heard much, perhaps too much, about “change” in our time.

Chesterton was right. The changes we see are not those we talk about when we are by ourselves.

III. One of the things we talk about when we are by ourselves is this very “passingness of things.” Two kinds of things appear in our experience. We encounter things that we understand that do not change. A triangle, for instance, does not change. If we do anything with it; it ceases to be a triangle. A triangle, presumably, does not debate with itself about whether it wants to be a trapezoid or a circle. If it decides to become either, one clear consequence follows. It is no longer a triangle. And sometimes triangles, by being exactly what they are, are just what we need. If we are a surveyor of land areas, for instance, it is quite important to us that the triangle remains what it is. If it keeps changing, our calculations will cease being useful. We will cease using triangulation or other finesses of the trade.

However, if we take a look at ourselves, we notice something pretty obvious after a while. We change, but we remain ourselves. We have pictures of ourselves which, much to our embarrassment, our parents assure was ourselves when we were two. Little did they expect what would happen to the little tyke when he got to Georgetown. But here he is in another photo in front of Healy Hall, wearing a Hoya sweatshirt, with a young lady the parents do not recognize.

We next are called home to our grandfather’s funeral. He was an important figure in our lives, a good man. We wonder about him as we return home. Without him, we could not exist. He has, as local colloquialism has it, “passed.” In spite of speculations we hear in bio-technology, it will happen to us, though not now. But we do recall one of our high school classmates was killed in an auto accident one Saturday night when we could not make it to that party.

We do not hear much of this sort of thing. We figure to be around for a long time. We do not
want to be morbid. We are more concerned, as Aristotle said, with how to live, though Cicero spoke to us also of how to die. The “why” we live does come up when we are old enough to drink a beer legitimately, or even illegitimately.

The fact is, from all we read, the economic future of any young man or woman today is pretty bleak, much bleaker than we are let to believe. We are for hope and change, but there do seem to be neglected or violated rules. A Russian futurologist predicts that this country will break up in ten or twenty years. Canada seems to have changed its Constitution and put it in the hands of very odd courts. David Warren, their best columnist, expects they will approve polygamy momentarily. (Ottawa Citizen, 03/28/09). So if you go in for that sort of thing, head north. This polygamy business is about the last sexual principle left standing, except maybe incest. I have even seen advocates of that not too pious practice. So, what seems to be passing, though few will talk about it in public, is the whole tradition of civility.

IV. One thing that I have always noticed when it comes to thinking of the passingness of things is that, sooner or later, a writer or thinker will finally come back to Plato. It is never a bad idea to go back to Plato. But the going back to Plato, at its most perceptive point, is the rediscovery of his never too much emphasized principle that all changes in the city begin in changes in the soul of the individual citizen. We are reluctant to admit this.

This was Chesterton’s point in a way also. The unspoken things that everyone “feels” are about how we are living when it seems that we ought not to be living this way. The old moralists used to talk of a thing called “the voice of conscience.” The new psychologist often blamed this guilt for our foibles. He wanted to get rid of our “guilt-complex” without first getting rid of our guilt. The classical tradition thought a better way to do this was through acknowledgement, repentance, and forgiveness, all of which had something objective about them.

But, of course, our guilt usually is like a tooth ache. It indicates that something is wrong with our tooth, something we ought to attend to before we try the next meal. This brings us back to the triangle question. We too, like the triangle, are already a certain kind of being. If we do not know what we are, we will have a difficult time in becoming what we ought to be.

Unlike the triangle, no doubt, we have a say in this “remaining ourselves.” In some sense, again unlike the triangle, we can, in practice, define ourselves out of existence. This new definition really will not make us turtles or other kinds of beings. We are stuck with ourselves, which is not a bad thing, actually.

What a self-redefinition of ourselves—apart from the kind of being we are—will do, however, is allow us to explain to ourselves that we really are not the kind of beings that we actually are. The purpose of this new explanation of ourselves is that it allows us to do what we want. So it is all very convenient.

So it all comes down to the question of our own passingness. Does it make a difference whether we know what we are? Can we divert the being given to us to something other than what we ought to be? Should we feel guilty about what we do when we suspect in private, even what is said to be all right in law or public opinion, does not leave us alone?

In other words, do we have a human nature or being that remains with us even in our passingness? When our grandfather dies, is that it? We wonder. What do we see in our walks that our grandfathers did not see in theirs? What do we envy when we want to change things against a measure of what we are?

In the beginning, I cited the Letter to the Hebrews, as it itself cited Psalm 102, about what perishes. Heavens and earth will pass away, but not the Lord. And likewise, I cited Belloc who once visited Carthage, long since destroyed.
Great human things, empires, nations, can vanish. Things decline and fall.

Augustine tells us, however, that ultimately “two loves” and “two cities” are found, none of which change in the end. The end of change is not to change. Great human things can vanish. All of education depends on whether we think that we too are among the things that simply perish, vanish, pass.

One needs to take a stand on this, no doubt. Personally, I stand with the above-cited passage from Aquinas that reads: *Homo non naturale sed supernaturale est*. It loses a lot in translation, but it gets to the heart of passing things. Though we too in this life belong to the passing things, we have read our Plato. In the end, among the passing things, among the heavens and earth that perish, we are not counted. We are made for eternal life. This fact explains both our guilt and why the light in our eyes is not just of this world.

*James V. Schall, S. J. is a professor in the Georgetown University Department of Government.*
The Sublime Obligation of Virtue

Socrates: “How can he who has magnificence of mind and is the spectator of all time and all existence think much of human life?

Glaucon: He cannot.

Socrates: Or can such a one account death fearful?

Glaucon: No, indeed.”

It is often noted that the death of Socrates at the hands of Athens represents a watershed event in the history of politics and political philosophy. The drama of a man driven by principled conviction to challenge the state structure and expose its deficiency of virtue is a timeless and inspiring one. But it is perhaps not as widely and easily noted why Socrates’ death was such a weighty event. In contrast to the majority of the observations regarding Socrates’ Apology, this work will not focus primarily on the predicament posed by Socrates’ death for the institutionalized state structure, but will focus on the ethical demands made on the individual who reads the Apology. From an examination of those demands, it is revealed that the life lived by the internalized principle of virtue, though it often represents obligation and discomfort, is driven by the most powerful human force possible, one that transcends meager, temporal existence.

Socrates’ death is a representation of the fact that he, unique among his contemporaries, was one who had first directed himself toward the examination of his own life and the pursuit of virtue. This examination of the self is accompanied by an examination of the lives of fellow Athenians in order to discover where true wisdom might be found. The fact that Socrates subjects his fellow Athenians and even his accusers to a trial of their lives is only possible because Socrates internalizes and lives by the power of principle over pragmatism. It is only through principle that Socrates can sway his listeners’ souls so that they are moved to emulate and admire Socrates in spite of his unjust execution. It is principle that drives away the fear of death; there is no man who can freely give up his own life if he has not internalized a principle that transcends his life. The fact that Socrates does rule himself was fully evident when he went willingly and boldly to his death, proving he did not fear it, but was chasing a higher goal.

But Socrates’ premature death provides a definitive example that the life of virtue is not an easy one. Virtue imposes upon man the sublime obligation to live according to the highest code of principle and dignity. It is within the limits of physical and rational possibility for Socrates to escape his death in the court of Athens. But it is not within the realm of moral possibility. By perjuring himself or begging for mercy, Socrates might have gained a few more years of breath,
but he would have lost something far greater—his virtue. In comparison to the loss of virtue, death is a trivial matter: “The difficulty, my friends, is not to avoid death, but to avoid unrighteousness; for that runs faster than death.”4 It is often noted that virtue in this temporal world frequently goes unnoticed; often it is even punished.5 But this reality is neither surprising, nor sufficient reason to abandon the life of virtue. In fact, in a certain sense, virtue is most pure when it is unaccompanied by reward. If there is no expectation that virtue will bring benefit, it must be sought for its own sake. But to pursue virtue in the face of opposition requires an internalization of the principles of philosophy that transcend the paltry, unexamined life of mediocrity which is so prevalent. Virtue is rare. Therein lies its power. Therein lies its intricate complexity, which the uninitiated mind cannot encounter without confusion and curiosity.

The life of virtue has distinct ramifications for everyone who encounters it. Socrates pursues virtue not to draw a following, but for its own sake. As a servant of Apollo, and in accordance with his role as a social gadfly, Socrates is acutely interested in the lives of his fellow Athenians and followers. Socrates questions and prods his countrymen toward virtue by causing them to be concerned for their souls.6 He claims that he does not teach, but if any man ever learns from Socrates, it is during his Apology. His boldness is remarkable; at no point in any of his speeches does he display any sign of doubt. Even his characteristic questioning plays a minimal role. The interrogating, inquiring demeanor of Socrates is not entirely gone, but it has receded, and the most prominent position is filled by the passionately principled side of the man. However, Socrates’ significance in the lives of his followers is not that he spoke virtuously, but that he lived and died virtuously. The death of Socrates represents the pinnacle of his philosophy; everything rests on what he does in this trial. For years he held that philosophy is a preparation for death; if, at the last moment, he betrays that principle, he is nothing.7 But he does not betray his principle of virtue; he inspires his followers with the declaration that “no evil can befall a good man”8 and greets death willingly and without reserve.

