Seeing Differently, Seeing Further
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An Interview with Father Stephen M. Fields, S.J.
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When Love Blooms
Alexander John Kritikos
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.
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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

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Georgetown University
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Letter from the Editor-in-Chief

Dear Reader,

Thank you for reading the third issue of *Utraque Unum*, a journal of Georgetown University’s Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy. I appreciate your willingness to support us through reading our work.

The goal of *Utraque Unum* remains to promote intellectual discussion in regard to matters of culture, the founding of the United States of America, Western civilization, and Georgetown University. The journal continues to be directed and run by Georgetown undergraduates. It is a forum for all Hoyas, past and present, to discuss these topics. In addition, we welcome the contributions of friends of Georgetown.

I recently came across a speech by Father John A. Conway, S.J. in the classic book, *Miniatures of Georgetown*. Father Conway was deeply beloved by students and alumni. He served Georgetown as a Dean, a professor of philosophy, and a professor of canon law in the Law School. These words resonated deeply with me in my reflection of these past few years here on the Hilltop:

“In the newly-decorated Gaston Hall, there are in gorgeous order depicted the escutcheons of most of the Jesuit colleges in the United States, indeed of all those colleges in America. It is a work of art and of wisdom, that excites universal admiration; and it is a confirmation of my proposition that in all of them religion holds the first place in education—yes, in all of them—throughout the length and breadth of Canada and the United States, in Mexico and in Cuba, in Central and South America, from Panama to Patagonia. Amid all those truly artistic designs, pregnant with symbolism and redolent of genius, there is none more expressive, none more suggestive of high purpose than the coat-of-arms of Georgetown, so familiar to us all. Indeed, I have often thought that it must have been the inspiration of some good Father of the olden time, who in his meditations, perchance, had caught some glimpse, prophetlike, of Georgetown’s future, and its lofty destiny. The eagle soars above the earth ‘close to the sun in lonely lands,’ grasping in the right talon the cross and in the left the globe, while the scroll reads *Utraque Unum*. So Georgetown soars aloft above the things of earth, eagle-like, facing the Sun of Truth with fearless eye, fearless in the strength of the cross; and not unmindful of what sea and earth and sky have to reveal, of all that human wisdom has gathered together in its centuries of experience, she bears the globe, the symbol of earthly science, whilst she fearlessly proclaims that both are one—that there is no conflict between religion and science, for both issue from the same source, which is infinite truth, and both flow into the same ocean, which is Eternity. By this principle are solved most of the problems of life; from the divorce of religion and science results much of the confusion of life. At times, it may be difficult to see this union; the atmos-
phere may be thick and the clouds may be dense, and the din of the market-place may drown the voice of truth, for a time; but when the air lightens, when the clouds roll away, when studious silence reigns once again over all, clear and distinct, upon the brown of time, as on the escutcheon of Georgetown, is the legend—Utraque Unum. It is the first principle and the legitimate conclusion of all true progress.

“[A]ll human institutions pass away; like individuals, they are born to die—and for the most part the principles they teach and the theories they hold will vanish into oblivion. Georgetown, too, may pass away, for it likewise is human; and Macaulay’s traveler from New Zealand, or from some distant island of the Philippine archipelago, 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…even then, in those far distant ages, the truths and the principles taught in Georgetown today are the only ones that will lead that newer civilization to better things, for they are eternal. And 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.”

As is always the case when one is enjoying college, the years have gone by too fast. The memories I have made here at Georgetown University are indelible. Let us work together to make sure that Georgetown promotes and proclaims the eternal truths and principles that are the foundation of our institution. If we understand that Georgetown’s escutcheon is not simply a logo, but it is the very essence of our existence, then there will not be any ruins to see on the Hilltop for a distant traveler in a distant age.

Sincerely,

Eric Wind

Editor-in-Chief
Georgetown University has a distinct tradition of excellence in the field of political philosophy. Not only can one point to current political theorists such as Georgetown’s beloved Fr. James V. Schall, S.J. and Professor George Carey, but one can also name great teachers of the past such as Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, Walter Berns, and current guests like Jean Bethke Elshtain. One of the central missions of the Tocqueville Forum is to promote activities that deepen student understanding of, and encounters with, major issues and themes in political theory. As in many activities we undertake, we aim to do so by adding what may be lacking in the many activities of the university – notably, in this case, as a counterweight to the prominence of politics on the campus.

An oft-repeated saying of Fr. Schall is “don’t major in current events.” Living, working and studying in Washington D.C. makes this advice a challenge to heed: while the buildings of the Hilltop have the appearance of being ivory towers, the obsession with politics among our faculty, students, and many guest instructors who come from careers in public service, is palpable. Georgetown is well-known as a stage where government officials of any nation are welcome to launch an initiative or promote a cause. If we consider the combined number of students in SFS and Government majors in the College, the amount constitutes a sizeable percentage among all fields of study on campus. We are surrounded and inundated with political concerns, with activities exploring the policy debates of our time, and with efforts to exert influence upon their direction. We are embedded, inescapably, in politics.

However, this enthusiasm for current affairs can be as narrowing as it can be invigorating. We find ourselves in a large grove of trees without awareness of the dimensions of the forest. We tend to lose sight of how we arrived at these particular set of political issues; the alternatives that appear no longer to be on the table; and deeper and perhaps permanent issues that may underlie any discrete current debate. We become so deeply invested in these discrete battles that we are unable to comprehend anything beyond them or deeper issues beneath them. In a nation apparently so thoroughly divided between Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, Blue and Red States, it seems impossible to entertain the idea that there may be something outside or beyond our current dichotomies. If liberal education aims in some ways to provide the opportunity for liberty, then an education devoted to current affairs may in fact prove to be deeply illiberal to the extent that we are trapped in ways of understanding the world in narrow and presentist terms.
Political philosophy, by contrast, provides a form of liberation that can be foreclosed to those who major in “current events.” Political philosophy began in the discussions initiated by Socrates who asked his fellow citizens whether conventional understandings of basic ideas were true understandings. Socrates had the uncanny ability to make the familiar seem strange: by raising questions about prevailing beliefs, he contributed to the possibility of thinking differently and thinking farther. In Plato’s great political masterpiece, *The Republic*, Socrates guides a number of young men through a discussion of the nature of justice, making it possible for them to imagine a regime constituted entirely differently than their own democracy. By encouraging them to think differently and farther, he bestows on them the ability to understand more profoundly and more consciously their own commitments. He encourages them to become more fully human in part by allowing them to see that their inherited assumptions do not constitute the full horizon of human experience.

Every age – even our own, defined by freedom and equality – has its sacred cows. We inhabit our world much like fish in a fishbowl, often wholly unaware that we swim in water that is undetectable to us. If Socrates were to roam around the Hilltop today, he would doubtlessly ask some discomfiting questions about our own assumptions, ones we hold as unquestioningly as those held previously by our predecessors in ancient Athens. He might ask, for instance, “what do we mean on this campus when you speak of ‘social justice’”? Socrates and his interlocutors require some three-hundred pages of dialogue to arrive at the conclusion that justice is an exceedingly difficult virtue to define. Yet, it seems that for many of us, we know without further discussion what is meant by “social justice.” An encounter with Socrates might lead us to wonder not only what “social justice” is, but to reflect on what work the word “social” does in that formulation.

Does “social” imply that justice consists of some kind of equality? What of the classical view that justice results from the capacity to distinguish or judge – to reward according to merit or desert? Might “social justice” be unjust? These questions – and countless others, in all spheres of life – make the study of political philosophy the core of a liberal education, and thus a necessary counterpart to the predominant concerns about politics on campus.

Socrates might find Georgetown, and America, a difficult place to discomfit. America is the nation above all that was founded upon a political philosophy – the philosophy of Locke, of Jefferson, of the American Founders. More easily than most, we can come to understand the philosophy that has defined much of what we are and what we believe. Yet – ironically – part of that philosophy makes such understanding difficult, to the extent that our Lockean philosophy begins with an understanding of humanity in which individuals are largely responsible for shaping and fashioning our own selves. We – the most philosophically constituted citizens in the world – are particularly resistant to an understanding of our own philosophical constitution because a part of our philosophy paradoxically resists the notion that we are constituted through philosophy. To better understand our own belief in self-fashioning, we need an encounter with political philosophy. To put it more bluntly: those who would aspire to be liberally educated should seek out an education in the constitution of America and its roots in the West. With such an ambition in mind, we inaugurated “The Tocqueville Forum on the Roots of American Democracy” – an effort to provide a counterweight to our temptation toward self-deception, and the self-certainty that can result when we throw ourselves into the political life of the nation without a firm understanding of its sources, origins, or deeper meaning.

