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Making the Dantean Pilgrimage at Georgetown: An Ignatian Interpretation of Dante’s *Commedia* and What It Means for Georgetown
Utraque Unum

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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Cultivating Knowledge of America and the West
# Table of Contents

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

About The Tocqueville Forum

The Mystery of Education, *by Professor Joshua Mitchell* ..................... 2

The Forum (Articles on Political Philosophy)

The Three Waves of Modernity, Revisited: Toward Souls Mired in the Instantaneous Now: On Modernity’s Nominalist and Gnostic Rejection of Nature and Adoption of Historical Consciousness, Or “If Hegel Just Stuck with Augustine Everything Would Be Fine,” *by Kieran Raval* ......................... 4

Absolute Power: Then and Now, *by Matthew Vorsatz* .......................... 10


The Chamber (Articles on Law and Politics)

Letting the Genie out of the Bottle: Why Strong and Wealthy Governments Are Also Responsible for Ethnic Conflicts, *by Kee En Chong* ............................................................ 19

How to Understand the Left/Right Polarity: A Historical View, *by Joshua Dill* ....................... 23

Shades of Grey: Regime Classification in Singapore, *by Geeva Gopalkrishnan* ......................... 28

The Sanctuary (Articles on Religion and Theology)

Contract and Covenant Contrasted: A Study in the Theology of John Locke and the English Puritans, *by Caleb Morell* ............................................................. 33

One God, Two Revelations, *by Hope E. Edwards* .................................... 40

The Archive (Articles on History)

To Make a Nation: British Workers, National Identity, and the American Civil War, *by Kevin Baird* .... 45


The Parlor (Articles on Literature, Film, Music, Plays, and Art)

Royall Tyler’s *The Algerine Captive*: Satirizing a National Agenda, *by Amy Reavis* ..................... 59

Prophet-Freaks: A Tocquevillian Consideration of the Grotesque in American Literature as Pathology and Remedy, *by Christina Eickenroht* ................................. 62
“Less Noble Callings:” Journey, Crucible Moment, and Holocaust Confrontation in Contemporary Jewish-American Fiction, by Ian Philbrick ................................................................. 70

The Clock Tower (Articles on Georgetown)

Making the Dantean Pilgrimage at Georgetown: An Ignatian Interpretation of Dante’s Commedia and What It Means for Georgetown, by Kevin D. Sullivan ................................................................. 74

The Quest for “Jesuit Heaven”: Searching for the Lost Relics of Georgetown, by Michael Fischer and Kevin D. Sullivan .................................................................................................................. 79
Dear reader:

I was flipping through my grandmother’s old high school yearbook recently, and a photo caught my eye. It featured two students writing on a chalkboard with several posters hanging over their heads on the wall. The posters read: “You are educated if you can do what you ought whether you want to do it or not.” “The happiest people are those who educate their tastes so that they can appreciate and enjoy the best.” “The secret of self-education lies in planning your own leisure.” Virtue, good taste, and leisure—somehow, according to this earlier generation, education ought to be directed toward these things.

Looking up from the page, I thought back to my own high school hallways, where the typical posters on the wall sought to impress upon students the financial incentives of their education, with graphs comparing the expected earnings of those who earn their diplomas against those who do not. The underlying message was clear: we were engaged in our studies for the sake of their financial return.

This small contrast between high school wall posters reflects a significant shift in our public philosophy of education that has taken place over the last half-century. Seventy years ago, economist Karl Polanyi observed the totalizing effect the free market had on society. He feared society would become “adjunct to the market.” Sure enough, now it seems the market has subsumed our educational institutions too. Government officials tend to reinforce the economic view of education whenever they touch on the subject. On the campaign trail in 2008, for example, then-Senator Obama told a Denver audience, “Education is the currency of the Information Age, no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success but a prerequisite… In this kind of economy, countries who out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.”

Overall, this shift in our public philosophy of education suggests greater trends of growing materialism, financial angst, and diminished regard for the humanities among Americans. As editors of *Utraque Unum*, we take it as our task to counter these trends, not with cries of despondency but by demonstrating that the study of the humanities can indeed foster virtue, good taste, and the creativity needed to turn leisure into the basis of a robust culture, to borrow Josef Pieper’s language. We hope you find the essays that follow to be winsome demonstrations of that fact.

Special thanks are owed to the dutiful and dedicated editors who did the substantive work to produce this issue. Mitchell Tu’s faithful service in the not-so-glorious role of Copy-Editor was second to none. Three new Section Editors, Nick Richards, Evelyn Flashner, and Louis Cona, deserve recognition for learning the job quickly and performing it well. I also could not have done it without the consistent good editing of veterans Andrew Schilling, Michael Lessman, and Eugene Ang. Finally, I owe special thanks to my Managing Editor, Christina Eickenroht, whose organization, responsibility, and timeliness ensured that we got this issue out on time.

Sincerely,

Jordan Rudinsky  
Editor-in-Chief
The essays in the Spring 2014 issue of *Utraque Unum* prompt me to write not in my capacity as the Director of the Tocqueville Forum, but rather as a professor who has taught on Georgetown’s main campus for some twenty years, and who increasingly wonders about how education is achieved. I say achieved, rather than acquired, because while common opinion would have it that professors give something to students, and that students acquire what they are given, as I reflect on the writings of a number of the authors in this issue who have been my students these past few years, this opinion—let’s call it the education-as-conservation-of-information theory—seems on the whole short-sighted when it comes to the human sciences. To be sure, professors give lectures and students often do their best to acquire what is given. In the human sciences, however, the professor’s thoughts seldom appear in the same guise when students make them their own.

Those thoughts, of course, can appear in exactly the same guise when students rehearse them verbatim on quizzes and tests. And it is worth noting that for countless millions of students around the globe, the institutional expectation is that they will recite exactly what their professors convey. There, education does involve the conservation-of-information; there, the (student) “outputs” can be measured against the (professorial) “inputs.”

In a liberal arts institution of the sort that Georgetown professes to be, however, something more mysterious, more wondrous, can and must happen. In the give-and-take of questioning in the classroom, ideas can come to life as students discover that ideas are, not the dead possessions of their teachers, but living questions for them. And, like all living things, ideas are never passed to the next generation in exactly the form they took in the previous generation. As fathers and mothers gaze upon their sons and daughters with both bewilderment and joy, and see in them the intermixing of traits both known and unknown, so, too, do professors gaze on the ideas of their students in a similar light. Biological life would soon become extinct if it entailed merely the conservation-of-information. The living accomplishment that is a liberal arts institution involves a mystery no less ineffable. Like life itself, some acquired traits are passed down professor to student; the ideas themselves, however, are an active achievement of a student life lived with a view to the urgencies their professors cannot fully comprehend—for they are not theirs to comprehend, but rather the students.

A living engagement with ideas, so evident in the student essays in this issue of *Utraque Unum*, thrives in an ecosystem of a certain sort, which there is reason to fear is slowly being overrun in colleges and universities across the country. The classroom, which I have already mentioned, has in many places already been transformed into a high-tech “learning environment,” extendable in principle to anyone with a computer screen elsewhere on the planet. Yet I wonder if the more difficult questions in the human sciences can be addressed in this way. In Plato’s *Republic*, the conversation between Socrates and his interlocutors begins in the Piraeus, in the marketplace; but it only gets serious in a smaller setting.
after they withdraw from the marketplace and sit in the house of Cephalus. The really serious conversations in the middle of the Republic, moreover, where we strain to understand ideas that Socrates says are “hard to accept and hard to reject,” happen between only two or three people. Some ideas can be exchanged in the Piraeus; the most difficult ones, however, cannot be exchanged and acquired at all. They must be achieved, in the back-and-forth of conversation and debate. This can only occur in a smaller setting, in a classroom without the technical gadgetry that turns a place of conversation into a Piraeus, into a marketplace.

It is heartening to read in these pages student essays that bear witness to the mystery of education, and to the importance of the older, more primordial, understanding of the classroom.
The Three Waves of Modernity, Revisited

Toward Souls Mired in the Instantaneous Now: On Modernity’s Nominalist and Gnostic Rejection of Nature and Adoption of Historical Consciousness, Or “If Hegel Just Stuck with Augustine Everything Would Be Fine”

Kieran Raval

Haven’t you perceived,’ I said, ‘that our soul is immortal and is never destroyed?’
—The Republic, 608d

In his 1959 seminal essay, “The Three Waves of Modernity” Leo Strauss argues, “the crisis of modernity is ... primarily the crisis of modern political philosophy.”1 This crisis unfolds in three distinct waves of modernity, which seek to reject classical political philosophy. These waves are represented by Machiavelli and Hobbes in their “reduction of the moral and political problem to a technical problem,”2 Rousseau’s historicism, and Nietzsche’s “transvaluation of all values”3 by the will to power. While Strauss presents a very thoughtful critique of modern political philosophy, he neglects a broader, meta-level critique of modernity precisely by positing modernity to be coterminous with modern political philosophy. Robert Pippin notes, “Strauss’ account sometimes slips into an indictment of the hubris or folly of the modern founders and so neglects the larger issue of the motivations for the modern revolt against antiquity. Any consideration of that theme would introduce issues rarely mentioned by Strauss: the role of scholastic controversies (especially nominalism and the continuing problem of the Gnostic heresy), the Reformation and the transformation of political notions of right directly linked to Reformation ambiguities about church-state relations.”4

Strauss’ omission in these areas presents an opportunity to consider the intellectual movements of modernity more widely. One must reach back before Machiavelli to find the real roots of modernity, including the roots of the crisis of modern political philosophy that Strauss accurately analyzes. Modernity, at its root, is the denial of nature as the lens through which the soul (or psyche) is understood. As such, the modern project encompasses more than a political project. In its totality, it can be seen in three waves: the metaphysical project of nominalism, the theological project of Luther, and finally, the political project (to which Strauss gives his
attention) of Rousseau and Nietzsche. The denial of nature necessitates conceiving the soul in historical terms, which, in turn, has led to the modern—or even postmodern—inability to conceive of the soul vis-à-vis nature or history.

Plato and Aristotle had enabled the West to view the soul—and by extension the human person—in terms of the givens of reality, that is, nature, specifically human nature. Said differently, the soul was seen in light of universals and truths of reality that have a real, objective existence apart from historical circumstance of human consciousness. That is to say, man was classically conceived in terms of his unfolding toward a comprehensible excellence that was intelligible to man because his reason was in communion with the cosmic order of reality. Man’s excellence, or flourishing, was known by his telos. This teleology of the soul recognized that man’s excellence lay in the operation of right reason. Man was understood in terms of the givens of human nature: namely, that he is a rational being, and his behavior is to be understood in terms of how closely he approaches the actualization of this intelligible end. Man’s excellence lay in his living in accord with the givens of human nature and of reality itself, because these realities entail the truth about man qua man.

This teleological view of the soul rises and falls on the real existence of a human nature that is universal and constant across time and space. That is to say, there are certain realities and truths about man that are prior to man and not created by him: “The issue ultimately involved is whether there is a source of truth higher than, and independent of man.”5 This truth would reveal to man who he most truly is and how to live in accord with reality to his flourishing. Josef Piper, quoting and elaborating on St. Thomas, posits this end and nature of man: “The being of man in its essential significance consists in this: to be in accord with reason’…To be open to the truth of real things and to live by the truth that one has grasped is the essence of the moral being.”6 Nature, as objective, precedes human construction and consists in those fundamental metaphysical truths about man and the world.

The first wave of modernity turns away from the givenness of nature, and therefore constitutes a metaphysical change. This comes in the fourteenth-century with William of Occam and the emergence of nominalism, which denied the real existence of universals.7 Richard Weaver cites this philosophical event as laying the foundation for all modern thought that would follow: “With this change in the affirmation of what is real, the whole orientation of culture takes a turn…initiating a course which cuts one off from reality.”8 He succinctly traces the “denial of everything transcending experience [to mean] inevitably…the denial of truth.”9 The critical truth to be denied is the truth about man himself. Weaver further notes, “because a change of belief so profound eventually influences every concept, there emerged before long a new doctrine of nature.”10 Of course, Occam did not set out to deny human nature. However, he laid the metaphysics of modernity that would soon allow for radical new ways of considering the soul apart from the givenness of reality.

The realist worldview that developed up until Occam held not only the real existence of universals, but also the real interpenetration of metaphysical universals in the whole of reality, including the material world. Thus, the world was seen to be ordered analogically, wherein first principles were diffused through the various orders of reality, each of which participated in such principles by virtue of being ordered by them. Realism posited a deep harmony between the spiritual and physical orders of reality. The whole of the created world was implicitly “charged,” to use Hopkins’ language, with a metaphysical and even divine grace.

This analogical ordering and conception of reality is radically upended by the second wave in modernity’s turn from affirming the real existence of nature: namely, by the theological project of Martin Luther. In The Freedom of a Christian, Luther writes, “human nature and natural reason, as it is called, are by nature superstitious
and read to imagine, when laws and works are prescribed, that righteousness must be obtained through laws and works.”¹¹ Luther attacks human nature because he views it as completely depraved after the fall, incapable of even the natural virtue posited, for instance, in Aristotelian ethics wherein one is habituated to the good (made virtuous) by doing good acts: “Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works.”¹² This is intimately tied to the distinction that Luther makes between the “inner” and “outer” man. A bifurcated human existence emerges whereby man is not an integrated being of body and soul. Rather, the soul is, in a way, separated from the person and elevated as the “inner man” that lives by faith in the realm of spirit. The “outer man” is man’s physicality and materiality. The outer man is enslaved by the passions or even by works. The spiritual inner man must rule over the outer man and hold it in submission.

Luther’s view of the soul comes close to positing two distinct beings. Instead of infusing the material, the spiritual rejects that which is physical—and vice-versa—and seeks to hover above the human being and even the world. In his famous formulation, “faith alone and not any works,”¹³ Luther confirms this bifurcation of human nature, which is indicative of a larger split in the very order of reality, stemming from a rejection of the classical and medieval analogical view of the universe. For Luther, nature, including human nature and the material world, is so depraved by sin that no goodness could possibly reside in it. No eternal or divine realities could infuse the world of time and nature. One must instead escape the latter in order to attain the former. This amounts to a rejection of the sacramental ordering of reality, wherein everything potentially manifests eternal—and even divine—reality and goodness. This flows naturally from Luther’s rejection of the ecclesiastical sacramental order, which, in his view, amounts to mere ceremonialism.

Luther’s move drives a deep wedge between nature/reason and grace/faith. He denies the deep, holistic interpenetration of these realms. Nature is no longer taken up and elevated by grace, but, in a sense, nature must be rejected in order to live the life of faith and attain salvation as a Christian. Thus, Luther denies any modicum of goodness or capacity for it in postlapsarian human nature. By focusing only on spiritual man, Luther denies the goodness of nature and thereby effectively denies nature itself. This inaugurates a theological problem that, as will be demonstrated, quickly becomes a philosophical and political problem.

Theologically, Luther creates a soteriological problem. Luther’s theology is difficult if not impossible to reconcile with the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation and its soteriological implications: namely that, because the Divine Logos took up all of man in the Incarnation—body, flesh, mind, soul, spirit, interior, and exterior—that same totality of man’s existence must necessarily be saved and sanctified. The greatest sign of the deep integration and interpenetration of nature and grace (or to use Lutheran terms, “inner man” and “outer man”) is that God Himself took on all of man’s nature and carried that nature through His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. Salvation, on some level, must involve man’s nature and physicality. Luther would posit a salvation that takes place only in the realm of spirit. This is a supremely Gnostic move.

Philosophically, Luther opens the floodgates for continental rationalism and eventually German idealism to develop and take hold; for, as the givens of nature are no longer graced, the soul can only increasingly be understood in purely historical and contingent terms. Whereas it was formerly true that man was a rational being across all times, places, and circumstances, now human consciousness is seen as emergent by a historical dialectical process. One can see in modernity’s emergent emphasis on dialectic the underlying drive to resolve the deep contradiction internal to man, namely the chasm between flesh and spirit that was opened by Luther.

Luther’s theology creates two nodal points: God and man. The mediating reality of nature,
imbued with a kind of sacramentality, is done away with. Said another way, reality becomes constituted in terms of the two nodal points of the one and the many. The mediating reality of the few is done away with. A bifurcated existence increasingly comes to replace an integrated existence. It is only after the world has been reduced to two nodal points from its former analogical ordering that the self can emerge as such. No longer is the soul constituted by its place in an order greater than itself that it did not create. No longer is the soul defined by relationality. Rather, the soul comes to be understood as the product of historical and then increasingly voluntaristic contingency. The third wave of modernity encapsulates Strauss’ second and third waves, Rousseau and Nietzsche. These thinkers are the logical progression of modernity, cohering as the final wave of modernity. It could certainly be said that modernity’s third wave ought to be broken down into two smaller waves, represented by each of these thinkers. While Nietzsche, in particular, represents a novel turn in modern thought, he merely takes modernity to its logical conclusions, which others refused to do. In that sense, his novelty is better understood in relation to the larger modern project.

Rousseau, following Hobbes, begins with a fundamental denial of man’s rational capacity for knowing what is. Rousseau’s natural man, to which he seeks a return, is pre-rational. What matters for Rousseau is man’s sympathy rather than his rationality: “Before that time the Romans were satisfied with the practice of virtue; they were undone when they began to study it.” Rousseau reinterprets virtue to mean a descent into man’s passions and sentiments rather than a habitual conformity to the reality of nature that is the good. The descent into sentiment itself amounts to a denial of the givens of nature and the order of reality. As such, there is little objective order and ground on which to stand. Thus, Rousseau becomes the first to posit that “man’s humanity is due not to nature but to history, to the historical process, a singular or unique process which is not teleological.” Rousseau’s historical conception of the soul is a direct consequence of his adopting Hobbes’ theory of a state of nature. To posit man in the state of nature as the first principle and touchstone for further philosophical and political reflection is to already have introduced a historical evolutionary process in the conception of man. Depending on the theorist, it is the first step in denying man’s nature as rational or social.

The political implications of Rousseau’s thought evidence the enduring presence of Luther’s protestant hermeneutic of retrieval. “We cannot reflect on the morality of mankind without contemplating with pleasure the picture of the simplicity which prevailed in the earliest times.” Rousseau’s belief in the hypothesis of the state of nature drives him to seek a return to what he calls the virtue of the ancients. Of course, this is impossible. Yet, as “necessity raised up thrones,” so does Rousseau develop the general will, which “takes the place of the transcendent natural law.” The general will evidences again the modern bifurcated existence of the one power over the many masses and the lack of a mediating layer in social and political relations. The general will bridges the “gulf between the ‘is’ and the ‘ought’” by working through the historical process of man’s emergent rationality. The general will cannot err because by being itself, it is what it ought to be. The general will “is good because it is rational, and it is rational because it is general.” The tautological justification for the general will invokes Hobbes’ Leviathan. This self-referential justification for the general will, wherein “the mere generality of a will...vouches for its goodness,” shows the rejection of any recourse to nature or the givens of any reality not created by man: “Moral and political ideals are established without reference to man’s nature: man is radically liberated from the tutelage of nature... What is called man’s nature is merely the result of man’s development hitherto; it is merely man’s past, which cannot give any guidance for man’s possible future...”
With Nietzsche it is clearer how the hermeneutic of retrieval, begun by Luther and continued by Rousseau, leads to a distorted conception of man’s rationality. If Rousseau posits a simpler or earlier man who is essentially sympathetic, Nietzsche posits one who is essentially violent, whose experience is that of “terror and anguish.” Both fundamentally reduce man to irrationality and leave no room for man’s capacity to know the universal truths of nature and to act in accordance with this order of reality. Nietzsche does not ask what the truth or nature of a thing is, but rather whether it brings vitality.

Nietzsche, as a philologist, applies the hermeneutic of retrieval to the very words “good” and “bad.” He argues that, because “good” meant at one time noble and powerful, and “bad” meant common, plebian, and lowly, these meanings ought to be recaptured for modern times, and stripped of the transformed connotations and meanings they have since acquired. Thus, the noble man—Nietzsche’s good man—“conceives the basic concept ‘good’ in advance and spontaneously out of himself and only then creates for himself an idea of ‘bad.’” Here is seen Nietzsche’s conception of the soul in all of its colors. Reason is divorced from the will as there is no objective, given reality for reason to comprehend. As reason is historically emergent and contingent, and not the faculty by which the soul comprehends the truth of given universal realities, it becomes for Nietzsche “a kind of atavism of the highest order.” Thus, the will emerges as the dominant faculty of the soul because it has the potential to become a completely new basis for reality, and therefore the good, precisely by creating a new basis for reality. Because there exists no objective good to which the Nietzschean will is drawn, it must first will its own conception of the good before it can be drawn to choose it.

The new self-created ‘nature’ of man thus becomes will to power. “All known ideals claimed to have an objective support: in nature or in god or in reason. The historical insight destroys that claim and therewith all known ideals. But precisely the realization of the true origin of all ideals—in human creations or projects—makes possible a radically new kind of project, the transvaluation of all values…” The transvaluation of all values—the rejection of the classical and Christian moral tradition in favor of that which supposedly affirms life—becomes the new objective support and basis for reality in the creative will to power. The Nietzschean political implication is that “man does not by nature will equality. Man derives enjoyment from overpowering others as well as himself.” Having denied and finally overcome the givens of who he is (that is to say, human nature), man may will to overcome the givens of other people, even the given of their very existence.

Having surveyed three waves of modernity that are arguably more comprehensive and encompassing than those originally proposed by Strauss, it is possible to engage in a more thoughtful and critical analysis of modernity and to draw more prescient conclusions about the prospects of modernity moving forward.

The three waves of modernity, taken together, may be seen as a new theodicy, or attempt to explain and deal with the problem of evil and suffering in the soul and in human society. The first reality to be suffered by man is his acceptance of nature and the givenness of universals that man himself does not create. These realities are, in a sense, imposed upon man from without. Modernity begins with the first wave, associated with nominalism, wherein a choice is made to not suffer the real existence of universals, a choice that would culminate in the Nietzschean move to create reality by will, rather than to intellect reality with one’s reason.

The classical Christian answer—articulated first by Augustine and developed further by Aquinas—to the three waves of modernity is to hold together both nature and grace and universals and history in a creative, dynamic tension that presents an analogical ordering of reality, an integrated conception of man’s soul,
and a picture of the authentic integration of the soul into the whole of the human person. It affirms the deep, sacramental interpenetration of the carnal and spiritual realms following the Incarnation. It proceeds with a hermeneutic of continuity, avoids the bifurcation of Gnostic tendencies, establishes man’s limits, and rejects the tyranny of the will that is the logical outcome of a purely historical conception of the soul. It reveals that, without a recourse to nature and teleology, modern insecurities actually posit their own teleologies under the guise of unfolding theories of history, be they a return to the state of nature, the will to power of the übermensch, the triumph of communism, or the coming of the rational secular state. Over and against these teleologies-turned-ideologies, Augustine and Aquinas show man’s true end and how man ought to act and be treated in light of that end. Ultimately, however, one wonders with Anthony Esolen if, “in this time, grace is needed merely to recognize that there is a nature to begin with.”32

Kieran Raval graduated from the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences in 2013 with a degree in Government.
Absolute Power
Then and Now

Matthew Vorsatz

Historical conditions have played a role in influencing a wide range of philosophical views concerning who should hold power and how that power should be used. The English Civil War (1642-1651) played a large role in influencing Hobbes’ political philosophy, suggesting to him that a strong central authority may be able to guard against the evils of discord, societal conflict, and civil war. After witnessing the damage of the English Civil War, he believed that the potential for abuse of such absolute power was an acceptable price for peace; he never really focused on how such abuse might manifest or what consequences it might bring. In contrast, the conditions following England’s Glorious Revolution (1688), the development of radical Athenian democracy, and the rise of American democracy provided “intellectual firewood” for Locke, Aristotle, and Tocqueville, as all of these historical circumstances were evidence for either why absolute authority was undesirable or why a more limited authority was preferable. Using the views of these philosophers, I will argue that Hobbes’ call for absolute authority is ill-conceived; he misunderstands human nature, allows for excessive costs in securing peace, fails to make the sovereign accountable to its goal of peace, and overlooks the negative consequences of obedience. The central danger of Hobbesian thought is the political freedom provided to the sovereign, which creates a large potential for the abuse of power.

The relationship between reason and passion is central to the thought of both Locke and Hobbes. Both argue that in the interplay between reason and passion, one will dominate the other in directing human decisions; however, they disagree on which more frequently wins out. Hobbes argues that self-love, natural equality, and willingness to do harm “make men...of evil character,” as they are “bent on securing their own interest by fair means or foul.” In stark contrast, Lockeian thought suggests that while there is the potential for self-love, bias, and self-judgment to run amuck, reason tends to triumph over such passions, as people are bound morally by the laws of nature. If human nature were governed by the passion of self-interest, then man would fail to distinguish himself from animals. As Hobbes would say, “Homo homini lupus”: man is a wolf to man. Under these circumstances, in which animalistic man allows himself to be directed by passion and self-interest, Hobbes’ pact of submission may be appropriate to restrain man’s potential for danger to others. However, degrading man’s dignity is unnecessary. Hobbes’ call for political domination is only reasonable if one first believes that man is truly an animal, similarly guided by passions.

But Aristotle tells us that reason “is what separates man from the animals.” Man alone has both the capacity to exercise reason in making decisions and the communicative ability, which allows him to form political communities. While man may occasionally lapse into primal passion, self-mastery is the natural end of the human person. Reason guides our social living. It understands that such a shared condition implies that acting in one’s self-interest to the detriment of others has a ripple effect, leading humanity to fall into the Hobbesian “war of
every man against every man.” Fear of such an outcome may temporarily ward men away, but as even Hobbes suggests, fear alone is not enough. Thus, it must be the virtue of justice that prompts man to avoid harming others and exert his liberty only “within the bounds of the law of nature.” Since reason appears to largely triumph over passion, absolute power does not seem necessary as a further check against passion and self-interest.

Yet even if human nature were dominated by passion, as Hobbes argues, there would still be no justification for unlimited absolute authority. If human nature is malleable, then social progress may be capable of guiding human nature toward a more desirable end, as deemed by majority opinion. This removes any need for absolute power, which may be biased and run counter to what is socially desirable. Hobbes’ discussion of “intellectual dissension” suggests that reason is the guiding force that moves people to the “act of disagreement,” advancing the idea that reason can have multiple correct conclusions on a single topic. While it is understandable that different experiences and degrees of knowledge may produce different lines of thinking, Hobbes’ description of the emotional reaction to disagreement highlights the fact that human nature does not change when man moves from the natural state to the civil state. In Hobbes’ eyes, being right is a matter of the “heart’s joy and pleasure,” and so disagreement can lead to “hatred and contempt” for those with conflicting views. Thus, it appears that Hobbes’ “reason” is not actually purely intellectual, but rather, guided by the passions of self-interest and egoism; were it free of emotion, it would lead to debate and dialogue, and likely some form of ideological progress. However, according to Rousseau, the “legislator is in a position to transform human nature” because of its power to make laws. A Hobbesian absolute sovereign would appear to have at least as much power as Rousseau’s legislator, and consequently, be able to force the same transformation. Yet while an absolute sovereign may be capable of changing social norms and transforming human nature to be more “moral” and rational, the goal of establishing an adaptive pluralistic environment would be undermined by the continued existence of unchecked power. Only in the absence of an absolute sovereign and the existence of pluralistic governance would such expressions of “individuality” and opinion have the capacity to continuously transform and adapt human nature to new social stimuli. And as men adjusted to the presence of diverse opinions and became more tolerant of differences, the need for an absolute sovereign would be even further reduced, if it had not already been eliminated. Even if Hobbes’ conception of human nature were accurate, it would not justify the indefinite duration of absolute authority. On this basis a people can require some form of limitation to the sovereign’s power before they agree to enter into the social contract.

While Hobbes and Aristotle would seem to agree that the goal of government is peace, they present polar opposite manifestations. Aristotle believes that the best form of government will lead to every man “act[ing] best and liv[ing] happily,” which suggests the need for a positive peace that promotes the cultivation of a societal atmosphere that will enable men to achieve such a potential. On the other hand, Hobbes believes that the end of the sovereign is the “safety of the people,” which idealizes a negative peace in which protection of the people and self-preservation of the sovereign are the goals. While both ends of government are variations on the theme of “peace,” the two versions are so different that it is misleading for them to be lumped together under a single label. As Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies, would expand: “Negative peace refers to the absence of violence, [while] positive peace is filled with positive content such as restoration of relationships, the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population, and the constructive resolution of conflicts.” As such, it would seem that a system that promotes a positive peace and order is far superior to one that merely aims for a negative...
peace. Hobbes argues that absolute power is necessary to produce such a negative peace, yet Aristotle suggests that much more can be accomplished with a mixed constitution, which calls for only limited power.