Socrates’ virtue inverts common distinctions of success. Every word of his defense is colored by his virtue. It is obvious that the motive behind his speech is not that of the typical defendant. If his motive in speaking is merely to save his own life, there can be no doubt that he is a tragic failure. But he does not seem determined primarily to secure an acquittal.9 He does not speak frivolously, but neither does he employ any immoral means to secure his liberation.10 What, then, is his motive? One can look to nothing other than his own internal principle and commitment to virtue to understand the manner of his defense. He is skeptical of the plausibility of convincing his jurors,11 and he is not principally concerned with educating his followers since he addresses them directly only after his condemnation. Instead, he is obligated to act in accordance with virtue for its own sake, irrespective of the benefit or disadvantage it might bring. His purpose in speaking is to convict his judges by casting their shallow, temporal lives against the luminescence of the virtuous life from which he will not be shaken.

Therefore, Socrates’ defense speech, though it is feckless in preventing his execution, must be characterized as a resounding success and an effective defense of virtue. Socrates foists greater conviction upon his accusers through the power of his virtue than could ever be done by force of violence: “And now I depart hence condemned by you to suffer the penalty of death—they too go their ways condemned by the truth to suffer the penalty of villainy and wrong.”12 Yet Socrates’ conviction of the jury is relatively
incidental; his death’s true power resonates through the testimony to virtue that he displays. The incarnate virtue represented by Socrates is a far greater weapon than any wielded by his accusatory opponents, and it is efficacious in impacting the conduct of his followers for thousands of years.

The standard set by virtue is higher than any mere state can compel because it originates from the rhythms of the soul, not from the will of man. The life lived virtuously must have an interior motivation, for it will almost certainly encounter exterior opposition. As both Plato and Augustine demonstrate, the advent of the virtuous state on earth is an impossibility. History is characterized by a noticeable lack of virtuous political organizations, but the stories of vicious states are never far from the minds of even the casual observer of history. However, virtue can and does exist in the soul of the individual, rational man whose fullness is not exhausted materially. The power of virtue lies in its ability to oppose and negate evil, which is undoubtedly a prevalent force in the world. It may be that there are only a few virtuous men alive at any time, but the example of Socrates teaches that virtue is the principal power which must be sought as a fine treasure, and that no hindrance—even death—ought to deter one from pursuing it.

Justin R. Hawkins is a junior in the Georgetown University College of Arts & Sciences studying government.
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The problem facing the weak argument from religious pluralism, on the other hand, is that what is being defended by such an argument is not religious freedom as traditionally understood. Indeed, if the argument is: “We will tolerate your religion in so far as it is sufficiently similar to our own,” then what is being defended is hardly a right to freely practice the religion of one’s choosing, but rather a right to freely practice a religion that falls within a permissible range of faiths to be selected by the state. It seems as though most people will want to affirm that individuals should be free to choose a given religion even if it differs significantly from those practiced by a majority. But such an argument does nothing to protect such minority faiths. A right to religious freedom that only protects majority religions and those doctrinally similar to them is hardly the freedom of religion protected in liberal democracies or enshrined in the First Amendment.

3. Harm and the Limits on State Authority

It is clear that there is indeed a tension between paternalism and religious toleration. Is there some way of distinguishing specific paternalistic policies from religious coercion that would render the former legitimate and the latter illegitimate? One distinguishing feature that might appear promising to the defender of paternalism is privacy. Religion is an intimately private matter implicating an individual’s personal relationship with God and should thus be accorded a greater level of respect than other activities, it might be argued. This distinction, though attractive, fails to adequately reconcile paternalism with religious toleration. Further, the reasons for which it fails also suggest moral limits on the state’s coercive authority that extend even beyond paternalism.

The principle of privacy fails to adequately distinguish between religion and other human activities because it fails to account for all of the dimensions properly encompassed by freedom of religion. It is indeed true that many aspects of religion are intimately personal. But so too are many aspects of the activities that paternalists often seek to proscribe (e.g. drugs, sexual behavior). Freedom of religion, properly understood, extends not merely to private prayer, but to public assembly in places of worship, debate and discussion of various religious principles, and even intensely interpersonal proselytization.

Suppose the paternalist bureaucrat were to seize on the notion of privacy offered up here and tell us: “Fine. You are free to worship as you please within the confines of your own home. The state is only concerned with regulating the public manifestations of your faith. Since these are not all that private, you have no objection to such regulation.” We would be appalled by such a response, because freedom of religion properly protects not only the private elements of our faith but the public ones as well. The distinction based on privacy thus fails.

If one believes in a moral right of religious freedom, then, one believes in a right that encompasses activities that may be publicly harmful of other people – harmful, because, as I have argued, having true religious beliefs and avoiding false ones is integral to living a good life and, according to many, achieving salvation. If one does indeed affirm a moral right of religious freedom, then, the fact that certain activities (e.g. the consumption of certain drugs, prostitution) result in moral or spiritual harm to others does not justify the state’s proscribing them. One who believes in religious freedom cannot also believe that the prevention of moral or spiritual harm is a sufficient basis for coercion. Rather, it follows from a moral right to religious freedom that the state’s authority must be confined to the prevention of and protection against people inflicting involuntary physical harm on others. Such a conclusion is, I believe, demanded as a matter of consistency.

Jay Sykes is a junior in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying government.
Distinguishing the Declaration from Locke’s Second Treatise

Scott Gray

Contemporary analysis of the Declaration of Independence seldom moves beyond the introduction’s statement regarding inalienable rights and the right to rebellion. Although such analysis may rightly define certain tenets of the Declaration as fundamentally Lockean, the document is more than its introduction, and much of it actually diverges significantly from Locke’s Second Treatise. The common idea that Locke should be viewed as a sort of ghostwriter for the Declaration is largely misleading and does a disservice to both the Second Treatise and the Declaration.

Locke’s work consists of a philosophical discussion on why man enters into society while also attempting to define what constitutes the just society. According to Locke, man enters into society based upon compact, and this political society then institutes a government in order to protect property. Locke examines consent with great care, exploring the character of the natural state before defining the nature of consent. Locke argues that a law of nature prohibits absolute anarchy, even in the natural state. Instead, violence can there only “serve for Reparation and Restraint.” Ultimately, Locke views the protection of property as man’s highest objective. Locke defines property first in terms of the mixing of one’s labor with an object, but he also extends it to legitimately include intellectual creations as well as fortunes acquired through the sale of excess property. In protecting this property, humans enter into societies based upon consent, which Locke carefully explicates. He notes that a child cannot be considered a subject of a particular state, and that one only joins political society upon reaching adulthood and exercising one’s free choice.

Thus, in considering Locke’s Treatise, it is important to consider his purpose. Locke is attempting to explore the nature of the natural state, and from this natural state he is attempting to develop a reasonable nature of consent.

Although these principles may indirectly influence the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration and Locke’s Second Treatise serve very different purposes. The Declaration was written not as an explanation for the emergence of government, but as a defense of the particular types of governments which existed in the colonies in the 1770s. Locke never directly addresses the idea of federalism or local autonomy, whereas it is an essential component of the Declaration. Jefferson objects to the mainte-
nance of standing armies in the colonies not because it violates an inherent liberty, but because it occurs “without the Consent of our legislatures.” Similarly, Jefferson airs two grievances to the legislatures themselves. He accuses the King first of “taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments.” Second, he criticizes the “suspending of our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.” So although a student of the Declaration must attest to the Lockean elements of its introduction, one must also confront the grievances that are very un-Lockean. It is seen that some of the Declaration’s objections demonstrate a willingness to sacrifice a Lockean “right” in order to defend a localized sense of order. The colonists were unwilling to subject themselves to a distant power, even if that power did little to actually undermine their rights. Given Jefferson’s political tendencies, it is likely that he would have opposed even the dismantling of colonial legislatures coinciding with the addition of deputies in Parliament.

The Declaration and the *Second Treatise* are also different in their interpretations of liberty and provision for government structures. Locke takes great care to describe legislative supremacy, describing the legislature as “the supreme power of the Common-wealth,” and argues that only this supreme power of the legislature deserves law-making authority. Jefferson’s concern with legislative supremacy is far from obvious in the Declaration, as it is not explicit there. The Declaration’s appeal is to “our British brethren” not for inclusion into Parliament. He goes so far as to vaguely criticize the legislative supremacy of Parliament, accusing them of “attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us.” Additionally, it is difficult to determine whether Jefferson shares Locke’s fundamental values. Whereas Locke places property as his primary value, Jefferson never mentions it by name, only vaguely including it, perhaps, under the pursuit of Happiness. It is likely that the colonists viewed rights only in terms of their protection by the colonial legislatures. Instead of believing in rights as absolutes, they believed that these rights could be codified by their particular communities.