Some might fear that an education in political philosophy will undermine the ability to
become influential or knowledgeable about political affairs. Quite the opposite: it could be well-argued that those who seek to truly understand politics can only do so by understanding the deeper philosophy that underlies the daily activity in the political realm. Those who can only see the trees will toil in the shadows; those who can better comprehend the forest will have a more panoramic vision. It was Georgetown’s own Jeane Kirkpatrick who best demonstrates and exemplifies this ability — a professor of political philosophy, she had the breadth and insight of understanding of the great competing regimes of the twentieth century to provide analyses of international affairs that caught the attention of then-Governor and presidential candidate Ronald Reagan. While perhaps her studies could classify her as a denizen of the “ivory tower,” her eventual position as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations suggests that she was anything but lost in the clouds. This is true for a number of noteworthy political philosophers who have demonstrated remarkable political and public accomplishments over the years, including William Galston (Domestic Policy Advisor to President Clinton), William Kristol (columnist for the New York Times), Andrew Sullivan (blogger extraordinaire) and Allan Bloom (author of The Closing of the American Mind), among many who have pursued studies in political philosophy. Political philosophy can free us in many ways, not least of which is the ability to think originally and insightfully from the perspective of one who has seen differently and seen further. For those who would embrace a liberal education — an education that frees — we encourage you to seek out the opportunities afforded by “The Tocqueville Forum.” You can do so by attending our many public and informal events, joining our reading groups, registering for our sponsored courses and, of course, reading, and perhaps contributing to, this journal. We invite you to join us on a journey toward a liberal education.

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

On Being Invited into the Kitchen of Heraclitus

James V. Schall, S. J.

“The classroom splits into three groups: those who are perfectly submissive because their only interest is to get a credit (grade), those who are said to have powerfully critical minds (they already know all the answers), and those described as intelligently teachable.”

— Yves Simon, A General Theory of Authority.1

“Seward: ‘One should think that sickness and the view of death would make more men religious.’ Johnson: ‘Sir, they do not know how to go about it; they have not the first notion. A man who has never had religion before, no more grows religious when he is sick, than a man who has never learnt figures can count when he has need of calculation.’”

— Boswell’s Life of Johnson, Monday, April 29, 1783.2

“Every realm of nature is marvelous; and Heraclitus, when the strangers who came to visit him found him warming himself at the furnace in the kitchen and hesitated to go in, is reported to have bidden them not to be afraid to enter, as even in that kitchen divinities were present, so we should venture on the study of every kind of animal without distaste; for each animal will reveal to us something natural and something beautiful.”

— Aristotle, Parts of Animals, 645a17-23.

In Cicero, we find the following phrase: Docilis ad hanc disciplinam. That is, someone is “teachable” in this particular discipline or field. This “teachableness” means 1) that we have done the preparation so that we can be further taught what we do not yet know and 2) that, in addition, we actually seek to know the truth of the matter at hand. We know that we do not know everything. This unknowing is the very condition of our being what we are. It makes us both uncomfortable and excited. It also alerts us to what is there about us to be known. This “wanting” to know is the most important element in the whole intellectual process. It is, as it were, the sign our not being, as they humorously say, “brain dead,” which can happen while the rest of our organs are functioning normally.

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Without this desiring to know, nothing much happens in us. This willingness to know is the one thing that we cannot “give” to someone else, though we might be able to inspire him or even prod him to know by himself. But it also presupposes that we already find ourselves to be beings that are capable of knowing. This capacity is what makes us different. We know that we did not give ourselves this knowing capacity. We have to wonder why we have it. And once we realize that we in fact have it, we want to do something about it, namely know more fully what it is and what it reveals to us, namely something not ourselves.

Thus, the very first line of Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics reads: “All instruction given or received by way of argument proceeds from pre-existent knowledge” (71a1). No teacher ever encounters a class in which no one knows anything. He has to find a place in what is commonly known, from which he can begin. From what is commonly known, the dialectic can take us to what is not yet known, as Plato taught us.

We often talk about knowing in general. This knowing gets us into the knowledge of forms, of universals. It is one of the lessons about which Plato still teaches us. This knowledge of forms allows us to speak of the many particulars of a species, of how its individual instances are both the same and different from each other. What is curious about existing things of a single genus or species is that the individuals, while having in common their sameness, also differ in some accidental or particular ways. Each exists, but exists differently.

Forms of what-it-is-to-be man do not walk down the street. Really existing beings do, John, Mary, and George. No two are exactly alike in their sameness. In the case of human beings, their very divergence among themselves within the same species is what gives rise to speech, politics, and a common good that would see the diversity as itself worthy and in need of reconciling itself with the others in the same species.

Indeed, we actually begin with others and see ourselves first in relation to and reflectively in counter-distinction from them.

I have always loved the Latin word, *docilitas*, the capacity of being taught. It is related to the idea of a gift, of being that sort of being to whom something lovely happens unexpectedly, to whom something is just given. Teachableness implies something beyond IQ’s or whatever it is that is said to measure one’s native intellectual potential. It implies not merely that we have the capacity to know from our nature, but that we also, from within our individual being, desire to know and do something about acquiring knowledge of what we know we do not yet know. Everyone knows of someone with a supposedly high IQ who never did anything with it. He “never achieved his potential,” as they say. We may even suspect it of ourselves.

Too, I am leery of “techniques” for learning, as if you can bypass the learning process itself somehow. The reason why we are not interested in something is not because something is wrong with that which is to be known. The something that is wrong is usually in us, the knowers. Chesterton once said, in a memorable sentence, that I have often cited: “There is no such thing as an uninteresting subject; there are only uninterested people.” God did not create anything that did not have origins ultimately in His own being.

Passing from not knowing to knowing can be and certainly is “work,” but it is the sort of effort that ends, once completed, in delight. The end of such “work,” as Aristotle wrote, is leisure, the activity of what is at its best. Knowing is being more than we already are while remaining ourselves. It means that we are not deprived of what is not ourselves as we suspected we might be when we realized how little we did know. The mind is capable of knowing all things, while remaining our knowing in our
particular being. In fact, this “capax omnium is the very definition of mind. It is what opens the solitariness of our own selves to the abundance of the being that is.”

The word “docility” implies so much. It shifts the focus of our attention from the teacher who presumably does know something to the learner who does not. Its point of view is not the teacher but the one being taught. It implies the aliveness, the eagerness of the not knower. To be “learned,” on the other hand, does not mean simply having learned, but being engaged in the very act of knowing. Truth does not exist outside a mind that affirms what it knows to be true. The learned man begins to see the connection of things.

Further, both the teacher and the learner aim at the same thing. They do not aim at one or the other’s truth, but seek truth itself. Neither the teacher nor the learner “owns” the truth but both seek it and, once found, rejoice in it. Truth is free and, as Scripture says, makes us free. Freedom does not make truth to be truth, but allows each of us to find it as something we did not make to be what it is. The highest acts of friendship relate to the truth that belongs to neither friend except as what both know in their own souls to be true. The highest act of friendship, as Aristotle says, is precisely this mutual discovery of the highest things which neither made to be what they are.

Evidently, we run into those people who are not capable of being taught because of their attitude toward or purpose in learning itself. Yves Simon suggests two of these latter types. The first is a student who primarily is concerned with grades. A grade is an external measure of comparative accomplishment. It compares the performance of one student, current or past, to another. It compares all students to a standard of excellence. If, however, we suddenly renounce all forms of grading, we will at the same time undermine any real large-scale discipline in learning.

By making all academic performances equal or unimportant, we end up by having no meaning to academic performance. If everyone gets the same grade no matter what he does, everything is thrown back on the student now separated from any teaching that makes a difference in what is learned. At that point, the student lacks the outside criterion that most of us need and find helpful in knowing whether what we know is valid or not. It is one thing to disagree with a given educational standard, but another to eliminate all standards as if there were no difference between the excellent and the shoddy or dubious. This is but another way of saying truth is not falsity.

Nonetheless, we find enormous pressure on grades and comparative grading systems. Harvey Mansfield at Harvard remarked somewhere that he had a two-tiered grading system, one for the external world outside the confines of Cambridge, and one for actual quality of the student’s accomplishment. Everyone at Harvard thinks obviously he deserves an “A,” else why would he be there? He assumes, by virtue of his admission, that he is already superior to anyone else in some other institution. Therefore, every student deserves an “A.” However, since within any class, some students are in fact better than others, and the purpose of teaching is to select and point this difference out, there is an internal grading system that does not give everyone an “A.”