While Hobbes argues that a sovereign with absolute power will aim at the “safety of the people,” he does not provide the sovereign with any motivation to do so; the sovereign does not face any recourse for not providing peace, and so it is likely that it will not do so. Even though Hobbes’ “double obligation” has two components, that of an association amongst the people and that of the people’s obedience to the ruler in return for his protection, the two components are inseparable. In essence, everyone will simultaneously enter into the pact of submission, which, as the name suggests, largely holds the people accountable, but does nothing to make the sovereign accountable. The people all agree to “transfer all [their] own force and power” to the ruler, as “each man subjects his will to the will of a single other.” The belief is that the man or assembly will use such amalgamated power for the “public benefit,” yet even Hobbes highlights that it is a “gift,” suggesting no real responsibility. Furthermore, Hobbes beliefs that holders of sovereign power are not subject to civil law because common man’s “lack [of] self-restraint” should not be applied to the ruler. According to Hobbesian thought, the “terror of some power” is necessary for the laws of nature to be observed, and without civil law and punishment, there is no force present in this lifetime to ensure that the sovereign acts according to “justice, equality, modesty, mercy, and, in sum, do[es] to others as [it] would be done to.” Thus, it would appear that an absolute sovereign has no reason to secure peace for the people; oppositely, the sovereign may even choose not to secure peace if it conflicts with the sovereign’s self-interest.

Hobbes argues for “peace at any price,” but does not seem to consider what this “price” may be if the sovereign has absolute power. Unfortunately, this price may include not only peace itself but also the sovereign pursuing its own interest at the expense of the people’s interest. Aristotle advances the idea that the sovereign will not pursue the common interest without prodding, arguing that “passion perverts the minds of rulers, even when they are the best men.” This view suggests that there is no reason for the sovereign to be “biologically configured” any differently than the common man, so it is just as likely as the common man to pursue its own interest. Even Hobbes admits this, saying that “the laws of nature…are contrary to [man’s] natural passions,” and so it would seem that absolute power would cause the sovereign to adhere to its self-interest and disregard the calls of the common interest. Being free from the restrictions of civil law, the sovereign can easily “stay [one step] ahead of his neighbor” and best provide for its own preservation and security. This advantage allows the sovereign’s interest to always come out on top. Since “no number of citizens can rightly strip the ruler of his power unless he gives his own consent,” the people are stuck in an existence in which their interests are always subordinated to those of the sovereign. Thus, while the people have entered into the pact of submission as a means of escaping from the state of war, it appears that they have not actually escaped. Instead, the players of the game have simply been changed; it is no longer each man against each man but is now the sovereign against the people.

This new state of war is one characterized by a faint resistance to complete domination, which contrasts with the outright competition and struggle of the initial state of war. The people now live in obedience, as their wants and beliefs are crushed in favor of the wants of the sovereign. As Hobbes himself explains, the “public conscience [of] law” is simply the “private opinion” of the sovereign, and so the people’s behavior and decisions are forcibly molded to the private opinion of the sovereign. The “private [sovereign] is judge of good and evil actions,” creating “just and unjust” through his orders, which are very much unlike Locke’s idea of justice, which is derived from the natural law.
Instead, this justice is simply what is good for the sovereign, expressed in terms that help to further subjugate the people. To act unjustly is to invite punishment; consequently, acting either for the common interest or for one’s personal interest, if it is in conflict with the sovereign’s interest, will be labeled as unjust and condemned. Thus, the absolute sovereign can use the idea of justice to further subjugate the people and also to “morally” direct their actions toward the aims of the sovereign.

The fear that drives men to escape the Hobbesian state of nature blinds the people to the potential for abuse of absolute power, and leads them to ignorantly hand over both their security and well-being to the direction of the sovereign. While Locke allows for conscientious objection and the right of abdication in his social contract, consequently protecting both the minority and common interests, Hobbes makes no such allowances; his absolute power crushes the demands of the people. Without being able to “rightly strip the ruler of his power,” the citizens hand over their fate to a dangerous “God on Earth.” While Hobbes suggests that tyranny is preferable to anarchy, Rousseau may be more accurate in believing that man “prefers the most stormy liberty to a calm subjection.” After all, as Tocqueville posits, liberty is the “antidote” to the hidden dangers of unguided self-interest, moving it toward cooperation and mutual assistance instead of toward egoism and selfishness. Similarly, J.S. Mill praises the “spirit of liberty” as the “only unfailing and permanent source of improvement”; as such, the despotism of Hobbes would be seen as a “hindrance to human advancement” because it necessitates obedience. From every angle, this new state of war, that of calm subjection, is much more oppressive than the stormy liberty of Hobbes’ natural state of war. As such, fear has misguided the people that submitted to the Hobbesian pact of submission, and once they have entered the social contract, there is no getting out.

Tocqueville suggests that even if the absolute sovereign did act for the common interest, such rule would still be inherently bad; by stripping the people of liberty and forcing them into obedience, the resulting isolation cultivates selfishness and egoism. An absolute sovereign without secondary powers is disconnected from the people, as the two categories in society become “the ruler” and “the ruled,” with nothing in between. The non-ruling people are thus “equal” in their enslavement to the sovereign. Being deprived of liberty and forced to obey, men have no common link, and consequently, no way to understand that they can unite and work together. While Tocqueville applies this absolute power argument to democracy, such equality in freedom has the same consequences as equality in enslavement; the central problem is the isolation stemming from either type of equality. The “individualism born of equality” fosters this isolation, which guides self-interest toward the vices of egoism and selfishness, and not toward uniting for a common interest. Such selfishness creates a negative peace, which is characterized by an “absence of violence,” as men withdraw into their own “worlds,” so isolated that they lack the closeness and contact necessary to even produce conflict. However, as Mill suggests, conflict and tension may actually be good if they exist in an atmosphere of toleration, as they can lead to dialogue and subsequent “social progress.” In order to promote social progress and avoid becoming “stationary,” people must constantly exercise their liberty and produce such ideological conflicts; however, absolute authority, in any form, aims to restrain such liberty through equality in obedience. Thus, even if the absolute sovereign acts with the common interest in mind, there is nothing that it can provide the people with that is more valuable than their liberty, for liberty is the “only unfailing and permanent source of improvement.”

While negative democracy may be the best an absolute sovereign can do, as it pursues the common interest, such rule may still be worse than the anarchy of the natural state; the absolute sovereign may actually promote regression by restricting man’s free will. While the institution
of a negative democracy technically brings men into the civil state, this “civil state” is very similar to the state of nature in Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, which characterizes natural man as “solitary” and “alone.” The resemblance of the absolute sovereign’s civil state to Rousseau’s natural state suggests that absolute power does not actually improve on the natural state, and may even make it worse. While men in both conditions are isolated, Rousseau’s natural man at least has his free will, while Hobbes’ civil man does not. The “antidote” to the Hobbesian civil state’s isolation is liberty, which makes people recognize their need to cooperate with others and aim for mutual assistance. However, since an absolute sovereign rules through obedience, and has no motivation to restrain its sphere of influence, it seems that such absolute authority will crush liberty and cooperation; thus, absolute power appears to be incompatible with liberty. The absolute sovereign not only reinforces man’s self-interested motivation by promoting isolation but also degrades man by taking away his free will. Such a miserable condition of human existence suggests that Hobbes’ call for “peace” at all costs is unjustifiable. Sacrificing liberty for such a negative peace may actually lead to a condition worse than anarchy, in which case, avoiding the civil state would be preferable. Instead, it may be more apt to pursue Tocqueville’s idea of liberty at all costs. Liberty acts as a check against the dangers of self-interest, and promotes cooperation, social relations, and social progress. Liberty would guard against the creation of a tyranny worse than anarchy.

Carl Schmitt’s faulty understanding of Hobbesian thought highlights the dangers of a theory of absolute authority and its ability to be abused; his ideas facilitated the rise of the National Socialist Party of Germany and motivated their subsequent crimes against humanity. Both Hobbes and Schmitt opposed Locke’s view of human nature, believing that man is naturally evil, “ready...to trample reason and logic” because he is concerned with “gain[ing] the next momentary advantage.” However, such a view of human nature appears to be excessively pessimistic, as it inappropriately degrades the rational capacity of men to that of animals. With this pessimistic view of human nature, Hobbes and Schmitt both argue for absolute power as a means of forcing man into peace and holding back both civil and external war. Nazi Germany’s application of Darwinian superiority shows that absolute sovereigns are vulnerable to abusing discretion and are willing to pursue the sovereign’s interests even if they conflict with the common good. Furthermore, the harshness of Nazi rule exacted obedience and suffocated the liberty of each individual, crushing the conscientious objections of many soldiers. Even though Hitler was democratically elected and his power was supported by a large majority of the people, it was the combination of a popular mandate and absolute discretion that made him so threatening. Through these, he was able to direct the massacre of 6,000,000 Jews. Thus, Hitler, a legitimate sovereign, stands as an example of how far into evil consequences Hobbes’ theory of absolute authority can lead.

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in fear, opponents of modernity claim to watch while society turns ever inward without hope of recourse or resolution. With The Ethics of Authenticity, Charles Taylor both responds to these “knockers” of modernity and challenges those who support it—or the “boosters,” as he calls them. Rather than dismiss the rising trends of individualism, lack of wonder, and hollow political communities, Taylor suggests that we take a critical eye to the truth underlying their permanence—man’s quest for authenticity. After all, these trends would not exist if there were not once a need for them. What was this need and why do we seem to have lost sight of it? Are there ways to refocus on that need within the context of a drastically different culture? From a breadth of thought ranging from philosophy to literature, Taylor deconstructs our “modern malaises” and successfully rebuts both the hopelessness toward and celebration of contemporary society, both widely-held, leaving us, I think rightly, with “some kind of insoluble conflict” that requires that we stop searching for totalizing solutions and embrace the middling nature of identity in modernity.

The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that you have one. When it comes to modernity, recognizing that there exists a problem seems to be an easy task. Even those most in favor of modernity can recognize its pitfalls. Throughout the common critiques, we find that the initial problems only point toward a deeper conflict that fuels them, namely, the problem of modern individualism. Following suit, Taylor discusses the role of individualism in modernity as one of three phenomena unique to the times. Although Taylor places individualism on par with two other characteristics, for purposes of analysis, I think it necessary to separate them—at least initially.

Utilizing a Platonic-like heuristic, Taylor starts from the smaller in order to illuminate the larger. He spends a great deal of time exploring the pathologies and habitual patterns exhibited by the modern individual in order to illuminate the role that the individual plays in creating and sustaining the modern climate. Almost cyclically, however, Taylor shows how the pathologies suffered by the individual are spurred and solidified by these larger more structural realities. Citing Alexis de Tocqueville and further highlighting his contribution to our (sometimes critical) conception of individualism, Taylor remains within the tradition of liberal melancholy. Readers at all familiar with romantic appeals to the past will find Taylor’s claims plausible and probably equally frustrating, given his simultaneous sympathy to and reproach toward the modern individual.

The two, what I will call secondary, issues that Taylor brings to bear are disenchantment and the degradation of political community. By disenchantment, Taylor refers to the “primacy of instrumental reason” that comes to dominate
our mode of operation after the industrial revolution and its impact on our ability to appreciate rather than utilize. Similar to Martin Heidegger’s concerns in The Question Concerning Technology, Taylor’s treatment of instrumentality explains modernity’s increase in the value of utility at the expense of relational value, moral value, and even aesthetic value. Furthermore, those objects and activities once enjoyed solely for their inherent value—value as separate from function—become functional or disappear altogether.78 When applied to a lived reality, it is difficult not to recognize Taylor’s “unease that instrumental reason threatens to take over our lives” as inevitable.

The first theme that Taylor returns to throughout the book, and the theme that I think makes his argument both refreshing and initially unsatisfactory, is the idea that modernity—and all of the phenomena that comprise it—is dualist. That is say, it has both positive and negative elements, and to ignore or discredit the positive in efforts of critiquing the negative is to wholly misunderstand it. At the same time, celebrating those positive phenomena regardless of their negative counterparts is equally detrimental. By applying this bifurcated framework to each tenant of modernity he is able to look through both lenses in order to find the common root in each of them—further proving his claim that even the perverted manifestations of modernity have something in common with the benefits of modernity. In this way, “disenchantment” surely has its place within modern society; however, the degree to which we expand it beyond that which instrumental reason can operate is cause for attention.

The second theme is that of felt community. As science and mechanics become more and more prevalent, we are either stripped or relieved of the need for external contact. The power required to accomplish once laborious tasks is transferred from other people, institutions, and communities to processes, machines, and technology. Why purchase a pair of handmade shoes when infinite varieties exist at the touch of a button! Man’s need for the tight knit community of old diminishes, and without the practice of living within such a community, man’s ability to operate within community also diminishes. The quality of human connections is weakened because the need for connections is weakened. Again, this Kantian autonomy is in part the result of very positive advancements made in modernity—advancements that it would be foolish to discredit however lonely one might be. With newly found agency, individuals can choose from a variety of careers, locations, and living styles without being tied down to a particular community. Where rigid class and wealth structures existed, fluid movement among many communities marks contemporary society. Taylor implores the “knockers” to be conscious of these positive aspects in order to truly get at why the negative aspects prevail.

Taylor mentions these two phenomena in the same breath as the phenomena of individualism, but there exists a greater causal relationship flowing from the latter to the former two. From the seed of individualism sprout the branches of disenchantment and disintegrated community. Focusing on the individual and his discontents we are better able to assess the problems that lay even deeper within the seed.

Just under one hundred years before Lincoln’s “Emancipation Proclamation,” Immanuel Kant proclaimed himself and all other rational beings emancipated from their “self-incurred tutelage.” Free from the old orders, Kant urges us to take control of our reason and act out of individual volition. We might say that this preexisting order from which Kant is freed resembles what Taylor calls “backgrounds of intelligibility” or “horizons of significance.”80 I do not argue that Kant wished to let go of just any and every horizon, but rather wished to illuminate the value in the radically new horizon of scientific reason. Furthermore, Kant’s project made no mention of rejecting the larger order as a whole—the unfortunate consequence of our emancipation that I will discuss later.

It is this fine line that Taylor explores in his discussion of individualism. Forced to look at
your life and evaluate your choices, you are made aware that they all occur within the context of some communally understood framework of value and that the relationship between your actions and this framework is delicate. Taylor argues that modern individualism often neglects this delicacy and slides head first into self-centered fulfillment. Not only does our emancipation give us other options from which to choose, we often take it to discredit choosing the previous horizon at all. Without multiple choices available, the idea of choice itself comes to “confer worth.”81 The ability to choose becomes the prime aim; the thing chosen loses importance, and the context within which it is chosen matters even less. Though according to Taylor, this cannot be the whole story.

Referring to Herder, and the Romantics more generally, Taylor appeals to individualism’s genuine place of origin. For them, celebrating the individual meant encouraging the individual to listen to his inner voice, create his best person, and fulfill his personal inclinations. However, Individualism fueled man’s quest to authenticity in accordance with his place in society. That we could explore any one of these individual paths was once a discovery that introduced various ways of living—living of course, within the context, against the background, or along the horizon, of greater humanity. Needless to say, a world of diverse experiences, beliefs, and expressions is richer and frankly more enchanting. Because of this, it is necessary for the knappers of modernity to briefly put aside the obvious critiques in order to place their finger on the deeper good that is distorted by this rampant individualism. Taylor argues that it is not a function of authenticity that self-fulfillment is now sought in opposition to the bonds of solidarity, but rather a radicalization of authenticity that this is so.

What has this radicalization accomplished, and how has it accomplished this? Culturally, individuals no longer view themselves as contingent agents in relation to their community. Here, the second phenomenon is brought to light. Empowered by technological advancements, these habits of unitarily fulfilling one’s desires are entrenched by the increasing ability to do so. With a weakened need for others, our reliance on a larger horizon of significance shrinks. Increasingly divided into “authentic selves” searching for fulfillment by way of ever more standard modes—such as technology, bureaucracy, and certification—true individuality fades and the value in “choice” diminishes. We find that identity can be sectioned off into “work” and “home” and “personal,” our roles in society mimic cogs in a machine, and the invigorating ability to use reason and personal thought is paralyzed by an infinite number of choices. Completely focused on the inside, the value once afforded to the outside—value found in other individuals or communities—ceases to be the fundamental raison d’etre. Atomism, becomes the reigning truth of the day.

It is at this most central and individual level that we can pause to address the insolubility of our modern predicament. Our identity has always been in relation to our horizons of significance, intricately tying them to one another, but the extreme effects of modern advancements seem to turn us away from these horizons. Though we are to be individuals, we are individuals together and through our connection to the world around us. Not simply in a way that connects us to our laptops and our Facebook friends, but in a way that markedly impacts how we exercise our individualism. This conflict, sometimes battle, is the blessing and burden of enlightenment, and one that cannot be solved or made whole. The Enlightenment brought to the foreground this tension by juxtaposing the public and the private in a way that calls us to be authentic individuals yet secures us within the context of society at large. The self is not, and arguably was never meant to be, wholly separate from its horizons of significance but rather has the ability to navigate both spheres and many horizons. Taylor shows us that at some point, our exploration of the inner sphere of Kant’s charge became bound up with the modes and mores of industrialization and bureaucratization,83
cementing the individual on a path of self-efficiency and placing at the end of this path an incoherent aim—that of self-centered authenticity.

Wallowing in unconscious meaninglessness, we are left with a first principle—authenticity—that fails to account for its own first premise, that of necessary and inextricable connection to the world outside us. Without the background of some moral and relational context of intelligibility, authenticity is shrouded in a self-determined conception of the self to which Taylor argues that, “self-choice only makes sense because some issues are more important than others.”

Through this “misplaced moral ascent” modernity compounds its problems, narrowing its focus continuously inward while stamping out the mutually reinforcing interaction that should characterize the authentic self. From this internal point, Taylor emphasizes the importance of relational identity in understanding and working to palliate our modern illnesses.

With scientific progress and technological advancements, society is spoiled. Questions have answers, mysteries are solved, and choices are made—that which struggles is alleviated. In modernity, this comes to be expected, and it is this expectation that our faulty experience of authenticity seeks to satisfy. From the authority of the church to the authority of science to the authority of the self, the individual is given a clear-cut answer. According to Taylor, however, this is not reality, and our malaises speak truth to that. We feel disenchanted and recognize our lack of political community because there are moments of struggling with various horizons of significance that incline us to their importance. We feel tension and find fault with the modern condition because we are beings made in tension rather than peaceful resolution. La Lotta Continua, Taylor puts forth, and ongoing the struggle should be. It is not only struggle, though, but dialogue. Our dialogical nature requires the interplay between individualism and communal contingency. It is this struggle, this dialogue between our individual selves and our external circumstances, that should characterize modernity. It is the condition from which the Enlightenment springs, and to retrieve it we must take up “a battle for hearts and minds.”

In order to find authentic authenticity Taylor posits that “the belief that modern societies can be run on a single principle” should be forgotten. When the church believed that society could be run solely on divine principle, people like Kant fought back with the idea that science and reason have their place as well. The boosters who believe that society can be run on the emancipatory principle of individualism are met by theknockers who bemoan the loss of civil society. Both of these nodes fail to fully address the complexity of the human condition and fail to foster true authenticity. They attempt to sidestep the struggle that comes with individual autonomy.

Modernity favors the individual; therefore, retrieval requires what may seem to be an imposition on the individual. Taylor urges us to recognize the fact that sometimes our horizons of significance will need to make claims on us, rather than the other way around. We need to remember the benevolent and altruistic roots of scientific and medical discoveries that were able to help others—and in so doing help ourselves as individuals. Like Tocqueville, Taylor submits that modern atomism is combated by connections and associations—the kinds of tension-ridden andblurry accoutrements that make claims on us as individuals while preserving our ability to be individuals within a society. By accepting this “insoluble conflict” between the individual and society at large, we are able to reframe the dialogue of individualism and reclaim the responsibility that accompanies an authentic existence.

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In February 1994, the world was stunned by images of bodies strewn across a market in Sarajevo. Long hailed as a “European Jerusalem,” Sarajevo, with its side-by-side mosques and churches had become a battleground for a multi-ethnic conflict. Two months later, Rwandans rapidly turned on one another in an orgy of violence. In two weeks, despite traditionally high rates of intermarriage between Hutus and Tutsis, 250,000 were massacred. Who, and what, is to be blamed for the fragmentation of peace? How did these heretofore coexisting societies descend into violence?

With regard to the first question, Fearon and Laitin argue that “insurgents” are the “main factor” in driving ethnic conflict in previously peaceful societies. They are to be blamed for “ethnicizing” civil conflicts. With respect to the latter question, they posit that the key condition is the weakness of the state (proxied by lower per capita income) that aids insurgents in sparking ethnic violence. In contrast, I refine and contest their conclusions in two ways: 1) Governments can also be held responsible for increasing the salience of ethnic identities, and they are able to do so precisely because of strong state power. 2) Ethnic conflict may not solely be correlated with national income. Rather, the distribution of economic goods along ethnic lines by governments serves to reify divisions and aid conflict ethnicization.

As a prelude to the discussion, there is a need to consider the interrelated concepts of identity that ethnic conflicts are situated upon. Ethnicity is “membership in a group that shares certain common attributes” like nationality, culture and religion. Simultaneously, ethnicity is necessarily constructed vis-à-vis other groups. It relies upon the “social organization of [cultural] difference.” Ethnic conflict, on the other hand, is where at least one of the parties involved views the “conflict, its causes and potential remedies along an existing or perceived [ethnic] divide.”

Although ethnic identities are often associated with the phenotypical attributes of race (i.e. outward appearance), the biological evidence for static and discreetly defined communities is limited at best. Despite the apparent widespread differences in skin, hair and eye-color, only 0.1% of differences between gene markers exist between any two individuals. While ethnic categories are not innate, the human tendency to differentiate is innate. As Donelson Forsyth puts it, “adopting a group categorization [is] unconscious, rapid, effortless and involuntary.” Indeed, Henri Tajfel’s study shows that all it takes to foster discrimination is to tell someone that they “belong to a particular group.”

It follows that ethnic conflict, as an extension of ethnicity, may not only be socially constructed, but may also be easily defined by key individuals. Leaders and intellectuals play a disproportionate role in forging an ethnic identity vis-à-vis other groups. Fearon and Laitin emphasize the responsibility of insurgents, who,
enabled by state weakness, are able to ethnicize a conflict. For example, the aftermath of Yugoslav breakup saw many Croats borrowing the ideology of Franco Tuđman’s “thousand-year dream of statehood” in contrast to a millennium of Serbian oppression. Nevertheless, Stef Janesen points out that the “thousand-year dream” is at best a stylized fact. Although Serbian oppression may well have occurred, Yugoslavia had only existed for seventy-five years, indicating that individuals pulled “experiences [outside of their] individual recollection, and incorporate[d] them into their personal narratives.” As in any nationalist movement, thinkers and leaders play a *sine qua non* role, because they help to coalesce these recollections into coherent rhetoric.

Hence, whilst Fearon and Laitin may be right that insurgents may ethnicize conflicts after the fact, the scope of accountability ought to be broadened to include governments too. For instance, Count Otto von Bismarck, Germany’s first chancellor, was instrumental in defining German nationalism as Prussian conservatism, and opposed to Catholics and Jews, whom he termed “Reichsfiende” (enemies of the state). Both insurgents and states establish symbols and institutions to help reinforce the “us” vs. “them” divide.

Who ought to be held accountable for ethnicizing populations toward violence? Fearon and Laitin imply that insurgents are only capable of shaping a conflict along ethnic lines because they are able to impose their authority where state power is absent. By their reasoning, through the same mechanism—imposition of power—governments should therefore be better candidates for heightening ethnic fault-lines than insurgents are. Governments can be doubly faulted: First, governments may establish ethnic divides in order to facilitate their rule. This tactic was most evident in colonial governments seeking to prevent concerted uprisings. Second, government may whip up nationalist sentiments for irredentist and ideological purposes. In particular, newly independent states may be especially tempted to do so.

Both policies of divide and rule, and stirring up nationalist fervor, can then help to create ready platforms of historical grievances for future insurgents to seize upon once state power has declined. To be clear, governments may *not necessarily* implement such discriminatory policies, but should they choose to do so, they will rely on a strong state presence—the very variable Fearon and Laitin posit forestalls ethnic wars.

On the first count, colonial governments may deliberately enact geographic, economic and militaristic “divide and rule” policies in order to exert control over the native population. Geographical differentiation was manifested in the British-imposed Jackson Plan in Malaya that divided towns into four ethnic quarters, so that they could be more easily ruled. Economic discrimination was similarly a result of colonialists favoring particular ethnic groups over others to ascendancy to the local civil service, such as the Indians in Burma or the Acholi in Uganda. This was often starkly accompanied by British suppression of indigenous rebellions using another ethnic group. For instance, Indians and Karens were used to combat lowland Burmese rebellions, while the Acholi were pitted against the Banyoro in Uganda. These colonial recruits may not have had pre-existing animosity or even distinct ethnic identities from the rebels, but were more willing to open fire on rebels, since they came from a different area.

Ironically, the colonial policy of “divide et imperia,” which aimed to “discourage the creation of a single dominant ethnic group” that could challenge their rule, became a self-fulfilling prophecy. Although strong state power could artificially elevate one group over the other, colonial departure often heralded ethnic conflict along the very lines they had drawn. Myths of the Karens as “colonial collaborators,” or the Acholi as a “martial tribe,” then served as ready matériel for leaders of ethnic conflicts to tap into. For instance, the Burmese government’s military campaign in 1971 to “turn the [Irrawaddy] delta ‘white’...to clean the area of
“[Karen] insurgents” can in part be attributed to the historical legacies left by the British.\textsuperscript{114} In the same vein, almost 500,000 Acholis were murdered by the Idi Amin regime in the 1970s,\textsuperscript{115} and Acholis currently dominate the ranks of the Lord Resistance Army.

On the second count, modern governments are not exempt from blame either. In the course of territorial expansion, or nationalist agendas, governments may also enact discriminatory policies that highlight salience. Irredentism is often fueled by the rhetoric that builds up notions of the “us.” Hitler justified his annexation of Czechoslovakia and Poland on the presence of ethnic German minorities who lived there, presumably on the basis of shared heritage and language.\textsuperscript{116} This was despite the wide regional variations in dialects that rendered German mutually unintelligible in some cases.\textsuperscript{117} In contrast, Jews, who spoke the same dialects and lived in the same areas for centuries, were excluded in the Nazi ideology of \textit{Volksgemeinschaft} (people’s community) as the “other.”\textsuperscript{118}

As with colonial powers, governments require pervasive state influence to disseminate their propaganda; the Nazi regime was also backed by economic growth and could thus provide radio sets, theatres and newsreels.\textsuperscript{119} There is thus a direct link between ethnicization and state power. Governments are both willing and able to perpetuate ethnic violence. On the one hand, they have the incentive to reify tensions for the sake of garnering legitimacy. On the other, they possess the capability to entrench ideas of discrimination throughout the populace through speeches, the news and public imagery.

Moreover, once these tensions are heightened, it is possible to witness governments as the main perpetrators of violence. Indeed, extreme forms of discrimination (i.e. genocides) are often state-sanctioned, since they require economic heft to perpetuate.\textsuperscript{120} In the prelude to the Rwandan genocide, Hutu President, Juvenal Habyarmana, “called for the population to…defend itself,” while state-owned companies distributed firearms amongst households.\textsuperscript{121} Similarly, the main perpetrators of crimes against humanity and war crimes in Kosovo were institutions like the Yugoslav Army and the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs.\textsuperscript{122}

What other salient factors account for ethnic violence? Fearon and Laitin argue that economic growth also has a negative relationship with ethnic wars, primarily because it allows for a well-financed bureaucracy and counter-insurgency force,\textsuperscript{123} but also because it raises the stakes for young men who wish to join an insurgency.\textsuperscript{124} This relationship may be challenged in two ways: Firstly, the relationship may be endogenous—a lack of economic growth may itself be due to ethnic discrimination by individuals and groups over resources. Secondly, even with economic growth, pre-existing discrimination can create a vicious cycle of economic inequality amongst ethnic groups, therefore increasing the tensions that precipitate conflict.

One way of accounting for ethnic discrimination is through the functionalist lens. Ethnic discrimination may be the result an individual’s economic incentive to deny others the opportunity to access resources, in order to maximize one’s own share.\textsuperscript{125} In this account, ethnic differences are highlighted, because they serve as easy markers to exclude others.\textsuperscript{126}

While individuals may participate in discriminatory economic structures, it is governments that establish these differences through policies. For instance, Malaysia’s constitution guarantees economic advantages for indigenous Malays, while the Belgians reserved places in the civil service for those with finer features (the Tutsis).\textsuperscript{127} As individuals and governments perpetuate systems of privilege, public goods fail to be adequately provided and inefficiencies arise. For instance, Indian Hindus sought to exclude Muslims from water supplies, while Malaysia’s affirmative action program bred low levels of competition in the marketplace.\textsuperscript{128} A vicious cycle ensues, where institutionalized discrimination stifles growth. As demonstrated in the Kuala Lumpur riots in 1969, poor and
uneven economic growth may explode into ethnic conflict. The resultant violence then further entrenches ethnic divisions.