Thus, it is a mistake to consider Locke the inspiration of the Declaration of Independence in that it does a disservice both to Locke and Jefferson. Although there are points of conversion, there are major points of distinction in both documents. Locke’s work is a philosophical one, dealing with ideas of property and equality, whereas Jefferson is a more practical defense of the indigenous political institutions that had been created in America since 1620. Far from arising out of nowhere, the Declaration was a culmination of decades and decades of American experience in self-government. The points of convergence are worthy of analysis, but so are the many divergences between the two works.

Scott Gray is a senior in the Georgetown University College of Arts & Sciences studying government.
render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21 NKJV). This simple verse in the teachings of Christ is one of the most powerful statements of the Bible and political philosophy. Its proper interpretation has major ramifications on the relationship between ecclesial and civil authorities, but the statement is often confusing and misleading when taken alone. When understood within the context of the Bible, the phrase becomes much clearer. Indeed, as James Schall has observed, “this granting to Caesar genuine authority…may well have been Jesus’ most revolutionary political contribution.”

The passage is important because, “[Jesus] transforms the subject of the debate from the payment of a tax as such to the deeper issue of where ultimate authority resides…nothing is more central to politics than a sound understanding of the proper basis of sovereignty.” Here we gain insight into the greater meaning of the verse. Aristotle’s most famous quote from the Politics is that “man is by nature a political animal,” (1253a2). Though true, we are also flawed creatures corrupted by original sin. Because we are sinful, full justice does not spring up spontaneously in this world. As such, to ensure justice there needs to be a substitutional entity to rule over us, namely the civil state. States are perhaps the most powerful entity for controlling people’s outward actions, which they do through the external coercion or force. As will be elaborated later in the paper, these states are divinely ordained and so it is our duty to obey the secular rulers. Christians should do more than support their government; we should actively fulfill our individual role to work for terrestrial peace, while knowing it will never be completely actualized.

As inhabitants of an earthly realm, humans are subject to municipal laws and must respect and obey these laws under most circumstances. More importantly though, by following the laws of Man, humans obey God’s will since a state itself is divinely ordained—founded by God to create an earthly form of justice. Because it seeks to maintain a minimal standard of virtue and peace, human government should be civil, though not secular. “God’s claims are so comprehensive that our relationship to Caesar also must be subsumed under our earthly calling to advance God’s kingdom and righteousness.” Politics then emerges…as an integral part of our
obedient response to God; it is in other words, a vocation, a form of lay apostolate.”

In order to understand the relationship between religion and civil society, “we have to start with the assumption that we are dealing, for the most part, with fallen men.” We cannot be ruled entirely and directly by God’s law on Earth because humanity is capable of great evil. A government of men must exist as an intermediary between what Saint Augustine calls the City of God—the the kingdom of God’s true, virtuous believers, and the City of Man—the fallen world we inhabit. “True justice,” Augustine states, “exists only in the republic founded and governed by Christ.” Since we do not live in a completely just world, governments must compel us to obey certain laws to maintain earthly peace and order. The state’s “main weapon—fear of punishment—cannot make men good or virtuous, but only less harmful to their fellows,” since anything created by flawed creatures will itself be flawed.

The purpose of a state is not to recreate heaven on earth, but merely to prevent the rise of hell on earth both in a social and moral sense. “The task of the State, then, is to maintain peace by employing its overwhelming powers of coercion to hold in check the warring aspirations of selfish men…the State preserves an external peace—what Augustine calls earthly peace or the Peace of Babylon.” It should be noted that the best form of earthly governance is not under consideration here, merely the presence of an organism that can compel humans to live in relative peace and order. Although it inevitably does matter what form of government a state possesses, in terms of its abilities to achieve this earthly peace, the crucial factor is that an intermediary state exists at all. Why it is so important to have a state is explained in a commentary on Saint Augustine’s The City of God: “the worst possible government is far better than anarchy, and in any case, it must be endured as a divine punishment for men’s sins.” Since government is vital to prevent the worst form of chaos and anarchy, it seems reasonable that humanity should show loyalty and obedience toward the state, since it is the mechanism by which external safety and order are maintained.

Our obedience to the state is more than merely functional. Although the earthly prince provides for his subjects’ well being, these princes themselves are merely the tools by which God imposes His will on the world. The state “is a divinely established institution to repress and punish the wicked, and its rulers, who are ordained by God, are the ministers of His wrath and a terror to evildoers.” Let there be no doubt as to the source of their authority—these rulers are fulfilling the role assigned to them by God. “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God” (Romans 13:1 NKJV). Since God is the ultimate source of power and justice, “when Christians render obedience to rulers they are really obeying God rather than men, since it is God who establishes rulers and who orders that they be obeyed.” Because of humanity’s inherent flaw, however, earthly society will never actually attain the Peace of Babylon.

In the meantime though, the political state rightfully exists to impose organization upon the world. Referring back to the passage from the Gospel of Matthew, “New Testament writers generally use the Greek verb translated ‘to render’ (apodidonai) to refer to the act of giving someone that to which he is rightly entitled…’the payment of tribute to Caesar is not only your unquestioned obligation; it is also your moral duty.’” Even Jesus himself recognized and accepted the right of civil government to rule. When he was being interrogated by Pontius Pilate, the symbol of Caesar’s civil government in Israel, “Jesus answered, ‘You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above’” (John 19:11 NKJV). It is clear throughout the Bible and world histo-
ry that rulers possessed a divine authority to rule. Jesus, like us, was subject to the decisions of a civil administration. We should do more than merely refrain from resisting civil authority; we should embrace it and do our part to help it strive toward its important, though admittedly unattainable, goal of earthly peace.

If authority comes from God and people must obey and worship Him, it follows that humans also have a duty, under most circumstances, to serve the state in turn as a manifestation of His will on Earth. Individuals must do so in accordance with their natural talents. Christians “have a positive duty to participate in the State’s work of governance, adjudication, punishment and warfare, if they had the talents that fitted them for these duties.” Good deeds are a necessary component of faith, indeed, the more Christians serve their fellow man, the better they are serving God. C.S. Lewis phrased it aptly, saying, “Those who want Heaven most have served Earth best. Those who love Man less than God do most for Man.”

Civic rulers have an obligation in turn, as the messengers of God, to rule over their people justly. “Let the kings of the earth serve Christ by making laws for Him and for His cause.” Since these people ruling humanity are by definition human and likewise inherently flawed, there will not always, or even often, be just government. The question then becomes, what is the recourse for faithful and obedient Christians in the face of an imperfect leader? The answer is, in some sense clear, yet nuanced. When leaders stray from a moral path, it is the people’s right and obligation not to blindly follow the commands of their rulers. Indeed, Augustine tells us that “Only when their orders are contrary to the clear commands of God Himself has given to men must kings and rulers be refused obedience.” This does not necessarily justify revolt and revolution. There is a difference between disobeying an unjust law and actively working to overthrow a divinely ordained ruler. “Even the most wicked, cruel, and tyrannical rulers receive their power from God alone…and, sooner or later, in this world or the next, they are suitably punished for them. Nevertheless, through their wicked deeds God accomplished what He wishes to perform.” We must trust that God’s will is being put into action. Christians can take real action, but must be willing to accept the consequences. “True Christians must be prepared ‘to endure even the most wicked and vicious commonwealth’ … because true justice exists only in the City of God.” Despite outward oppression and human corruptibility, we can still maintain a Christian faith and strive to be moral. If man can maintain his faith in God despite the outward chaos and turmoil of the world, surely he will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and be saved from this sinful world.

Augustine notes the true misfortune that, “every human action from the most sublime expression of altruism or patriotism or the highest intellectual or artistic achievement to the most sordid or trivial action is rooted in human sinfulness.” The issue, then, is not how to eliminate this malevolence, but how it may be contained and controlled. Because humans do not inhabit an ethereal realm, some form of governance must be enacted. “God uses the evil desires of fallen man as means for the establishment of earthly peace and order and for the just punishment of his vices. The state is thus a gift of God to man.” Since the state is a gift to humanity from God, and a Christian’s duty is to obey the will of God, people should obey and contribute to material society as a tool in God’s
plan. Christians should respect the state in areas over which it holds sway, as well as will its success and work for it. Everything has its place and serves its role in God’s Divine Plan, so we must “render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:7 NKJV). Obeying the laws of Caesar or the secular order, however, does not place a person outside of the realm of God. As mentioned, God wills the state to man as an avenue through which it can achieve secular order or Saint Augustine’s Peace of Babylon.

By rendering obedience to the secular order, the Christian man is thus following the will of God. Rather than completely separate, as posited by some, Augustine shows us that religion and the secular order are inexorably linked. The good Christian must be loyal to state authority because it is an avenue through which he can be virtuous if he and his fellows can, “obey the governing authorities, be peaceable, pay taxes, respect and honor the rulers, and generally, be ready to do every good civil work.”