The student concerned with grades confuses the measure with the measured. Clearly, the student who cares nothing for grades is not an ideal either. But the gulf between what is learned and its measure never quite correlate. The important thing is “What did I learn?” not “What grade did I get for learning it.” The grade does remain a check on ourselves as we study, but graduation usually means the day when grades cease and living the truth because we see it begins. We become less dependent on teachers and more dependent on our own knowing of things,
including the highest things. This is what adulthood and maturity are about.

Likewise, another kind of distinction needs to be considered. The fact is that some students with less ability end up performing better than those with higher natural qualities. They may take more time, may be more disciplined, more careful. Eventually they prove to be better and more complete, wiser adults. The measure of our intellectual lives is not so much what we learn in college but what we think about along the way until we reach our declining years. The classical authors were not wrong to associate old age with wisdom, though they too understood the dictum: “There is no fool like an old fool.”

Some things like mathematics can probably be better learned in youth because, as Aristotle said, the discipline does not require experience. Experience is not capable of being learned in a book, though the reading of literature can help. This is why Aristotle tells us that particularly ethical and political books are really not ethics or politics themselves. They are at best guide books to aid us to see what goes on in ourselves and in the souls of others in our polities.

III.

In Aristotle’s little treatise known as the Parts of Animals, we come across a passage that is mindful of the famous admonition in Book X of the Ethics about how we should live. “The scanty conceptions to which we can attain of celestial things give us,” Aristotle said in the first treatise, “from their excellence, more pleasure than all our knowledge of the world in which we live; just as a half glimpse of persons that we love is more delightful than a leisurely view of other things.” Surely, this is an experience to which almost anyone can relate. It is but another example of Aristotle’s sense of the common man. The implication is that both partial glimpses, the one of the world and the one of someone we live, take us to something of much greater delight and wonder.

In the Ethics, Aristotle gave us an oft-pondered piece of advice along the same lines. “We must not follow those who advise us, being men, to think of human things, and, being mortal, of mortal things, but must, so far as we can, make ourselves immortal, and sustain every nerve to live in accordance with the best thing in us; for even if it be small in bulk, much more does it in power and worth surpass everything” (1177b1-78a2). We know that we are advised constantly to concern ourselves only with mortal and human things, not divine ones. The latter are, yes, “impractical.” It is, none the less, the insufficiency of the human to satisfy us that makes us suspect that we are already in a higher search of what is, even in our concern for what we do in the world.

In the Parts of Animals, we also read: that “All parts of nature are marvelous.” And we are introduced into Heraclitus’ famous kitchen.
Even though we too be strangers and hesitate to enter, we are invited in because “divinities” are present there. More than that, even the ugliest animals we are invited to study, because, like the universe itself, we will find in each particular animal we come across something both “natural and something beautiful.” Contrary to Parmenides’ principle that “only being is,” Heraclitus thought that all being “flowed” and “changed.” Still he invited us into his kitchen because ultimate things could be found even there. It is perhaps no wonder that, even with most of us, it is the kitchen of our homes and its memories that remind most of us of the divinities and the beauty of things.

Samuel Johnson is asked in 1783 whether sickness and the approach of death should remind the most hardened sinner of religion. He did not think so. We die as we live. We neither learn calculation nor religion unless we prepare for them. The time when we can be docile to something passes in non-learning and non-use. Johnson implies that there comes a time when, through our own choices, we are not capable of being taught. Even what seem to be the most pressing and riveting experiences can pass by before us unnoticed. The fact is, even in our kitchens, we encounter things every day that we do not notice.

It is a mark of Christian theology to maintain that no human existence passes before its own existence unnoticed. This noticing includes both the unborn and the born. This “being noticed” is the other side of Augustine’s famous reference to our “restless hearts” in the first lines of his Confessions. We are already caught up in reality by the very fact that we exist and did not cause ourselves to be. Our being is already caught up in the question of whether we are docile, capable of receiving from outside of ourselves what we are. The further question then arises: “On so knowing we receive our existence, do we become, once in being, what we are to be?” The first nature is what we are. The second nature is what we are in charge of and responsible for in ourselves, our deeds and makings.

Without this latter drama of what we do with ourselves in the universe and among those we love, there probably would be no need of a universe in the first place. But the universe itself has within it those beings, ourselves namely, who seek to know it and in so knowing it, they come to know themselves. They know that they are here as beings given to be what they are. This initial receptivity of our being marks us as connected with what is more than ourselves. How odd that we are the kind of beings we are.

Our docility is correlative to those we will allow to teach us about ourselves. Not only are we given ourselves, but we are in charge of whom we allow to teach us about ourselves. Yves Simon remarked, in a memorable phrase: “No spontaneous operation of intellectual relations protects the young philosopher against the risk of delivering his soul to error by choosing his teachers infelicitously.” That is delicately put.

In most universities of the world, we cannot take as evidence of what we are Scripture and doctrine, even when they seem uncannily to understand what we are, to our reason. This reference to reason, of course, is the only ground in which Scripture and doctrine should be offered in the university, as Benedict said in the Regensburg Lecture. When we freely cut off any source of knowledge, we are un-teachable by it.

Moreover, there is what, in the same lecture, Benedict XVI calls, rightly, logos. The reason that wants to make things and the reason that wants to know things, the practical intellect and the theoretical intellect, belong to the same mind in that being who exists in the world and knows he exists there. The truths of revelation, as Aquinas...
taught, do not contradict those of reason. This is the tie that binds them together.

IV

In conclusion, we have all heard the expression of “learning the hard way.” It is another way of saying that errors also teach us if we will but let them. The ball game has just been lost by another big score. With ball cap on, glove in hand, and head drooping, Charlie Brown walks dejectedly off the field while Lucy, also with glove and ball cap, grimly watches yet another disaster of which she was a notable contributor, Charlie says out-loud, “Another ball game lost, Good Grief!”

In the next frame with Lucy still following him, Charlie exclaims loudly and poignantly: “I get tired of losing…. Everything I do, I lose!” But as he turns to her, Lucy, perking up, logically says to a surprised Charlie: ‘Look at it this way, Charlie Brown. We learn more from losing than from winning.” To which unwelcome thesis Charlie responds with a shout that flips both Lucy and her logic upside-down: “THAT MAKES ME THE SMARTEST PERSON IN THE WORLD!!” Charlie may not be able to pitch a baseball game, but he certainly understands the logic of defeat.

Docilitas is the capacity of being taught, even the lessons of losing. Unlike the angels, perhaps other forms of Heraclitus’s “household divinities,” we are not given everything from the beginning to make one choice, up or down. Our teachableness is what binds us together. Chesterton said someplace that the difference between a teacher and a mother is that the teacher teaches one thing to a hundred children, while a mother teaches one hundred things to one child. It is the mother who must know everything, who must teach the young scholar, usually in her kitchen, lest he chooses his professor infelicitously.

It was this same Aristotle on much the same point who assured us that “This is why we need to have been brought up in fine habits if we are to be adequate students of what is fine and just, and of political questions generally. For the origin we begin from is the belief that something is true, and if it is apparent enough to us, we will not, at this stage, need reason for why it is true in addition; and if we have this good upbring-ing, we have the origins to begin from, or can easily acquire them” (1096b4-9). If we begin by doubting anything is true, we cannot begin at all. This was Aristotle’s point.

We won’t find religion on our death bed if we do not already have it. We will find on examination that all animals are natural and beautiful. It is well if we are eminently teachable. The smartest person in the world has learned something from his loses. “All instruction given or received proceeds by way of argument from pre-existent knowledge.” The young scholar should be careful lest he choose his mentors infelicitously. For the origin we begin from is the belief that something is true. We must so far as we can make ourselves immortal and strain every nerve to live according to the best thing in us. All parts of nature are marvelous. A half glance of the persons we love is more delightful than a leisurely view of other things. The “restless hearts” define our being from its very inception. We are in the world to direct our hearts to the rest in which they begin, a rest we cannot, ultimately, give ourselves. This is why we are first receivers.