Moreover, once established in the popular consciousness, ethnic differences may become difficult to dislodge. Donald Horowitz describes this as “ranked systems” where economic and ethnic status and intertwined.129 In such systems, even with high levels of per capita income, economic goods may still be, or perceived to be, distributed along ethnic lines.130 For instance, even with special rights, a widely held grievance prior to the Kuala Lumpur riots was that Malays only held 1.5% of corporate wealth.131 A second vicious cycle is thus created, where economic and ethnic cleavages reinforce one another. The economic grievances that Fearon and Laitin suggest are helpful in fomenting unrest are further agitated when perceived through an ethnic lens. Young men may feel disenfranchised by economic and ethnic disadvantages. Arab nations with high income per capita levels are a case in point.132 The onset of the Arab Spring took on the undertones of Sunni/Shia majorities protesting ethnic nepotism; they were in turn violently suppressed by their Shia/Sunni elite.133

In the final analysis, Fearon and Laitin are myopic in laying the blame for ethnic violence mostly at the feet of insurgents. Whilst insurgents may play the role of a catalyst in sparking grievances into conflict, governments often set the stage for ethnic identities to be reified in the first place. Conversely, this implies that the foundational factors of state strength and economic growth may not only fail to ameliorate ethnic tensions but may in fact aggravate them. Strong states possess the robust communications infrastructure to build national myths and solidify group identity. Strong economic growth can also be distributed along ethnic lines, perpetuating a cycle of ethnic grievances. All are fair targets in the blame game for ethnic conflict. Neither insurgents nor governments are exempt from causing the descent into violence.

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When talking about politics, we casually make use of the terms “Left” and “Right” as if they had self-evident meanings and represented watertight conceptual categories. These terms are familiar and frequently used, and most of us have ideas and images that we readily associate with them in our heads. In addition, a duality is a simple and intuitive analytical framework that we find easy and natural to use. As a result, we utilize the Left/Right dichotomy in our political discussions without assessing whether it is fully coherent.

However, even greater problems arise when political philosophers attempt to impose coherence on the Left/Right polarity. When these concepts are detached from their historical context and abstracted into a comprehensive scheme encompassing all possible political positions, two major problems arise: the problem of vague conceptual definitions, and the problem of imbalance. The vagueness and imbalance arise from the fact that Left and Right derive their meanings (not to mention usefulness) from major historical trends that serve as an “anchor” for political terms, without which political schemata are free-floating and fairly useless constructions. Historical context is therefore important because it not only clarifies political distinctions but also sets the framework for the definitions of political concepts. Given that the end of one historical trend and the beginning of another may alter the definitions of political concepts significantly, ignoring the historical context is a recipe for confusion.

In the early 1990s, as the Soviet Union collapsed and long-established political landmarks in Italy seemed to shift overnight, political scientist Norberto Bobbio felt the need to tackle directly the question of whether the Left/Right dichotomy was still sensible and coherent. His book *Left and Right* presents a short and trenchantly argued answer: yes, there is a simple and stable principle that divides left from right; more than this, the distinction is “exhaustive” (i.e., all political movements are one or the other) and it is fundamental and elemental to politics. Such a clear-cut and balanced duality is what we may be assuming when we casually use the terms left and right.

Bobbio’s admirably concise definition is that the Left values equality, while the Right values inequality. Bobbio intends his polarity to be neutral: he believes that neither “equality” nor “inequality” need necessarily include any moral charge and that the terms can be purely descriptive. By choosing two opposite terms, he avoids the problem of having to assign a positive or substantive principle to each of the two terms, like Dino Cofrancesco does when he says that the Left is based on liberation, while the Right is based on tradition. Bobbio thinks that choosing two such “axiologically positive” terms is a problem because, as two separate categories, they may mix together in a way that pure opposites do not. Instead, he chooses a term and its...
opposite, which are comprehensive of the entire range of political positions and cannot overlap.

Nevertheless, Bobbio’s pristinely logical schema suffers from two serious problems, both of which he partially acknowledges. The first problem is that the concept upon which he builds his entire framework—equality—does not have an obvious meaning. Bobbio admits that any political argument based on equality must address the following questions: “Between whom? Of what? On the basis of which criteria?” These are indeed huge and pressing questions. After all, Aristotle believed that equality meant that things that are alike should be treated alike, yet he also believed that certain people were “by nature slaves.” Legal theorist Peter Westen, discussing this Aristotelian definition, concludes that equality, as a principle, is reducible to the trivial and contentless proposition that “cases are alike, unless they are different.” The point is that a concept like equality requires a context of understanding, a whole set of moral assumptions, if it is to have any meaning.

The second problem with Bobbio’s polarity is that it is unbalanced. In his attempt to create a duality with no overlap whatsoever, he selected a principle (equality) and its negation (inequality). This, unfortunately, is not a true duality like black and white. It is more like the distinction between black and not-black, the obvious problem being that there are many colors that are not black. Inequality is simply the negation of equality, and even if there are moral standards established such that “equality” has an obvious meaning, there will still be many conflicting ways in which to violate that principle. Bobbio himself recognizes this issue by saying, “one could almost say that the Left/Right distinction revolves around the concept of the Left, and that the variations are based upon the different possible opposites to the principle of equality, which can be variously the inegalitarian principle, the hierarchical principle or the authoritarian principle.” Political scientist J. A. Laponce phrases the issue well when he says that, in our discussions of political concepts, Left is “semantically dominant” over Right, and that it is the “anchor term” of the political polarity. Inequality is therefore not a coherent and unified principle in the same way that equality is, making Bobbio’s polarity an unbalanced one. This problem of imbalance is typical of schemes that try to establish a logical duality on the basis of a single “anchor term.”

The two flaws that mar Bobbio’s polarity may be avoided by an understanding of Left and Right that is based on historical trends. In line with the first criticism that the Left’s principle of equality requires additional cultural and moral context, the political tendencies that we know as Left and Right should not be defined only by abstract principles but also by their historical and cultural context. The fact that the terms Left and Right only came into usage at a specific historical moment is empirical evidence for this idea. The unbalanced nature of the Left/Right polarity is a consequence of the fact that our concept of the political Left is connected to a coherent historical “anchor” trend, whereas the Right is more of a negative category—a grab-bag of internal and external oppositions to the anchor trend of the Left.

The French National Assembly of 1789, in which the terms were first used, is a frequently-cited starting point for the establishment of the Left/Right dichotomy. French historian René Rémond opts for the Restoration of 1815, after the French Revolutionary period was over. British historian Tony Judt argued for a 180-year cycle of ideological politics that began in 1789 and wound down after 1969; one could just as easily create a 200-year cycle ranging from 1789 to the collapse of Communism in 1989. These time limits are important and telling. They indicate that Left and Right have historically circumscribed meanings, and cannot be transmuted into pure abstract categories. When a scholar like Bobbio eschews historical analysis and tries to base his understanding of politics on abstract principles, then, as Rémond says, “does it not follow as night the day that any political society must reproduce this eternal dialogue? Athens, in this view, had its men of the Left and its Rightist leagues.”
Indeed, if Bobbio is correct, then every society on earth throughout history must conform to his fundamental and comprehensive scheme.

The fact that historians like Rémond and Judt see Left and Right and ideological politics as defined by a certain historical timeframe points to the importance of a specific cultural context of understanding. Two scholars who have taken an extremely long-term view on the development of political and social conditions in the modern West may help explain this culturally defined context: Alexis de Tocqueville and Charles Taylor. Tocqueville wrote about the monumental political changes that occurred in France and the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries, but he believed that these changes were part of a long continuum that went back “seven hundred years.”

“The gradual development of the equality of conditions,” he writes in his introduction to Democracy in America, “is therefore a providential fact, and it possesses all the characteristics of a divine decree: it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress.” Charles Taylor, on the other hand, writes in his book A Secular Age about the modern development of secularity and an “exclusive humanism” during the period 1500-2000. These two scholars situate their theoretical discussions of politics and society solidly within a shifting cultural and historical context, a framework which Taylor calls a “context of understanding.”

While the political categories under discussion do not necessarily fit perfectly with Taylor’s narrative, I suggest that he is correct in identifying a “Reform Master Narrative” of modernity in which the modern condition is characterized by the emergence of a “humanism of freedom and mutual benefit” or a humanistic “ethic of beneficent order,” and that this trend anchors our political concepts, including the Left/Right polarity. The principles that are central to our modern political imaginations—liberty, equality, rights, and the rest—find their definitions only within this trajectory. Our answers to Bobbio’s questions “equality between whom, of what, on which criteria?” are defined by the cultural context of understanding provided by this rationalizing movement toward a humanism of freedom and mutual benefit. This is why Aristotle could believe that equality and slavery were compatible, while for us this seems illogical and perverse. By avoiding an undue reliance on abstract principles and focusing on long-term and durable historical trends that appear to be “providential” or that provide the “Master Narrative” for society, Tocqueville and Taylor accurately capture the dependence of political terms on their historical context.

The focus on historical trends not only helps to clarify the problem of vague definitions, it also helps to explain the problem of imbalance. Tocqueville and Taylor would agree that there is a fundamental and long-term social-cultural-political trend that “anchors” other developments within society, a trend which is in fact coherent and identifiable. My argument is that this trend is broadly identifiable with the aspirations of the political Left, in all its various liberal, authoritarian, pragmatic, and utopian forms, while the Right is defined mainly in its opposition to the Left. Habitual labels like “progressive,” “conservative,” and “reactionary,” which indicate either support for or opposition to a trend in motion, provide some support for thinking in this way.

This implies imbalance, since Left is unambiguously used as the “anchor term” or “anchor trend,” while “Right” is defined purely by its deviation from this trend. But there are many ways to oppose or criticize the movement toward equality and the humanism of mutual benefit. Obviously, continued allegiance to the Old Regime’s hierarchical cosmology based on the union of throne and altar would constitute one way to oppose the general “Leftist” trend. Parliamentary conservatism, Burkean Whiggism, and authoritarian nationalism are others. These three correspond to the three main currents that Rémond identified in the French Right, namely Legitimism, Orleanism, and Bonapartism, which
he admits proceed from “dissimilar conceptions of the social order and of political philosophy.”

We could also point to the elitist philosophy of Nietzsche, which, according to Taylor, broke with the humanism of freedom and mutual benefit, yet has little in common with traditional or conservative Rightism. Though all of these different currents oppose the Left and are therefore on the Right, they lack any fundamental unity, and in some cases proceed from diametrically opposed premises. They find their place and their coherence only through their relationship with the anchor trend of equality and the humanism of mutual benefit. The fact that this is a trend or movement also helps to explain why parties may seem to shift around on the Left/Right scale over time, appearing first to be radical and later conservative, a phenomenon which would be hard to explain by reference to unchanging, abstract principles.

If our political definitions only make sense within a historical narrative or movement, what then should we make of claims that this master narrative, trend, or ideological cycle is coming to an end? The end of the Cold War caused many people to claim that the Left/Right polarity was defunct. Judt believes that ideological struggles had basically come to an end by 1969. Likewise, political scientist Francis Fukuyama famously claimed that the “end of history” had come about through the triumph of liberal democracy. Others point to the emergence of Green and environmental parties as further proof that old political divisions no longer define the scope of politics. Although one should avoid simplistic formulations, there is something to these claims. It is undeniable that the basic principles of the humanism of mutual benefit have come to be generally accepted—principles like popular sovereignty, some sort of legal and/or natural rights and equality before the law, and a secular and horizontal conception of social organization. The pre-modern legitimist currents of the Right have long since shriveled up, replaced by Rightist philosophies that accept the tenets of democratic legitimacy and popular sovereignty.

If this cycle of ideological politics is coming to an end of sorts, it is imperative to think about what may replace it. Several social and technological advances of the current day may have potential to create a new historical “context of understanding” and fundamentally alter our conceptions of basic political principles. These advances include the increasing sophistication of our empirical measurements of mental capabilities, genetic engineering, transhumanism, and mind-computer interaction.

As technological means for measuring and quantifying human capabilities, especially mental capabilities, become more sophisticated and credible, we may see an intensification of our current meritocratic understanding of equality. Elite individuals may come to believe their high social positions to be rationally and scientifically grounded—to believe themselves to be rulers “by nature.” Crucially, they may still hold to the principle of equality, but as argued above, this principle derives its meaning from the broader social and moral framework of society. An advance with similar implications will be our increasing ability to analyze human genetics and select offspring based on their genetic signatures. This may also intensify a meritocratic understanding of equality, in that individuals with even minor physical or mental disadvantages may be considered, not unfortunate, but rather the products of parental irresponsibility.

Another advance is the technological enhancement of mental or sensory capabilities, through drugs or mechanical or genetic enhancements to the body—so-called transhumanism. Even in the hermetic world of “transhumanists” (people who support enhancing human capabilities through genetic modification and technology), there is debate about whether transhumanism is consonant with Enlightenment ideals or whether it is an inevitably elitist philosophy more in line with Nietzsche’s Übermensch.

Green politics in Europe may be seen as another emergent political current, which promotes a certain vision of the correct way for
humans to exist within the natural environment. This vision is in many cases radically critical of technology and the current organization of human society. Whether the ecological movement actually attains broader political relevance or remains something more akin to an interest group is yet to be seen.

In conclusion, a long-term historical viewpoint suggests that Left and Right are not abstract categories with self-evident meanings, but are instead concepts that depend on historical and cultural “anchor” trends, like the emergence of an idea of equality framed by the humanism of mutual benefit and order. Tocqueville described such trends as follows: “it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress.” In order to properly analyze politics, culture, and society, we must look to the past, present, and future to identify the basic anchoring trends that provide the definition for basic political concepts like equality and shape the framework of understanding in which polarities like Left and Right operate.

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For a city-state that is barely a spot on the world map, Singapore’s political system has intrigued both political leaders and economic scholars alike. While Singapore has been hailed as an “economic miracle” and a model for developing and even developed countries to emulate, the People’s Action Party (PAP), Singapore’s current ruling party, has held the reins of political power continuously for over half a century now—the country’s entire post-independence history. This impressive electoral success and political dominance of the party have raised questions about the fairness of political contestation in Singapore, with many describing the city-state as a “benevolent dictatorship” or as an authoritarian regime. However, the government of Singapore has maintained in its rhetoric that it is firmly democratic, albeit not by Western liberal standards. Through a historical account of the principal socio-political developments in Singapore, this paper will attempt to situate Singapore’s regime type within the typology of modern regime ideal types proposed by Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan. In order to accurately discern the current regime classification, this paper will only be assessing the economic, political, and social developments in the nation after 2001.

According to Linz and Stepan, modern regime types can be classified into five ideal types: democratic, authoritarian, totalitarian, post-totalitarian, and sultanistic. These regime types differ in terms of four distinctive dimensions: pluralism, ideology, mobilization, and leadership. In the context of this paper, only the democratic and authoritarian ideal types are relevant for our assessment of Singapore’s regime type.

Before outlining the socio-political developments in Singapore and analyzing them in the context of Linz and Stepan’s typology, it is worthwhile to first describe both the democratic and authoritarian regimes in terms of the four dimensions as stated. First, democracies are said to have responsible and extensive economic, political, and social pluralism that is legally protected, as well as an ideological commitment to citizenship and procedural rules of contestation. Regime mobilization is low, but there is high citizen participation that is autonomously generated by aspects of civil society and competing political parties. Another defining characteristic of democracies is leadership renewal that is produced by free and regular elections.

Next, with regard to authoritarian regimes: while they usually have extensive economic and social pluralism, they are said to contain “limited, not responsible” political pluralism with some capacity for semi-opposition. Such regimes lack a highly defined guiding ideology and have a diffused mentality. Political mobilization is neither intensive nor extensive in an authoritarian regime since inclusive networks of associations are rarely developed. The leadership in such regimes is characterized by the exercising of political power within “formally ill-defined but actually quite predictable norms.”

Having briefly discussed the regime types, we will move on to evaluate Singapore’s political system based upon the four dimensions of regime type as outlined by Linz and Stepan. Starting with pluralism, Singapore can be said to have extensive social and economic pluralism. The striking characteristic of the social scene in
Singapore is its diversity of ethnic communities, which reflect its extensive social pluralism. Although it is home to distinct ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions, Singapore allows each group to hold by its own ideas, religions, and languages. The city’s inhabitants are granted relative social autonomy and organizational autonomy as seen by the existence of various non-governmental organizations, such as the Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE), Nature Society, and Singapore Indian Education Trust (SIET), which challenge the state in issues of public concern: gender relations, nature conservation and ethnic institutions, respectively. In addition, Singapore’s highly developed free-market economy and autonomous private sector reflect its extensive economic pluralism. The adoption of free market has allowed open competition between domestic and foreign firms, and minimal government intervention exists in the management of firms.

Political pluralism, on the other hand, is limited in Singapore, despite it being a constitutional democracy. Although there are several legal opposition parties, including the Worker’s Party of Singapore and the Singapore Democratic Party, the PAP has held ceaseless rule of the country and enjoys a near majority in the country’s parliament. The ruling party has never once garnered less than 60% of the total votes. Indeed, by just looking at the results of the past three general elections in Singapore, it is evident that the PAP still garners significant majority support from the electorate despite a slow but gradually increasing support for the opposition. In the 2001 elections, the PAP won 82 of the 84 parliamentary seats and obtained 75% of votes. The 2006 elections saw the ruling party retain its 82 seats but the vote secured dipped to 66%. The 2011 elections witnessed a heated campaign effort by the opposition that won them 6 of the 87 seats, leaving 81 seats for the ruling party which only received 60% of the overall vote.

In view of the marginal presence of the opposition, the incumbent has made provisions for increased political pluralism in parliament: constitutional amendments were approved that allow the appointment of up to nine Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMPs) from the opposition. This scheme was intended to ensure minimum opposition participation in the Parliament and to allow for alternative views to be expressed. However, while the NCMPs “have all the rights, privileges and duties of elected MPs,” they are not allowed to “vote on constitutional amendments.” Some opposition parties have expressed distaste for the NCMP scheme, claiming that it is a tactic to limit political pluralism and “a ploy by the ruling [PAP] to dissuade people from voting for the Opposition.”

Although elections can be deemed to be free from rigging or corruption, with Singapore ranked fifth out of some 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International’s 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index, strict regulations do constrain responsible political pluralism in Singapore. The Sedition Act, for example, outlaws seditious speech, organization or distribution of political material. Domestic media too is constrained, with news coverage and editorials accused to be in general support of the government and its policies. Moreover, the Elections Department is under the purview of the Prime Minister’s office, and the absence of a structurally independent election authority has been identified as a potential source of diminished political pluralism. Thus, in spite of its autonomous socio-economic pluralism and the presence of some opposition voices in its Parliament, Singapore’s political system leans toward the authoritarian regime type with respect to pluralism since the country cannot be said to have a responsible political scene where contestation exists without hindrances.

In terms of ideology, Singapore is not governed by a teleological or elaborate guiding ideology. Instead, the government actively tries to cultivate civic engagement among the citizenry by promoting a vision for the county actively shaped by the citizens. In 1999, the government launched the “Singapore 21 Vision” (Vision for
Singapore in the 21st Century) after much public consultation on social and political issues. One of the five tenets proposed was “Active Citizenship: Making the Difference,” which was intended for the citizens to be “participants, and not mere observers” in the nation-building process. Singapore also prides itself in being a meritocratic society, with equal legal rights for women as men and no legal racial discrimination. These attributes point toward the “extensive intellectual commitment to citizenship” that Linz and Stepan describe as being characteristic of democracies.

With regard to mobilization, neither extensive nor intensive political mobilization can be observed in Singapore, except during election rallies. The violence during the racial riots of 1964 in Singapore has been the basis of constant reminders by the government of the delicate nature of the social fabric in Singapore. In fact, the government has often wielded racial harmony and stability to justify its restrictions on freedom of speech and assembly. For example, the Societies Act requires organizations of more than 10 members to register with the government, and organized political activity is restricted only to registered parties and association. Even then, public assemblies and political speeches are highly regulated and require the approval of the police. In 2007, the Singapore Democratic Party (an opposition party) had planned on hosting a public forum on the ministerial pay-hike and invited members of the European Parliament to attend. However, the government argued that foreigners did not have the right to partake in the internal affairs of the state “from within its borders” and prevented the event from taking place by barring the European Parliament members from attending. The Speakers’ Corner, a designated area for lawful demonstration and speech was launched in 2000 to encourage citizen participation. Though generally considered a step in the democratic direction, such events still face stiff regulations and are not immune from other existing laws such as defamation and sedition. The right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association is stated explicitly in Singapore’s constitution, and while some form of mobilization appears occasionally, the stiff restrictions that accompany them would characterize Singapore as an authoritarian regime under Linz and Stepan’s framework.

Finally, the leadership in Singapore is constrained by laws and power and is exercised within formally defined norms. General elections form the basis for the selection of leaders in Singapore and these elections are conducted every five years as stipulated in the country’s constitution. Similar to the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, the leader of the party that manages to obtain the majority of the parliamentary seats is named the Prime Minister, who then forms the Cabinet. Nevertheless, given that the current Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, is the son of the country’s first Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, the government has attracted accusations of dynastic tendency in the leadership. That said, considering the lack of corruption in elections, such allegations should be considered baseless and that free elections are indeed the means by which leadership in Singapore is chosen, just as in a democratic regime.

On the whole, the non-congruent characteristics displayed by Singapore in the four dimensions of classifying modern regimes reflect the shortcoming of Linz and Stepan’s typology in accounting for Singapore’s regime type. Although it seems fitting to classify Singapore as a democratic regime based on its ideology and leadership, it could also be classified as an authoritarian regime with respect to its limited pluralism and mobilization. Such non-conformity points to the possibility of Singapore being classified as a “hybrid” regime. However, the use of “hybrid” regimes as a residual category to house countries that exhibit both democratic and authoritarian rule tends to mask important differences between such countries. For example, although Russia and Mexico during the 1990s combined democratic rules with authoritarian governance and were classified as “hybrid” regimes, they differed in fundamental ways and degrees. The ambiguity of the “hybrid” regime
as an analytical category thus demands greater specificity in classification to distinguish the degree to which democratic norms are used to legitimate authoritarian rule.

Competitive authoritarianism, a particular type of “hybrid” regime defined by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way,\textsuperscript{173} contains the specificity required to distinguish between the democratic and authoritarian features in Singapore’s political system. Levitsky and Way propose that although regimes may mix authoritarian and democratic features, they can be distinguished by the degree of democratic contestation present in the regime and classified as a fully authoritarian, competitive authoritarian or democratic regime.\textsuperscript{174} Democracies have extensive commitment to procedural rules of contestation while fully authoritarian regimes have no such commitment. In fact, many authoritarian regimes often violate such democratic rules or reduce them to a mere façade. Competitive authoritarian regimes fall short of both ideal types; instead of openly violating formal democratic rules, they attempt to manipulate them by subtle means of persecution. Significant arenas of contestation through which opposition factions may challenge or even defeat the incumbent are the electoral arena, legislature, judiciary and the media. Hence, analyzing such arenas of contestation in Singapore would enable a more accurate regime classification.

As discussed earlier, elections are generally free of massive fraud and the electoral arena is not abused or extensively manipulated by the ruling party. However, the ruling party has been observed to occasionally take advantage of its position as the incumbent to influence the electoral arena. The PAP, for example, has been charged with accusations of gerrymandering and weakening opposition contestation.\textsuperscript{175} The electoral boundaries of constituencies in Singapore have been redrawn several times with the government arguing that the redrawing of boundaries is essential because of “the high geographical mobility of Singaporeans.” The opposition parties, however, have claimed that this gives them too little time to work the ground and severely impedes their contestation. Moreover, the government has often announced in its election campaigns that it would prioritize public housing upgrades to constituencies that support the PAP. This linking of votes to incentives might be construed as an abuse of state power, with critics questioning the measure as a way for the incumbent to influence votes and ensure electoral success.\textsuperscript{176} The incumbent thus does not actively seek to eliminate institutions in the electoral arena, as would be expected in an authoritarian regime, but rather subtly manipulates state power to influence the elections, as is characteristic of a competitive authoritarian regime.

The judicial and legislative arenas in Singapore have widely been credited to be transparent and free of corruption or state influence. The legislature in Singapore is indeed the focal point of opposition activity in Singapore, largely due to the insufficient platforms for political expressions. However, defamation lawsuits against opposition politicians that sometimes drive them into bankruptcy are not new and are seen as a repression of democracy. The judiciary is reputed to be efficient, and largely respects due process rights. Nevertheless, the government’s overwhelming success in court cases has raised questions about the independence of the judiciary. That said, such claims and criticisms have yet to be proven true, and the judiciary is still generally regarded as transparent. Thus, the judicial and legislative arenas may be said to be free of abuse by the incumbent and can be concluded to be largely favorable for political contestation, as in the case of a democracy.\textsuperscript{177} However, the occasional defamation suits that suppress democratic political expression would cause Singapore to be classified as a competitive authoritarian state.

Media outlets in Singapore are neither entirely independent, as in a democratic state, nor entirely state owned and systematically repressed, as in an authoritarian regime. Although touted as private enterprises, government-linked companies own the two corporations that
Shades of Grey

dominate the media arena, MediaCorp and Singapore Press Holdings Limited (SPH), and have been known to influence news coverage.\(^\text{178}\) However, the relaxation of prohibitions on campaign rallies and online electioneering in the 2011 general elections, as well as the neutral coverage of the elections by the media corporations, reflect signs of an increasingly free press in Singapore. Local publications are not pre-vetted but are expected to be responsible in their reporting and ensure that the content takes racial and religious sensitivities into consideration. In general, the restrictive state of media and press in Singapore is typical of the competitive authoritarian regime that Levitsky and Way describe.

In conclusion, both democratic and authoritarian characteristics are firmly embedded within the political system of Singapore. As a result, Singapore cannot be neatly situated within Linz and Stepan’s typology of the five regime ideal types. The importance of specifying “hybrid” regimes as distinct regime types becomes apparent when confronted with the task of classifying Singapore. Singapore is neither strictly democratic—since some form of political repression is present due to conservative concerns for stability—nor strictly authoritarian due to the non-explicit management of the arenas of contestation. The country therefore fits the model of a competitive authoritarian system, in which an institutionalized ruling party monopolizes the political arena, using coercion, media control, and other means to formally or legally impede democratic challenges by the opposition parties, while at the same time allowing for extensive socio-economic pluralism and limited political pluralism.

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The tendency to attribute to the Puritans the widest and grandest developments in the West often proves to be misleading. These speculations range from the origins of American democracy in Alexis de Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* to the rise of modern capitalism in Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. More recently still, and perhaps more convincingly, certain twentieth-century Puritan scholars have noted another apparent connection between the Puritan emphasis on covenants and the development of the idea of social contract in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century enlightenment thought.\(^{179}\)

Claims such as these, however, often conflate contract and covenant as synonymous political concepts without adequately taking into account the theological underpinnings of these terms.

Understanding the factors at work in America’s founding proves difficult without proper regard for the differing theological and anthropological aspects that distinguish Lockean Liberalism from Puritan thought. On the one hand, an overemphasis on Locke would lead to claiming, mistakenly, the *Second Treatise on Government* as the sole inspiration for the U.S. Constitution, thereby neglecting America’s Puritan heritage and its influence on the founding fathers. On the other hand, an overemphasis on the particular strand of Protestantism known as “Puritanism” and its role in the creation of the U.S. constitution would neglect the Enlightenment’s impact on the system of government envisioned by the founding fathers. While it falls out of the scope of this paper to explicate fully the implications of either system of thought in the American historical context, it is the purpose of this paper to demonstrate that fundamental differences exist that result in the mutual incompatibility of the Puritan and Lockean worldviews.

To demonstrate the difference between a Puritan and a Lockean worldview, both sources must be thoroughly examined. This paper will compare Puritan covenant theology as presented in the Westminster Confession of Faith with John Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government*. When juxtaposed, the extent of overlap between the two can be more readily determined. This overlap, in turn, will demonstrate that the Lockean contract and the Puritan covenant cannot be conflated as synonymous or interchangeable because they are built on fundamentally different theological foundations. Even though these two concepts may appear similar in form and operation, underneath this thin veneer lie vast theological differences regarding man’s relationship to God, original sin, and revelation.

Determining precisely what constitutes Puritanism is difficult, and remains a continued source of controversy and debate. Throughout the past one hundred years, scholars have wrangled over definitions. For instance, English
Contract and Covenant Contrasted

historian J.P. Kenyon judiciously warns against abusing the word “Puritanism” and is content to adopt Lawrence Stone’s vague definition of Puritanism as “a generalized conviction of the need for independent judgment based on conscience and bible reading.” However, other historians in the field, such as G.R. Elton, are content to define Puritans as those who sought “a religion ‘purified’ of all the works of Rome.” As if to ignore the challenge altogether, the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church itself acknowledges, ‘the term ‘Puritan’... never had a precise use...” In light of the difficulty in arriving at a common definition, examining the causes of such controversies sheds light on what Puritanism is and is not.