Though the state serves an important purpose, humanity should be under no misapprehensions that it can produce God’s Kingdom on earth. The state, being comprised of flawed humans, is itself marred by sin and malevolence. Worldly governments ought to exist because, “only the State, with its apparatus of laws, punishments, and coercion, can hold these conflicts within bounds and prevent men from annihilating one another.”

Christians cannot and must not lose sight of the true source of authority and sovereignty—God—by treating the state as a manifestation of Heaven on Earth. “Our obligations to the state do not fall outside our obligations toward God, nor are they in inherent conflict with them…our obligations toward the state, more than being simply compatible with our primary obligations to God, actually follow from them.”

As such, when a leader errs from the path of righteousness, it is the duty of true believers not to obey. This does not necessarily give permission for open revolt. Man is still subject to the secular authority of the state even though it may stray from the path of justice. Leaders’ actions serve a purpose on earth. Although the state is different from God’s kingdom, humans are ultimately serving God by rendering to each what is their due. Everything has a place and serves a role in the framework of God’s rule, and the state is no different.

Collan B. Rosier is a junior in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying government and history.
The conscious effort of secularists, who often pose as “disinterested parties” in the debate, has unequivocally pushed God further and further from the public sphere in recent years. In the year 2000, atheist and lawyer Michael Newdow led the charge to remove the phrase “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance; recently, he has proposed litigation to remove “in God we trust” from our coinage. Although the Supreme Court failed to reach consensus in the first case—ruling that Newdow did not have custody of his daughter, and therefore lacked standing in the case—the case calls into question the intent of the Founders in shaping the First Amendment. Thus, an examination of the merits of the phrase “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance is in order, including an examination of the case law supporting the phrase.

One ubiquitous argument against the phrase harkens back to the “Founders’ intent.” “The Founders were a product of the Enlightenment,” the argument goes, “and the Enlightenment championed secularism.” Indeed, the Founders were a product of the Enlightenment. Origins of the ideas we often hold as self-evident are products of the Enlightenment. For example—we hold that authority rests on rationality rather than appeals to tradition, sacred texts, or some unmediated concept of nature; that toleration is a virtue; that freedom and equality are fundamental to both public and private life; that self-determining individuality is a higher value than obedience. Nevertheless, to argue that Enlightenment figures were “secularists” is a grave misconception.56

This misconception stems largely from another and broader confusion—the conflation of “secularism” with “secularist;” the latter is an ideology which advocates that religion has no place in public life, while the former is a founding principle, which—as the Enlightenment propounded—advocates that religion and formal (i.e. state) authority should be separate. Thus, secularism is not necessarily the belief in a public sphere completely devoid of religion, religious symbols, or religious beliefs; it does not, in itself, dictate whether religion is permitted or restricted. Secular states are not atheist states or even states which force their citizens to believe and profess their religion sub rosa, and in some secular states there can even be a majority religion in the population—this, in fact, is the case in countries such as Thailand, Turkey, and, of course, the United States. Secular states can also exist with wide religious diversity—e.g. India and Lebanon.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau first coined the term “civil religion” in Chapter eight, book four of...
The Social Contract. No one has written more eloquently on civil religion in America, however, than Tocqueville. Democracy in America abounds with dazzling quotes about the formative and profound qualities of civil religion, and the necessities of religion in preserving true liberty; his well-known quote about “the whole man being in the cradle,” and being able to see the provenance and “whole destiny of America encapsulated in the first Puritan to land upon its shores, just as the first man led to the whole human race,” are quite telling.

The history of civil religion in America begs a closer look at the subject through American jurisprudence, specifically the phrase “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Establishment Clause. Congress enacted the Pledge itself on June 22, 1942 and amended the Pledge to include the phrase “under God” in 1954. When Congress chose to put the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance, it was by a unanimous vote. The vote was not even recorded because it was done by voice vote—no dissent at all. The pressures for this insertion were secular political pressures, not pressures by religious organizations and institutions. Although the vote occurred during the apogee of McCarthyism—where the intent was to root out all communists, and to that extent atheists—it stands to reason that a manifold of political pressures could have rendered a similar insertion of the phrase “under God” into the Pledge of Allegiance.

Moreover, there were three levels of popular government at work—Congress prescribing the Pledge, the state requiring patriotic observances in its schools, and the school district choosing to comply with those demands through teacher-led recital by those willing participants. Although the federal government did mandate that if the Pledge was to be recited, it be said with the words “under God,” this in itself did not coerce state governments, and further, local school districts to mandate the saying of the Pledge of Allegiance. This is made explicit in Lee v. Weisman.

As defined by Justice Clarence Thomas, coercion concerns itself with “the force of law” or “the threat of penalty.” “Peer pressure,” he says, “as unpleasant as it may be, is not coercion, at least not from a legal stance.” Students, therefore, have a theoretical and legal means to opt out of saying the Pledge, or opt out of saying the phrase “under God.” Students are not coerced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance; at most, they are coerced to be present at the time of its recitation.

To acknowledge civil religion and its impact on American society, the Court has taken a more limited view of the Establishment Clause to actualize the dichotomy between “active” and “passive” transgression. The Pledge is not what the Establishment Clause protects against—to wit, state-sponsored prayers, religious rituals or ceremonies, or the imposition of or the requirement of teaching or not teaching a religious doctrine, as established in the case Lee vs. Weisman (1992), regarding public prayer at a graduation ceremony. The court, moreover, distinguishes between the Pledge (recited before the prayer) and the prayer itself, condoning and even encouraging the former, and declaring the latter unconstitutional. Hence, the Establishment Clause does not protect individuals to the extent that the Free Exercise Clause does.

What is more, the entire Pledge of Allegiance is descriptive; the Pledge is not a prayer. The Pledge itself is a patriotic observance focused primarily on the flag and the nation, and only secondarily on the description of the nation. After all, there is not one religion that incorporates the Pledge into its canon, or one that would consider the Pledge a meaningful expression of religious faith. Even if taken literally, the phrase is merely descriptive; it purports only to identi-
ify the United States as a nation subject to divine authority. One can disagree that there is liberty and justice for all in the United States, one can disagree (as Newdow does) that we stand one nation, under God, but that does not make it a prayer. Therefore, “under God” may mean several different things: that God has guided the destiny of the United States, for example, or that the United States exists under God’s authority.

The Supreme Court has upheld this position on many occasions; the Court has left a long and robust precedent conserving the language of the Pledge. Most cases in which the Pledge is cited regard not the Pledge itself, but such things as the display of religious figures in the public sphere and other endorsement cases. It is telling that the Court has heard more Establishment Clause cases in the past fifty years than in the past two-hundred years combined; however, only three cases, at the time of Newdow’s filing, dealt with the Pledge of Allegiance directly. This presents a certain ubiquity and historicity of this particular phrase and the Pledge more generally, and it is augmented by the fact that the vigor and creativity of Establishment Clause cases have only been rising in recent years. Such references serve to legitimate secular purposes of solemnizing public occasions in ways reasonable to our culture—expressing confidence and hope in the future, the freedom of man, what is worthy of appreciation in society, inter alia. This constitutes a certain type of “ceremonial deism,” to use a phrase coined by Yale Law School Dean Eugene Rostow (and subsequently codified by Sandra Day O’Connor), which describes such things as our national motto and the Pledge of Allegiance.

In order to decide whether endorsement has occurred, a reviewing court must keep in mind two crucial and interrelated principles. First, it must assume the viewpoint of a “reasonable observer.” But nearly any government action could be overturned as a violation of the Establishment Clause if one “heckler’s veto” sufficed to show that its message was one of endorsement. Second, the “reasonable observer” must be deemed aware of the history of the conduct in question. Thus, some references to religion in public life and government are the inevitable consequence of our nation’s history.

The Court has been fastidious, in all its Establishment cases, to honor American civil religion and American religious history. After all, if the Court did not provide these meticulous decisions, it would open up a slippery slope that would render unconstitutional the way in which the Court itself commences each day. Likewise, Congress and each Presidential executive order open with a blessing.

In Engel v. Vitale (1962) it was stated that “There is of course nothing in the decision reached here that is inconsistent with the fact that school children and others are officially encouraged to express love for our country by reciting historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence which contain references to the Deity…or with the fact that there are may manifestations in our public life of belief in God.” In Abington v. Schempp just one year later, Justice Brennan said, “The reference to divinity in the revised Pledge of Allegiance, for example, may merely recognize the historical fact that our Nation was believed to have been founded ‘under God.’ Thus reciting the Pledge may be no more of a religious exercise than the reading aloud of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, which contains an allusion to the same historical fact.” Twenty years later in Marsh v. Chambers, Justice Brennan reaffirmed that “under God” did not explicitly violate the Establishment Clause because the words “have lost any true religious significance.”

What is more, in Lynch v. Donnelly (1984), the court again recognized America’s religious history; in this decision, they refused to rule that religion and government are completely separate; in fact, the Court ruled that the government
may advance religion (in general) in some cases, so long as there is no “administrative entanglement.” The court listed many examples of our “government’s acknowledgment of our religious heritage...including Congress’ addition of the words ‘under God’ in the Pledge of Allegiance.”