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Few scholars dispute the role early Southern thinkers played in shaping the American political tradition and the American polity. Jefferson’s role in crafting the Declaration of Independence and Madison’s role in developing the compromises necessary for a Constitution, while later advocating it in The Federalist, are often lauded in popular history. After the early influence of these famous Virginians, the focus within American political theory shifts northward, to New England. This New England focus disregards a central element of the American polity, the “second generation,” so to speak, of Southern statesmen, originating within what is commonly called the “Deep South.” Two South Carolinians, Robert Hayne and John C. Calhoun, both participated in the central debates of the 1830s and express the central Southern political themes of the era. A close inspection of their oratory and writings reveals a political concept tied not to slavery, but to broader concerns about the future of federal intervention in a Constitutional Republic. In moving beyond the Southern fear of the “Northern conspiracy,” it is possible to analyze ideas concerning the American polity with lasting resonance in the current political climate.

First, it is necessary to acknowledge the role that the concept of the “Northern conspiracy” played in shaping the antebellum Southern argument. Both Calhoun and Hayne acknowledge the conspiracy, often in a way that results in historians interpreting anti-Northern conspiracy theory as the focal point of Southern statesmen. Although Hayne’s debate with Webster is rightfully remembered in American history as one of the greatest moments in the Senate’s history, Hayne couches within his valid concerns over a public land bill a tepid argument blaming the North for the introduction of slavery in the South. Although he acknowledges slavery as an evil institution, he blames the North for introducing slaves to America and describes the Southern plantation owners as acting out of “a practical question of obligation and duty.”1 Hayne continues, asserting that the

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1 Speech of Mr. Hayne, of South Carolina, January 19, 1830 (taken from The Webster-Hayne Debate on the Nature of the Constitution: Selected Documents, ed. Herman Belz [Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2000], accessed online), 7.
South “resolved to make the best of the situation in which Providence had placed us, and to fulfill the high trust which had developed upon us as the owners of slaves,” while accusatorily asserting that “the States North of the Potomac actually derive greater profits from the labor of our slaves, than we do ourselves.”

Hayne’s concern with a Northern conspiracy led him to play a leading role in the development of the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad Company, even dying while advocating for that railroad in North Carolina. He wrote in 1836 of the need for the South to form a union with the West, given their common agricultural interests, in order to permanently thwart the North’s political dominance. Hayne envisioned binding West and South “in mutual sympathies and common interests” in order to promote a “lasting union” between the two entities.

Hayne’s emphasis on the idea of a “lasting union” was meant clearly, in his mind and the minds of many Southerners, to counteract the attempts of the North to force its political agenda upon the other states. Even after Hayne’s death in 1840, Southerners clearly echoed Hayne’s fears of a Northern conspiracy. Senator George McDuffie, a fellow South Carolinian, described the North as “a mercenary league to plunder the exporting States of the Union, through perverted forms of federal legislation.”

Clearly, Hayne and his followers held a somewhat paranoid view of the union, one where the North clearly was the aggressor, and the South was the innocent protagonist.

Southern writers credit Calhoun with a similar anti-Northern paranoia. In a brief biography published in Baltimore in 1874 as a defense of Calhoun, “Justinian,” an anonymous friend and supporter, wrote that Calhoun “foretold the wretched point of oppression we have now reached, when the fanaticism of the abolitionists, and the usurpation by the consolidationists of all the rights of the States, engulfed in the vortex of the agency at Washington, would drive the South out of the Confederacy and destroy the Union.”

Here again, the North is portrayed as the aggressor against the innocent South, seeking merely to preserve the rights of the states that are enshrined within the Tenth Amendment. Many scholars accept this as the irrational core of the Southern argument. For this reason, Daniel Webster is now a revered historical figure, captured in the Stephen Vincent Benet children’s book and many other elements of relatively recent popular culture, while Hayne has been relegated into obscurity. Even currently, the United States Senate’s internal internet network is called “Webster” in honor of the orator from Massachusetts, and Webster’s statue is displayed prominently in the Old House Chamber of the U.S. Capitol. Hayne, however, is nowhere to be found, and Calhoun, although respected as a Vice President, is seldom remembered for his political foresight. In order to understand the meaning of the antebellum Southern argument and its implications on the American polity, it is essential to look past the conspiracy and to the core of the Southern argument. Through a deeper analysis, Hayne’s theories can be combined with Calhoun’s in such a way that Hayne introduces a synopsis of the central themes driving a Southern argument broader than slavery, and Calhoun attempts to develop a system whereby those concerns could be addressed.

Hayne’s arguments, developed thoroughly in his debate with Senator Webster in 1830, can be condensed into arguments favoring a natural

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2 Ibid., 7-8.

3 Robert Y. Hayne, “Address in Behalf of the Knoxville Convention, to the Citizens of the Several States Interested, In the Proposed Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad” (Charleston: A.E. Miller, 1836), 34.


agrarian ethic, opposing vast discretionary spending, and endorsing the strength of individual states to intervene on Constitutional questions. With regard to the agrarian ethic, Hayne offers challenging words for a nation moving rapidly toward urbanization. Hayne identified American closeness to the land as a central reason for independence, validated by writings of the Revolutionary period. These writings demonstrate that the fundamentals of the “Southern position” in the early nineteenth century were fundamentally accepted by founders from many of the different colonies prior to the Revolution. Of those seeking both greater and ultimate independence from Britain, proponents of local legislative autonomy regularly pointed to geographic disparities as a reason for this autonomy. Silas Downer, writing as “A Son of Liberty” in 1768, states that “no part of the habitable world can boast of so many natural advantages as this northern part of America.” He laments that these advantages will be of no use “if we be deprived of that liberty which the God of nature hath given us.” He continues: “View the miserable condition of the poor wretches, who inhabit countries once the most fertile and happy in the world, where the blessings of liberty have been removed by the hand of arbitrary power. Religion, learning, arts, and industry, vanished at the deformed appearance of tyranny.” Thus, even in 1768, a Rhode Islander is effectively making the Southern argument, that the unique characteristics of the American landscape lend itself to liberty and the values which define the American culture (arts, learning, industry). A common opposition surrounds the idea that a small, isolated island (Great Britain) could directly govern entities far removed from it, with peculiar local opportunities and interests; they would likely now similarly fear the drained swamp of Washington directly governing the affairs of states far-removed from its situation. When the combined wits of the First Continental Congress passed their Declaration of Resolves in 1774, they, too, used America’s unique geography as a justification for independence and localized government. They write that “from their local and other circumstances,” colonies “are entitled to a free and exclusive power of legislation in their several provincial legislatures.” The wilderness was a source of both challenge and innovation, as the colonists used the wilderness to their advantage during the war, challenging traditional British fighting techniques, and in the years following the war to provide for economic sustainability as a nation. Hayne acknowledged this natural ethic as essential while arguing a public lands bill in 1830, noting that a largely free and agrarian system “was the system under which this country was originally settled, and under which the thirteen colonies flourished and grew up to that early and vigorous manhood, which enabled them in a few years to achieve their independence.” In this speech, Hayne acknowledges that the ability to tame the wilderness played a major role in giving colonists the strength and ideals to pursue their independence. His role as an agrarian also indicates his sense of foresight, which he addresses later during his speech. Acknowledging the fledgling effects of industrial decay in Northern towns and cities, he states: “I would by a just and liberal system convert into great and flourishing communities, that entire class of persons, who would otherwise be paupers in your streets, and outcasts in society.” Southerners advocated a private welfare system whereby communities looked out for their own due to close personal relationships, a

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7 Ibid., 141.
8 Speech of Mr. Hayne, of South Carolina, 3.
9 Ibid., 6.
system displaced by government intervention during the Great Depression. Hayne rightly predicts that, as Northern values permeate all values of life, urbanization and its challenges will replace the fundamentally rural nature of the American Founding Era and, as such, increase the involvement of the federal government.

Hayne’s argument on the agrarian ideal is closely tied to his sentiments against federal discretionary spending. In 1830, the two issues were linked in the form of a public lands bill which would divert funds from the acquiring and sale of public lands to discretionary projects. In his first speech, Hayne states: “I am opposed to those partial distributions of favors, whether by legislation or appropriation, which has a direct and powerful tendency to spread corruption through the land; to create an abject spirit of dependence; to sow the seeds of dissolution; to produce jealousy among the different portions of the Union, and finally to sap the very foundations of the Government itself.” In his second speech, Hayne offers a stronger condemnation, criticizing discretionary spending as a process which “will spring up those low, groveling, base, and selfish feelings which bind men to the footstool of a despot by bonds as strong and as enduring as those which attach them to free institutions.” At the time, these funds were being used to establish universities, roads, canals, and other public works projects. These ideas of corruption certainly resonate within the public debate today, as funds are regularly expended on local projects to curry favor with voters. One must only look to the most recent Omnibus spending legislation passing through Washington to note the critical projects diverted to states important to the majority party. Over time, state governments have been weakened, as organizations and local communities seek federal funds for the regular maintenance of the vast public trough of discretionary projects.