Several problems weigh into the difficulty of defining Puritanism. First, the term “Puritan” was originally applied in the 1560’s as an insult—“a satirical smear word”—against those discontent with the then-present state of the Church of England under Elizabeth I. As such, this externally attributed title does little to establish the common traits of Puritanism. Second, following the restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660, the Act of Uniformity of 1662, which demanded conformity to the Book of Common Prayer, resulted in the “Great Ejection” of over 2,000 “non-conforming” ministers. Consequently, any prospect of a continued Puritan identity ended with new labels of “dissenting” and “nonconformists.” Third, the often-clumsy conflation of English, Scottish and New England Puritans into a single monolithic category eradicates the subtle differences that depend on time, geography and the particular strand of Puritanism, as evident in a number of broad studies that portray Puritanism as a monolithic whole.

Fourth, the emphasis on Puritanism as a primarily political movement ignores the Puritans’ overall emphasis on religious renewal of church and individual piety. Fifth, and finally, the many forms—Presbyterian, Congregational, or even non-dissenting Anglicans—through which dissenters make manifest their common desire for Calvinist reform and spiritual purification in the Church of England make it difficult to identify a clearly Puritan church or denomination. Therefore, any definition of Puritanism that takes into account all of these difficulties must also take into account the historical context which gave rise to the Puritans as well as the common ties that bound them together.

With these difficulties in mind, we can now turn to the notion of the “covenant” as the central expression of Puritan thought that binds all these various movements together. The centrality of the covenant in Puritan theology and society therefore cannot be overlooked. As to its historical background, the term “covenant theology” is first used by Scottish Puritan Robert Rollock in 1596. Its popularity as the chief expression of Protestant-Puritan thought rose quickly in the late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century in Scotland, England and Western Europe. Yet knowledge of the “covenant” was not limited to the clergy and educated elite. Already by the end of the sixteenth-century, Puritan writers assumed their readers to be knowledgeable of the covenant. For instance, by 1623 English Puritan divine Richard Sibbes could assume his parishioners to be knowledgeable of the “covenant of grace” without need of further explanation.

The widespread popularity of covenant theology among the English Puritans results from the clarity it brought to Reformation-inspired views concerning the Fall, man’s natural relationship to God, justification by faith in Christ apart from works, and assurance of salvation. The Puritans believed that each of these questions could be best understood in reference to the concept of covenant. As Perry Miller, the foremost Puritan scholar of the 20th century, puts it, in the doctrine of the covenants the Puritans believed themselves to have “found in the idea a key to the history of the universe.”

Beyond popular writings and sermons, the centrality of covenant theology in Puritan thought is best encapsulated in the 1647 “Westminster Confession of Faith.” This confession was written during Lord Cromwell’s reign to
replace the older teachings of the Church of England. Today it outlives the Puritans as the chief summation of what church historian Carl Trueman calls “Reformed Orthodox Puritanism.” For the purposes of this paper—to compare the Puritan notion of Covenant with Locke’s contract—the Westminster Confession of Faith serves as a summary of what constitutes Puritan theology.

As opposed to a contract, an idea contemporaneous with the Puritans in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, a covenant consists of more than a mere “agreement between individuals.” In essence, the covenant explains God’s promises to man and defines man’s duties before God and his neighbor.

While the concept of covenant was certainly present before the Puritans, they were the first to transform it into an “organizing principle” for their doctrine. The covenant offered what no other single doctrine could deliver: “a scheme including both God and man within a single frame.” Most importantly, the notion of covenant solves the problem of the “ontological chasm that exists between an infinite, self-existent Creator and a finite, dependent creation.” Put simply, the covenant bridges the gap between God and man. Therefore, the Puritan covenant theology cannot be understood politically, sociologically or even historically unless it is first understood as ultimately concerned with the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith. Ultimately, the doctrine of the covenant strives to bring clarity to the problem of fallen man relating to a holy God.

Since its purpose is to clarify the doctrine of justification, covenant theology essentially involves three components: (1) the covenant of redemption between God and Christ; (2) the covenant of works between God and all men; and (3) the covenant of grace between God and the elect. Each of these must be examined in turn. The first component begins with God rather than man. Following the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, the covenant of redemption “refers specifically to the agreement between the Father and the Son” before man even steps into the picture. As one Puritan theologian explains, in the covenant of redemption, “God covenanted with Christ that if he would pay the full price for the redemption of believers, they should be discharged.” Thus, the first covenant begins, not between man and man or even between man and God, but within the Trinity between God the Father and God the Son.

Secondly, the covenant of works refers to the promise of salvation to those who live by perfect obedience to God’s law. As the Westminster Confession states:

The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

The Puritans, however, held that this requirement applied to Adam in the Garden of Eden, even before the fall. The Puritans held that when Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he acted as the federal head of all humanity. Consequently, all fell through Adam’s fall. Through Adam’s sin, all sinned. Through Adam’s violating the covenant of works, all violated the covenant of works. As federal head, Adam stands in a fundamentally different position with reference to God than subsequent human beings. Adam’s role is representative. “Adam stands not simply as private individual but as the first human being, he is also the representative of the whole race.” Furthermore, Adam stands as the legal representative of the human race. Thus, Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden applies equally to subsequent humans as if they themselves had sinned in the Garden. As a result, the human predicament is much more akin to Adam’s state after the fall than before the fall: all are equally under God’s condemnation and wrath for violating the covenant of works.

While the covenant of works presents man as in need of God’s help, the covenant of grace fulfills the promise of the covenant of redemption. As such, the covenants of redemption and works lead up to and culminate in the covenant of grace. As one scholar puts it, “The covenant of grace has
been called the characteristic Puritan doctrine, as justification by faith was the characteristic doctrine of Luther.204 Whereas the covenant of works at best brought condemnation from the law, the Puritans understood the covenant of grace to bring peace with God. Christ fulfills the covenant of redemption, making grace possible, the means whereby God’s righteous requirement of perfect obedience embodied in the covenant of works is fulfilled through Jesus Christ.205 The Westminster Confession summarizes this doctrine:

The Covenant of grace: whereby [God] freely offereth unto sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved; and promising to give unto all those that are ordained unto life his Holy Spirit, to make them willing and able to believe.206

By dying a substitutionary death and rising from the dead, Christ’s active righteousness—his perfect record of fulfilling the covenant of works—can be freely applied to anyone who believes and thereby enters into the covenant of grace.207

A number of inferences for political theory can be drawn from this three-fold division of Puritan covenant theology. First, man’s natural state is not one of license to do as he wishes, but rather one of bounded duty to obey the covenant of works.208 This natural state is evidenced by the fact that the covenant of works is applied to Adam before the fall and to all of man after the fall.209 Second, man’s natural duties are not primarily owed to other men, but to God himself. Although God’s law, demonstrated both in nature and in His Word, does include duties to fellow man, such horizontal obligations are derivative of the primary and vertical duties to God.210 As such, a Puritan concept of justice involves, first, rendering to God His due. This perfect obedience to God does not neglect acting justly toward one fellow man. Rather, like the ordering of the Ten Commandments, obedience to God comes first; the rest, which concern themselves with man’s duty to his neighbor, follow after the first commandment. Third, and finally, the distance between man and God after the fall is so vast that man is incapable of sufficiently knowing God by natural reason. Before the fall, Adam’s access to God was unhindered by sin and Adam knew God by natural means. However, after the fall, as Puritan John Owen notes, “human beings are now faced with the reality of the vast distance between God and humanity...” Consequently, outside of revelation and the supernatural interworking of God’s Holy Spirit in redemption, man, individually and collectively, remains utterly incapable of obedience or moral reform.

It is amidst the backdrop of these temporally bleak but spiritually hopeful Puritan notions of covenant that John Locke enters the English political scene. Born in 1632 to a Puritan family, Locke would live through and participate in one of the most volatile times in English history. Before his death in 1704 Locke lived through the English Civil Wars from 1642 to 1649, physically witnessing the execution of King Charles I in 1649. Locke lived under Lord Cromwell’s rule until its end in 1658 and witnessed the restoration of the monarchy under Charles II in 1660. He was personally involved in the Glorious Revolution of William and Mary in 1688 and lived to see the accession of Queen Anne to the throne in 1702. Important for this discussion is that this time period also marks a change in theological thinking, in addition to these political and social changes. This theological change is manifest in the writings of John Locke.

Locke’s theology, like his political theory, bears little resemblance to his Puritan context. Though raised in a Puritan home, Locke clearly did not find Puritanism appealing. While he studied at Christ Church, Oxford, under the great Puritan divine John Owen, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Locke clearly did not intend to remain in the orbit of Puritan thinking. His opting to study medicine over the expected route of ordination in the Church marks the beginning of Locke’s break with his family heritage and Puritan tradition.212 The clearest evidence of Locke’s break with Puritan theology with regard to social theory
is found in his *Two Treatises on Government*. Although he claims that his *Two Treatises* are specifically a response to Sir Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha*, Locke clearly had broader issues in mind when he wrote his treatises. First, Filmer was neither alive at the time of the publication of *Patriarcha* nor at the time of Locke’s response. Instead, *Patriarcha*, though completed by Filmer in 1630, was published posthumously in 1680. Locke’s two treatises were likely completed as early as 1681, though they remained unpublished until 1689. Second, contrary to common perception, Filmer was not the only alternative to Locke’s *Second Treatise*. While Lockean social contract as proposed in Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government* grounds the authority of the monarch in the so-called “divine right of kings,” it does so specifically as a competing alternative to the Puritan covenantal approach and its political manifestation in Cromwell’s protectorate. As a result, by espousing the same views that Filmer opposes, Locke undermines a separate foundation from Filmer’s: that of Puritan covenant theology. Locke’s *Second Treatise* holds the most relevance for this discussion, since it demonstrates Locke’s deviation from Puritan theology in his discussion of the state of nature. It is precisely in Locke’s contract of society, that he clearly parts company with the Puritans. Juxtaposing Puritan covenant theology and Lockean social contract theory reveals Locke’s pursuit of an ennobling origin for man in an alternative anthropology to the Christian doctrine of the fall. This new narrative he calls “the state of nature.”

Locke’s discussion of a social contract is not novel in itself, but its novelty consists in bringing two separate ideas together: (1) the “contract of government” and (2) the “contract of society.” The “contract of government” theory postulates that the legitimacy of government is based on a contract between rulers and subjects, such as was found in feudal societies where barons and nobles often legitimized kings. While conceptually the notion of a “social contract” is posterior to the contract of government, logically the contract of government is anterior to the social contract. In Locke’s reasoning, the “contract of society” precedes the “contract of government” because only an already organized society can come together to legitimize a government. Inspecting Locke’s state of nature reveals that the novelty of Locke’s state of nature consists in his denial of the Christian notion of the fall. While Locke’s state of nature in some ways resembles Adam and Eve’s state prior to the fall, it hardly reflects the Puritan conception of the common state of man after the fall.

In his *Two Treatises on Government*, Locke’s argument begins where Filmer’s argument ends. Filmer argues that because of “Adam’s private dominion and paternal jurisdiction” man must be saved from a natural state of “force and violence.” It is here in Filmer’s anthropological assumptions and theological arguments regarding Adam that Locke chooses to take his stance. By choosing this point as the point on which to disagree with Filmer, Locke defines his own position in opposition to Filmer’s. This should be unsurprising. After all, it was Filmer, and not Locke, who first wrote, “Mankind [is] naturally endowed with freedom from all subjection.” Of course, Filmer wrote this as an expression of the views he intended to oppose. By embodying and defending the position Filmer opposed, Locke seeks a more ennobling point of origin for government than one where, as Filmer describes the world, “men live together by no other rules but that of beasts, where the strongest carries it, and so lay a foundation for perpetual disorder and mischief, tumult, sedition and rebellion…” Instead of a Filmerian, or perhaps a Hobbesian condition that is naturally “nasty, brutish, and short,” Locke seeks “another rise of government, another original political power” by presenting an alternative to the state of war: this is the state of nature. Here, Locke disagrees with not only Filmer and Hobbes but also Puritan covenant theology: Locke’s vision of humanity is completely void of the Biblical narrative of the fall of man; the corruption of reason, will, and ability; and the subsequent need for redemption.
In stark contrast with Puritan anthropology, Locke finds his ennobling point of origin for man in the state of nature. He defines the state of nature as “a state of perfect freedom to order their actions and dispose of their possessions and persons as they think fit, within the bounds of the law of nature, without asking leave, or depending upon the will of any other man.” Locke’s idea of perfect freedom poses an optimistic view of man as one who is capable of using reason to identify and obey the law of nature. Through applying reason to the law of nature, the state of nature need not be a state of war and violence. Hence, Locke makes reason nearly synonymous with the law of nature: “And reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will consult it that, being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions.” Reason is thus the restraint and guarantor of the state of nature.

Locke derives the basis for rights to liberty, equality, and independence in the state of nature from man’s origins in the activity of the Creator. These natural rights also necessitate certain duties. Since the natural state extends to all of mankind according to Locke, each person therefore owes to each/every other the duty of preserving the natural rights of all. “As he is bound to preserve himself... [so] ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of mankind.” For this reason, it seems a principle in Locke’s writings that the existence of natural rights also necessitates corresponding natural duties. The right to freedom posits the duty to every man to “preserve the innocent and restrain offenders.”

As such man’s natural freedom constrains each person to protect the natural freedom of all. Hence, instead of freedom, the state of natural freedom becomes bondage. To fail in one’s natural duties to preserve the freedom of all is itself to transgress the law of nature. To fail in one’s natural duties to preserve the freedom of all is to fail to act reasonably. Hence, the danger of “transgressing” lies in one’s declaration to thereby “live by another rule than that of reason.” This transgression jeopardizes the security of the whole and is thereby a “trespass against the whole species.” In Locke’s political theory, it is this difficulty in ensuring the rights of all that warrants men to leave the state of nature by entering into society through contracts and thereby delegating some of the responsibilities of judging right from wrong and punishing crimes to civil government.

Now that Locke’s idea of the state of nature has been briefly discussed, it can be contrasted with Puritan covenant theology. First, Locke departs from the Puritans by arguing that the natural state of man is rooted in freedom and not obedience to God. For the Puritans, man’s point of origin according to the covenant of works is not one of perfect freedom, but one of owing perfect obedience to God. Locke, on the other hand, because he situates man in a natural state of perfect freedom, assumes that man can both know and obey the law of nature. However, the Puritan narrative of the fall suggests otherwise. Central to the Puritan covenant of works is the doctrine that Adam acted as the federal head of the entire human race and, consequently, his sin and failure to obey “the law of nature” applies to each subsequent person after the fall. Hence, in his state of nature Locke’s theology not only departs from but also rivals the Puritan narrative of the fall and redemption of man.

Second, Locke’s conception of justice is horizontal in scope—ensuring the rights of one’s fellow man—while Puritan covenant theology is more concerned with vertical justice between man and God. Although Locke often mentions God, he never speaks of obedience to God outright, but instead emphasizes obedience to law of nature and reason. While Locke grounds the individual’s self-worth in “being all the workmanship of one omnipotent and infinitely wise maker,” he finds no particular duties owed to this Creator besides those owed to one’s fellow man. As such, for Locke, man renders to God his due by rendering to his fellow man his due. In other words, one serves God by serving one’s neighbor. Horizontal justice between men is anterior to vertical justice between man and God.
In contrast, the Puritans view that the Creator stands in a fundamentally different position to his creation with regard to justice. As Creator, God owns absolute rights over his creation. As a created thing, man owes an absolute duty to his Creator. Any action toward one’s fellow man is secondary and derivative of a primary duty to God. The Puritan conception of justice then is not primarily one of horizontally rendering to each person his/her due right, but of vertically rendering to God his due as the Creator.

Thirdly and lastly, Locke’s reliance on reason undermines the Puritan’s emphasis on man’s need for revelation as a result of the fall. Locke’s entire enterprise hinges on the suitability of reason to sufficiently reveal the law of nature for man to naturally obey. For him, reason alone is the restraint and guarantor of the state of nature. Unlike the Puritans, the measure of justice for Locke is not God’s character or decree, but man’s reason. As Locke writes, “crime... consists in... varying from the right rule of reason.” However, in Puritan theology, the distance between man and God that resulted from the fall is so vast that man is incapable of sufficiently knowing God by natural reason. Furthermore, not only did the fall inhibit man’s ability to know God by reason, but it also demonstrated that obedience to the law comes not by reason alone. Instead, Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden demonstrates that knowledge itself is insufficient to ensure obedience. And if this is true for Adam who walked and spoke with God, how much more must it apply to his descendants? While Puritan covenant theology and Locke’s social contract theory share similar analogies and imagery and may even result in similar institutions, they contrast sharply regarding man’s relationship to God, original sin, and revelation.

To conclude, the Puritans were impressed with the importance of man’s duty to render to God his due. The Puritans emphasize God’s centrality in their doctrine of the covenant of works; the fall is essentially man’s failure to perform satisfactorily his duties to God rather than his duty, as Locke would have it, to his neighbor. Second, the Puritans emphasize God’s primacy through their doctrine of the covenant of redemption: God sent Christ to do what man could not—that is, to perform man’s duties to God. Finally, the Puritans find evidence for God’s primacy in their doctrine of the covenant of grace, man’s opportunity to be made right with God.

Emphasizing the primacy of God, the Puritans left little room for discussion of man’s inherent rights, one of the central concerns of Locke’s *First and Second Treatise on Government*. Grace and covenant, rather than rights or contract, hold a central place in Puritan theology. Thus, God receiving what He deserves from man is more important for the Puritans than man getting what he deserves from his neighbor, as it was for Locke. In addition, man not receiving his due punishment for failing to obey the covenant of works, and this punishment being dealt to Christ, is prior in importance to any contract he forms with his neighbor. These differences between Locke and the Puritans preclude any notion that Locke’s theories may have emerged out of the Puritans, since Locke’s social contract narrative and its emphasize on human contract, rather than divine covenant, so brazenly differs from the Puritan biblical narrative.

In conclusion, the dissidence between Lockean contractarian thought and Puritan theology casts doubt on any prospect of co-existence between them. Locke and the Puritans present radically different narratives regarding man’s relationship to God, the effects of original sin and the role of revelation. Although it falls beyond the scope of this paper to demonstrate whether America is founded on Lockean social contract theory or Puritan covenant theology, one thing is certain: they are so diametrically opposed that American democracy cannot be founded on both.

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One God, Two Revelations

Hope E. Edwards

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

—Romans 1:18

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

—Romans 3:21-22

The Apostle Paul pens his letter to Christians in Rome around A.D. 57. Although his express purpose is to “preach the gospel” to first-century Romans (Rom. 1:15), his ultimate aim is to proclaim the gospel of God to all humankind through the ages. Paul defines the gospel as “the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (1:16). It is this gospel that Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, believed after reading the Letter to the Romans in A.D. 386. The same message that transformed the lives of Paul, first-century Romans, and Augustine continues to change lives today.

To understand this gospel, Christians employ biblical exegesis. Exegesis derives from the Greek word ἐξεγήσις that literally means, “to lead out.” Ascertaining the original meaning of the text is critical to analysis. Exegesis is the opposite of eisegesis: Exegesis presupposes truth is objective and separate from the text regardless of the interpreter, while eisegesis presupposes that meaning is relative to the interpreter. This author honestly endeavors to exegete the text by closely examining Paul’s Letter to the Romans and asks her readers to lay aside skepticism and religious affiliations in order to consider the message. This author also affirms Christian Scripture is revelation—in religious vernacular, the Word of God—which it is incumbent on all to heed. By extension, the same assertion is made with respect to Romans.

This article examines two central revelations in Paul’s letter, both of which concern righteousness. The terms “righteousness” and “righteous” derive from the Greek word δικαιος, which denotes a condition of complete rectitude in which a person’s character and actions align with all that God commands and approves. According to The New Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, in the New Testament the word “righteous” appears fifty-two times and “righteousness” appears eighty-five times, of which Romans contains eleven usages of “righteous” and thirty usages of “righteousness.” Clearly, righteousness is a dominant theme in Paul’s letter.

The crux of the issue for this article stems from a case of apparent mixed messaging. On the one hand Paul speaks of God’s righteousness revealed through wrath and on the other God’s righteousness revealed through Jesus Christ (1:18, 3:22). Is the Apostle confused, or is there in fact a clash of revelation from on high? On the surface, it seems as though God has a split personality: one personality roars threateningly; the other extends what amounts to an olive branch. Although these appear to conflict violently, is it possible to reconcile them? Each revelation bears
distinctions concerning the nature of God’s self-revealed righteousness. Examining these particulars sheds light on the dilemma.

To begin, Paul describes the message of the first revelation. This is the what question. He depicts God in a war-like posture in relation to humans. The gruesome picture develops with each succeeding clause that flows from the Apostle’s pen: “the judgment of God rightly falls,” “there will be wrath and fury,” and “there will be tribulation and distress” (2:2, 8, 9).

This warlike deportment prompts the question, why? Paul says God reveals His wrath because all “are under sin” (3:9). This prompts a further question: What does sin signify? Paul continues, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one” (3:10-12). This is the composition of sin according to the Apostle. Notice the verbs of the preceding quotation are in the present and present perfect tenses. First, the present tense verbs are “none is righteous,” “no one understands,” and “no one does good.” Second, the verbs in the present perfect tense are “all have turned aside” and “together they have become worthless.” By logical necessity, both tenses presuppose an action performed in the past. This past action is the Futile Exchange in Romans 1: “they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and served the creature rather than the creator” (1:25). Paul describes this sin as worshiping images of created beings: man, birds, animals, and creeping things (1:23). True worship bestows honor and evokes gratitude, neither of which men do with respect to God the Creator (1:21). Instead of worshiping the creature, a mere image, man should worship the Creator, the source of the image. Man owes God worship because God, as Creator, is worthy (1:20, 23).

God has revealed His wrath because of sin, but against whom has He revealed this wrath? The bad news is that wrath is on everyone. Adam is the archetypal man, and thus, his sin is representative of everyone. Paul explains that when Adam sinned, all sinned (5:18). Theologically speaking, everyone came from Adam because they were in him to begin with. Moreover, because all are “in Adam,” all experience the consequence of his transgression. Therefore, the wrath of God is revealed upon all people because all people have sinned. This archetypal sin of Adam is summarized in the doctrine of original sin. In Adam’s fall, he passed down his corrupted DNA, so to speak, to his children. That is, everyone has inherited sin by transmission from the progenitor of the race. Some critics retort that since all people did not have direct agency in Adam’s first sin in the Garden of Eden, they should not bear responsibility for Adam’s sin. This seems to be a logical rejoinder. Paul points to the most obvious symptom that everyone has sinned, which is death. Everyone dies (5:12, 15, 18, 20). Blaming Adam and Eve or even ignoring the disease because one rejects agency, however,
One God, Two Revelations

Beyond all this, how does God reveal His wrath? Paul writes three times that “God gave them [humans] up” to ungodliness and unrighteousness (1:24, 26, 28). God has not capriciously afflicted humanity. Rather, God turns people over to their self-imposed stranglehold of sin and allows them to suffer both earthly strife and eternal death as a result of their disobedience to Him (2:8). Furthermore, Paul claims that God and His wrath are “plain” to everyone. Moreover, this wrath is evident in the created world (1:20). It is as though Paul calls everyone simply to look around. Earth is marred by death and decay. Even human life is “full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness” (1:29). Still, people “suppress the truth” due to their sinful nature. Yet, they are without excuse and only serve to deepen their self-deception by trying to evade God’s punishment (1:20) because God has made Himself known universally throughout creation (1:19).

In light of the bad news of God’s wrath, can there be any good news? Paul declares that there is. The good news is the second revelation: “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (3:21-22).

First, it is important to note when the second revelation occurs. The answer lies in the transition between the two revelations. In the preceding two and one half chapters, Paul strings together sentence after sentence in a series of phrases that begin with “for” and “therefore.” In fact, in the short span of roughly 1,250 words from Romans 1:18 to Romans 3:21, Paul employs “for” thirteen times in a causal sense. He uses the word “therefore” twice, which signifies a bolder conclusion than if he were to use “for.” Putting these facts together, Paul’s diction points to the consequences of the wrath of God presented in Romans 1:18. The turning point in the series of “for” clauses is “but now” in 3:21. By means of this conjunction, Paul pivots from God’s righteousness revealed in wrath to God’s righteousness revealed through Jesus Christ. The “but” is the disruption of God’s wrath. The “now” arranges these two revelations, thus answering the questions of when each revelation occurs. The revelation of God’s wrath begins prior to the revelation of God’s Son, Jesus.

Next, one must examine the content of the message of the second revelation. This is the what question. Paul unpacks this revelation in the verses that follow it:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith (3:23-25).

It is necessary to clarify Paul’s terms in these verses. “Justified” comes from the Greek dikaiōō and means to make righteous. In Romans this term appears fifteen times. The term comes from the legal realm and signifies right standing with the court. Applied theologically, it means to be in right standing with God, who happens to be the ultimate Judge. Since “to be justified” is in the passive voice, it implies that another, in this case, God, acts upon humanity. Any capacity for a person to become righteous lies in God’s agency. “Grace” derives from the Greek charis and denotes a favorable disposition that is unmerited. This term appears twenty-five times in Romans. Paul immediately qualifies grace as a “gift” which, in this case, refers to God’s unmerited favor toward a person. “Redemption” derives from the Greek apolutrōsis and appears twice in Romans. Redemption is an economic term denoting payment of a debt. Theologically speaking, redemption, therefore, is repayment for human sin, and it is God who pays the debt. In the passage above, the means to accomplish this redemption is “propitiation.” The Greek word for this is hilastērios, which means to appease or to satisfy a debt. The only occurrence of propitiation in Romans is in 3:24. Finally, while today “faith” may bear an ambiguous meaning,
for Paul and his first-century readers, *pistis* in the Greek, simply signifies “trust.” This is a key term for Paul, appearing some forty times in the *Letter to the Romans*. All these terms in concert result in Paul’s message, which is this: despite the bad news that all have sinned in Adam and are thus condemned, the good news is that those who trust in God’s propitiatory sacrifice, Jesus, will be justified.

Next, the content of the message is inextricably linked to the means of the message. This is the *how* question. The means of this second revelation is “apart from the law” (3:21). Since Paul distinguishes the revelation of Jesus as separate from the law, one must understand the nature of the “law.”

Paul goes to great lengths to explain the law, and he does so through two usages. His first use of the law concerns morality and is referred to as the Moral Law. This is God’s perfect standard of righteousness required of all people. Furthermore, because it is God’s standard, it is completely “holy and righteous and good” (7:11). Paul’s second use of law is derivative of the first and is referred to as the Mosaic Law. This is the written law that God specially gave Israel, and it is a manifest record of His invisible Law over mankind. According to Paul, Israel is God’s chosen people, or “his people whom he foreknew” (11:2). In the context of 3:21, the written law refers to the “oracles of God” entrusted to the Jews (3:2). Paul interprets these “oracles of God” to be the whole of the Hebrew Bible, which includes the Mosaic Law. In contemporary Christian vernacular, this is the Old Testament. As Judge, God employs the written law as an instrument to expose and to convict Israel of sin. Paul, an Israelite himself (11:1), repeatedly comments on this usage. He claims, “if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin” (7:7). Elsewhere he writes, “through the law comes knowledge of sin” (3:20). Thus, the law exposes Israelites to, and consequently convicts them of, their unrighteousness before their Judge.

Although God does not specially deliver the written law to Gentiles, that is, to non-Israelites, He generally inscribes His Moral Law on the heart of every person, both Jew and Gentile (2:14-15). “[Gentiles] show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them” (2:15). Like Israel’s “visible” law, this “invisible” Law convicts offenders of sin. It also, however, sentences violators to death. Since God has made His righteous standard known to everyone, no one can plead ignorance. God will judge everyone by His Law.

Given that all people violate His Law, God reveals wrath through the death of all people in the first revelation. Yet, despite the fact that all break His Law, God reveals His mercy and grace through the incarnation spoken of in the second revelation. “By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us” (8:3-4). Although in the human mind it appears paradoxical, Paul claims Jesus is both divine and human (8:3). Since He is the God-man, Jesus can and does perfectly fulfill the “visible” written law and “invisible” Moral Law: “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (10:4). Christ is the “end” of the law. He is the terminus, the completion. He is the full revelation of the Law in that He perfectly keeps God’s Law.

According to Paul, the message of Jesus is foolishness to non-believers (1 Cor. 1:18). Why is this so? The folly is that a righteous man, Jesus, dies for unrighteous people. Paul writes, “one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (5:7-8). Though humans are naturally lawbreakers and thus “enemies” of God who deserve His wrath (5:9-10), every person can be “reconciled” to God through the death of His Son, Jesus (5:10). He is able to do so because He is the only bona fide Lawkeeper. Because He has no sins of His own, He Himself owes no debt. God’s Law has
no purchase on Him. Conversely, everyone else, all humans, are lawbreakers. The bad news, therefore, is that their life is forfeit as payment of their debt to God (5:17). Since God is just—indeed, must be just—He must enforce His law. Since the penalty for sin is death, all sinners must die. However, there is good news—the gospel. The folly of the gospel lies in Jesus’ death for humanity, the Just for the unjust, the Sinless for sinners (2 Cor. 5:21).