In *Wallace v. Jaffree* (1985), Justice O’Connor responded with an invocation of “ceremonial deism”—that the inclusion of the words “under God” is not unconstitutional because they “serve as an acknowledgment of religion with the legitimate secular purpose of solemnizing public occasions, and expressing confidence in the future.”

In *Allegheny County v. ACLU* (1989), Justice Kennedy—acting as the swing-vote on the Court—stated that “any test which might invalidate longstanding traditions [read: the 55 years of the Pledge as it now stands], cannot be a proper reading of the Establishment Clause.” In other words, tradition—even if it includes government endorsement and support of sectarian religious messages—must triumph over “evolving” understandings of religious freedom. This decision permitted the existence of competing religious symbols, conveying a message of accommodation and religious plurality. While something standing alone like the phrase “under God” could be deemed unconstitutional, its inclusion with other patriotic activities and phrases clearly offsets any particular religious message it may have in itself.

Our continued repetition of the reference to “one nation under God” in an exclusively patriotic context has shaped the cultural significance of that phrase to conform to the aforementioned patriotic context (as the “reasonable observer” test would demonstrate). So granting that the phrase hitherto carried any religious freight, it now has long since been lost—for better or worse.

Reciting the Pledge or listening to others is a patriotic exercise, not a religious one; participants promise fidelity to our flag and our nation, not to any particular God, faith, or church. There may be others that disagree, not with the phrase “under God,” but with the phrase “with liberty and justice for all,” for example. To be sure, that would not give such objectors the right to veto the holding of such a ceremony by those who are willing to participate. Thus, it would seem that only if the phrase “under God” somehow tends to the establishment of a specific religion in violation of the First Amendment could the claim to strip the phrase succeed, where one based on objections to other phrases, such as (sticking with our current example) “with liberty and justice for all,” fails. The Pledge of Allegiance does not constitute “an explicit religious exercise” or a “formal religious exercise” tending toward one religion or the establishment thereof of the kind struck down in past case law such as *Lee*.

This is what the Establishment Clause is supposed to protect: the inclusion of everyone, or nearly everyone. The argument is not that the government needs to say that one must pretend that what is distinctly religious in this phrase is lost; the argument is that it is lost! What is distinctively religious about this phrase is exactly that—lost. Therefore, the Pledge might serve the civic purpose of unification, at the price of a minute number of people who are offended. Therefore, the religious affirmation in this case is so tepid that it should fly completely under the “constitutional radar.”

In summation, we must assert that it is an interpretive choice to feel excluded; in this instance, “under God” is purposefully ambiguous and inclusive enough to encapsulate even those “irreligious” people, which the Court recognized in *Seeger* still have something that directs, transforms, shapes, channels, and structures their behavior and morality. It would be ironic indeed, if the Supreme Court were to wield the constitutional commitment to religious freedom so as to sever outcomes from the
traditions developed to honor it in the first place. Therefore, to argue for an unwarranted extension of the Establishment Clause—one that would have the unfortunate effect of prohibiting a commendable patriotic exercise—is tenuous at best and a clear repudiation of previous Court precedent at worst.

Ryan Berg is a senior in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying government and theology.
The Republic is the true Apology of Socrates, for only in the Republic does he give an adequate treatment of the theme which was forced on him by Athens’ accusation against him. That theme is the relationship of the philosopher to the political community.” The Athenian jury’s trial and subsequent execution of Socrates was an open act of purging the best existing city of its best man, an act in which philosophy itself suffered an existential crisis. In writing the Republic, Plato reexamines the problematic coexistence of the political things, the province of demagogues, sophists, and statesmen, and the highest things, the concern of philosophers. In fact, when Socrates adopts the function of a philosopher-architect who invites Glaucon and Adeimantus, potential philosophers with a boundless thirst for answers, to build a city in speech, the statesman and the philosopher coalesce into a philosopher-king, an “intellectual guardian” in the words of Plato. Together, Socrates, Glaucon and Adeimantus form “a community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers,” whose exploration of justice leads them to the very place in which disordered notions of human morality and justice take root within the city. This metaphysical locus of disorder lies within the very mind of the young potential philosopher. Thus, by looking at the traditional conceptions of justice from a macroscopic perspective of the city, Socrates not only elucidates an ultimate, human conception of justice but also expounds the significance of education as the timeless, universal driving force for the proper development of the youth, the future philosopher-kings of the city.

Socrates begins by probing into and successfully dismantling the traditional conceptions of justice in his discussion with Cephalus, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus in Book I. Yet, although he has merely clarified what justice is not rather than defining what it is, “although, as Socrates disarmingly admits, they have not defined justice but have wandered, their wandering has not been purposeless—they have not defined justice, but they have succeeded in

On Book II of Plato’s Republic: Education and the Malleability of the Soul in the ‘City in Speech’

Natalie Punchak

“The real community of man, in the midst of all the self-contradictory simulacra of community, is the community of those who seek the truth, of the potential knowers, that is, in principle, of all men to the extent they desire to know… They have a true community that is exemplary of all other communities.”

—Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind 69
defining the problem of justice.” Indeed, Glaucon’s reiteration of Thrasymachus’ case for injustice, which “implies that there is an insoluble conflict between the good of the individual and the common good,” stands at the core of this disordered notion of justice, propounded in the myths and allegories which invade the works of poets and subsequently infect the city. As Glaucon demonstrates through the myth of Gyges and the invisible ring and Adeimantus through the literature of Homer and Hesiod, it seems best to simply appear just, for not only will the man who seems just reap the greatest rewards, honors, and praise, but he will also be spared from Hades by persuasion of the gods. Socrates, then, has the mission of showing “that the man who is whipped, racked, chained, and has his eyes burned out because men believe him to be unjust will be blessedly happy if only he possesses justice; while the prudent, courageous, skilled server of his own interest is miserable because he lacks justice.” In arriving at this conception of justice, “a justice which is not Athenian, or even Greek, but is rather human,” Socrates unmasks something even more essential to the subsistence of the healthy city: education.

It is precisely in Socrates’ call for Glaucon and Adeimantus to turn from the petty tyrannical regime of Thrasymachus to the much nobler task of building a ‘city in speech’ – an ideal state embodied in the healthy and ordered soul of the best man – that the question of education in moving men away from necessity and self-interest to a broader conception of the common good is found. Socrates’ first city, which Glaucon coldly refers to as ‘city of pigs,’ is a community of men originating out of necessity. Simply stated, “Men join together because they are incomplete, because they cannot provide for their needs themselves,” and in specializing in some art or profession according to the nature of each, they are able to provide for the basic necessities of their society. However, this city is both impossible and undesirable, for men have a habit for luxury and desire; thus, Socrates and Glaucon expand the city in speech, introducing the fundamental need for a new, ‘spirited’ class, the ‘guardians’ who will protect and defend the city.

In exploring the necessary qualities of the guardians and their role “in the construction of the state, Plato couches the question of educating the guardians in terms of harmonizing the two sides of their characters, the gentle or wisdom-loving, and the high-spirited.” By drawing a distinction between the appetitive natures of the economic classes and the spiritedness of the guardians, Socrates delineates the significance of education as the vital force which molds the character of the guardians and makes them fit to protect the city.

In taking up the significance of education in the subsistence of the city, the architects of the city in speech are faced with the question of the constitution of the guardians’ – the future philosopher-kings’ – education, which consists of _mousikê_ and _gumanstikê_. Socrates points to the malleability of the soul of the young, who cannot distinguish between symbol or allegory and reality; thus, the guardians’ training, which shall commence with the telling of fictional stories such as fables and fairy tales, must be firmly supervised. This fundamental notion of intellectual formation through education is later echoed in the middle dialogues of Plato, particularly in his conception that “a certain ordering of the soul’s non-rational elements is a necessary prerequisite for proper employment of the rational. Accordingly, the main concern of early education is developing the preconditions of reason, rather than reason itself.” However, in spite of its function as a mere prerequisite for the cultivation of reason, the so-called primary education of the guardians is essential, for it forms the correct opinion of the youth. This correct conviction, in turn, allows for the curbing and self-moderation of the appetites of the guardians because they have learned right opin-
The formation of correct beliefs and their retention is essential for the tempering of the spirited nature of the guardians, and becomes a vital foundation of the later development of the philosopher-king. Here, Plato alludes to the necessity of order in the education of the guardians, which he then expounds in Book VII.

In reading the Republic, we must keep in mind that there was no core text such as the Bible to guide the moral education of the Ancient Greeks; hence, “The poets are taken most seriously as the makers of the horizon which constitutes the limit of men’s desire and aspiration: they form the various kinds of men, who make nations various.” Because poetry so fundamentally moves the human soul and sculpts the moral nature of man, Socrates emphasizes that the gods cannot be misrepresented as doing evil to good men or conferring good onto the wicked men; “just men and just deeds are the only ones celebrated.” Socrates then rejects the poetry of Homer or Hesiod as suitable for the cultivation of the young souls of the guardians, for these poets portray the gods as corrupt, as persuaded by wicked men and as able to disguise themselves and lie about their nature. In banishing Homer and Hesiod from the ‘city in speech,’ Socrates advocates for a radical reform of education, in which “the poetic depictions of the gods cannot serve as models for human conduct.”