Finally, Hayne’s most theoretical argument is against the role of the unified federal state. Hayne demonstrates through logical analysis that unless individual states retain the legitimate hope of objecting to statutes they deem unconstitutional, the federal government will always prevail. In his third speech responding to Webster, Hayne identifies the dangers of an increasingly expansive federal government held in check only by itself. Hayne argues that the Supreme Court should not handle these sorts of disputes, as the Court “is created by, and is indeed merely one of the departments of the federal government.” Over time, the salience of Hayne’s argument has been revealed by, among other things, the Court’s willingness to liberally construe the interstate commerce clause of the Constitution. Cases like Wickard v. Filburn have severely limited personal conduct as well as state conduct. Over a century prior to that decision, Hayne looked to the written Constitution as a compact, stating that “the very idea of a division of power by compact, is destroyed by a right claimed and exercised by either to be the exclusive interpreter of the instrument. Power is not divided, where one of the parties can arbitrarily determine its limits.”

Doing so, Hayne argued, would leave powers vulnerable to being “usurped and executed by the other Departments.” The prevalence of shared responsibilities among executive agencies, and the rise of the unitary executive model

10 Ibid., 6.
11 Speech of Mr. Hayne, of South Carolina, 6.
12 Ibid., 11.
13 Wickard was the Supreme Court Case which, in 1942, limited the planting of gardens for wheat for personal use to maintain a federal subsidy set within the Agricultural Adjustment Act.
14 Ibid., 8.
15 Ibid., 12.
of the presidency, has been the cumulative result of the slow consolidation of powers, which commenced in the nineteenth century and has been consistently upheld by the Supreme Court. Even in 1830, Hayne argued that the protections passed through Congress to preserve large manufacturing interests represented a large-scale infusion of government planning, protected by the federal structure, into the economy, one antithetical to the free market ideal upon which America was founded. Hayne dubbed this an attempt to “organize the whole labor and capital of the country.”

As Hayek and others rightfully illuminated in the twentieth century, economic planning regularly falls victim to the principle of unintended consequences, an idea Hayne quickly discovered in the 1830s. Today’s feeble attempts to organize a banking and financial system on the brink of collapse demonstrates the impossibility of central planning. Hayne argues that institutions and business models should succeed based upon the sustainability of their design, not through government protection.

In response to Hayne’s analysis of the problems of growth in the young Republic, Calhoun posits a solution deeply rooted within the ideals of America’s founding. Calhoun produces his *Disquisition on Government* not as a political speech, but as a scholastic work. Alluding to the work of the sciences, Calhoun sets out to define a scientific model of governance formed on what he calls the “concurrent majority.” Suffrage is the fundamental element of the polity in Calhoun’s system, a suffrage which organized to empower different interests to protect themselves against abuse at the hands of a tyrannical majority. Thus, the logical distinction between governments was the compromise of democratic governments and the force of despotic ones.

According to his formula, the system of compromise promotes the ability of the populous to make decisions on public questions in a just fashion. Comparing his system to the idea of a jury, Calhoun viewed the concurrent majority as a manner of limiting the functions of government. This premise rejects the current idea of the “working” Congress. Instead of valuing a Congress solely on its ability to pass legislation, particularly according to the President’s directive, a proper Congress would both protect and perfect legislation, protecting valuable social institutions and perfecting those elements of society which most need to be improved. Calhoun’s philosophy, never adopted directly by Southern statesmen, called for specific institutions to counter majoritarian influence in governance. Calhoun envisioned two presidents, one Northern and one Southern, among other institutions to formally check power.

Interestingly, though the South never adopted Calhoun’s commitment to formal institutions, they did adopt the theory of the concurrent majority into their political institutions. The prominent Southern historian David Potter gave a series of lectures on the concurrent majority at Louisiana State University in April 1968, in which he addressed the issue of Calhoun. Potter emphasizes Calhoun’s focus on the concept of “negative power,” or limiting factors which “would contribute to a system whereby decisions were made jointly by the minority and the majority, and not the majority alone.” This concept, as well, is not uniquely Southern in its origins. Negative power was enshrined within the U.S. Constitution in an effort of checks and balances. The passage of legislation was made more difficult with a bi-cameral legislature, including one House in which the states were represented as equal bodies (Senate). Potter emphasizes more tactics which developed from

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16 Ibid., 6.
rules regulating the functioning of Congress, including the filibuster in the Senate and the seniority system for appointing Committee Chairmen in both houses.19 Thus, the intricate rules of Congress, agreed upon by members of different political philosophies and endorsed by the Founders in the Constitution, were actually promoted through Calhoun’s underlying philosophy. Potter reflects on the words of an early twentieth century Speaker of the House, Thomas B. Reed of Maine, who told an audience in Chicago in 1908 that “the rules of the House have been framed with the view of rendering legislation difficult.”20 Thus, although Calhoun favored more formal institutions to make the concurrent majority mold of governance possible, his plans were implemented by Southern statesmen who could use the strategy to their advantage. Even after rules in the Senate were changed to allow a three-fifths majority of senators to vote to move out legislation, the rule was seldom used, submitted only eleven times and voted for only four times in the sixteen-year span prior to the New Deal.21 Calhoun also reinforced his arguments by arguing for the strength of state governments.

Calhoun defends the rights of states in his Fort Hill Address, stating: “This right of interposition, thus solemnly asserted by the State of Virginia, be it called what it may—state-right, veto, nullification, or by any other name—I conceive to be the fundamental principle of our system.”22 Calhoun, continuing with his analysis of the jury, advances the notion that the polity can force the government to address tough issues in a comprehensive fashion which takes into account all major societal interests. If, in fact, the Senate must receive near-unanimous support to pass legislation, it will acquire that support necessary to pass the legislation it must, and little else. Part of America’s uniqueness has been its recalcitrance to the political “fads” of the twentieth century, ranging from relatively benign (at least, in terms of physical violence) socialist and labor party movements to the more violent fads of totalitarianism and communism. Although these efforts thrived in other nations, it was difficult in the United States, where political change was harder to actualize. Calhoun viewed the states as central in this process, and as they have been increasingly removed, the federal government has assumed greater jurisdiction. The populous now views Congressional success based on the number of laws passed or introduced, not their corresponding quality.

Southern thinkers could not comprehend every problem of the modern republic, but with one generation separating them from their revolutionary founders, these Southerners were uniquely able to perceive the beginnings of threats to the American union. Even today, with a strong union, these problems persist, as the institutions that once protected Americans from debilitating governance break down. It remains unclear if Americans will choose to erect defenses to protect these institutions, or if they will continue to allow them to usher in the industrial urban mentality the great ante-bellum Southern statesmen once feared. If Americans embrace negative power as an essential check to ensure actual representation, they cannot discard the relevance of the distinctly American ideals of the second generation of Southern political thinkers.