For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ (5:17).

In Adam all are dead (certainly bad news) but in Christ all are alive, which is good news indeed.

If this second revelation is good news, to whom is this good news revealed? Although the written law was specially given to Israel (3:2), this good news of salvation through Jesus Christ is “for all men” (5:18, 10:12). Yet, if this is truly good news, do all men receive it? According to Paul, the answer is no. “All men” do not automatically receive justification resulting in life. People are not robots; they have active wills, which necessitate choice. The choice to receive life through “redemption that is in Christ Jesus” must be “received by faith” (3:24-25).

To sort through any confusion on justification by faith, perhaps the following elaboration is helpful. Instead of trusting in his or her own attempts at righteousness, every person must appropriate the righteousness of Christ. This can only be done by faith, that is, by trusting what God says to be true. Paul teaches that the person who trusts in the second revelation, that of the righteousness of God in the person of Jesus, will be justified. When God looks at the one who exercises such faith in Jesus, He sees the blood of his Son covering them. His sinless blood, so to speak, atones for the wrongdoing of the believing person and enables God to declare them righteous. Paul’s reference to Jesus’ work as the “propitiation by his blood” (3:25) alludes to the Jewish sacrificial system in which the blood of animals covered the sins of the one who sacrificed the animal. Animal blood was only a temporary propitiation, however. Technically speaking, it could not justify, that is, it could not make man righteous. Only Jesus, fully God and fully man, could permanently atone for the sins of all men. By means of Jesus’ final cleansing sacrifice, God is free to offer righteousness to all who will believe it and receive it.

Admittedly, the revelation of bad news and the revelation of good news seem to clash with one another. For Paul, however, they perfectly harmonize on the same score: God’s righteousness, His justice. In Romans 1:18, God generally reveals His righteousness as wrath upon all humanity. In Romans 3:21-22, God specially reveals His righteousness as a gift to all, to be received by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. These revelations perfectly intersect in the “propitiation” of Christ. To the one who believes, God gives both mercy and grace: mercy is the withholding of something deserved, while grace is the conferral of something undeserved. In context of the gospel, God demonstrates mercy by sparing the guilty from death, while he also lavishes grace on the unworthy, resulting in life eternal. On the cross, therefore, Jesus is the Standard of righteousness and the Payment for righteousness on behalf of believers. Though the “wrath of God” is undeniably bad news, the “righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus” is unfathomably good news (1:18, 3:22).

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We may have our own opinions about slavery; we may be for or against the South; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army; they are making, it appears, a navy; and they have made what is more than either—they have made a nation.” So pronounced Chancellor of the Exchequer William Ewart Gladstone to a cheering crowd in Newcastle on October 7, 1862. In his comments, which ignited a firestorm, the chancellor touched upon an issue essential to British discussions of the Civil War—the issue of nationhood. Gladstone’s words, which he later regretted, suggested a matter-of-fact observation, rather than a moral judgment; his view was that the perceived achievement of nationhood by the Confederacy stood as a milestone, an accomplishment that deserved respect regardless of sympathies for or against its cause.

In contrast, when supporters of the Union rejected Confederate nationhood, they did so on the basis of British national identity, pointing out how its longstanding association with liberty clashed with Confederate insistence on the preservation of slavery. While arguments based on national identity contained many nuances, they essentially took two forms: value-free arguments that refrained from making judgments on the worth of the Union or Confederate causes, only taking into account their viability; and value-priority arguments, which examined the causes based on their moralities, and judged them in light of values considered integral to British national identity. In a time when British workers were still largely politically powerless, their consideration of the questions posed by the American Civil War helped them consider not just their stance on that topic but on their relation to the British nation as a whole.

The lines of thought expressed in Gladstone’s Newcastle speech were reflected in worker opinions about the war and, at a higher level, in general political discussions in the mid-nineteenth-century. The American Civil War took place in an atmosphere rife with discussions of nationalism. The European revolutions of 1848 focused attention on the formation of nations. Both North and South articulated arguments that placed their causes in the context of nationhood. The Confederates believed their aspiring nation should be recognized as distinct from the Union but cohesive in itself. In contrast, the North considered the South an integral part of the United States. Lincoln’s appeal to the “mystic chords of memory” in his first inaugural address suggested a nation formed by a common heritage and history. To win the battle of ideas, the Union and the Confederacy each considered a convincing vision of its own nationhood indispensable.

Although nationalism was a dominant political theme in the Western world of the mid-nineteenth-century, it hardly possessed a single, uniform definition. In the great revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848 and still reverberated, nationalism became associated with the idea that “nations”—peoples united by common culture—should be synonymous with political
states. The Confederacy placed great import on being seen as a nation, but the cultural identity that set it apart as its own nation centered above all on the preservation of slavery. Such a national identity differed from the identities of other aspiring nation-states formed around unity of language or religion. While recognition of a nation in the latter instances would seem rather straightforward—does the entity in question share a common language?—the Confederacy opened itself up to denial of its nationhood because of sentiment against its cornerstone, slavery. Political debates that focused on the Confederacy’s other unifying factors, such as a homogenous culture and a functioning central government, put the Confederacy on firmer ground.

Few arguments aided the Confederacy more than those that considered its independence a fait accompli. As exemplified in Gladstone’s speech, accepting the Confederacy as an established nation allowed the justice of its cause to be set aside. The argument gained further potency when made to, and heard from, cotton workers suffering from a dearth of the staple crop. Its implications were potentially damaging to the Palmerston ministry: how could the government allow ongoing suffering among British men and women due to a conflict whose outcome had been decided?

Thursday, August 7th, 1862 witnessed an outcry from Blackburn, a mill town in Lancashire. A crowd, dominated by working men, gathered at the town hall to debate a petition to the government requesting diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy. The first resolution, carried unanimously, declared: “That this meeting deeply deplores the unnatural war now raging in the States of North America; the awful destruction of life and property now resulting therefrom...” The Blackburn meeting illustrated the power of the belief in Confederate nationhood, particularly when combined with internal British interests. In the eyes of Jackson and the supportive crowd, the Confederacy had earned a right to independence, and in practice the Union could
not undo this fact. Alone, a Confederate nation might not deserve much active aid from Britain, but workers’ relationship to the conflict lent to the Confederate cause a sense of urgency and even righteousness. Interests aligned across the Atlantic in favor of ending the war as soon as possible, which in August of 1862 meant recognizing the Confederacy as an independent nation. It should be noted that the *Liverpool Mercury* criticized the meeting in an August 11 editorial, pointing out that “the mere recognition of the South as an independent Power would not have the remotest tendency either to terminate the war or to raise the blockade of the cotton ports.” Many issues, such as slavery, also clouded the prospects of arbitration, the method of ending the war favored later in the meeting.245 The *Mercury’s* skepticism in a column days after the meeting, however, only highlighted the emotional power of the nationhood issue. Whatever the logical flaws in the proposals of R.R. Jackson, he won a crowd of workingmen over to the idea that the Confederacy was a rightful nation which possibly deserved foreign intervention on behalf of its claims.

The argument that the Confederacy deserved recognition because it was a true nation was a pragmatic approach. By applying the threshold of “nationhood,” which admittedly differed for a great many audiences, one could declare that the Confederacy, whatever its national values, earned recognition simply by meeting this criterion. Taking a value-neutral position essentially left recognition in the hands of the combatants: it was up to Jefferson Davis, his government and his army, to prove their viability as a state, and then Britain would join in recognizing an accomplished fact.

The Union also benefited from a value-neutral outlook on the war. By the time of South Carolina’s declaration of secession in December 1860, the United States had been independent of Britain for 84 years. Emerging victorious (or at least still standing) from several military conflicts and rapidly expanding westward, the United States gained recognition in British eyes as a legitimate nation. Therefore, attempts to prove the Confederacy’s position as a realized nation ran up against the fact that the United States had long been such a nation. On February 22, 1862, the Reverend Newman Hall addressed a crowd of 2,000 to 3,000 workers in Surrey. In questioning why sympathy for the South persisted, he compared the logic of the Union cause to a potential British response in a similar situation:

> We may think that conquest is hopeless, and that the compromise which must close the war might as well have come to pass without bloodshed and mutual impoverishment. But England is the last nation that ought to blame them if they choose to fight. They take up the sword in defense of law; to preserve the integrity of their empire; and to prevent the many inconveniences, which, under the special circumstances of America, would result from the existence of two separate Governments so contiguous. In a similar case, would not English statesmen be unanimous in drawing the sword? Hear!246

Other speakers went further in applying the principles of the Union cause to Britain’s own political activities. Henry Vincent, a veteran of the workers’ movement going back to the days of Chartism, invoked an example close to home in demonstrating the justice of the Union cause. An account of his lecture in Huddersfield on the war described his tack: “After tracing the progress of the war, he said that many people regarded it as a foolish thing on the part of the North to fight for the Union; but in order to show that national susceptibilities ought to be respected, he drew a graphic illustration of the probable steps which would be taken by England in case of an Irish revolt, and the manner in which proposals for interference would be treated.”247 The Liberal MP and noted Union advocate Richard Cobden, linked support for the Union with support for the very idea of national identity:

> What is it that at present appears to be the paramount instinct among races of men? Certainly not a desire to separate, but to agglomerate and bring together in greater
concentration the different races speaking the same language and professing the same religion. Three-fourths of the white population in America are now contending against disunion; they are following the instinct which is impelling the Italians, the Germans, and other populations of Europe; and I have no doubt that one great and dominant motive in their hearts is this, that they are afraid that if they become disunited, they would be treated as Italy has been treated when disunited. Well, then, without pretending to offer an opinion myself, these are powerful motives, and if they are operating as they appear to operate, they may lead to a much more protracted contest than has been predicted by some of our statesmen.248

By portraying the struggle to restore the Union as a matter of a nation’s rights, Northern sympathizers also appealed to neutral moral judgments on the war (although both Hall and Jones often spoke extensively about the evils of slavery). Secretary of State Seward’s instructions to Charles Francis Adams at the start of his posting in London emphasized the same point, that the United States had a right as a nation to deal with its internal affairs without interference. This argument lacked the emotional power of the Confederate case for recognition based on nationhood, chiefly because expectations for opening the cotton supply accompanied proposed recognition of Confederate nationhood. Whatever the rights of the government in Washington to assert its authority, British workers were still in distress because of the cotton shortage. Advocates of the Union heightened the stakes by emphasizing the possibility of war over British diplomatic recognition of the Confederacy or any more provocative actions. They pointed out the difficulties of substantially aiding a Confederate nation while invoking the consequences of war on Britain’s own political situation. The workers of Lancashire might not gain cotton, but at least they would not have to fight.

While many debates focused on the nationhood of the warring sections—whether the Confederacy was really a nation, and whether the Union’s accepted nationhood gave it the right to quell the rebellion—other debates focused on the war’s meaning for Britain’s, specifically England’s, own national identity. Notably, little substantial discussion occurred in Wales, Scotland or Ireland about the war’s relation to any sort of “British” national identity, and when the English spoke about it, they invariably used the term “English” rather than “British.” Therefore, this terminology shall be adopted through the rest of this chapter, and the location of its events will safely be confined to the territorial realm of England.

As a stable, cohesive political unit with a long history, England did not have to prove its nationhood to anyone. Geographically it was united, and culturally it was relatively homogeneous. In addition to these elements, England had developed over hundreds of years a political tradition which prized certain principles. In this formulation, liberty and representative institutions (however unrepresentative in practice) comprised a key part of the British national identity. Particularly in the wars against France of the eighteenth-century, the idea pervaded British society that its country was an oasis of liberty, favored by God. This idea grew into a basis for asserting superiority over the French enemy: while at the time France possessed greater military might and a more sophisticated culture, the British considered themselves better off because of the extraordinary power of the king and the Catholic hierarchy over the French people. These ideas took root even in the lower classes, which, although economically disadvantaged and politically marginalized, recognized what freedoms they did possess.249 In the subsequent decades, this belief in the unique British characteristic of liberty remained deeply engrained at all levels of society, providing a long-cherished cultural touchstone by which political questions were judged. Therefore, in the British view Union and Confederate partisans needed to portray their causes as essentially compatible with British national identity if they were to be taken seriously.
For the Union cause to come across as an effort to promote liberty, and to therefore place it in accord with British identity, it needed to own the slavery issue. As previously discussed, Union sympathizers were unable to effectively capitalize on British antislavery sentiment in large part because of the Lincoln administration’s reluctance to frame the war in terms of abolition. The Emancipation Proclamation itself, which went into effect on January 1, 1863, swayed some to accept the Union as genuinely antislavery, but others perceived it as purely a military action, or as an incentive for slaves to revolt. Rather than directly persuade Britons, the Emancipation Proclamation’s great benefit to the Union cause in Britain was to unleash the efforts of Union and antislavery activists. Lincoln’s reframing of the debate in terms of slavery and freedom allowed Union sympathizers in Britain, those who already supported the cause, to join the fight without reservations, brandishing the Emancipation Proclamation as a weapon.

In short, the Emancipation Proclamation in itself was not particularly persuasive, but its use by effective partisans magnified the document’s effect. Boosting the antislavery credibility of the Union cause proved essential to aligning it with British national identity.

Before examining the substance of appeals to English national identity, it should be noted that these appeals seldom came from workers themselves. The examples seen here are lectures and speeches delivered by non-working class figures to the workers, and they fairly represent the manner in which the discussion about English national identity was conducted. Rare was the occasion when an average worker at a public meeting would avow his support for the Union or the Confederacy based on its compatibility with English principles such as liberty and representative government. Nevertheless, the discussions about English identity deserve attention in looking at the sources of British worker opinion. First of all, while perhaps not keen on discussing these relatively abstract principles, workers were interested in the more concrete issue of slavery, and advocates of both North and South tried to fit the issue into their discussions of liberty. Secondly, advocates frequently invoked “the heart of England” in their addresses to workers, indicating their belief in its efficacy as a tool for persuasion. Certain speakers repeated their assertions time after time before working class audiences, suggesting a positive response underlined by common insertions of “(loud cheers)” or similar comments in accounts of these addresses. Finally, the idea of English identity as pertaining to workers, even if not articulated by them, had a long tradition, going back at least to the eighteenth-century notion of the rights of the “free-born Englishman.”

One of the most forceful and eloquent advocates of English identity relating to the American question was Newman Hall, a Nonconformist minister and member of the Union and Emancipation Society. Hall, a frequent Union surrogate at public meetings, addressed working men in London on October 20, 1862. His speech, later printed and distributed as a pamphlet by the Union and Emancipation Society, examined the history of the United States to determine the legality of secession and the importance of slavery. Following this exposition, he urged the speech’s listeners, and the pamphlet’s readers, to support the Union cause. Hall admitted that the Confederacy could yet become an independent nation, “but if the South become a separate nation, they do so avowedly to perpetuate and indefinitely extend all the horrors of slavery.” Such a nation deserved no sympathy from the across the Atlantic: “The heart of England beats true to liberty. It is impossible she should sympathize with slavery. It is impossible, therefore, when the question is clearly understood, that she can sympathize with this Southern conspiracy against humanity.” In Hall’s argument,
the bases of Confederate and English nationality were mutually exclusive. Going beyond the single issue of slavery, he bound the American question to the essence of Englishness.

Hall continued by asking why England should sympathize with the Confederacy. He targeted the argument that southerners represented traits Englishmen should find admirable. Bringing up high-mindedness, courtesy, ancestry, generosity, bravery, chivalry, and desire for freedom, characteristics the Confederacy supposedly possessed, Hall noted the contrast between the ideal of these traits and the reality of slavery. Ultimately, any society based on slavery could be no friend to Britain:

While we continue to be Britons, and therefore neither slaves, nor, what is worse, slavemasters, is it possible that they can ever love us? For political ends they may at present court our favor. They want to have the blockade broken, to sell their cotton, to be recognized as a Confederacy. But do they not know that England detests and abhors the system which they regard as essential to their existence, the “Corner Stone” of their social fabric? Let them come here and publicly proclaim their principles! Let them come with their iron chains, and bull-hide scourges, and well-trained bloodhounds, and with these illustrations of their system advocate their hellish doctrines on our soil sacred to Freedom?255

Support for the Confederacy, in Hall’s argument, would constitute a betrayal of all that the idea of England represented.

While Hall denounced the Confederacy, he recognized opposing arguments that targeted workers. One particular argument brought out his anger:

We are told that the condition of many working men in England is worse than that of the slaves, and that it is a harder lot to toil in a dark coal mine than in a sunny cotton field. Insulting to British workmen is such sophistry! Would not every one of you rather, as a free man, spend all your days in darkness, dirt and danger, than with a palace as your prison, and pampered with luxury, live a slave, body and mind enthralled, and subject to every caprice of the fellow-man who claims you as he does his horse or his dog?

In this statement, Hall answered materialistic arguments by invoking ideas. British workers possessed a good greater than any material comfort—freedom, an inherent condition of being English. Instead of denying the validity of the claim that slaves were economically better-off than workers, he appealed to a more noble sentiment and counted on its resonance. Even if Hall assumed correctly that workers would be inspired by a calling higher than economic self-interest, he faced risks. Hall does not hesitate to include workers in the heart of England, but the franchise still eluded them, as did significant progress in forming trade unions. Was Hall simply portraying an England that the workers themselves did not recognize?

A notable voice from the working class that agreed with Hall’s portrayal of the issue was that of Henry Vincent, the old Chartist lecturing around the country. In his speeches, Vincent portrayed not just an England devoted to liberty, but an Anglo-Saxon race sharing the same principles. Speaking in Birmingham on February 16, 1863, Vincent offered a recounting of the tradition of English liberty, going back to the thirteenth-century. The hundreds of years of struggle for liberty in England were simply continued on the other side of the Atlantic by the descendants of Englishmen. In his peroration, Vincent appealed to an identity that superseded class, one also echoed in Hall’s speech:

Arise Englishmen, and in your faith and prayer stand by the right and oppose the wrong, that your proud country, growing in moral energy and more complete in faith, may stand true to her ancient principles and her ancient glory, and that the voice of her thunder may be heard in the universe in no complicity with slavery—no acknowledgement of any Slave State. Long live the free people, long live freedom, long live liberty,
long live justice, long live the life-giving vitalizing divine powers which, by God’s mercy, have been planted in this country, and long live the great race from which America has sprung—the great race that bears on the earth an open Bible, that carries on the earth an incorrupt press, that builds on the earth an unfettered pulpit—long live this people to bear down before them superstition, sin, and slavery, and to plant upon their thrones justice and liberty.256

By casting the act of sympathizing with the Union in such noble terms, Vincent and Hall provided a way for workers to participate in their national identity. They may not have possessed the vote, but workers could understand the ideal of England, and they needed no franchise to embrace it. Hall referred to past worker support for the revolutions in Hungary and Italy, indicating that this method of expressing political views followed a great tradition. Conceiving the nation of England as one based on values, and then judging the American question in light of those values, offered a way for workers to transcend the restrictions on their political voice and participate in the political life of the country.

Considering the importance of the concepts of national identity and nationalism to Europe in the mid-nineteenth-century, it seems natural that these concepts played a role in forming British opinions about the war. Although Britain did not undergo the revolutionary upheaval that swept across the Continent, some of the ideas that motivated the “springtime of peoples” seeped into British political discourse. Union and Confederate sympathizers sought to turn these concepts to their advantage, and when appealing to workers, they needed to make them relevant. Both interests and ideals could accomplish this feat. Neither side possessed a monopoly on one or the other, but clear distinctions emerged. Arguments on behalf of the Confederacy tended to emphasize the pragmatic benefit of recognizing a Southern national identity, specifically in relation to cotton. They added particular relevance to discussions, but also staked the argument on the success of Southern arms. Significant setbacks would decrease the practical gains of recognizing Confederate independence and render the idea of Confederate nationhood questionable. By comparison, supporters of the North harkened not just to a national identity for the United States but to Britain. By linking the two identities through an emphasis on common values, proponents of the Union appealed to the heart. As the war dragged on, economics needs lessened, and the slavery issue clarified, workers grew more receptive to such appeals.

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At least as early as the time of Plato (427-347 BC) humans have been debating the meaning of justice. A quick scan of Book I of the Republic yields at least three definitions proffered by the interlocutors. Aging Cephalus believes justice to be simply returning what one has taken from another, while young Polemarchus suggests a more refined definition: giving benefits to friends and harm to enemies. At the same time, pugnacious Thrasymachus insists that might makes right and justice must be the advantage of the stronger. What this brief episode in ancient literature tells us is that the debate over what is just long predates us; it likely has existed as long as mankind. It is, therefore, remarkable that the word has weathered the storm of disagreement surrounding it and survived to the present day. There is something basic, beneath the myriad points of contention, that all agree on: justice is, simply, what is right.

This essay seeks to discern how the common conception of justice in late eighteenth-century France, based upon Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s treatise On the Social Contract and Jacques-Louis Ménétra’s Journal of My Life, had changed from that of the same region during the time of the Song of Roland. It does not seek to trace comprehensively the development of justice during the many centuries in between these two periods, for that would require much more space than allowed here. At the conclusion we will have two separate and culturally contextual notions of justice—two cities, so to speak, but not the road connecting them. Any conclusions about such a road will be speculative, inferences from the differences between the two conceptions of justice. Concerning these two conceptions, it will be clear that, informed by Augustine—and, through him, by the Greeks—the eleventh-century Franks understood justice as the rectifying of men and their interrelations before God; justice was cosmic balance, residing in the abstract. By the eighteenth-century, the French had come to understand justice as respect for the freedom and equality of individuals: justice now resided within men. Thus between these two time periods the notion of justice was humanized.

The Song of Roland, as an account of a religiously motivated military mission, affords a unique body of evidence from which to construct the understanding of justice held by the Franks of its time. The poem tells the story of Emperor Charlemagne’s (742-814) eighth-century military campaign against the Saracens in Spain, highlighting the heroism of his nephew and count, Roland. While Charlemagne did in fact lead a campaign in Spain in the eighth-century, the poet likely skewed some details to serve his immediate purposes. Scholars typically date the poem to 1098-1100, the time of the First Crusade, in which case it would have served as propaganda for potential Crusade recruits. Themes of treachery and religious conviction provide rich soil for an analysis of justice.

In order to understand the concept of justice latent in the Song of Roland it is necessary to examine the underpinnings of early medieval thought in general and Charlemagne’s thought...
in particular. Living in a time when literary output in Western Europe was sparse, Charlemagne looked to earlier texts for his education, particularly to Augustine of Hippo (AD 354-430). Charlemagne’s biographer Einhard (c.775-840) tells us: “While at table, he listened to reading or music. The subjects of the readings were the stories and deeds of olden time: he was fond, too, of St. Augustine’s books, and especially of the one entitled ‘City of God.’” Augustine wrote *City of God* from 413 to 427 following the Visigoths’ sack of Rome in 410. He intended, among other things, to refute the claim many pagans were making that the rise of Christianity had caused Rome’s downfall, supplanting the trusty polytheism of Rome’s glorious past. In doing so, Augustine asserts the superiority of “true religion” against the waning paganism, while giving his fellow Christians a vision for political life. Both these provisions were of utmost relevance to Charlemagne a few centuries later.

Given that Charlemagne highly esteemed *City of God*, his own personal notion of justice can thoroughly be discerned from it, as Augustine wrote much about justice. Arguing that Rome was never a true republic because justice never existed in it, Augustine defined justice as simply “that virtue which assigns to everyone his due.” Here Augustine channeled Aristotle, who gave a similar definition of distributive justice in his *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> And justice is that by which the just person is said to be inclined to do what is just by choice, and inclined to distribute things, both to himself in comparison with someone else, and to another person in comparison with someone else, not in such a way that more of what is choiceworthy goes to himself and less to his neighbor, nor the opposite way with what is harmful, but so that each gets what is proportionately equal, and similarly with another person in comparison with someone else.”

Thus, though separated from the classical philosophers by more than a millennium, Charlemagne had a direct link to them through Augustine. Putting the Christian spin on Aristotle’s definition, Augustine continued: “Then what kind of justice is it that takes a man away from the true God and subjects him to unclean demons? Is this to assign to every man his due?” To do justice to a man, to render to him his due, for Augustine, one must act in a way that tends toward his right relationship to God. More specifically, such justice would cause a man to live a hierarchically ordered life: “God rules the man, the soul rules the body, the reason rules lust and the other perverted elements of the soul.” Again, Augustine invoked the Greeks, this time Plato. Justice first concerns God and the individual before the community—vertical justice before horizontal. For Augustine the Christian bishop, this would have entailed abandoning any and all idolatry and false worship and fully embracing the one true God who took on flesh in Jesus Christ.

The inferences likely drawn from this by the political leader will be clear: servitude must be just, in so far as it can restrain unprincipled people from wrongdoing. Principled people, on the other hand, Augustine said, may not need such servitude. Thus it is suited to some and not to others, as Aristotle taught also. Augustine devoted so much ink to this discussion about individual “vertical” justice in a discussion about collective justice because the two are bound: a collective of individually unjust persons cannot be a just collective. Only through the justification of each of them on an individual level can the political community become just. Whether or not Augustine actually intended it (Augustine’s understanding of the agency of this justification is a complex dynamic always involving divine grace, sometimes involving political coercion), in the mind of the Christian emperor hearing this read aloud at his dinner table the conclusion would have been certain: military conquests will need to include forced conversion. Indeed, in *Song of Roland*, Charlemagne forces all the surviving Saracens to be baptized upon conquering them.

Of anything in *City of God*, Charlemagne would have paid most attention to Augustine’s...
description of the good Christian emperor. If he is to embody both of God’s principal moral qualities, justice and mercy, Augustine wrote that he must rule with justice, be humble, spread Christianity “far and wide”, fear and love God, avenge wrong not out of personal animosity but out of necessity for the greater good, and be ready to pardon, never to encourage or justify evil but to urge the culprit toward righteousness. Moreover, Augustine praised Theodosius as a model Christian emperor, and Theodosius was (and is) remembered as the emperor that outlawed pagan religious practice, advancing Christianity’s legal status from a religion to the religion. Based on all this, it can be inferred that Charlemagne understood justice to be rooted in the relationship between each individual and God, and to be of special concern to political and military action.

Shifting our focus to the Song of Roland, in light of this Augustinian cultural framework, the poet’s manner of telling the story of Roland can be explained more thoroughly. The poem reflects Augustine’s theological anthropology and its relation to justice in how the Saracens as men are portrayed, in the Franks’ behavior toward them, and in the presentation of the various instances of vengeance.

Beginning in the first laisse, the way the poet portrays the particular differences between the Saracens and the Franks illustrates just why the Franks considered the Saracens their enemies: they were not Christian. If, as suggested above, Augustine’s thought influenced the Franks’ worldview, then the portrayal of the Saracens should reflect the belief that they serve demons, not God. The end of the first laisse reads, “It [Saragossa] is held by King Marsile, who does not love God; / He serves Muhammad and calls on Apollo. / He cannot prevent disaster from overtaking him.” In simplest terms the poem evinces an Augustinian standpoint in its portrayal of the rival ruler. Augustine wrote that the Christian emperor must love God. The poet wrote that King Marsile does not love God. With this introduction the rest of the poem is framed with the dichotomy between the Christians, who love God, and the “pagans”, who do not love God, the justice residing, of course, with the former.

The narrator develops the depraved nature of the Saracens as his tale progresses, especially through the contrasts between their conduct and the Franks’ conduct. Without subjection to God, nothing restrains the Saracens from deceit. So Blancandrin, King Marsile’s wise man of counsel, suggests they falsely promise to Charlemagne that, if he ceases his attack, they will follow him to his palace in Aix, receive the Christian faith, and submit to him in vassalage. Nor do they refrain from sacrificing some of their own. “Far better for them to lose their heads there / Then for us to lose the fair and beautiful land of Spain,” Blancandrin says of his Saracen countrymen. When the Saracens approach Charlemagne, the poet writes, “there is nothing he can do to avoid deceit.” In contrast to the Saracens’ depravity, Charlemagne is “noble” and portrayed as devout, stretching out his hands toward God, not a man of “hasty words,” and concerned with God’s kingdom; in reply to Blancandrin’s promise of hostages and acceptance of the faith, he focuses not on the hostages but on the salvation of Marsile: “He may yet be saved.” Moreover, “He wishes to be guided entirely by the men of France,” which distinguishes him from the autonomous tyrant of classical philosophy. Thus he is Augustine’s model Christian emperor.