The culmination of Book II is significant, then, because it points to the poet, not the philosopher, as the one who corrupts the city through the misrepresentation of the divine, an act that disorders the young souls of the guardians and encourages weakness and moral disease within the city walls.

Plato, Adeimantus and Glaucon’s decision to construct a city within speech, then, is redolent of a crisis of disorder in which the conception of the philosopher-king is solely a theoretical one, for the statesman of the polis, preoccupied with the here and now, fails to recognize the objective truth of the philosophers. Alas, this crisis not only existed in the cities of ancient Greece but also plagues our contemporary cities, societies and universities on the 21st century. As Plato plainly states, education is the font from which disorder flows into the city, so that the relationship between the education, the healthy, ordered soul of man and the best city must never be broken. Education is the fundament and backbone of character formation within the youth, the future ‘intellectual guardians’. Perhaps, then, it is time for universities, the harbingers of contemporary education, to seriously grapple with their dangerous allegiance to unbridled relativism as a moral virtue. For we must realize that “our problems are so great and their sources so deep that to understand them we need philosophy more than ever.” It is in the great, core texts of the Bible, Plato and Augustine that a certain objective truth can be sought, a truth which fortifies, rather than enfeebles a community. In the words of Allan Bloom, “Men may live more truly and fully in reading Plato and Shakespeare than at any other time, because then they are participating in essential being and forgetting their accidental lives.” Thus, just as education serves as the site for the quiet entrance of disorder into our society in Plato’s and in our own time, so it is the revolutionary force which we must look to in the re-formation of our morality, a morality exceptionally vital to the problems of the 21st century.

Natalie Punchak is a junior in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences studying government, English, and Spanish.
In the mind of today’s students, there is always one more test to ace, a higher percentile to reach, another “meritocratic mountain” to climb. As Walter Kirn and David Brooks have pointed out, the current generation of American students is obsessed with scaling this mountain – both scholastically and professionally. This attitude of heaping accomplishment upon accomplishment isn’t so much a conscious effort, but a part of our times – a widely accepted recipe for success—which David Brooks labels ‘The Organization Kid.” But this attitude towards education – viewing it as a means to professional progress (and money) – seems to leave out a very basic human aspect of education. Contemporary students are driven to succeed in exams and evaluations, but there seems to be a disconnect between this version of education and the notion of the education of the human spirit: learning for the sake of learning.

Newman addresses the problem of conflicting educations by setting out his view of knowledge. For Newman, knowledge exists as one overarching, all-encompassing whole. Every subject, whether classical literature, chemistry, or theology, is categorized under one universal Knowledge; by limiting oneself to a single branch, one throws the entirety of knowledge out of balance. Only through the study and discovery of the “great outlines of knowledge,” on its “principles…scale…lights and its shades…its great points and its little” can one approach Newman’s idea of a liberal education – what Newman describes as an “acquired illumination” characterized by a habit of clear thought and the pursuit of truth.

Newman contrasts his view of the liberal education with the utilitarian view proposed by Bacon and Locke. Their conceptions of knowledge and education are grounded in a notion of progress. For Bacon and Locke, the ultimate end of education is utility – or its usefulness to society. These utilitarians saw the goal of education as something that can be quantified and measured; for all the money, effort, and time one invests in an education, there must be some greater material return at its completion. On this basis, Locke derides the study of poetry or Latin, as one could never use that in any future occupation. He argues that any sort of education—particularly one like Newman’s liberal education—that cannot “teach us definitely how to advance our manufactures… improve our lands, or to better our civil economy” is a waste of energy and time.
It is here that Newman and the utilitarians face a fundamental divide. Bacon and Locke propose that education’s end lies in its utility – its usefulness to an individual and a society. This utility manifests itself in producing able and pragmatic professionals who can succeed in the “relief of the human estate” of work, pain, and death. Newman recognizes, however, something intrinsically valuable in knowledge. He sees knowledge as able to “stand on its own pretensions,” free from any further ends besides “the exercises of mind, of reason, of reflection.”

For Newman, knowledge when pursued for its own sake becomes liberal knowledge – something a world apart from the soulless, mechanical, and unthinking utilitarian definition of knowledge. Newman considers liberal knowledge to be intrinsically good – an end unto itself. Not only does knowledge have no further aim, but once pursued for the fulfillment of a physical, utilitarian end, it also ceases to be liberal knowledge, and is relegated to the utilitarian’s notion of “useful.”

Upon clearly breaking off from Bacon and Locke, Newman turns to the creation of liberal minds. Again, he distinguishes himself from the utilitarians by describing their vision of teaching as mere instruction, and the liberal version as true, fulfilling education. Bacon and Locke would have their students constantly study material in order to sear it into their minds. The students are to then use these ideas in a professional practice to make life as easy and pleasurable for society as possible. Newman roots liberal education not in pleasure, but in beauty. Because ultimate truth and good lie in knowledge, human beauty thus consists in attaining knowledge. Liberal education is the bettering of the human reason and spirit. It is the “perfection of the intellect” and the advancement of the human moral character, ultimately creating, as Newman puts it, a “gentleman [with]...a cultivated intellect, a delicate taste, a candid, equitable, dispassionate mind, a noble and courteous bearing in the conduct of life.”

Just as one gardens to capture the beauty of nature, so too one cultivates the mind to achieve human beauty. Only a liberal education can truly reflect human beauty and bring about human flourishing.

Yet, no matter how many books have been read and philosophies discussed among the bright-eyed youth of a university, the students eventually have to march out into the world where the Baconian “human estate” is very real. True, in our time and even in Newman’s, death no longer looms around every corner. But the mind is still connected to the body and needs food, water, and shelter. Newman doesn’t deny the importance of such physical necessities. In fact he praises them, as he writes, “life could not go on without them; we owe our daily welfare to them; their exercise is the duty of the many, and we owe to the many a debt of gratitude for fulfilling that duty.”

Newman simply states that research towards the building of a bridge, the flying of a plane, or the curing of cancer is not liberal knowledge and should not be pursued at the university. They are important, as “life could not go on without them,” but they are not fundamentally valuable truths to humanity – they fall under the category of ‘useful,’ rather than ‘liberal.’

Despite Newman’s beautifully worded arguments, it is difficult to argue against the practical reality of Baconian logic. In the 250 years between Bacon and Newman, massive changes in agriculture and industry had substantially prolonged the average human life. In the 150 years separating Newman from us, progress in technology has rocketed to unthinkable heights – literally out of this world. In many ways, Newman is wrong when he states that “useful knowledge has done its work.” There will always be room for improvement, whether because the preservation of human life demands it, such as the curing of AIDS, or because competition between businesses produces it more spontaneously. It is almost impos-
sible to imagine a day in which human society reaches an absolute apogee – when there is no room for improvement. Yet Newman manages to reconcile this seemingly infinite quest for betterment with liberal knowledge: he movingly shows that the liberally educated individual does more not only for the individual, but also for society as a whole.

Bacon and Locke call for the advancement of society through a very particular and specialized education. They hold that it is only through a precise division of labor that the greatest progress be made. This maxim seems to be backed by history, since civilization only managed to make significant advances against Bacon’s “human estate” once it labor became highly specialized. But for Newman, purposefully breaking people down into parts of a mechanized whole reduces humanity to nothing. In Newman’s view, ultimate truth lies in the liberal mind. There can be no higher good than the pursuit of a higher intellect because this very pursuit is in accordance with humanity’s ultimate good. While the utilitarians may chase some ephemeral, ever-changing notion of progress, Newman measures his account against everlasting truth. It doesn’t ultimately matter if progress is made through education because progress is the search for some external, physical, and ultimately provisional goal. Education is measured by that which is permanent. For those who choose to tie themselves to the utilitarian standard, the individual “becomes himself more and more degraded as a rational being…he resembles a subordinate part of some powerful machinery, useful in its place, but insignificant and worthless out of it.”

Newman contrasts his liberal student with this almost Marxist view of an alienated student, solely studying one aspect of one particular occupation.

With a liberal education, students not only avoid the robotic trappings of the utilitarian standard, but are also able to fully realize their human potential. By internalizing the liberal arts, especially theology and philosophy, students grasp “that common link” which binds together all parts of knowledge. If a student only focuses on one small portion of knowledge, he possesses an incomplete and fractured understanding. Specialization in a particular field leaves one deficiently informed of the enormity of Truth, and it is only through such an understanding of Truth as a whole that develops an enlightened individual. Newman argues that liberal knowledge “expands and enlarges the mind, excites its faculties, and calls those limbs and muscles into freer exercise.”