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19 Ibid., 10.
20 Ibid., 39.
21 Ibid., 57.
22 Lence, 367.
Separate But Equal: The Essence of American Bicameralism

Collan B. Rosier

All legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and a House of Representatives.1 Article I, § 1, United States Constitution. This section of the Constitution emphasizes the importance of a legislative branch in the form of a bicameral Congress. Indeed, the rest of the article further elucidates this concept, suggesting in its thoroughness and prominence in the document the importance with which the Founders invested the concept of legislative representation. James Madison perhaps best expresses the reasons behind a bicameral legislature in Federalist No. 63. Madison argued that a bicameral legislature was crucial because the interests of the people were worse off, “where the whole of legislative trust is lodged in the hands of one body of men, than where the concurrence of separate and dissimilar bodies is required in every public act.”2

The concept of a House of Representatives is appealing to the American sense of political egalitarianism. The frequency of elections every two years and the relatively small size of constituency reassure the electorate that the body is, in structure, responsive to the public will. However, in Federalist No. 10, Madison argued that when majority rule alone determines legislation, “the public good is disregarded...by the superior force of an interested and overwhelming majority.”3 Therein lies a flaw in the structure of the House of Representatives, because the responsibility of a government—and a legislature in particular—is not simply to mirror the will of the people, but also to improve upon their sentiments, moderating them if necessary and searching for the solution that is best in the public interest. Thus, despite the many benefits of the system in the form of personal freedom and liberty, “democracy can produce bad, or at least unintended, results if the government caters” to the short term goals “of the citizens rather than to their long term values.”4

The political philosopher Edmund Burke proposed that, when justifying his vote, a legislator can act as either a "‘Trustee’ who follows his independent judgment [or as a] ‘delegate’ who

1 Constitution of the United States, Art. 1, §1.
3 "Federalist No. 10," Ibid., 51.
follows the wishes of his constituency.”5 Due to the nature of its composition, the House of Representatives is more in line with the latter outlook. The main flaw with this approach to representation is that it is nearly impossible for legislators to fully reflect the views of their constituencies or even their supporters because the constituents’ interests are so varied and diverse. The Founding Fathers “knew that in a nation as large and diverse as the United States there would rarely be any such thing as ‘public opinion’; rather there would be many ‘publics’ (that is factions) holding many opinions.”6

The issue of diverse constituencies acts as one of the major justifications for the existence of the Senate. The philosophy underpinning the Senate was that, given the difficulty in directly representing the will and desires of the people, government should instead express the people’s values or interests. Edmund Burke advanced this theory in his Speech to the Electors of Bristol. “Burke wanted the representative to serve the constituents interest but not its will.”7 This concept is actualized through the composition of the Senate. The size of the respective constituencies is a major factor. While it might not make a large impact in smaller states, the difference between a Senate constituency and a House district can be quite substantial in larger states, such as California, the constituencies of which are so large, that the broader values of the people must trump their diverse desires when the senator chooses which way to vote. Burke challenged that, “your Representative owes you, not his industry only, but his judgment; and he betrays, instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.”8

In addition, the longer term—six years as opposed to two years in the House—insulates the Senate from frequent elections which hold the senators accountable for their actions, allowing the body a greater degree of autonomy in the decision making process. This can allow the Senate time to sooth the passions of the masses if necessary in order to resist making rash popular decisions. It is, in fact, the duty of a legislator to resist public trends that are not in the long term interests of the nation; “transient popular majorities should carry little weight with representatives.”9

However, one could argue that the Senate was once much more immune from public trends. Wyatt Yankus argues in his essay, “Separate and Dissimilar Bodies: The Senate, The House of Representatives and the Seventeenth Amendment,” that the nature of the Senate has changed since the Constitution. The Seventeenth Amendment provided for the direct election of senators by the people rather than through bodies like state legislatures, which are somewhat insulated from the public. Yankus makes the claim that, “the Senate is now a less effective bicameral check, functioning in many ways as nothing more than a smaller version of the House.”10 Yankus is right in this claim that the Senate functions less well than originally designed, but there are still other layers of insulation that keep the Senate from being simply a convention of public opinion, such as the aforementioned constituency size and election frequency.

However, it is clear that the current composition of the Senate diverges from the original intent under the Constitution. “The new federal

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Constitution was designed to ensure that governmental leadership would be entrusted as much as possible...[to men who]...‘possess most wisdom to discern and most virtue to pursue the common good of the society.’\(^{11}\) The utility of the Senate, as it was originally conceived, was to help prevent the problems of the masses from destroying the fledgling nation. Essentially, the Senate was meant to watch over the egalitarian House.

Regardless of what the Constitution originally intended, however, the mixed benefits of each body, as they are currently structured, combine to create a delicate balance of power. For instance, the House has the power to impeach, but only the Senate can hold the trial. Additionally, all legislation regarding the raising of revenue must originate in the House, but all treaties and appointments must pass through the Senate. In the case of a tie in the Electoral College, the House decides the presidency while the Senate determines the vice president. Finally, both houses must come to a consensus on a bill, in order for it to reach the president.

In addition to stemming each other’s relative power, the House also exists to lend credence to certain systemic changes that, while enjoying the support of the public, might be threatening to senators less attuned to public sentiment. “If politicians had no choice but to carry out constituents’ wishes, democracy loses one of its main safety valves,” but it is important to note that sometimes government must bow in the face of overwhelming and pervasive public sentiment, which is easier to accommodate in the House.\(^{12}\) The Civil Rights movement exemplifies this advantage of the House. The Senate originally blocked some of the Civil Rights legislation, but the House supported it, thus suggesting that the House acted as a faster medium for passing legislation that reflected long-term public mind-set. It is for this reason that there cannot be just a Senate. Because of the fear of power concentrated in the hands of a few unresponsive men, “the people have always exhibited a measure of suspicion toward their elected, representative government. It is an inherent aspect of the American character.”\(^{13}\) There is a very delicate balance that must be found between representing the people’s interests and catering to their wishes to create an effective government.

However, there is an important limit to the extent of the government power, even in the more egalitarian House. In response to the question John Stuart Mill poses in On Liberty, “Quis custodiet custodies?...Who guards the guardians?,”\(^ {14}\) the best answer is the guarded themselves. Although it has been argued distance and insulation are necessary to a government acting in the best interests of a people, there cannot be too much distance. The mechanism of elections makes up for this distance by regularly holding legislators accountable for their actions by placing them at risk of being removed. Elections work as measures of accountability in both legislative bodies. While it is easier for the people to register their complaints with the House due to the frequency of elections and composition of the districts, if public opinion does not merely reflect a transient reaction but a stable and long lasting trend, it will over time appear in the Senate as well, as senators whose views reflect that trend are elected. In this way, the people serve as the auditors of how well the government has upheld their long term beliefs and judge them accordingly.

On the one hand, the purpose of government is, as John Locke stated in *Two Treatises of Government*, to, “refine, not reflect, public wishes, and mediate, not mirror public views.” On the other hand, officials can misread public views or become victims of political ambition, thus necessitating elections to retain accountability. This delicate balance between relatively greater autonomy in the Senate and relatively greater accountability in the House is preferable to the hegemony of the former or latter, as would occur if only one body existed. At the core, the balance between these two concepts lends strong support for the concept of bicameralism. In essence, the Founding Fathers played two flawed institutions off of each other, thereby creating a bicameral system of bodies—separate but equal.

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State religion has fallen out of fashion. Outside of the Islamic world, only a handful of states recognize or favor an official religion. For some, this divestment of official religion by various states is evidence of an inevitable secularizing trajectory of world history. On the other hand, many religious people claim that state religions have been a barrier to true religious flourishing and, as a result of the disintegration of the stale state-sponsored religions, true faith will thrive in a “free market of religions.” While people try to make sense of the erosion of entrenched official state religions, especially in Europe and the Americas, few contemporary proponents of religious societies consider whether this practice may actually be desirable. In fact, supporters of a religiously-minded society in the United States tend to accept that the American paradigm of non-established religion is the best model in which religion may flourish. Those who prefer religious over secular societies, however, often fail to seriously consider the former practice that viewed state religion as a necessity for the cultivation a religious society.

State religion need not be understood to mean lack of freedom of religion even if the two have often gone hand in hand in the past. State religion also need not be understood to mean the creation of a state church as in England and Scandinavia. Rather, state religion implies state-sponsorship and endorsement of a particular religion to which the state officially adheres and looks to for guidance. By establishing a state religion, a political community accomplishes two goals. Primarily, state sponsorship acknowledges that the state’s power is derived from and limited by divine authority. This forces the state to acknowledge its merely temporal nature. It also reminds the state of its duty to uphold certain moral principles associated with religion. Secondarily, state sponsored religion recognizes the historical role played by a particular religion in the origins and development of the political community.

In a well-publicized speech on religion in America, presidential hopeful Mitt Romney argued that “the establishment of state religions in Europe did no favor to Europe’s churches. And though you will find many people of strong faith there, the churches themselves seem to be withering away.” Romney suggested that established religion does not increase religiosity, and may even stifle it. This claim is quite common in the United States. But is it true? Is the United States really more religious than Europe? If so, is this because Europe established religion while the United States did not? With regard to religiosity, it is probable that the United States is more religious in terms...
of religious belief and church attendance. It should nonetheless be noted that a public religious procession or the presence of religious imagery on public buildings would probably be less controversial in Europe than in the United States. While the United States may be more religious than Europe, it is far from certain that this was solely or primarily the result of the lack of an established religion. What is certain, however, is that Europe and the United States have had very different histories with regard to state-sponsored religion.