As the character of the Saracens develops in the poem, it becomes clear that the chief and perhaps only difference between them and the Franks is religious. Interestingly, the poet had no problem describing the customs of the Saracens as virtually identical with those of the Franks. Like Charlemagne, King Marsile has “dukes and counts.” Blancandrin is a “knight” with knightly qualities of chivalry and dutiful service to his lord. Marsile offers “lands and fiefs” to his men. Both kings, Charlemagne and Marsile, even conduct important business next to pine trees. With all this in common, the only thing separating the two groups is that the Saracens do
not serve the Christian God. For the poet and his contemporary Franks, merely the religious difference between them and the Saracens justified their attack. Cast in Augustinian terms, because the souls of the Saracens are not subject to God, the just thing to do was to make them so.

The way the poet presented discussions and instances of Saracen conversion also suggests that the Franks understood the justice of their military enterprise to reside in the religious aspect. As discussed above, the poet portrays Charlemagne as principally concerned with King Marsile’s conversion. Historian David Ganz, discussing Einhard’s *Life of Charlemagne*, says this about Charlemagne’s concern for the salvation of souls:

> Of course Einhard’s ruler is an explicitly Christian ruler, concerned to protect Christians throughout the world and to worship God in a fitting way. His victory over the Saxons depended on his condition that the Saxons abandon the cult of demons and their native rights to take up the sacraments of Christian faith and worship.

Since Einhard wrote in the ninth-century, the importance he gives to the religious element of the conquest means that it was not unique to Roland’s Crusade-era culture. The poet even ended the *Song* with the account of Marsile’s former wife Brammomide’s voluntary acceptance of the faith, implying that this, even more than the just punishment of treacherous Ganelon, is the true dénouement of the story.

The Augustinian influence, particularly on vengeance, is further reflected in the portrayal of the trial of Ganelon, which results in his execution for treason. Two cases of vengeance are at play in the trial: Ganelon is accused of treacherously exacting revenge on Roland, and Charlemagne, once having ordered Ganelon’s execution, is said to have had his vengeance. Thus there are permissible and impermissible forms of vengeance. Recall what Augustine wrote: The Christian ruler must indeed avenge wrong, but never out of personal hatred, and he must balance this with a readiness to pardon. Back when Ganelon first swore revenge, the poet portrayed his behavior as passionate, motivated by personal animosity. So naturally his vengeance is condemned at the end of the trial, while Charlemagne’s vengeance is upheld. When, therefore, historian Glyn Burgess writes that in the trial the poet equates vengeance and justice, the more nuanced reality is that he deems proper vengeance just and improper vengeance unjust.

What emerges from the *Song of Roland* is an understanding of justice profoundly influenced by the thought of St. Augustine—a justice rooted in religious conviction and chiefly concerned with the restoration of the cosmic equilibrium of rights and wrongs.

Now we jump forward several hundred years to the eighteenth-century. Europe had undergone significant changes between these time periods. Beginning in the sixteenth-century, the Roman church had been divided by various reforming sects, enabled in large part by Gutenberg’s printing press of 1440. Following this bold foray, other intellectual movements had risen up, including the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, which championed reason and the scientific method and questioned tenets of faith and tradition. It is in this context that Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), born in Geneva, lived and wrote his important works of political philosophy.

It must first be noted that Rousseau cannot be seen as a perfect representation of the typical thought of his day. His was a time of great intellectual diversity. Historian Jonathan Israel has pointed out the tendency to overlook “the intensity of the clash over democratic Enlightenment ideas within the Revolution” and to see the atmosphere as more homogenous than it was. Additionally, it has been pointed out that interpretations of Rousseau have yielded vastly different conclusions. However, certain principles of equality and freedom at the foundation of Rousseau’s thought are unquestionably clear in *On the Social Contract* and generally represent the dominant thought of the typical merchant-class.
French person of Rousseau’s time, as our examination Ménétra will demonstrate below.

Rousseau’s understanding of justice can be discerned from the problems he identified and the solutions he suggested in On the Social Contract. He made clear his aim in his opening paragraph: to discern the true foundation of political authority. The Western tradition in which Rousseau found himself had said that authority resided in nature or in might (recall Thrasymuchus). This was a problem for Rousseau because, unlike his classical forbearers, he considered it a basic truth that “all are born equal and free;” no one is naturally so much more fit than others that he may rule them. Pursuing a new line of thought, Rousseau’s challenge was to find a foundation for authority that balanced “what right permits with what interest prescribes, so that justice and utility do not find themselves at odds with one another.” With what understanding of justice would this have been a challenge for Rousseau? He provides an answer in Chapter VI of Book I:

‘Find a form of association which defends and protects with all common forces the person and goods of each associate, and by means of which each one, while uniting with all, nevertheless obeys only himself and remains as free as before?’ This is the fundamental problem for which the social contract provides the solution.

Here Rousseau explained what he meant, in his introductory paragraph, by “utility” and “justice.” Utility is protection and justice is freedom. These conflict because protection requires the sacrifice of certain freedoms. To ensure protection and freedom at no cost to either was a lofty goal for Rousseau. He believed he achieved it with the social compact, the true foundation of authority, in which each citizen “alienates” himself and his rights entirely to the community, but maintains his freedom: “since there is no associate over whom he does not acquire the same right that he would grant others over himself, he gains the equivalent of everything he loses, along with a greater amount of force to preserve what he has.” The viability of this claim is not our concern here. What’s relevant to this discussion is what it discloses about Rousseau’s understanding of justice: it required that the freedom of all be respected.

Not only was Rousseau’s justice something in the abstract, upheld by a social compact regime structure; it was also a disposition in the individual inculcated by the social compact regime. Unlike his predecessor Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), Rousseau understood the social compact to be not just a necessary evil but a requirement for a person’s full flourishing. While man is born with natural liberty, he requires law to attain “moral liberty” from his appetites to make him “master of himself.” The social compact achieves this by aligning each citizen’s self-interest with the general interest, making him altruistic and impartial; it “substitutes justice for instinct in his behavior” and replaces “physical impulse” with “duty” and “appetite” with “right.” Thus Rousseau’s justice was the disposition of an individual who acts equitably. Taken all together then, the evidence in On the Social Contract evinces an understanding of justice as the respect, on the part of both the state and the individual, for the freedom and equality inherent in human the nature of all.

If Rousseau’s writing shows us generally how the philosophes of his time understood justice, what about ordinary men and women? At one point in his life, probably June 1771, Rousseau met a Parisian named Jacques-Louis Ménétra (1739-unknown), a glazier who recorded the events of his life in a journal which has been preserved. As a working-class citizen, Ménétra provides in his memoir a unique opportunity to discern a commoner’s understanding of justice and hold it up against that of Rousseau.

That Ménétra even undertook to record his life tells us something of what he thought of convention. In his introduction to the English translation of Ménétra’s Journal, Daniel Roche explains how uncommon it was for members of Ménétra’s class to be included in the “normal channels of the official culture.” The mindset
which the middle and lower classes would have inherited from medieval feudalism cast society in terms of collectives—families, villages, religions—and not in terms of the individual. That Ménétra wrote a book whose chief subject was himself reflects a significant shift in his class’s way of thinking about itself—or, now, about themselves. Fully aware of the novelty of his enterprise, Ménétra rejected formalities of grammar and spelling in order to present himself as explicitly unassociated with the upper classes, who were virtually the only ones to ever write and therefore to ever adhere to formalities. For example, there are no periods in his memoir. He wrote, in Roche’s words, “libertarian literature.” It was his way of declaring his independence, his freedom from forms of oppression. This reveals that Ménétra, like Rousseau, believed abridgements of his freedom to be fundamentally unjust.

Within the text itself also Ménétra conveys the great value he placed on freedom and equality. He rants often against this or that group of people, and his rants share the common quality of resentment at anyone’s pretension to intrude on his freedom to live as he saw fit. Moralizing clergy were often the objects of his scorn, as was, at one point, the tyrannical behavior of the National Convention, the Revolution-era governing body. Thus he was in favor of the Revolution, but only in so far as it freed him and others from oppression. When the resulting atmosphere was itself rather oppressive, he did not hold back from leveling complaints against it. In one of his rare philosophical reflections, Ménétra expressed the same understanding of human equality as Rousseau, writing of the nobility, “they did not believe the Eternal when he created man everything was in the most perfect equality [sic] and that they were just as subject as the commonest of men to all the infirmities and even to death.”

In contrast to Rousseau, however, who understood freedom to be both from external force and from internal passions, Ménétra prized his freedom in part for the sake of his licentious behavior; at one point he robbed a Jewish man, at another he raped a shepherd girl, never evidencing repentance for either deed. Because of Ménétra’s brief contact with Rousseau, we get a unique instance of the difference in their characters. When asked to leave a café because well-known Rousseau was attracting too much attention, Ménétra writes that he himself was “quick to take offense” and “greatly insulted,” while Rousseau, on the other hand, calmed him. One of the purposes of Rousseau’s social contract was to turn men’s self-interest into justice. While Ménétra at points claimed to have respected his neighbor and injured no one, he invalidated these sentiments with stories of his own thievery and rape. Rousseau, by contrast, disgusted himself with his one illicit sexual relationship. “It was to me as though I had committed incest.” This one instance is not necessarily a universal representation of the difference between these two, but it does illustrate the difference in the importance each gave to living morally.

So it was that the general understanding of justice in Northwestern Continental Europe had by the eighteenth-century grown to be more centered on the individual than it had been in the eighth- to eleventh-centuries. However, certain elements of justice persisted through this time period. For both Rousseau and Ménétra as well as their medieval predecessors the notion of justice always connoted right action, doing what simply ought to be done. They both understood that some actions were permissible and others were not, and that justice directly reflected which actions occupied these two categories. It is in deciding which actions fall into which category that our two time periods depart from each other—and they certainly do differ. Lest there be any speculation that these two time periods did not in fact differ in their understandings of justice but rather in how they expressed it, let it be remembered that Rousseau and Ménétra wrote with a tone of discomfort, to say the least, with the established norms of their society. For their medieval Frankish ancestors expressed no hesitation at violating freedom and equality in
the name of rectifying wrong behavior; from their perspective, more accurately, there was no freedom to be violated, for error had no rights. What was not right had to be made right. By the eighteenth-century, most understood there to be a few obstacles between the wrongness of someone’s actions and the attempt to forcibly rectify them: namely, freedom and equality. Thus in On the Social Contract Rousseau aimed in part to accomplish the same thing as the medieval Franks (at least as they presented themselves) set out to do: to make men more just. Only Rousseau aimed to do it while upholding freedom and equality.

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Upon first glance, *The Algerine Captive* seems more prominently a captivity narrative than a quixotic fiction. The protagonist, Updike Underhill, deviates greatly from the lance-bearing, fantasy-spewing adventurer that is Cervantes’ Don Quixote. He hardly resembles traditional literary Quixotes—impulsive, idealistic rogues who resist the norm in favor of their own sporadic and disjointed imaginations and whose tales are narrated by a third-person narrator. In contrast, Updike is a professional—first a pedagogue and then a doctor—and his first-person narration maintains a rational and measured voice rather than the incoherence and disjointedness of a traditional quixotic character. And yet, Updike’s quixotism quickly becomes apparent as his interpersonal relations play out. In the quixotic manner, he is made the fool by his students, his peers, and by the women he courts. Using the character of Updike, Tyler uproots the traditional use of the quixote as a sympathetic character ostracized from society and rather uses Updike as a satire; he employs quixotism in order to exaggerate the absurdity of Updike’s blind beliefs in American exceptionalism. We follow Updike, and everything he represents, as he winds his way through the world as the professionalized quixotic fool prompted by the nationalist history he has studied in his youth. Both halves of this novel, one domestic and the other global, generate in concert a sophisticated and progressive critique of American exceptionalism by satirizing Updike’s unwavering and very vocal patriotism, both in the ideology he espouses and in his actual embodiment of exceptionalism itself.

The absurdity of a quixotic character traditionally arises from the distortion of apparent wisdom. Notably, Tyler opens Chapter XI in Part One with the following excerpt from Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost*:

> None are so surely caught, when they are catch’d,
> As Wit turn’d Fool: Folly, in Wisdom hatch’d,
> Hath Wisdom’s warrant, and the help of school;
> And Wit’s own grace, to grace a learned Fool. (V.ii.69-72)

Wit is readily and paradoxically made the fool, and like Shakespeare’s fool, Tyler frames the absurdity of Updike’s character with both his self-promotion and his espousal of personal wisdom. Updike’s brash assertions of his education render him the learned fool. Updike imprudently proclaims his own antiquated classical education as the basis of his wisdom. In the chapter that succeeds the Shakespearean allusion, Updike recites Homer in the original Greek while in the public Sea Port and is received by onlookers “with cold approbation of politeness.” They find him utterly unintelligible; his thoughts and actions are out of place, imprudent, and overly aureate. This moment, along with others, is emblematic of Updike’s quixotism as he struggles to rectify what he sees to be important, his classical education, with how his peers judge him. The wit and wisdom of Updike’s classical education...
quickly turns to folly and foolery as he is met with awkward glances.

Updike’s distorted wisdom manifests particularly in his assertions of a nationalist ideology. Tyler thus applies his quixotic satire of Updike’s assertion of superior classical education to his constant calling for another form of apparent wisdom: nationalist education. Updike is classically educated in Latin and Greek, following the fashion of the quixotic figure; but, unlike the typical quixote whose canonical texts consist of romances of old, Updike also immerses himself in the texts of American nationalist history. In the opening of the first chapter, Updike cites Jeremy Belknap, a patriotic historian, as having recorded his own family lineage. In doing so, Updike inserts himself into a nationalist ideological tradition. From his upbringing immersed in this rhetoric stems an ideology of America as an exception among nations, most notably for its qualities of liberty, individualism, republicanism, and capitalism. Updike’s nationalist education, as one of his theoretical tenets, then becomes a part of the ideology that Tyler satirizes. Tyler, by delineating this quixotism as folly masked with ostensible wit, is then able to make a clear and direct satire of American exceptionalism. In the first half, wisdom turns to folly in Tyler’s critique of Updike’s espousal of exceptionalist ideology. In the second half, this ideological folly is then instantiated in his actions, as his acts of supposed honor become acts of distorted pride. Tyler uses the bifurcated structure both to show how ideological folly prefigures the distorted pride of the exceptionalist agenda and to show how an embodied agenda develops from folly. The domestic critique of Updike focuses on satirizing his ideological and nationalist educational commitments. In this section, he repeatedly
asserts the superiority of American sources of knowledge. Updike’s defense of this nationalist ideology becomes apparent when he travels to the Harvard museum. In it he “found the curiosities of all countries, but our own.” This upsets Updike, who desires to see the history of his great nation commemorated for citizens to enjoy. He especially worries that foreign visitors will get the wrong image of America, based on what they see there. In this moment, Updike argues for the importance of setting the correct kind of domestic example, a quaint nostalgia which Tyler lampoons. Similarly, in the preface Updike describes his anxiety over the new trend of reading for pleasure in America, which he sees as a threat to the integrity of the American domestic image. Increased literacy and the new upturn of “books of mere amusement” upset Updike for two reasons: he fears that the novels are not authored by Americans and that they consequently teach readers to admire the “levity, and often the vices,” of England. Updike would prefer that Americans read American authors who write novels displaying American manners. Thus, Updike’s exceptionalism begins at home. Tyler then satirizes the nationalist need to contrive a sense of all sources of knowledge being uniquely made-in-America.

The ideological discord Updike meets in America prefigures the same in Algeria when he is captured as a slave. As Updike experiences slavery abroad, he shares what it teaches him about his own country:

It was amidst the parched sands and flinty rocks of Africa that thou taughtest me, that the bread was indeed pleasant, and the water sweet. Let those of our fellow citizens, who set at nought the rich blessings of our federal union, go like me to a land of slavery, and they will then learn how to appreciate the value of our free government.

Here we see that while enslaved, Updike’s views of America are reinforced. By experiencing a lack of everything he once knew, those things become more apparently blessings to him. In this moment, we can see Tyler’s critique of the exceptionalist self-propagating tendency that consistently sees itself as superior.

If Updike is, as I have argued, an instantiation of nationalist rhetoric, then his travels and captivity abroad are Tyler’s occasions for critiquing a global American exceptionalist agenda. The exceptionalist agenda propounds that American ideals not only are superior but also ought to be spread to other countries in order for them to share in supposedly superior government, economy, and social practices. Soon after Updike is sold into captivity, he comments on his situation: “If any of my dear countrymen censure my want of due spirit, I have only to wish him in my situation at Algiers, that he may avail himself of a noble opportunity of suffering gloriously for his country.” Updike sees himself as a martyr—one who, though abroad, never forgets his country and everything he sees it as standing for. Updike’s quixotism leads him to embody the nationalist agenda; he sees himself as superior to others in his martyrdom.

In The Algerine Captive we can trace Updike’s travels domestically and abroad as Tyler’s layered critique of the nationalist rhetoric that expounds an exceptionalist agenda. Domestically, Updike confronts the issue of creating an American literary canon that reflects his values as well as a history worthy to be in museums. Abroad, Updike sees himself as a martyr whose honor and sense of moral superiority reflect his country’s sense of superiority. Tyler satirizes Updike’s beliefs and actions by making him the outlier, the quixote. Updike is a parody of everything Tyler saw as exceedingly idealistic, impractical, and biased in the early stages of American nationalism and exceptionalism.

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Prophet-Freaks: 
A Tocquevillian Consideration of the Grotesque in American Literature as Pathology and Remedy

Christina Eickenroht

fter Pilgrim John has been tormented by a curse that causes him to see through skin to the “working of his own innards” in C. S. Lewis’ The Pilgrim’s Regress, he mistakenly believes that the real man is found in “the brains and the passages of the nose… and the saliva moving down the glands and the blood in the veins… and the intestines like a coil of snakes…” John believes that the skin, because it neatly conceals this graphic reality, is “only a veil for the bad.” His guide corrects him, asserting that the skin does not hide reality but rather forms an essential part of it. John retorts that if he cut a man open he would find this gruesome reality, to which the guide replies, “A man cut open is, so far, not a man: and if you did not sew him up speedily you would be seeing not organs, but death.”

Much of American literature fixates on the death, the organs, and the gruesome innards of man, as well as his darkest passions. The “fascination with the abomination” compels American authors and their readers. In literary theory, the “grotesque” refers to that which elicits both empathy and disgust; often, characters with broken bodies, broken minds, or broken souls populate the literature of the grotesque. From Edgar Allen Poe’s raven to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Roger Chillingworth,” William Faulkner’s “Emily” to Flannery O’Connor’s “the Misfit” and “Hazel Motes,” the horrors abound throughout American literary history. Whence arises the American literature of the grotesque, and has it any redemptive qualities?

In this paper, through the lenses of Alexis de Tocqueville’s Democracy in America (1835-1840) and Flannery O’Connor’s Mystery and Manners (1969), we will explore the ways in which the transition to a democratic age, as outlined by Tocqueville, drives American authors to the grotesque. In addition, we will consider whether the grotesque constitutes a symptom of pathology or a small remedy for some of the diseases to which Tocqueville claims the democratic soul and democratic society are susceptible. We will conclude by applying the effectual potential of the literature of the grotesque to the wounds inflicted by slavery upon the American South.

Part I: A Brief Overview of the General Characteristics of Literature in a Democratic Age

Upon surveying the literary terrain of America, Tocqueville noted, “So far America has had only a very small number of noteworthy writers, no great historians, and not a single poet. The inhabitants have a sort of prejudice against anything really worthy of the name of literature.” In America, the bodies of literature that Tocqueville saw flourishing were foreign literatures, which he realized would not maintain their sway in America because they would fail to take root in the American democratic soul. No—a distinctively American literature with “a
character peculiarly its own” would have to arise.

Tocqueville sketched the qualitative changes that the art of literature undergoes as the march of equality draws men out of the aristocratic and into the democratic age. In the age of aristocracy, “wealth, strength, and leisure [combine] with farfetched luxuries, refinements of taste, the pleasures of the mind, and the cultivation of the arts.” Literature flourishes among the upper classes and hardly exists among the lower. It follows strict canonical prescriptions yet abounds with refinement; its style and form carry as much weight as its content. The dangers inherent in aristocratic literature include its tendency to become so entangled in the glories and formalities of the age that it becomes alien to the lived experience of the rest of men in the society.

Relative to the age of aristocracy, “less glory” but also “less wretchedness” characterize the age of democracy, as general well-being takes the place of glory and as equality unleashes its middling effect on the whole of society. Tocqueville notes two opposing trends in the readership of democratic societies that encourage the application of this “middling effect” to the creation of literature. On the one hand, democratic man lacks both interest in and time for reading; preoccupation with action, and a taste for only “facile pleasures” of the mind cheapen the democratic soul’s literary experience. On the other hand, the general leveling of education in America greatly increases the country’s readership; in aristocracies, readers are “few and fastidious,” while in democracies “they are immensely more numerous and easier to please.” The effect that such changes have on the body of literature is most simply formulated as increased quantity at the cost of decreased quality. Strict literary conventions slacken, and artists appeal to the less refined tastes of democratic man, who, for the most part, lacks a literary education.

Fully recognizing that literature in a democracy will rarely ascend to the glories of aristocratic genius, we may nonetheless cling to Tocqueville’s assertion that democratic souls are not by nature indifferent to the literary arts but rather “cultivate them in their own fashion and bring their own peculiar qualities and defects to the task.”

What, then, does the democratic soul desire of literature? Because democratic man primarily reads for leisure, because he considers reading a break from the seriousness of daily life, because he fails to understand and appreciate the refinements of the high arts—because of all such factors as these, democratic man desires books that are fairly easy to read, that offer instantly gratifying entertainment, and, above all, that stand in contrast to the monotony of his daily struggles. In short, the democratic soul desires “vivid, lively emotions, sudden revelations, brilliant truths, or errors able to rouse them up and plunge them, almost by violence, into the middle of the subject.” Thus turn his thoughts and his pen to the grotesque.

Part II: Whence Arises the Grotesque in the Age of Democracy: The Non-Parsimonious Anguish of the Democratic Soul

The distinctive form of the grotesque that arises in a democratic age arises toward the end of what Tocqueville outlines as the gradual shift that the march of equality brings about in the sources of literary inspiration. According to Tocqueville, as the democratic soul strips away the formalities by which the aristocratic soul once portrayed the ideal, he comes to conceive of only himself, standing bare in anguish before God. In applying his theory of history—in which equality strips away mediation—to beauty, Tocqueville leads us toward a foreboding conclusion: where beauty has been stripped away, grotesquery reigns.

Tocqueville traces a society’s transition from aristocracy to democracy, noting the corresponding shift in the artist’s sources of poetic inspiration from the ideal to the real. The poet in the aristocratic age portrays the ideal by beautifying and thereby ennobling the real. As he strives
to portray the ideal, the aristocratic soul “will always be inclined to put intermediate powers between God and man.” This he does as he creates men of heroic or quasi-divine character in his literature.

In contrast, the democratic soul rejects this idealism in order to portray the real in brutal honesty. Tocqueville bemoans the loss of these meditational layers that stand between God and man, between beauty and man’s beholding it. As the democratic soul perceives symbols as “childish artifices used to hide or dress up truths which could more naturally be shown to them naked and in broad daylight,” he begins to scorn all forms that stand between himself and the “Supreme Being,” supreme reality, or supreme beauty he aims to portray. In his artistic endeavors, the democratic soul tears down all the “hampering veils put between [himself] and truth”—veils that once mediated beauty—thinking that he can understand the truth of this world, the cosmos, and the divine with perspicuity. Like the democratic souls who instigated the French Revolution, the American writer tears off the “decent drapery of life” in his work. Edmund Burke’s reflections on the spirit of the French Revolution best capture the democratic soul’s stripping formalities bare in the imitative arts as in daily life:

All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of her naked shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.

However, Tocqueville implies that without mediation, man can ponder only the chaos of his own inner turmoil. With all meditational layers between God and man stripped away, the democratic soul can only portray the reality he perceives: his own isolated, grotesque, and restless soul before the terrifying, awe-inspiring God. In the Augustinian formulation, man becomes a problem for himself as he stands in the presence of God. In the realm of literary inspiration, precisely this occurs. His poetic subjects are found in the realms of “human destiny, man himself, not tied to time or place, but face to face with God, with his passions, his doubts, his unexpected good fortune, and his incomprehensible miseries.” Reason’s light cannot penetrate all of the non-parsimonious mysteries of man, yet the writer probes ever deeper, attempting to understand through literature the reasons of the heart that reason itself does not know.

The “deep gloom and amazing brightness” of man’s own soul arouses in him “piety, wonder, scorn, and terror.” The writer fears that which cannot be fully comprehended in his own nature, and yet even as isolation distorts his vision, the writer’s reflections upon the chaos of his own soul become reflections on the nature of man as a whole, his soliloquys the articulation of universal anxieties. This results from the continual march of equality, which enables man, when “he looks at himself” to “[see] all his fellows at the same time.”

Hence the move from imitative arts to innovative arts. As the democratic soul breaks from the past and despoils formalities, his art becomes only the psychological expression of his own troubled soul as it turns in on itself and grasps for intimations of the divine. Thus begins the agonizing march forward of the writer in the democratic age. Turning inward, the democratic man boldly aims “by exaggeration” to “illuminate certain dark corners of the human heart.” In these dark corners he finds the haunting images, figures, and narratives that abound in his literary work. When he “grows bored, restless, and anxious,” this soul (a soul much drawn to excess) knows not where to halt; he rushes “without stopping far beyond the bounds of common sense.” Beyond these bounds, in the depths of his troubled and non-parsimonious soul, live the grotesque and monstrous figures that populate his literature.
In addition, democratic man’s tendency to think in terms of general ideas more than particular details intensifies his proclivity to depict the grotesque. Rather than portraying “men and deeds,” he writes of “passions and ideas.” His usage of language itself contributes to the grotesquery of his literary work as a whole: democratic man not only increasingly employs abstractions in his writing and speech, but also personifies these abstractions and “make[s] them act like real men.” Far from being the heroes of aristocratic literature, these personified abstractions take on monstrous forms; this should be expected, for they are the product of the writer’s endeavor to cast as characters his soul’s dark passions.

In the literature of the grotesque, Tocqueville sees the democratic soul taking his anxious fears and holding them up as though they were the whole man. Just as political theorist Michael Oakeshott’s “Rationalist” works to “[draw] off the liquid in which our moral ideas [are] suspended,” this troubled author tries to distill the lonely fears and then pass them off as the central characteristics of man’s nature. However, the democratic soul’s propensity to isolate himself actually renders him incapable of understanding the whole man, since according to Tocqueville, the whole man is in reality constituted in and through his relations with others. As the author’s isolation renders him incapable of conceiving of the whole man, he writes only of his irreducible anguishes. Thus, in literature as in moral theory, we are left with “only the dry and gritty residue that chokes us as we try to take it down.”

Tocqueville further notes that the writer of the democratic age is often bombastic, as he attempts to capture and retain his readers’ attention amid the noisy tumult of democratic society. His stylistic tendency to write bombastically, in combination with the deep anxieties of his soul that become his subject, explains the democratic soul’s creation of “too many immense, incoherent images, overdrawn descriptions, bizarre effects, and a whole fantastic breed of brainchildren who will make one long for the real world.”

**Part III: Whether, According to Tocqueville, the Grotesque Can Be Redemptive for Man or for Democracy**

Because our task is neither to restore the past nor to glorify the modern, we must ascertain whether anything in the literature of the grotesque can be redemptive—either for man himself or for democracy as a whole. Will the grotesque as it appears in American literature aid us in “going forward amid the ruins” of equality’s march?

The novel will likely affect democratic man first and foremost by tapping into the primary psychological shift of equality: as men increasingly understand themselves to be equal, and as they strip away the formalities that once disguised their fundamental likeness, they become capable of sympathizing with mankind at large. Their sensibility “embraces more objects” than that of the aristocratic men. The danger here, of course, is that the man whose sympathy extends to mankind at large hovers over but never actually enters the world; his sympathy is theoretical—neither incarnational nor effectual. Nonetheless, Tocqueville’s prescient comments about the expansion of sympathy remain relevant in the realm of literature. Sympathy widens the democratic imagination:

> When ranks are almost equal among a people... each instantaneously can judge the feelings of all the others; he just casts a rapid glance at himself, and that is enough. So there is no misery that he cannot readily understand, and a secret instinct tells him its extent. It makes no difference if strangers or enemies are in question; his imagination at once puts him in their place.

By his imagination his sympathy becomes empathy, and democratic man recognizes in himself the anguished monster that haunts the pages of his books; in reading the literature of the grotesque, he himself feels the dreadful freaks’ miseries. It is here that the literature bred of man’s
psychological turmoil fully enters the grotesque, for it elicits not only disgust but also empathy. Any slight indication of humanity in the monster renders him empathetic: “As long as these works have vitality,” writes O’Connor, as long as they “bring such maimed souls alive,” then “they have to be dealt with.”