In freeing and bettering the human intellect and character, a liberal education, although good in itself, can prepare a student for any occupation in any field. The liberally-educated person has a firm grasp on the intricacies of knowledge and truth – of what it means to be human. They hold the ability to “take up any one of the sciences or callings…with an ease, a grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger.” Perhaps a liberal education is useful after all.

Newman thus answers the utilitarians. He shows how the study of the liberal arts brings students closer to truth, distinguishing it from the baseness of utility, yet also managing to beat them at their own game. A liberally-educated person may not have the technical capability of a systematically trained engineer, but he holds the ability to work at his task with an elevated mind. He molds himself to his work. He flourishes within his position while the utilitarian engineer approaches his post with rote and mechanization. The liberally-educated student has the power of judgment because he has an illuminated mind, broadened by the demands of philosophy, classical literature, theology, and reason. He is not bound by drudgery, but is tied to his humanity and to truth. He is a gentleman. He is a man of all arts and all trades. He has mastered what it means to be human, and thus he finds success in all human acts.
If Newman were to observe the state of the contemporary university student, he would surely turn in his grave. David Brooks and Walter Kirn’s indictment of the modern university and its students paints a picture of a university missing all the elements of the liberal education that Newman holds so dear. Newman would bemoan the plight of the modern student, who discards truth and knowledge in the name of scholastic and professional betterment. Yet Newman whole-heartedly believes in the saving grace of knowledge. There is joy in the university. There is joy in discussion. There is joy in learning.

For every Organization Kid out there, there remains hope. The idea of a university may be on its deathbed today, but the liberal arts live on. After all, Walter Kirn found salvation in *Huck Finn* after losing himself to the disillusioning scholastic system. Why can’t we, as well?

*Timothy Tsai is a freshman in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences.*
Georgetown University is in the midst of an heraldic crisis of sorts. Virtually every institution uses a visual device to represent itself, and that device – whether it is a coat of arms, a seal, or a corporate-style logo – becomes synonymous with the institution. These devices, therefore, are far from trivial; they are an integral part of an institution’s identity. So, what is the current problem at Georgetown University?

When Georgetown University needs to use a full-color visual device, it doesn’t use its seal or even its full-color coat of arms; it uses a photograph of a stained glass window of a (supposedly) discontinued version of its seal.

That is, instead of using a seal, Georgetown uses a picture of a depiction of a seal (in stained glass): that’s right, a picture of a picture – and, what’s more, the seal in question is a version which the University supposedly decided to stop using. This stained glass window can be seen in Figure 1. It will be recognizable to many readers, even if they are not familiar with the actual location of the window (the formal staircase in Healy Hall). This is because a photograph of this window is used in an increasing number of official capacities by the University: a blown-up version has replaced the so-called ‘official’ seal as the speaker backdrop in Gaston Hall (Fig. 2); it appears on the University’s podia (Fig. 3); the

Fig. 1  A photograph of a stained glass window of the (supposedly) discontinued circular seal; now, a photograph of this window is often used when the University desires a color emblem.
"old" seal, itself, has been replaced by this photo at convocation (contrast Figs. 4 and 5); the picture of the window is used as the University’s "logo" online on the websites of many university departments/programs (Fig. 6).

**What’s wrong with this?**

It is fine for the University to use a picture of the stained glass window as a motif or attractive image in its media, just as pictures of campus appear in such media (a photograph of the window, let us remember, actually is a picture of a part of campus). In fact if the stained glass window may be used attractively as a visual device in certain forms of media, then let it be. A good example of this is the beginning of each Georgetown University iTunes U video, which

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**Fig. 2** A blown-up photograph of a stained glass window as a backdrop in Gaston Hall.

**Fig. 3** A picture of a stained glass window of a seal on a podium.

**Fig. 6** Screenshot of http://cndls.georgetown.edu/gussda/aboutgussda.htm.

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Figs. 4 and 5 Convocation last year (left) and this year (right).
shows the different panes of stained glass com-
ing together, un-shattering, to form the window
(Fig. 7). This creative use of the photo should be
applauded. But to use a picture of a window
depicting the seal in place of the seal at convoca-
tion, on podia, on department websites, and
elsewhere is bewildering.

Should the President of the United States
begin using, instead of the Seal of the President,
a photograph of a wooden plaque of the Seal of
the President? Perhaps in the place of its coat of
arms and seal, the C.I.A. could use a photograph
of a cloth patch of its seal. Many state govern-
ments have stained glass windows of their seals
in their respective state houses. Ought those
governments replace their insignia with photo-
graphs of those windows? These rhetorical
questions could go on ad infinitum, but the point
is clear enough: photographs of depictions of an
emblem cannot replace the insignia themselves.
To try to use a photograph in this way reflects a
lack of understanding of Georgetown’s own seal
and of visual devices in general.

It looks like Georgetown has lost all rationale
for of its seal and other visual devices, with the
University clutching tightly a hunk of glass and
lead – the last or only depiction of the seal in
color it knows. That lack of aesthetic under-
standing is surely perceptible, subliminally or
explicitly, to all who come in contact with this
window-cum-logo. The window is convenient
and colorful; meanwhile little or no effort seems
to have been taken by those in charge of such
matters to give a rationale for Georgetown’s
visual devices.

**Why does the University do this?**

It’s clear that the reason the University so
often uses a picture of a window of a seal as its
emblem is its desire for a bold, clear, attractive,
full-color visual device. The “official” version
of the seal, for the past three decades, is based
on a drawing made in the final years of the
eighteenth century (Fig. 8). It is oddly shaped,
amost always monochrome (the only exception
being the university flag), and made up of
minute, intricate details. It is beautiful in the
proper context when it can be properly ren-
dered. When it cannot, it looks a right mess

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**Fig. 7** The introduction of a Georgetown University iTunes U video.

**Fig. 8** The “official” version of the seal for the past three decades.
(Fig. 9 shows how it looks when scaled down for emails). In any context, it is still monochrome and oddly shaped. So, the University is correct, I believe, to conclude that this seal, which they decided to make the sole “official” seal, is nice in some places, but doesn’t work in others. But a picture of a stained glass window is not the right solution. Neither are the other avenues the University has explored.

Besides the photograph of the window, what other visual devices has the University employed on account of the monochrome, intricate, and oddly-shaped qualities of its “official” version of the seal?

Other than the window picture, the University has also sought a solution to the limitations of its “official” version of the seal by using the following: 1. the (supposedly) discontinued version of the seal; 2. a collage of photographs of the seal in various media; 3. a “simplified” (and computerized) variation on the “official” version of the seal; 4. the athletic logos of the University in academic contexts. Only the first of these has merit; the rest are as ill-suited to the task as the photograph of the window.

In some places, the University has sought to circumvent the limitations of the monochrome, intricate, oval version of the seal by simply using the (supposedly) discontinued version of the seal (Fig. 11), notwithstanding Board of Directors vote in 1980. To this day, the registrar’s office stamps official transcripts with this circular version of the seal. University medals bear this version of the seal, and it’s just as well that they do;
the circular shape and relative clarity of this version is much more suited to the medium. By that same token, the blazer buttons sold by the university bookstore use the “official” version of the seal and, as a result, look unspeakably bad: the intricate, oval seal is quite obviously ill-suited to a small, circular piece of metal. Until this year, the very large seal at convocation was this version, which was supposed to have been formally discontinued for three decades (see Fig. 4); again, this choice was, obviously, based on the relative strengths and weaknesses of each of the two versions of the seal. Whoever has ensured that this old version has stuck around in some places, where it is more appropriate than the “official” version, is to be applauded.

The University should formally recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each version and sanction both for official usage. The current “official” version could continue to be used for official correspondence, University literature, etc., but some formal recognition should be given to the discontinued version, since it is used to this day in such official contexts as the registrar’s stamp and University medals. If this recognition were granted, the medals could keep their attractive appearance, the blazer buttons could start looking better and the giant seal attached to Healy at graduation could have some official endorsement.

A far less laudable “solution” is the collage of pictures of various manifestations of the seal (Fig. 10). The quadrants which make up the seal in this image come from a door of Healy Hall, the infamous window, the Healy mosaic, and the University flag. The problems with this are similar to the problems with using a picture of the stained glass window. This is a beautiful work of art, but if the idea is to get a color version of the emblem (and that is the idea), there are better ways. It is alarming that this image has worked its way into quasi-officialdom, often seen in correspondence from the University President’s Office. In e-mails from the President’s Office, the image is even named “GU President’s Seal!” This is nice for a poster or for greeting cards, but not so nice for a “President’s Seal.”

The third visual device, other than the window, which the University has employed to solve its seal conundrum, is a simplified variation on the “official” version of the seal (Fig. 12). This solves few of the problems with the “official” version of the seal; it is still monochrome; it is still oddly shaped; it is still quite intricate.