In Europe, especially after the French Revolution, there were fierce disagreements between supporters of a public role of religion and those who wanted to entirely eliminate and marginalize it. In Catholic Europe, those taking the pro-religion side tended to advocate the state-sponsorship of the Roman Catholic Church, both in continuity with tradition and as a response to blatantly anti-religious factions. In contrast, ever since the founding of the United States, there has been a less polarized division in the United States with regard to the question of state religion. Legally religion has no official role in the United States, and the federal government neither endorses nor opposes any religion—as set forth in the First Amendment to the Constitution. While religion has always played an important part in American political discourse, religiously-minded Americans have rarely advocated for the repeal of the First Amendment Establishment Clause. Although there are lively disagreements over the precise meaning of the Establishment Clause in the Constitution, the American consensus that state sponsorship of religion is undesirable has remained intact since our country’s founding even in the face of disputes between Episcopalians and Unitarians, Protestants and Catholics, and atheists and evangelicals.

The American Founding Fathers thus created a state which allowed religion to flourish without establishing any official religion or church. Although many have pointed to the principle of non-established religion as one of the wisest aspects of our nation’s founding principles, it was also a practical necessity. After all, the Founding Fathers were highly diverse in their religious beliefs. While all the signers of the Declaration of Independence were at least nominally Protestant, with the exception of the Catholic Charles Carroll (the cousin of Georgetown’s founder John Carroll), they were divided among various competing denominations and sects. In addition, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson and others were essentially Deists, highly skeptical of many of the beliefs of more orthodox Christianity. Thus, it could be argued that the United States had no choice but to preclude the possibility of an official state religion at the federal level. Because of the lack of viability of state religion in the Untied States, Americans, including those who favor public manifestations of religion, have not generally favored or even considered a European-style established religion.

Clearly, the experiences of church-state relations in Europe and the United States have been very different. Indeed for much of history, two supporters of a religious society—one American, and one European, would have had starkly different views on the desirability of state-sponsored religion. Interestingly, the parallel concepts of American non-establishment and European state religion did in fact interact with each other through the experience of American Catholics.

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It should be noted that while the federal government never established an official religion, this was not the case on the state level. Several states established official religions. Established religion lasted the longest in Massachusetts, where Congregationalism was disestablished in 1833.
In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, certain American Catholic figures began to adopt views about Church-State relations that were divergent from the traditional European Catholic position. Tocqueville observed the roots of a more liberal-minded Catholicism in the United States when he described Catholics as “the most republican and democratic of all classes in the United States” and observed that “[t]he Catholic clergy in the United States has made no effort to strive against this political tendency but rather seeks to justify it.” In particular, many Catholics in the United States promoted the American idea of non-established religion, freedom of religion, and separation of Church and State. The rise of this way of thinking was due both to the influence of American ideas and the attempts of some Catholics to diminish the suspicions of many non-Catholic Americans who believed that Catholics could not truly be loyal to the United States.

In 1895, Pope Leo XIII addressed a letter entitled *Longinque Oceani* to the bishops of the United States. In this letter, the Pope generally looked fondly upon the American Republic and praised the Church in America for its success and growth. Pope Leo, however, made a very interesting remark in reference to the proper relationship between Church and State:

> For the Church amongst you, unopposed by the Constitution and government of your nation, fettered by no hostile legislation, protected against violence by the common laws and the impartiality of the tribunals, is free to live and act without hindrance. Yet, though all this is true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is to be sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, disjoined and divorced. The fact that Catholicity with you is in good condition, nay, is even enjoying a prosperous growth, is by all means to be attributed to the facility with which God has endowed His Church, in virtue of which unless men or circumstances interfere, she spontaneously expands and propagates herself; but she would bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority.

Thus Pope Leo XIII made it clear that the American bishops should neither think that the status of religion in America ought to be universally accepted, nor refrain from pursuing the eventual state-sponsorship of the Catholic Church in the United States. The above quote, therefore, suggested that the ultimate goal of Catholics everywhere should be to establish the Church as the state religion. It further made the claim that state sponsorship leads to the strengthening and greater propagation of the faith.

Seventy years later the Church seemed to take a different position on state establishment of religion in *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965). In this declaration, the Church wholeheartedly advocated religious freedom, recognizing that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such

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3 http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_06011895_longinqua_en.html
wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.

According to *Dignitatis Humanae*, this right to religious freedom “has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right.”

In *Dignitatis Humanae* the possibility of state-sponsored religion was accepted but not forcefully advocated:

If, in view of peculiar circumstances obtaining among peoples, special civil recognition is given to one religious community in the constitutional order of society, it is at the same time imperative that the right of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom should be recognized and made effective in practice.

In this way, the declaration seemed to turn *Longinque* on its head. State-sponsored religion became the “peculiar circumstance,” while freedom of religion and state neutrality were portrayed as equally permissible or even the norm.

There is much debate over how *Dignitatis Humanae* should be interpreted. Many Catholics argue that it must be read within the continuity of traditional Catholic teaching on Church-state relations. After all, the beginning of the document stated that it should be understood with reference to “the sacred tradition and doctrine of the Church—the treasury out of which the Church continually brings forth new things that are in harmony with the things that are old.” Furthermore, *Dignitatis Humanae* made it clear that “it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ.” Others argue that *Dignitatis Humanae* essentially changed the Catholic position and adopted the American view of religious freedom and non-establishment. Although debate continues on the meaning of *Dignitatis Humanae*, it is rather clear that the document developed Church teaching on the question of Church-State relations. With regard to the role of the state, *Dignitatis Humanae* shifted the emphasis away from the duty of the state to recognize and support the Catholic Church and instead emphasized the state’s duty to protect religious freedom.

The American Founding Fathers would likely be surprised to discover that the relationship between Church and State which was adopted in the U.S. has become permitted if not supported by the Catholic Church. Few people argue today, as Leo XIII did, that state-sponsorship of religion is beneficial or even necessary for its success. In fact many, like Mitt Romney, frequently claim the opposite. The Catholic Church no longer seems to contend, as it did in the nineteenth century, that state-sponsorship is necessarily beneficial for religion. Instead, the Church seems to support any arrangement as long as it allows religion and particularly Catholicism to flourish, protects the rights of the Church, and guarantees the right to religious freedom. Having been seemingly abandoned by a once fervent supporter, the Catholic Church, it might seem that state religion can officially be declared a thing of the past. This should not be the case. The tradition of state religion merits reconsideration by contemporary societies.

Obviously a state religion, at least in its traditional form, would be a disaster for the United States, since it is anathema to American sensibilities and defies the long-standing consensus on Church-state relations as well as the unavoidable pluralistic history of the Republic. This, however, does not mean that state religion...
would not be beneficial elsewhere, especially where it has existed in the past, such as in Europe or Latin America.

The Constitution of the Republic of Malta provides a possible example of what state-sponsored religion could look like today. The Maltese Constitution states:

The religion of Malta is the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion. The authorities of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church have the duty and the right to teach which principles are right and which are wrong. Religious teaching of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Faith shall be provided in all State schools as part of compulsory education.

At the same time, the constitution provides that "All persons in Malta shall have full freedom of conscience and enjoy the free exercise of their respective mode of religious worship."

Such an arrangement seems to work rather well for the small Mediterranean island nation. By sponsoring the Catholic Church, Malta recognizes that 98% of its population professes a common faith and acknowledges the important role the Church has to play in society, especially in the realms of morals and education. Of course this does not mean it would work everywhere. A large, rather diverse country like France with a very tumultuous religious history would probably not benefit from a Maltese-style religious establishment. Nonetheless, as a modern Western state in the European Union, Malta could represent a model for those who believe religion should play an important role in society. By sponsoring an official religion, a state officially favors religion (the Catholic Church in the case of Malta) over both irreligion and secularism. A state like Malta also implicitly recognizes that it derives its legitimacy and authority from God, a notion that can help contribute to a truly just political system.

Too often, it is accepted as a fact that the American arrangement of disestablished religion is universally desirable and the only way of ensuring religious freedom. Many Americans assume that the paradigm of disestablishment that exists in the United States promotes religiosity while state-sponsorship stifles faith. Those who believe that religion should play an important role in civil society should reevaluate these assumptions. Catholics, in particular, should also recognize that state-established religion is not at odds with the teachings of Dignitatis Humanae, which must be interpreted in light of the traditional teachings of the Church. There is no reason to reject state religion per se as incompatible with religious freedom, modern democracy or a religiously vibrant society. Instead, by recovering, reconsidering, and adapting the tradition of state religion, political communities may be able to successfully revitalize and propagate religion in their societies.