This literature will, at the very least, force the democratic soul to consider the mysteries of his isolated anguishes—by shocking him alive, as it were. In forcing him to reckon with the non-parsimonious character of his own soul, the grotesque will combat his pathological tendency to destroy the very mystery that life in this world requires. According to Tocqueville, one of the crises of modernity is that the democratic soul destroys mystery, while strength of soul requires, in part, living with mystery. Democratic man’s ability to successfully resolve the small challenges of practical affairs in his own power leads him to conclude that “the mysteries of life will eventually fall before the mind of man,” in O’Connor’s words. In order for him to be broken of this pathological destruction of mystery, the democratic soul must be made breathless; he must be awed by the mystery of the cosmos, the world, and his own heart. The writer of the grotesque, then, will make himself and his reader breathless by shock.

In shocking and repulsing the democratic soul, the literary grotesque will shatter his belief in the indefinite perfectibility of man—even if only temporarily. As O’Connor writes, “it is only in these centuries when we are afflicted with the doctrine of the perfectibility of human nature by its own efforts that the vision of the freak in fiction is so disturbing,” for “he keeps us from forgetting that we share in his state.” These horrors will sober his aspirations. These monstrous details can serve as the irregular particulars—the “correctives” that painfully force the democratic soul to notice the flaws in his general theories.

The literature of the grotesque could perhaps even lead the democratic soul back to religion by tapping into his anxieties and leading him to ponder the immortality of the soul—that tenet of religion that Tocqueville considers most necessary to the health of a democracy. Man’s vicarious (and yet quite real) experiences of loneliness, anguish, and even death will lead his soul to collapse in upon itself; these anxieties, notes Tocqueville, can lead man back to religion. His “natural disgust for existence” and simultaneous “immense longing to exist,” his scorn for life and fear of annihilation, will compel him to contemplate the next world.

Thus understood, the grotesque in literature serves a small part in the overall project of tempering the pathologies of democratic man and democratic government—by sparking man’s sense of mystery, by problematizing his belief in mankind’s indefinite perfectibility, and even by leading him back to religion. Because “only the combination of the forces of all is able to guarantee liberty,” even the ogres of American fiction can be one of the “infinitely various” means “toward the fulfillment of one great design.” Although the despairing writer may have meant his monstrous brainchild for evil, it may yet be leveraged for some small good.

The amount of potential leverage that the literature of the grotesque wields on the democratic soul and on democracy as a whole ends here for Tocqueville, in large part because his appears to be a theology of finitude more than of Fall. The soul’s propensity for loneliness—not its propensity for evil or malice—concerns Tocqueville. Not so for Flannery O’Connor.

Part IV: Whether, According to O’Connor, the Grotesque Can Be Redemptive for Man or for Democracy

Flannery O’Connor, as a writer of the grotesque in the democratic age, stands as a realization of Tocqueville’s projection. O’Connor’s philosophy of the grotesque differs slightly from that of Tocqueville, for her deep theology of original sin leads her to consider the grotesque both a pathology of and a remedy for the diseases of democratic man.

Whereas Tocqueville sees the grotesque as a symptom of the pathology of the democratic
soul, O’Connor sees it as an effective mirror by which an author of clear vision forces man to confront the evils of his own heart. The distinctions between O’Connor’s and Tocqueville’s understandings here stem, in large part, from their differing views on the author’s state of mind. Whereas Tocqueville would understand the grotesque to spring only from man’s anguish, O’Connor offers an alternative explanation by detailing two types of authors who write about the grotesque. Some, she states, “write about rot because they love it”; others, however, “write about rot because they see it and recognize it for what it is.”

The author that O’Connor envisions in this second category is the faithful Christian novelist. When written by these authors of the second category, O’Connor maintains that the grotesque “proceeds from a healthy, and not from a diseased, faculty of the mind.” This mind produces the sort of grotesque that is “morally serious,” not just “willfully monstrous.” For this reason, his works may be read as revelation—not of the ideal, but of the real.

For O’Connor with her theology of guilt and original sin, the sort of reflection that happens when the democratic soul folds in upon himself and records his horrifying findings in literature can remind us of the wound, of the Fall. O’Connor’s theology, unlike Tocqueville’s, aligns with the Augustinian understanding that the death in man—not the death of man—constitutes man’s fundamental problem. Thus, where the grotesque as Tocqueville understands it can only be a moderate antidote to society’s ills, the grotesque as O’Connor understands it can draw men to true repentance by revealing to man the meanness of his own soul. The literature of the grotesque becomes a literary form of the American jeremiad tradition, further tearing away the veils of illusion that the democratic soul so despises to fix his eyes on the habitual evils of his own heart.

Notably more interested in sin and redemption than Tocqueville, who emphasizes the importance of religion more for its capacity to maintain liberty than for its salvation of souls, O’Connor goes so far as to say that the literary grotesque can actually inspire true belief in the heart of man. The horrors of such literature, which are only intimations of the horrors man recognizes in his own heart, will leave him in despair, grasping for a Savior. The “nature of grace,”
writes O’Connor, can sometimes “be made plain only by describing its absence.” Redemption loses its meaning for the man who believes in the indefinite perfectibility of man by his own effort; the literature of the grotesque can send him fearfully running to the foot of the altar. For O’Connor, the literature of the grotesque, when written by the author of faith, becomes revelatory and prophetic, capable of calling society back from its errancy only insofar as it is able to sober the individual man to the depth of his sin. O’Connor concludes that America will lack a robust religious fiction until there arises again that “happy combination of believing artist and believing society.” Nonetheless, in Tocquevillian style, she determines that the believing author must continue to travel forward amid the ruins, striving at all times to “reproduce, with words, what he sees,” which “at all times is fallen man perverted by false philosophies.” Although it remains only a “modest achievement,” she notes, it remains a necessary one.

**Part V: Factors That Could Magnify the Salutary Potential of the Grotesque**

The power of the literature of the grotesque to be redemptive—either for man or for democracy—would be magnified in proportion to its concreteness and its regional ties. On this both Tocqueville and O’Connor would agree.

The epistemology of Rousseau, to which Tocqueville and O’Connor both ascribe, requires that knowledge somehow be made “palpable to [man’s] senses.” Consequently, the literary freaks and monsters man encounters will only be able to leverage the aforementioned potential if, in O’Connor’s words, they “can be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, and touched.” In his fiction, the writer must “embody mystery through manners,” in O’Connor’s formulation: the fiction writer is concerned with “mystery as [he] find[s] it embodied in the concrete world of sense experience.”

Tocqueville and O’Connor would also agree that the literature of the grotesque yields maximum leverage on the soul and on society insofar as it taps into regional tropes, for they both recognize the “local independence” that remains “the mainspring and lifeblood of American freedom.” The more that the literature of the grotesque retains a degree of local variety, the more deeply it will penetrate the souls of the locality’s inhabitants. This power lent to the literature of the grotesque by the American’s attachment to his region has perhaps vaporized for much of the nation, as variety disappears with the coming of government centralization and globalization. There remains one region, however, where the regional tropes prevail more strongly: the American South.

**Part VI: The Southern Grotesque as Pathology and Remedy**

The literature of the grotesque may most intimately affect the Southern man in part because of the South’s rich regional culture and in part because the religious tropes upon which an author may draw remain strong. At the time of Tocqueville’s visit to America, the believer could still speak to society by drawing upon the rhetoric of Christianity. In the centuries between Tocqueville’s time and the present, however, the tight grip that Christianity once had on society has loosened; O’Connor noted that in her time such religious tropes would fall on deaf ears and deadened hearts—except in the South.

O’Connor boldly states that in the South, the “general conception of man is still, in the main, theological.” While the South is “hardly Christ centered,” she claims, “it is most certainly Christ-haunted.” According to O’Connor, the Southerner better recognizes a freak because he still has some conception of the whole man, understood theologically. For this reason, the literature of the grotesque yields greater leverage in the South than in other regions of the country. The ghosts of fiction attain greater depth in the minds of Southern readers, who, through the lens of a religious culture, implicitly understand the freak to be a symbol of our essential fallenness.

O’Connor claims that the grotesque yields considerable power in the South because “we
Southern society as a whole] have had our Fall. We have gone into the modern world with an inburnt knowledge of human limitations and with a [deepened] sense of mystery.” In losing the Civil War, O’Connor proclaims, the South has been “doubly blessed, not only in [its] Fall, but also having means to interpret it.” Here again, the implicit religious culture of the South lends depth to its self-understanding: “In the South we have, in however attenuated a form, a vision of Moses’ face as he pulverized our idols.”

Southern society, then, understands itself and its history as participating in the larger religious narrative of the prophetic tradition. Here, the American jeremiad again emerges as the monsters of grotesque literature remind the Southerner of his own propensity for evil. He is forced to confront the part he played in perpetuating slavery, in casting the “accursed seed” of slavery upon the Southern terrain. The literature of the grotesque reminds Southern readers that the evils of their own hearts form “not simply a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be endured.”

The literature of the grotesque could not so sober democratic man in Tocqueville’s understanding because the absence of a doctrine of original sin in his theology renders such Biblical repentance irrelevant. If, however, a doctrine of original sin (rather than one of finitude) were to penetrate the Tocquevillian anthropology, the literature of the grotesque could become one remedy—albeit a small one—for healing the wound inflicted by slavery.

In order for a society to overcome the path dependencies that generated and perpetuated the wounds of slavery at the level of mores, either religious revival or violent warfare would have to arise. As O’Connor understands it, the distinct brand of grotesquery that arises from the Civil War and its aftermath harnesses the sobering power of both religion and violence. Thus, Southern authors of the grotesque may offer their egregious brainchildren—prophet-freaks that they are—to Tocqueville as unlikely heroes.

**Conclusion**

The literature of the grotesque perhaps constitutes the more “troubled” aspect of the “glorious yet troubled” intermediate time that Tocqueville praises as the final stage of artistic and intellectual ascendancy preceding the quietude that looms over the end of history.

Democratic man strips away the meditational layers of beauty. He “[explodes] as ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated” the very veils he once considered “necessary to cover the defects of [his] naked shivering nature.” He tears off the skin that he, like Pilgrim John, mistakes for an illusion hiding the real, and he writes instead of the blood and guts and gore. In his ruthlessness, he may obliterate the remnants of literary grandeur.

The literary monsters that spring up out of democratic man’s anguish—or the clear-sighted author’s prophecy—have their limitations. Tocqueville’s fear of the emergence of the disembodied soul that hovers over the world but never enters it remains a concern. Books and their fictional characters cannot stand as substitutes for our neighbors; they will not usher us into the incarnate, face-to-face encounter with another human being that renews our feelings and ideas, enlarges our hearts, and develops our understanding.

Nonetheless, the expansion of empathy particularly in the democratic imagination lends a small degree of redemptive power to the literature of the grotesque. Tocqueville writes, “There is no misery so deep, nor happiness so pure, that it can touch our minds and move our hearts, unless we are shown ourselves under a different guise.” The prophet-freaks of American literature, as intimations of our own brokenness, may yet speak to our souls and to our societies. This grotesquery—these innards on display—may yet bring life.

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“Less Noble Callings”
Journey, Crucible Moment, and Holocaust Confrontation in Contemporary Jewish-American Fiction

Ian Philbrick

In the closing pages of Philip Roth’s *The Ghost Writer*, Hope Lonoff stalks out of her house after a series of humiliations, intentions, and denigrations by her husband, fictional fiction-writer E.L. Lonoff. The novel’s final line delivers the verdict of our narrator, author Nathan Zuckerman, who opines that Hope has embarked on a “doomed journey in search of a less noble calling.” The irony of Zuckerman’s observation should not be lost: Hope’s marriage—perhaps better dubbed servitude—has never been a noble calling at all. She has deceived herself, characterizing her husband as “loyal, dignified” and possessing “nobility” despite his withering criticism, domineering behavior, and apathy toward anything save his fiction. Her wanderlust for “walk[s] in the hills,” which he deems a “loss of…good time,” foreshadows the method of her departure. It further depicts a journey, both physical and mental, of inurement and self-deception that has, inevitably, resulted in the final combustion—the “crucible moment”—that destroys her marriage.

The crucible moment terminates her escapist journey in rejection of truth only for truth to be revealed in a cathartic cataclysm. This process is not unique to Hope’s character. Indeed, it can be identified in a milieu of protagonists in the contemporary Jewish-American literary canon concerned with collective memory and generational consequences of the Holocaust. The imputation of the Holocaust experience onto subsequent generations has catalyzed fictional treatments of the subject for decades, but in a primarily historical rather than aesthetic or experiential way. In contrast to this historical treatment of the effects of the Holocaust, the phenomenon of the crucible moment emerges from a modern moment in which a decline in emphasis on the historical imputation of the Holocaust has given rise to a preoccupation with the immediate recurrence of the Holocaust in individual memory. The crucible moment departs from past treatments in two respects. First, it implicates Jews who attempt to deny their own cultural, religious, or inherited connections to Judaism. Second, it imputes not a memory or theoretical knowledge of the Holocaust but a distinctly Holocaust-like and oppressively affective sense of victimization, guilt, or paradigm-altering cathartic confrontation unmediated by the vitrine of memory. While exhaustive analysis lies outside the purview of the following treatment, the phenomenon of the negative journey ending in crucible moment is examined with respect to several protagonists in contemporary Jewish fiction: the nameless narrator of Binnie Kirshenbaum’s “Who Knows Kaddish,” Larry Blank in Michael Lowenthal’s “Ordinary Pain,” Mark Berman in David Bezmozgis’s “An Animal to the Memory,” and Nathan Zuckerman in Roth’s *Ghost Writer*. Each of these characters embarks on a doomed journey of avoidance that rejects aspects of their Jewish faith or heritage in relation to the Holocaust but which inevitably results in a crucible moment of cathartic Holocaust-like confrontation.
Kirshenbaum’s “Who Knows Kaddish” focalizes the journey of avoidance of Judaism and the Holocaust through its protagonist, the past self of the unnamed first-person female narrator. The protagonist’s secularism is well attested: she refers to yarmulkes as “fucking hats;” does not know her Hebrew name; is “enormously envious” of Catholicism; typifies “the whole lot of” Jews as kvetching “martyrs;” celebrates Christmas and Easter; considers Judaism boring; and cannot perform Kaddish, the ritualized hymn uttered to mourn a death. The protagonist’s determined secularism parallels her recently deceased mother’s “Jew-eschewing” assimilation. However, when, “not long before” her death, the protagonist’s mother suddenly “[expresses] interest in visiting the Tenement Museum” for “nostalgic” reasons, the protagonist dismisses it with a laugh. By disregarding the possibility of her mother’s desire to reconnect with her ethnic roots, the protagonist establishes a distinctly secular identity through which she journeys in departure from her ethnic Judaism. This disregard foreshadows the narrator’s own impending crucible moment through her explicit failure to recognize her mother’s parallel journey away from Judaism, which eventually resulted in a watershed realization of lost connection. Just as the transmission of Judaism is matrilineal, so too is the “Jew-eschewing” journey that precipitates the crucible moment inherited and ramiﬁed from mother to daughter.

The protagonist’s own journey thus approaches the inevitable crucible moment: confronting the truth of her Jewish identity in the imputation of a Holocaust experience. Chronological shifts anchor the subsequent narrative in “southern Germany” where, in a detail worthy of double-take, the narrator is romantically involved with a “perfect Aryan” man named Peter whom she describes as the “specimen Heinrich Himmler had in mind.” Peter’s fetish for all things Jewish has elevated the protagonist to the status of a “goddess,” her “body an altar upon which he bestows offerings and atonements.” He desires even, in a blithely rendered yet cringe-worthy revelation, to take her to visit a concentration camp. In contravention of the narrator’s espoused secularism, holy and Holocaust diction precede the crucible moment, which occurs in a cemetery marked with Hebrew letters unreadable to the protagonist. The protagonist is blindsided by the grave of “Anna Koppelmann…[J] the last Jew,” as well as the grave-less tracts of “Jews extinct” as a result of the Nazis’ deportation and extermination project. Faced with the truth, our protagonist, who had “yet to begin” mourning her mother’s death, must now mourn not only her ignorance of Jewish identity but experience the pain of its receipt amidst the Holocaust’s enormity of absence.

In Michael Lowenthal’s “Ordinary Pain,” thirteen year-old Larry Blank seeks to “forge a career” exchanging his “nondescript” Judaism for the glitz of “celebrity,” a journey away from his Jewish identity that displays not alienation by disregard but alienation by exploitation. Larry’s is a deliberate journey of creative reinvention against a Jewish “heritage of oppression” that is insufﬁcient to render him unique. His “dirt-brown eyes,” “normal” nose, “hair the shade of soggy cardboard,” average height, and “hardly observant” faith mark him as mundane. As counterpart to Kirshenbaum’s protagonist, who ignored her Judaism wholesale, Larry exploits his background and others’ reverence for the Holocaust’s memory by enlisting faith to craft a fictitious identity. His doomed journey recasts his grandfather Ludwig, who in truth died of disease in the 1930’s, as a victim of Buchenwald. This “inspired” and “endlessly potent narrative” reciprocally reinvents Larry himself as a “tycoon of tragedy” among his peers. Larry’s departure from Judaism is his denial of the same reverential experience of Holocaust memorializing, actuating his journey away from faith. Larry’s disingenuousness galvanizes the eventual crucible moment that terminates his journey of avoidance. His bar mitzvah, meant to be the “fervent and unforgettable” culmination of his deception, is instead brought crashing down when the cantor, revealed as a Holocaust
survivor, praises Larry for his humanitarian sensitivity in counterpart to the Holocaust’s display of “humans doing inhuman things.”445 “Withered” and “sick,” Larry becomes a facsimile of both the cantor’s “skin scored with lines”446 and his own fictional invention, the suffering of his Uncle Ludwig at Buchenwald. Larry’s self-inflicted guilt is thus both generated by and equated with the Holocaust experience, rendering him a complicit victim in a cathartic tragedy that exists in both memory and in fiction.

David Bezmozgis’s “An Animal to the Memory” similarly considers Holocaust imputation onto youth. Mark Berman, the story’s teenage first-person narrator, journeys to escape his Jewish identity—that of a recent Soviet Jewish immigrant whose family is attempting to make a new life in the West. Unlike Larry Blank, however, Berman’s disassociation from his Judaism results in a crusade of aggressive resistance whose violent crucible moment ultimately imparts the violence of the Holocaust. Berman’s deliberate “campaign” to transfer out of the Hebrew School he hates is a doomed enterprise rooted in his faith and family background.

His family has been dispersed through immigration, fractured between Israel and Canada. This disorientation is refracted by the family’s move into a neighborhood populated by other Soviet Diaspora families, where Berman is “pummeled” until “numb” in a hazing rite by his Jewish peers. It is Berman against the world, his rebellion an inability to orient himself within the identity-confines of his community that manifests as violence. When a classmate’s jibe about his father’s “red shitbox” car provokes a fight, Berman makes no attempt to apologize for his actions.448 He continues his campaign, fighting two eighth graders over a dispute regarding kosher dietary laws—which Berman himself breaks—in a second instance of Jew-on-Jew violence. Unlike Larry Blank, he has no adoring audience for his efforts: his friends disparage his efforts, which have still only made him “the toughest kid in Hebrew School.”449

Lashing out against his Jewish identity, Berman’s crucible moment is to confront and bear the full weight of its cultural memory. His aggressive campaign culminates during his final fight against “another Jew” on the Hebrew School’s “Holocaust Remembrance Day” no less.450 Unlike the wizened cantor of Larry Blank, however, the messiah of Berman’s crucible moment is the weighty “man’s hand”451 of his Rabbi Gurvich, who berates Berman after breaking up the fight and forcefully thunders that to experience violence is fundamentally “what it is to be a Jew.” Berman’s crucible moment devastatingly imparts the destructiveness of intolerance, both from outsiders and from fellow Jews, leaving Berman “standing in the middle” of both the experience and enactment of the Holocaust.

In Roth’s Ghost Writer, fiction itself emerges as the vehicle of narrator and budding author-protagonist Nathan Zuckerman’s doomed journey away from his Judaism and toward the novel’s final crucible scene depicting Hope’s explosive exit. Like Kirshenbaum’s protagonist, Zuckerman has made a physical journey into the Berkshires to meet his literary idol, secular Jewish fiction-writer E.I. Lonoff.452 Lonoff’s “ceremonial greeting,” “ministerial air,” and “altar of art” supplant the Jewish piety of Zuckerman’s father and one Judge Leopold Wapter, whom Zuckerman has quarreled with regarding a short story he wrote that his father considers to depict Jews from an outsider perspective as nothing more than “‘kikes.’”453 Zuckerman’s journey is an attempt to transcend not only the religious through the secular but humanity through art as well. The idealization of reality through fictionalization parallels Zuckerman’s attempts to escape the constraints of his parental and community-based Judaism, an illusory journey that ultimately results in his crucible moment.

Zuckerman aborts his search for a nobler calling through art as the crucible moment nears. In the metafictional section inserted between chapters 2 and 4 entitled “Femme Fatale,” Zuckerman conjures a “perfect” paternal relationship between the character Amy Bellette (whom he imagines as an Anne Frank who managed to survive Holocaust) and Lonoff.455 He portrays
their “‘love’” as transcending the true nature of their real-world affair. He further celebrates Anne Frank as a secular Jewish martyr with a “craze for life” after a Holocaust of death. Zuckerman goes so far in his fiction as to imagine himself presenting her to his parents as his bride in an act of symbolic reconciliation with his Jewish heritage and atonement for writing fiction that offends his father’s Jewish sensibilities. But “the next morning,” he realizes he cannot “lift [Anne Frank] out of her sacred book and make her a character” to “[acquit]” him of his family’s accusations of impiety and anti-Semitism. Fiction cannot always either assuage or replace reality, even as it aspires to. Here the novel articulates its central theme of families damaged or destroyed by human turpitude, whether by genocide, adultery, or cold literary ambition. Zuckerman’s crucible moment is his realization of such forces’ destructiveness, and his rejection of the imaginatively journeying omnipotence of fiction that seeks to eradicate sacrifice all else before the altar of art. The foil to Zuckerman is of course Lonoff, who has prioritized the fiction of art over the demands and people of the material world, and witnesses the collapse of his marriage as a result.

The historical, societal, and aesthetic dimensions of the Holocaust, a genocide that shocked the world into its present conceptions of human rights and dignity, will continue unabated. Nevertheless, as the dwindling number of Holocaust survivors provokes a crisis within the project of transmitting and maintaining Holocaust memory, fiction seems aptly poised to gesture at truths that remain vital at such a crossroads. Journey—be it toward a crucible moment or not—constitutes a narrative vehicle in which fiction has trafficked since the days of Homer. By revealing the consequences inherent to journeying in contravention of one’s faith, upbringing, and cultural memory, the characters in the examined works embody the unwritten commandment that mankind remain mindful of the past lest it be judged harshly by it. This constitutes an acknowledgment of one’s history which might well indicate a less noble calling but that is ultimately, at least in the estimation of genres of contemporary Jewish-American fiction, far more injurious when ignored. But if fiction castigates with one hand, it offers rehabilitation with the other. In the fictional journey, as in the fictionalizing act, two opposing possibilities cohabitate: fiction of avoidance or fiction of engagement. For those (both authors and characters) of the former persuasion, these works suggest, there are consequences. But in the latter there lies the possibility of a reconciliation that reserves the power, perhaps, to address enduringly, cathartically, and worthily the suffering of a people. As Zuckerman’s fictionally idealized Amy Bellette asks E.I. Lonoff in The Ghost Writer: “‘You prefer tragedy?’”

Ian Philbrick is a freshman in the Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences.
Midway this way of life we’re bound upon, I woke to find myself in a dark wood.” Dante Alighieri begins his epic narrative with this lost and confused Pilgrim, who takes the soul of the poet Virgil as his guide, saying “Lead on, that I may free my wandering feet from these snares and from worse.” In a similar way, the autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola begins with a young man ensnared by sin: “Until the age of twenty-six he was a man given over to vanities of the world.” The respective great works of these Christian men—The Divine Comedy and the Spiritual Exercises—both provide a religious and philosophical framework for the journey of a soul struggling with the nature of human freedom and “man’s search for meaning.” An examination of these “frameworks” reveals how Dante’s understanding of human freedom and relational human identity, explored meaningfully in the narrative of The Divine Comedy, is reflected closely in the spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Georgetown University, the Alma Mater of Catholic and Jesuit Universities in the United States, converts Ignatian spirituality into a pedagogy and a communal framework. This pedagogy, seen in the liberal arts curriculum and emphasis on interdisciplinary learning, and this communal framework, what we will call “the Spirit of Georgetown,” likewise reflect the Dantean pilgrimage in method and goal. The commonalities of the Ignatian and Dantean pilgrimages make clear the fundamental symbiotic purposes of the Jesuit university: forming students so that they may embark on and complete their “pilgrimage” and guiding them in discovering spiritual freedom and relational identity in the process.

The Pilgrimage of the Student
The American Jesuit university is unique among modern higher educational institutions because the formation of the student is critical to its mission. Whereas secular universities, even the Ivy League institutions, seek to convey the most knowledge and professional skills to their students to prepare them for life, Georgetown seeks to endow the student with a unique purpose: educating “women and men to be reflective lifelong learners, to be responsible and active participants in civic life and to live generously in service to others.” Achieving this goal requires more than knowledge. It requires the Ignatian transformation and conversion of the student, a process captured in the Dantean pilgrimage. Hence, to prepare students for this pilgrimage and to guide them on the journey is inherent in the mission of Georgetown.

When Georgetown Professor Francis Ambrosio translates the second line of the Inferno as

Kevin D. Sullivan
“By realizing I was lost, I began to find myself,” it situates the Pilgrim in precisely the state that St. Ignatius sought to set right in the Spiritual Exercises (SE): that of “spiritual desolation.” Those performing the SE must be aware of a state of their soul that prevents them from moving closer to God, characterized as “darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to things low and earthly, the unquiet of different agitations and temptations, moving to want of confidence, without hope, without love, when one finds oneself all lazy, tepid, sad, and as if separated from his Creator and Lord.” The “dark wood” is a perfect literary expression of the “spiritual desolation” that St. Ignatius saw in the many souls he counseled and experienced himself. It is also the state that many young men and women find themselves in when entering the Jesuit university. The first step in Jesuit education is encouraging the student to leave the “dark wood” and to embark on his or her pilgrimage.

In the dark wood, the Pilgrim is physically “low and earthly,” trapped at the base of a valley and unable to “scale the mountain.” The Pilgrim is also “lazy” and tired, “weary of limb,” showing him to be fully reliant on his own human weakness and separated from the strength bestowed by his Creator. The Pilgrim desires the confidence to ascend but is made “tepid” by the appearance of the Leopard, Lion and She-Wolf, representing Lust, Pride and Avarice and embodying the “different agitations and temptations” that Ignatius identifies as signs of spiritual desolation. Not only do these beasts block the Pilgrim’s path, but they instill a “despair and whelming terror” that destroys “all hope to scale the mountain.”

Dorothy Sayers interprets the “rude and rough and stubborn forest” likewise, describing it as “not so much of any specific act of sin or intellectual perversion as of that spiritual condition called ‘hardness’ of heart.” It is not a single sin that lands a soul in the dark wood, but instead a crisis in identity that the Pilgrim wakes up to find himself in, having been “so heavy and full of sleep” that he must proclaim “How I got into it I cannot say.” Both Dante and Ignatius believe that a careful process of acknowledging and realizing our sin is the only way out of spiritual desolation—not a frantic attempt to change our ways and correct what we first perceive to be the error. Dante’s attempt to immediately climb out of the valley, blocked by the Beasts representing sin, is exactly what Ignatius counsels against when he writes “Let him who is in desolation labor to be in patience.” Instead, Ignatius calls the soul to leave desolation by “insisting more on prayer, meditation, on much examination, and by giving ourselves more scope in some suitable way of doing penance.” This is precisely the narrative of the Pilgrim as he journeys through the Inferno and Purgatorio, heightening his consciousness and “scope” by discerning the sins and “final identities” of the damned and penitent.

Jesuit pedagogy seeks to recreate the narrative of the Dantean pilgrimage. First, educating the student in the liberal arts encourages the growth of the intellect. Expanding the mind by making it aware of the “whole,” the interconnectedness of the world and human existence, gives the student “more scope.” This is not about the acquisition of more facts, or mastering “current events,” as Fr. James Schall S.J. would quip, but instead about better understanding the nature of things. The movement through the Paradiso toward the “Pure intellectual light, fulfilled with love, love of the true Good, filled with all delight” should be the movement in the student’s mind. It is an expansion in scope to seeing oneself contemplatively in relation to the whole, and in seeing the whole, to seeing reality contemplatively. The student must patiently labor in studies, advancing in the humanities and the sciences simultaneously in the same way that the Pilgrim slowly advances. “Over-specialization” in the education would cut off the intellect from the view of the whole, causing students to only see a part of reality and therefore live in a disordered way in relation to their perception of reality.