And, lo, there is now the additional problem that it looks as if it were made using Microsoft Paint.
Aside from the window picture the unofficial, discontinued version of the seal the collage picture; and the computerized “official” version, the University also uses athletic logos in official University-wide and even academic contexts. While the Nike-designed “G” logo might have some merit on uniforms, playing fields, and other athletic contexts, (why a simple athletic block G will not suffice is beyond me, but, alas, this is a question for another article), it certainly has no place in University-wide or academic settings; not if Georgetown wants to be taken as seriously for its research, teaching and tradition as it is for its basketball. Yet, it appears as the URL icon for Georgetown’s academic websites, (Fig. 13) and both it and the bulldog athletic logo (!) appear on academic websites (Fig. 14).

Surveying all of these efforts and acknowledging the limitations of the current “official” version of the seal, isn’t there a better option when the University wants a bold, clear, full-color emblem? I believe there is.

The University should consider using its age-old coat of arms when it needs a bold, clear, full-color visual device.

Georgetown has a coat of arms, which it has not used much recently, but which is both perfectly suited to the challenges the University seeks to overcome in its visual devices. Specifically, the coat of arms is bright, bold, colorful, clear and meaningful (Fig. 15). In content, the coat of arms quite clearly replicates the seal, but the coat of arms appears on a shield, horizontally divided blue and gray, often in

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Fig. 13  The Nike G as Georgetown’s URL icon.

Fig. 14  Nike G and Jack the Bulldog logo on a professor’s website.

Fig. 15  The coat of arms of Georgetown University.

Fig. 16  Georgetown’s coat of arms in Gaston Hall.
full color. The coat of arms does not need to appear exactly as it appears in Fig. 15. That is the beauty of a coat of arms: there is artistic license for how the eagle looks, the shape of the shield, etc., as appropriate for the medium. That said, if the University did begin using the coat of arms in any sort of official capacity (and it certainly should), I am sure it would adopt an official version.

Somewhere along the way, the University has forgotten about its arms, but now is the time to bring the shield back into more regular usage. The frequent use of this coat of arms in the past is obvious if we look around campus. Most notably, it takes pride of place in Gaston Hall, centered above the stage, among the coats of arms of other Jesuit institutions (Fig. 16). It also appears in Riggs Library (Fig. 17); in the foyer of White-Gravenor (Fig. 18); on the exterior of McDonough Gym (somewhat mis-colored; Fig. 19); and on the interior of the gym, itself (Fig. 20). Old photographs confirm that the University’s coat of arms once adorned the Constitution Room in Healy Hall (Healy 106; Fig. 21). Sadly – and ridiculously – it has been replaced with a painting of the stained glass...
window: panes, lead and all (Fig. 22)! We might also note that the coat of arms was deployed in a variety of University media in the past – quite attractively at that: on annual invitations to Founders Day (Figs. 23 and 24); on theatre programs (Fig. 25); and in a Newcomen Society publication on the university (Fig. 26); this last version, it seems, was used in a variety of other media as well). The coat of arms represents Georgetown at other institutions as well. For example, the library at the University of Michigan’s Law School features the coats of arms or seals of universities across the globe. Fittingly, this beautiful example is in stained glass (Fig. 27).

I hope I have shown that Georgetown’s coat of arms, used regularly in the past, can fill a niche in the University’s search for bold, colorful, clear, traditional, and meaningful visual device now and in the future. The practical need for such a device is caused by the monochrome, intricately detailed, and oddly-shaped nature of the current “official” version of the seal, and the desire for one is apparent in the extensive employment of a picture of a stained glass window of a (supposedly) discontinued version of the seal and other contrived solutions. But these “solutions” are unattractive at best, often inappropriate, and potentially harmful to both the University’s reputation and spirit.

The University should begin using the University coat of arms to solve its obvious and understandable problems in the realm of visual devices, possibly selecting or creating a standard or “official” version of the arms.

Coda

I will conclude with a quotation which is not inappropriate for the this journal in which this article appears and which emphasizes the special significance Georgetown’s shield has held in the past and might just hold in the future.

Macaulay’s traveler from New Zealand… may come to sketch the ruins of Washington from a broken arch of the old Aqueduct bridge. And on that hill there may be crumbling ruin and broken arch and tottering tower, and roofless walls, heavy with weeds and neglected ivy, may be all that will remain of Georgetown’s material greatness; but...if that traveler, searching amid those ruins, should come across an old shield of Georgetown, after deciphering it, he will, doubtless, wonder that, in ages so remote, a truth was so well known and so fearlessly proclaimed, which all the intervening centuries have confirmed—Utraque Unum. 

Fig. 22  Today, a painting of a window has replaced the coat of arms in Healy’s Constitution Room.

Figs. 23 and 24  Two examples of the coat of arms on Founders’ Day Invitations from 1931 and 1934, respectively.
Let us hope that the University begins using the coat of arms again, both for practical reasons and so that there will be a shield for this traveler to find!

Jack Carlson is an Allbritton Scholar at Oxford University and the author of A Humorous Guide to Heraldry (Black Knight/The Heraldry Society, 2005). He graduated from the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service magna cum laude in 2005. He thanks Lynn Conway and Ann Galloway (University Archives & Special Collections), Eric Wind, Victoria Stulgis and Scott Gray.

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Endnotes

About the Tocqueville Forum


The Forum

4  James V. Schall, S.J., At the Limits of Political Philosophy (Washington, DC: Catholic UP), 129.
6  Ibid., xii.
7  Schall, 136.
8  Apology, 41d.
9  Ibid., 34e.
12  Ibid., 39b.
16  Ibid., 109.
17  Ibid., 113.

The Chamber

20  By “physically harm” I mean an initiation of involuntary physical violence against another person or his property.
22  One need not be a theist to affirm the claim that having correct religious views and avoiding incorrect ones is important in living a good life. Such a notion seems equally plausible given either theism or atheism.
23  I do not have in mind here religions that teach or endorse violent actions or actions that result in involuntary physical harm to others. As I make clear later, I believe that such harm is within the proper scope of state authority. Whether or not such religions should be tolerated is a separate question.
24  Again, by “physical harm” I mean the initiation of physical violence against another person or his property.
The Sanctuary


Deane, The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine, 134.


Ibid., 241.

Ibid., 223-224

Ibid., 144.


Ibid., 224.


Ibid., 8.


Ibid., 224.

Ibid., 69.

Ibid., 124-125.

Ibid., 239.

Ibid., 143.

Ibid., 7.

Deane, The Political and Social Ideas of St. Augustine, 240.


Invoking the Enlightenment is obviously a dangerous argument on many levels; while the Enlightenment appeared “progressive” in many areas, one of its ironies is the extremely conservative or even regressive ideas it propounded about social life (hence “Victorian values”).
61 The Court opens each morning with the declaration “God save the United States and this honorable court.”

The Parlor
71 Allan Bloom, “The Student and the University,” 381.
75 Ibid., 309.
78 George Klosko, The Development of Plato’s Political Theory, 126.
80 Ibid., 352.
82 Allan Bloom, “The Student and the University,” 382.
83 Ibid., 380.
85 Ibid., 110.
86 Ibid., 81.
The Cellar


98 Ibid.


105 Ibid.


107 Ibid.


114 Ibid., 326.


117 Ibid., 1888.


120 Ibid.


Fall 2009 Tocqueville Forum Events

Welcome Week Discussion
“What is College For?”
Wednesday, September 9, 2009, 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Patrick J. Deneen, Associate Professor of Government and Founding Director of the Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy and Matthew Crawford, author of current bestseller Shop Class as Soul Craft.
Mortara Center Conference Room

Forum Lecture
“Is the Constitution Relevant Today?”
A Constitution Day Lecture
Thursday, September 17, 2009, 5:00-6:30 p.m.
Former Attorney General Edwin Meese III, Ronald Reagan Chair in Public Policy at The Heritage Foundation, and Chairman of The Heritage Foundation’s Center for Legal and Judicial Studies. Also, a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, California.
Intercultural Center Auditorium

Forum Lecture
“Freedom, the Human Vocation, and the Catholic University”
Thursday, September 24, 2009, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Dr. Mark Shiffman, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities, Villanova University.
Philodemic Room, Healy Hall

Forum Lecture
“America and the World”
Monday, November 9, 2009, 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Dr. Jean Bethke Elshtain, Leavey Chair in the Foundations of American Freedom, Georgetown University
This lecture was co-sponsored by the Mortara Center for International Studies and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs.
Intercultural Center Auditorium

Roundtable
“The Moral Dimensions of the Economic Crisis”
Thursday, November 12, 2009, 6:00-8:00 p.m.
Dr. Amitai Etzioni, University Professor and Professor of International Affairs, George Washington University, and Director of the Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies;
Dr. Eugene McCarraher, Professor, Department of Humanities, Villanova University; and Patrick J. Deneen, Associate Professor of Government and Founding Director of the Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy.
Lohrfink Auditorium, Rafik B. Hariri Building (McDonough School of Business)

Forum Lecture
“Ecological Decline and Wendell Berry’s Vision of Hope”
Wednesday, November 18, 2009, 6:30-8:00p.m.
Dr. Jason Peters, Professor of English at Augustana College
Intercultural Center, Room 120

For more information on upcoming Tocqueville Forum events, please visit: http://government.georgetown.edu/tocquevilleforum