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The observations of Charles Dickens would have never been possible had Georgetown not survived the first tumultuous decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, in 1810 the dissolution of the fledgling Georgetown College seemed to be an imminent reality. If it were not for the efforts of a relatively unknown Italian Jesuit by the name of Giovanni Antonio Grassi, our beloved alma mater would not exist today. Surprisingly, very little has been written about Fr. Grassi’s important role in Georgetown’s formation.

Fr. Grassi was born in Bergamo in the northern Italian region of Lombardy in 1775. He entered the Jesuit order in 1799 and studied under the famed Giuseppe Maria Pignatelli, one of the most important figures in the restoration of the Society of Jesus in the Italian peninsula. As a novice, Grassi was sent to Russia to complete his studies, before being ordained in 1804. As a testament to his nascent talents, he was named rector of the College of Nobles at the College of Polotsk immediately following his ordination. The next few years were uncertain for the young Fr. Grassi; he spent time in Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Portugal, Ireland, and finally England, where, in 1807, he became the chair of the Latin and Italian departments at Stonyhurst College.

However, much to the dismay of the English provincial who greatly admired the Italian priest, Grassi received a letter from his superior
telling him to go to Georgetown in the infant United States of America.

On October 21, 1810, Fr. Grassi arrived in Baltimore, Maryland after a fifty-two day transatlantic voyage. The next day he met Archbishop John Carroll, the founder of the college at Georgetown; four days later, on October 26, he arrived in Washington, which he described in his journal as being “an embryo of a town rather than a true town.” Upon his arrival at Georgetown, Grassi must have found the college to be in a lamentable state. He writes about the situation, expressing its gravity in pragmatic terms: “There were but ten boarders and prospects for any improvements were very small.” Fr. Grassi, however, did not distance himself from the problems of his new home and was appointed the ninth president of the college soon after he came to Washington. Although he was only president for six years, Fr. Grassi presided over some of Georgetown’s most turbulent history. He had inherited an institution whose enrollment and development had stagnated. Many suggested moving the college to New York where there would be a more plentiful supply of faculty, students and intellectual resources. Even the institution’s founder, Archbishop John Carroll, seems to have been disillusioned. Just when the situation seemed at its most dire, the War of 1812 erupted, placing Georgetown in an incredibly precarious political situation. Grassi, however, was able to enforce a diplomatic neutrality that neither compromised the institution’s safety nor betrayed its founding ideals. He kept the college open, despite the threat of the war. In 1814, the British invaded Washington. As Grassi laconically wrote in his journal: “August 24, 1814: The troops enter Washington. The Navy Yard, the Capitol and the President’s house are in flames.” The British command informed Grassi of the protection of the citizens of Georgetown. Grassi, in turn, did not allow the college’s buildings to be used by the United States Congress. His actions allowed Georgetown to survive the burning of Washington and remain intact throughout the war.

After the conclusion of the War of 1812, Georgetown flourished under the presidency of Fr. Grassi. In 1815, due to the urgings of Grassi and Georgetown’s first student William Gaston, who was now a member of the House of Representatives, President James Madison signed an act of Congress awarding the College of Georgetown the ability to confer academic degrees. Thus Georgetown became the first Catholic institution in the country to be allowed to grant degrees. Later that year John Carroll died, bequeathing a good amount of money to Fr. Grassi who wisely invested it in expanding Georgetown’s library holdings, marking a period of incredible growth and expansion for the library. Also in 1815, Grassi became a U.S. citizen.

From the accounts he left in his journal, Grassi, in addition to being an able administrator, was also very much involved in campus life. In his journal, he chronicled student life with interesting anecdotes such as his entry for April 18, 1816: “The boys went on a steamboat

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3 Severino, 25.
4 Ibid.
5 Barringer.
6 Severino, 25.
7 Ibid., 26.
8 Ibid., 29.
which got stuck, and remained on the river until midnight.” In addition to the campus community, Grassi established relationships with the greater Washington society. Many of these families sent their sons to Georgetown College even though they were not Catholic. Some famous students from this period included members of the Lee family and the son of the Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander James Dallas. The presence of these distinguished families among Georgetown’s student body attests to the efforts of Fr. Grassi to improve the institution’s reputation.

In 1817, Fr. Grassi was called back to Rome to deal with an emergency issue at the Vatican. He planned on only staying for the duration of the crisis, but he was severely injured in a fall and was unable to endure the journey to return to the United States. Although he was not able to return to his beloved adopted country, he remained a citizen until his death in 1849. Despite his relatively short time on campus, Fr. Grassi effectively saved Georgetown from the many challenges that threatened it, including war, dissolution and stagnation. He resuscitated the dream of John Carroll and left the college a major Catholic American intellectual center, a place which would one day become world-renowned as Georgetown University.

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10 Severino, 27.
11 Ibid., 28.
An Interview with Father Stephen M. Fields, S.J.

Danielle Singleton

Father Fields arrived at his office in New North precisely at our scheduled meeting time, 5 p.m., and promptly invited me to come inside. Dressed in his clerics, Roman collar, and matching black tennis shoes, Fields appeared to be completely in his element—even though he acknowledged that he is rarely interviewed for anything.

After exchanging the usual pleasantries (did you know he once lived in Charlotte?), we began with some basic questions. Father Fields has been teaching at Georgetown for fifteen years now, and before coming to the Hilltop, he was at Yale earning his doctorate, because “Jesuits study until we’re close to retirement.” Fields’ explanation of why he decided to become a Jesuit, however, was a testament to the impact one professor can have on a student’s life—something a lucky few of us have been able to experience.

While attending Loyola College in Baltimore, Father Fields took a class on the theology of the Church taught by the Dutch Jesuit theologian Felix Malmberg. Fields said that it was during that class that he for the first time “understood what the Church was as the Body of Christ” and saw “what a worthy thing it would be to serve the Church.” He chose the Society of Jesus in particular because he wanted to combine his studies and teaching with the priesthood.

Georgetown

Georgetown means a great deal to Father Fields. To him, Georgetown represents “a great American university” where it is “a joy and a privilege to serve the students.” When he hears the word “Georgetown,” Fields thinks of “a very important work for the Catholic Church in America,” “the generations of Jesuits who have done this work,” and “a beautiful campus in the capital of the free world.”

Father Fields believes that one of the biggest changes at Georgetown since he first arrived is the fact that the University president and provost are no longer Jesuits. Fields believes that this creates a challenge for the University because Jesuits “are no longer as prominently visible.” To this man who can recite the Georgetown mission statement by heart, the issue of lay leadership poses an important question: “How do we continue to infuse the University with Jesuit ideals?”

Another area where Fields has noticed change is in the quality of the students attending Georgetown. While the students are still as nice and polite as they have always been, Father Fields commented that they have definitely “gotten better in terms of intellectual ability.”

Since Georgetown is at its core a liberal arts institution, I asked Father Fields to comment on the nature of a liberal arts education. He was
obviously very comfortable with the subject, saying it is something he talks about in his class on John Henry Newman. In what appeared to be something straight from one of his lectures, Fields said that this kind of education is “ideally meant to liberate or free the mind from a lack of discipline in thinking, and from prejudice, bias, and ignorance.” Liberal arts study is a process of “exercising the mind,” and it “exposes students to the best that has been thought,” while also bringing the mind “into conformity with its own nature.”

Alexis de Tocqueville

“If Tocqueville wrote a book about America today, what do you think he would say?” That was the final question I posed to Father Fields, and his response was without a doubt the most interesting part of the interview. For starters, his first comment was a drawn out “Oh, now isn’t that a good question.” Fields observed that Tocqueville “admired the strength of local institutions as the structure of society” and also “the role that religion played despite the separation of church and state.” According to Father Fields, the question then becomes what has happened to those local institutions—“Are they still in place?” Fields’s opinion on the matter was a definitive “no.” Tocqueville would find things “markedly changed” with “both family and religion under siege by the darker forces of market economies.” Father Fields believes that the pressures of daily life have created a society in which there is “no time for religion anymore” and “less time for family life.” Fields says the exceptions to that, however, are the American South and Midwest where rural and agricultural interests have kept people close to the land and their towns and families.

The interview concluded with Father Fields wondering aloud what the new centers of society are, and how the greatness of America has increased at the same time that the supposed strengths of the country have eroded. “I wonder how Tocqueville would solve it.”

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