This leads to another critical nature of Jesuit pedagogy, the preparation of the student to
acknowledge responsibility and respond to it. After guiding the student out of the “dark wood,” the Jesuit university seeks to recreate the scene in the *Purgatorio* when the Pilgrim fully recognizes his limitations and the nature of his humanity in his encounter with Beatrice. To Ignatius, “consolation” occurs “when some interior movement in the soul is caused, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord; and when it can in consequence love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but in the Creator of them all.” This “interior movement” is the student’s recognition through his or her pilgrimage of both his or her own limitations, in the same way that Dante truly realizes the extent of his sin, and his or her own privileges, in the same way that Dante fully experiences the grace and “impossible” forgiveness of God. The metaphorical language here is exceedingly powerful. Through this interior movement, “So is the candle for its flame made apt.” The student, as candle, is made ready to respond in the same way that the Pilgrim’s “final” response, “forced from my miserable lips a 'Yes,'” to all that he has witnessed, contemplated and learned in his pilgrimage through Hell and Purgatory, shatters his spiritual desolation precisely though “some interior movement in the soul.” Alumni of the Jesuit university, leaving with the “graced awareness of our disordered loves and self-preoccupations,” respond by embracing the “flame” of love for the other and “going out and setting the world on fire.” Without this formation, graduates settle for professions in the “dark wood,” never adopting the vocation that could give their lives meaning.

**What the Student Finds on the Pilgrimage**

A pilgrimage is a journey toward something worthy of great effort, but its nature is also derived from a sense of self-discovery, a measure of finding meaning in the making of the pilgrimage itself. Dante’s pilgrimage, in the words of Francis Ambrosio, “embodies and enacts the question of human identity: who am I?” The answer to this question is the end of the pilgrimage, but the pilgrimage also entails being in the right mindset to even attempt to answer the question. This mindset is what Ignatius identifies as “spiritual freedom,” not a single choice but instead a “way of choosing” that the soul “entrusts himself to.” It is the mutual relationship of identity and spiritual freedom that Ignatius and Dante both consider to be at the center of the soul’s ability to experience meaning and purpose in existence. The Jesuit university uniquely seeks to guide students in discovering their relational identity and spiritual freedom, as opposed to the secular universities’ refusal to guide. The secular university takes pride in granting the student full autonomy, leaving him or her with an identity ignorant of the “other” and disordered human freedom.

As the *Commedia* is the allegory of the soul’s movement to rid itself of a sinful final identity and to truly know itself in relation to the “other” and God, the “story” of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the soul’s attempt “to conquer oneself and regulate one’s life without determining oneself through any tendency that is disordered.” The “ends” of both are indeed the same. “Conquering oneself” through the *SE* is the equivalent of fully knowing oneself, becoming conscious of one’s identity. When one discovers one’s ‘identity’ through the *SE*, one is able to fully ‘regulate’ one’s own life in the sense that he or she has complete spiritual freedom; his or her decision-making framework is not influenced in any way by a disordered sense of self or relationship with God, and therefore his or her actions achieve the maximum spiritual freedom. Representing the mutual relationship perfectly, John J. English, SJ, author of *Spiritual Freedom*, describes this freedom as an “acceptance of oneself as historically coming from God, going to God, and being with God.” In this sense, Dante and Ignatius come to the greatest paradox for humanity: our spiritual freedom is the greatest when our will is aligned perfectly to God’s will. Jesuit pedagogy seeks to guide the student in discovering this very paradox by instilling the motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam Inque Hominem Salutem*. When our spiritual freedom is ordered
relationally toward God and the “other,” who comes from God, we find our true identity.

As Fr. Kevin O’Brien interprets Ignatian spirituality in The Ignatian Adventure, “the fundamental truth of our identity is that God loves us unconditionally.” If the person of God is “fundamental” to our identity, then the beings that come from God are also fundamental. God’s creation and dominion is the “whole,” not only God himself, seen in the nature of the Empyrean in Paradiso. Dante’s “relationalism” articulates what truly lies behind the much-abused Ignatian value of “men and women for others,” central to the mission of the Jesuit university.

Dante asserts in literary form the claim that we can only understand our identity in terms of our relationship with the “other.” In the Inferno, the damned’s final identity is based on the way in which one abused his or her God-given freedom, and thereby harmed the other. Because God desires affective love from his creation, His will would never include doing harm to the “other.” The clearest representation of this harm is Count Ugolino, whose life of treachery demonstrates the greatest corruption of love, betraying the “other” in a relationship built on trust. Frozen in the River Cocytus, he instructively has no freedom, and his only outward action is the further destruction of the “other” as he gnaws at the flesh of Archbishop Roger. God’s will would also never include harm to ourselves. The Wood of the Suicides encloses those who were fully selfish in their identity in a different way: they denied their love to others, and thereby denied it to their Creator. They are also immobile, trapped in the form of withered trees, whose dryness and brittleness capture the nature of spiritual desolation. Finally, His will would never include a love of “self” through the use of the “other.” Our love for the “other” must be selfless in the same way that God’s love for us is selfless; therefore, corrupted love, as represented in the souls of Paolo and Francesca, is also a form of spiritual enslavement to our lust and desires.

Modern culture embraces and regurgitates the radically individualistic identity of the Inferno. The minds of youth are poisoned with the same “final identity” of Dante’s damned, given the belief that everything they need to find their identity, and the meaning in life that follows, can be found “within ourselves.” The result is mass societal “impersonalism” and the loneliness of the modern era, because we are made to believe that both the divine and the “other” are irrelevant to our purpose in life. This identity crisis is frightening precisely because we become too sure of a self-referential identity that is inherently incomplete. The trend of professionalism in liberal arts universities leads the young to feel confident in their ability to “choose their own identities” only in regard to what they desire for their own future.

The Jesuit university seeks to save the student from this final identity precisely by “educating men and women for others.” Engaging the student in academic fields dedicated toward the betterment of humanity, not the fulfillment of self or the material distractions of the world, frees them from the “enslaving” identity of modern culture. Inculcating students in a culture of service and “community in diversity” guides them in discovering their identity in relation to the other, not the self-referential identity that leads to corrupted love. As Fr. Kevin O’Brien describes it in The Ignatian Adventure, “These things are good in themselves when ordered and directed by the love of God. They become disordered attachments or disordered loves when they push God out of the center of our lives and become key to our identity.”

The habit of living and learning in relation to the other is the habit of practicing one’s spiritual freedom, and “People who are spiritually free know who they are...They are able to discern God’s presence; find meaning in their lives, and make choices that flow from who they are, whatever the circumstance.” In a world bereft of guidance and in contempt of authority, the Jesuit university offers great hope in that it seeks to guide those courageous enough to embark on the Dantean pilgrimage and to leave the dark wood.
Finding Hope in Georgetown University
What Dante’s *Commedia* offers to the Jesuit university is a literary exhortation. Understanding the commonalities of the Dantean pilgrimage and Ignatian spirituality that are in no way coincidental reveals what the Jesuit university must do to serve as guide for its students. If the Jesuit university is not true to its mission, then students will graduate having never embarked on their own personal pilgrimages. If the Jesuit university does not commit itself to inculcating the values that aid students in discovering their relational identity and spiritual freedom, then the journey itself will be meaningless. While blessed with a Jesuit education at the Alma Mater of America’s Catholic and Jesuit universities, it is clear that our own identity as a Catholic and Jesuit university is in crisis. The “spirit of Georgetown”—the values and culture that guide Hoyas in discovering their relational identity and the nature of spiritual freedom—is still strong enough to reach students, but it could be vastly enhanced by an Ignatian reading of Dante. Leading others to recognize the compatibility of Dante’s understanding of relational identity and Ignatian spiritual freedom would allow Georgetown University to emerge enlightened from the “dark wood” and to avoid the “Wood of the Suicides” that our Ivy League peers have set as their final identity.

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The Quest for “Jesuit Heaven”
Searching for the Lost Relics of Georgetown

Michael Fischer and Kevin D. Sullivan

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s Dahlgren Crypt is the physical rendition of the Dahlgrens’ version of paradise, Copley Crypt, together with the adjoining relic repository, is a Jesuit heaven.

Georgetown’s Greatest Treasures
The vaults, crypts, and archives of Georgetown hold many secrets. Yet they are just the physical manifestation of the “depths” of the Hilltop’s history. By error, ignorance, and at times disregard, much of what at one time defined Georgetown—what mattered to its inhabitants, what gave it purpose and identity, what lifted it beyond the confines of a normal academic institution—has been mysteriously “lost.” But perhaps no tale of Blue and Gray holds the same fascination, tragedy, and potential hope as one known to the few who either stumbled upon it by sheer coincidence or have been keepers of its secrets as the generations passed: the Georgetown relics.

In the Roman Catholic tradition, relics “are physical objects that have a direct association with the saints or with [Jesus Christ]... [including] the body or fragments of the body of a saint, such as the pieces of bone or flesh... [or] something a saint personally owned,” according to Fr. Carlos Martins, the director of “Treasures of the Church,” the largest touring collection of relics in North America. The word derives from the Latin *reliquiae*, which means the “remains” or “something left behind.” Relics are those things left behind by holy men and women. Their purpose, according to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, is to help with “catechesis” as a form “of piety and public devotions” listed at the same level as praying the Rosary, traveling on pilgrimage, and attending the Stations of the Cross. As Saint Jerome succinctly put it, “We do not worship, we do not adore, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are.” Focusing prayer while driving pilgrimages and devotion, relics have had a long and remarkable history within the Catholic Church ever since the days of Christ.

Being real symbols of holiness and closeness to God, relics have inspired devotions, vocations, and Catholic religious movements throughout history. Miracles of all manners are associated with their veneration and display. For example, during the early days of the Soviet Union, a number of Jesuits—with the secret blessing of the Pope in Rome—sought to sneak their way into a Soviet secular museum to retrieve the relic body of Blessed Andrew Bobola, a Polish Jesuit missionary and martyr. As the Jesuits later related in their memoirs, the relics became a focal point for resistance to Soviet authoritarianism amongst the people: “The [Soviet] commission was surprised and puzzled on seeing [Andrew Bobola’s body] wonderful condition of preservation, and left the church in a noticeable state of perplexity, amid the open protestation of Catholics, Orthodox and Jews who had gathered in the streets.”

Even in contemporary times, the first-ever public presentation of the relics of St. Peter by Pope Francis at the Vatican drew huge
attention from Catholics and non-Catholics around the world.491

It seems natural then that a Catholic institution as old and prominent as Georgetown would become a site for collecting and displaying such relics. How most of Georgetown’s relics came into the possession of the Jesuit community and curators of the Hilltop has largely been lost to the records: some seem to have been collected by wealthy Catholics or collectors, while others seem to have been tracked down by priests or been donated from personal collections. Regardless, by the 1930s, Georgetown had in its possession around three hundred relics. When Copley Hall was completed in 1933, a space was set aside next to the Crypt Chapel, called a repository, where the relics could be kept, displayed, and properly venerated. The earliest known description of this space, by Georgetown President Fr. Coleman Nevils in his work *Miniatures of Georgetown*, is worth quoting extensively:

In a large square room next to the Crypt is situated the Repository of the Holy Relics... The Repository contains over three hundred relics of the Saints. The large central reliquary has a relic of the True Cross; it was presented to the Rector of Georgetown, Father Dubuisson, by the Austrian Empress, Maria Luisa. There are in the Repository statues of the Sacred Heart, our Blessed Mother, Saint Peter Canisius, and the three boy Saints, Aloysius, Stanislaus and John Berchmans; on the wall are two large banners, one for the League of the Sacred Heart, and the other for the Sodality. There is also a large plaster facsimile of the earliest discovered inscription to Christianity in China. The altar rail is from the old 1830 students’ chapel, at one time in the Mulledy Building.495

This short description, just an anecdote in a sea of incredible Georgetown history, is packed with fascinating claims. Fr. Nevils references in passing a story about Fr. Dubuisson’s acquisition of a relic of the True Cross—a splinter of wood believed to have come from the cross on which Christ was crucified. He mentions the possession of relics of important saints with special significance for young men and students, ones that continue to inspire today. He notes the existence of the student-led “League of the Sacred Heart” and the “Georgetown Sodality” with a special interest in Catholic devotional, the latter of which is considered Georgetown’s “founding student group.”

Not much of the space had changed when the Hoya ran an in-depth feature on the Healy tunnels, the Crypt, and the Copley Repository in 1967:

Represented are Saints Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, Francis Borgia, Francis Hieronomo, John Berchmans, the selfsame Aloysius Gonzaga, and many others. A small brass cross opens to reveal relics of the eleven Apostles. Other metal and glass disks display small inscriptions identifying the relics of Saints Francis of Assisi, Paul of the Cross, Theresa, and Barbara. A bone of Saint John Berchmans is enshrined in a larger brass reliquary placed at the center of the room and topped with a ring of thorns.496

The evidence suggests that the relics were not a dusty part of the Georgetown archives, but instead an integral part of the Georgetown experience that engaged students in remarkable ways. For example, in November of 1949, a relic of St. Francis Xavier arrived in the nation’s capital for public veneration at local churches. On the 9th of that month, Georgetown hosted a special service on the porch of Old North in the Quadrangle, led by Fr. Edward Jacklin, SJ, Dean of the College, and Fr. J. Hunter Guthrie, SJ, President of the University. Based on accounts and photos from the veneration, attendance was high, and included the leaders of the College Student Council.497

The Quest for the Lost Relics

Having stumbled upon Fr. Nevils’s description in *Miniatures of Georgetown*, the authors were astounded that such a collection of some of the greatest treasures of the Church had once been
an integral part of the faith life and history of the Hilltop. But where were these invaluable artifacts of our Alma Mater’s pride now? Ignited by curiosity, and fueled by the Indiana-Jones-like saga that followed, the exploration took the authors to the ends of campus, the research of multiple professors, the insights of knowledgeable alumni, and the vaults of cautious archivists.

Our search began when the Lauinger staff connected us with Ruth Cline, Lecturer of Medieval Studies at Georgetown, who wrote a fascinating article on the travels of Georgetown’s 14th President Fr. Stephen Dubuisson (1825-1826) to Europe to raise money for the Maryland Province Jesuits. From Fr. Nevils’s work, we believed that Fr. Dubuisson had received a relic of the True Cross as a gift from Empress Marie Louise of Austria (1791-1847), the second wife of Emperor Napoleon. Cline confirmed that Fr. Dubuisson had indeed received a relic of the True Cross in his travels according to his files, but that it was unclear whether the Empress Marie gave it. However, she did state that, “It is entirely possible that Empress Marie-Louise sent the larger relic after Dubuisson had returned to Washington, so he would not have a record of it in his papers.”

This assured us that our confidence in the accuracy of Fr. Nevils’s record was not misplaced, and led us to try to unravel the fate of Copley Reliquary and its possessions following the time of the *Hoya* article previously mentioned.

We then made contact with former University curator Clifford Chieffo, who revealed to us the most startling information of our grand adventure. Chieffo confirmed for us that the reliquary in Copley had been converted into the Muslim prayer room sometime in the 1990s. He also corroborated the existence of numerous Georgetown relics, including ones of particular notoriety and value in the context of Georgetown’s Catholic and Jesuit identity. But his description by email of the scene that he found when he arrived at the reliquary as recently appointed archivist in the mid-1970s confirmed something far more shocking:

There was a “shambles” of an open display frame with cup-hooks, that at one time was hung with “relics” in their little Italian lockets. There was only about four or five left when I got to the room, which included the two mosaic twisting columns. The rest were long gone from the days when the room was open to the students. The remains are listed in the Collection database, maybe two-three. One was a splinter of “the true cross.” Others were ornate with the saint’s name in Latin.

Chieffo continued to describe how the reliquary “was pretty well ‘sacked’ by the 70s,” as “graduating seniors had a penchant for ‘borrowing’ a piece (a.k.a. anything not nailed down) of Hoyas history to take home with them.” And so, our humble search had become part of a larger rescue mission: not only to search for the relics to uncover information, but also to find whatever relics might remain.

While incredibly disheartened by the news, we pressed on by inquiring the library archivists and historians about their records of the materials. However, they claimed to know nothing about the location of any remaining relics from the Copley repository, and at times seemed to stonewall our requests. Broadening our search, we found an ally in Fr. G. Ronald Murphy, SJ, who guided us down to the Healy Vault, where many of Georgetown’s other treasures lay covered in dust and hidden. Fr. Murphy had discovered the St. Clement’s Island Cross in the vault (which now hangs in Dahlgren for all to behold), and we hoped that we might make a similar discovery. We handled and unearthed artifacts such as Fr. Edmund Walsh’s collections from his world travels, silk liturgical vestments from the 16th century, and a cannonball that had been unearthed during Healy’s construction. Yet the relics remained elusive and undiscovered.

Though we had reached a dead end in our quest, all was not lost. Through a sheer coincidence of events, the authors of this piece rediscovered a small collection of relics that remained on campus: an astute undergraduate student and
the off-handed remarks of the university’s sacristan achieved our great end. In a small FedEx box hidden behind religious books in the sacristy closet of Dahlgren chapel, labeled in sharpie marker with the word “relics,” were five of the last known Georgetown relics: two of St. Francis Xavier, one of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, one of Pope Pius X, and one of the True Cross. They remained in beautiful condition, though sadly their seals had been broken and their papers of authenticity (signed by a bishop that allows the relics to be tracked over time) had gone missing over the years. And Georgetown could hardly have been more blessed with the relics she retained, for these three saints are prominent inspirations for a Catholic and Jesuit university. Pius X, Pope from 1903 to 1914, was a major reformer in the history of the Church, publishing the first Code of Canon Law, reforming liturgical practices, and promoting religious liberty around the world. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American-born US citizen to be canonized, founded the Sisters of Charity and become the patron of educating the poor and of Catholic Schools. And Francis Xavier, prominent and beloved among the Jesuits, was a remarkable missionary in Southeast Asia, India, Japan, and China, who was said to have converted more people to Christianity than anyone since Saint Paul.

“For Generations to Come”

Much shall pass from the Hilltop, and the growth and development of our Alma Mater should be the goal of everyone in the community. But alas, our quest to find Georgetown’s lost relics is not unique. Disrespect and disregard for the beautiful and remarkable gifts of our University’s are not just an affront to our own history, but also an affront to our future. The physical manifestations of Georgetown’s history and tradition are important symbols that define our experience, our community and our mission in this world. A relic of the True Cross or of the Jesuit saints whose sacrifice animates the Spirit of Georgetown has the potential to animate and inspire the forming of men and women of good character for others, the cause of glorifying God by the deeds of the University community, and the keeping of our mission alive in the alumni scattered around the world like little wildfires, ready to ignite those around them.

How then can we make a lesson out of this search, one that was filled with disappointment and in some cases shock, while also opening new doors and discoveries? How can Georgetown better protect its treasures in a way that does not hide them “under a bushel basket?” From the perspective of those concerned, praise should go to those who have worked to better preserve and promote Georgetown rich past on campus. Members of Campus Ministry and other parts of the Administration deserve laud that, in April, a Mass for the reopening of a renovated Dahlgren Chapel will feature a procession with the remaining relics to a relic “box” below the altar. This welcomed and meaningful act should be accompanied with some type of proper description and explanation of the box’s contents for the betterment of our oldest sacramental space (and so future Hoyas don’t forget what lies within it!). Such preservation coincides with a beautiful new display for the St. Clement’s Island Cross, a display format that should be replicated for other important pieces of our history and mission, including much that is found within the Healy Vault.

Changes to the historical buildings around the (Dahlgren) Quadrangle over the next few years also offer an opportunity. The Ryan and Mulledy buildings are planned to be converted into a new dormitory. Recognizing the historical importance of the space and spiritual needs of campus, the Ryan Hall Chapel should be preserved and kept as a functioning prayer space, while the buildings’ redesign should be viewed as a restoration of the space’s old beauty, highlighting many of its wonderful historic features while also providing space for the display of other treasures of Georgetown.

Some of Georgetown’s finest treasures remain in full view on campus, but are placed where few students or other visitors ever see
them. In Healy Hall, for example, Carroll Parlor, unbeknownst to most in the campus community despite its prime location and beautiful contents, should be transformed into a more accessible student space. As a lounge or study area, Carroll Parlor would properly display and protect the incredible historical items already present while also drawing greater attention to our University’s many gifts. This could also be the perfect location for rotating displays that would allow circulation of the some 20,000 artifacts held by the Georgetown archives, the vast majority of which lie untouched and gathering dust in storage.

Lastly, students and other Hoyas need to further engage and be engaged with the artifacts and stories of their Alma Mater. This piece’s authors are not the first (nor, we hope, will be the last) to write prolifically across the pages of the Hoya, the Voice, and scholarly journals associated with the University. Those who would seek to carry the name and the effects of Georgetown from her walls have a responsibility to know her past and discover her spirit. Therefore, for everyone’s sake, Hoyas of every kind—students, faculty, administrators, alumni, benefactors, and friends—who can illuminate our Hilltop’s history need to rise to the occasion. There exists much still that needs to be explored and reclaimed for Georgetown, and the more time passes, the harder it will be to preserve for generations of Hoyas to come.

Roman Catholic tradition holds that relics exist to point, by means of the saints, to God. But uniquely, Georgetown’s relics, by means of the history of this Hilltop, point to an even deeper appreciation, passion, and love for our Alma Mater. Whether practicing Catholic or not, all Hoyas should wonder at the findings and losses of the Georgetown relics with wonder, and learn from its lesson: that unremembered across this campus, awaiting the curiosity of Hoyas to discover, remain some of Georgetown’s greatest treasures.

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Endnotes

The Forum

2. Ibid., 89.
3. Ibid., 96.
7. Weaver, Ideas, 3.
8. Ibid., 4.
10. Ibid., 4.
12. Ibid., 18.
13. Ibid., 10.
27. Ibid., 28.
28. Ibid., 39-40.
44. Ibid., 18.
46. Bain, 18.
49. Ibid., 90.
50. Ibid., 134.
52. Raphael, 58.


56. Sreedhar, 151.

57. Ibid., 129, 134.


60. Ibid., 57.

61. Sreedhar, 151.


66. Musingafi.

67. Habibi, 37.

68. Ibid., 39.

69. Ibid., 141.

70. Rousseau, 20, 24.

71. Craiutu, 35.


75. Ibid., 1

76. Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, 56

77. Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity*, 3

78. Heidegger discusses the Rhine as both a beautiful natural wonder to appreciate and a might machine to utilize. In the technological mindset—in which he argues we become more and more entrenched—we lose the ability to see it for a beautiful and awe-inspiring river and can only view it as a source of energy, protection, and nourishment. This view of it comes to dominate our vision.

80. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 37. I will continue to use this term throughout the paper but may shorten it to “horizon,” I think that the image of a horizon is helpful as it is something that encapsulates the entire sky and therefore the entirety of our vision like the horizon of significance encapsulates all of the morals and actions within a society or for an individual.

81. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 37

82. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 33. Taylors discussion of language here is particularly helpful. He explains that humans only become fully human through their “acquisition of rich human languages.” This points to the dialogical nature of our condition and reinforces the idea that there is no other way to be and be authentic than to interact with the backgrounds of intelligibility against which we communicate with ourselves and those around us.

83. Berger, The Homeless Mind, Chapters 1 & 2

84. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 39

85. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 107

86. Taylor, The Ethics of Authenticity, 110

The Chamber


90. “Insurgency is a mode of military practice that can be harnessed to various political agendas, be it...Islamic fundamentalism or ethnic violence in a great many states...It seems quite clear that intense grievances are produced by civil war –this is often a central objective of rebel strategy.” (James D. Fearon and David D. Laitin, “Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war,” American Political Science Review 97, no. 1 (2003): 88.)

91. Ibid., 76.


98. Esman, 63-65.
100. Ibid.
101. In other words, ethnic conflict is not simply groups reflexively attacking one another. Key individuals are essential in “telling” a group of people that they form an ethnic group, and/or that to view a contested issue through “ethnic” lenses.
104. Ethnic wars are “a species of insurgency” and “insurgency [is particularly favored by] state weakness.” (Fearon and Laitin, 88)
108. Significantly, Latigo notes the Banyoro were “organically linked to the Acholi.” (86)
109. To borrow a concept from Brubaker and Laitin, such willingness may stem from low levels of interaction with the other group. (Rogers Brubaker and David Laitin, “Ethnic and nationalist violence,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 439.) In this particular case, violence is not only not punished (since there is a lack of frequent interaction), but also rewarded by the colonial powers.
110. Blanton et al., 481.
112. Latigo, 88.
113. Fearon and Laitin believe that there is “little evidence that civil war is predicted by… broadly held grievances” (88) Although I agree that the immediate onset may not be spurred on by these grievances, their data fails to include a time dynamic (policies enacted by colonial governments as opposed to present ones), focuses only on linguistic (79) and religious discrimination (whereas there may be other forms of grievances), and elides the heightening of ethnicity created by “myths” over past oppression.
115. Latigo, 87.


120. To be fair, Fearon and Laitin exclude both cross-border wars and massacres (76) from their data. However, this exempts a significant set of ethnically motivated conflict. Including these case studies, I come to the opposite conclusion that state and economic strength are in fact important variables that facilitate genocide.


123. Fearon and Laitin, 88.


130. By measuring only income per capita and inequality (83), Fearon and Laitin fail to adequately reflect inequality and income distribution along pre-existing ethnic fault lines.

131. Jomo, iii.

132. The Gulf States alone “had more than half the GDP of all Middle Eastern countries.” (Fasano Ugo and Zubair Iqbal, *GCC Countries: From Oil Dependence to Diversification* (Washington, DC: International Monetary Fund, 2003), 99.)

133. For instance, “Shiites remain poor and disenfranchised by the Sunni majority, but [prior to the Arab Spring] they’d never protested like this...Bahrain’s uprising was suppressed in a harsh crackdown.” (““Bahrain: The Revolution That Wasn’t,” NPR, January 5, 2012, <http://www.npr.org/2012/01/05/144637499/bahrain-the-revolution-that-wasn’t>.)


135. Bobbio, 60-61.

137. Ibid., 51.
138. Ibid., 61.
141. Bobbio, 58.
145. Bobbio, 92-93; Rémond, 23.
147. Ibid.
149. Ibid., 299.
150. Rémont, 382.
151. Taylor, 299.
154. Ibid.
155. Ibid., 270.
156. Ibid., 271.


163. Ibid.


166. Lee, 172.

167. Linz and Stepan, 270.


169. Ibid.


174. Ibid., 53.

175. Yeo, 219.

176. Ibid., 220.


The Sanctuary

179. At this point that secondary literature on Puritan covenant theology diverges. One side, including Perry Miller and Michael Walzer, draws a direct connection between covenant and contract. While the other side, including Carl Trueman and Mark Dever argue this is a misreading of covenant theology. Michael Walzer presents a “covenant or agreement” (note that they are used interchangeably) as “a voluntary obligation between persons
about things wherein they enjoy a freedom of will and have a power to choose or refuse.” Walzer, Michael, The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics (New York: Atheneum, 1968), 214. Likewise, Perry Miller states, “By the word “covenant” federal theologians understood just such a contract as was used among men of business, a bond or a mortgage, an agreement between two parties, signed and sword to, and binding upon both. It was usually defined as “A mutual agreement between parties upon Articles or Propositions on both sides, so that each party is tied and bound to perform his own conditions.” The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), 375. Trueman argues such efforts reflect “the simplistic mistake of confusing the biblical notion of covenant with the commercial notion of contract…” Trueman, John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 72.

182. Kenyon, 22.
183. Packer, J.I., A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life (Wheaton, Il: Crossway, 1994), 21. “‘Puritan’ as a name was, in fact, mud from the start. Coined in the early 1560’s, it was always a satirical smear word implying peevishness, censoriousness, conceit, and a measure of hypocrisy, over and above its basic implication of religiously motivated discontent with what was seen as Elizabeth’s Laodicean and compromising Church of England. Later, the word gained the further, political connotation of being against the Stuart monarchy and for some sort of republicanism; its primary reference, however, was still to what was seen as an odd, furious, and ugly form of Protestant religion.”
184. Similarly to Packer, JP Kenyon notes “… the word ‘Puritanism’ was scarcely used by contemporaries, ‘Puritan’ very rarely, and then as a term of abuse.” (Kenyon, 22). Indeed, similarly, William Perkins, himself a puritan, called the label a ‘vile’ term. Workes, iii. 15. Cited in Kendall, RT, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 5.
185. Likely for this reason the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states that ‘the term ‘Puritan’, which never had a precise use, ceased to be applicable after 1660” (Kenyon, 22).
186. Mark Dever notes that the broad strokes of comprehensive studies of Puritanism tend to ignore important particulars. Richard Sibbes: Puritanism and Calvinism in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 216-7. For instance, Perry Miller’s work in The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), although a masterful piece of intellectual history, ignores the names of authors and over-emphasizes the internal consistency of the Puritan movement as if it were a monolithic category. In contrast, several scholars attempt to categorize Puritanism in different ways. For instance, Trinterud offers three categories of Puritanism: (1) the original, anti-vestment party; (2) the passive-resistance party; and (3) the Presbyterians. (L.J. Trinterud (ed.), Elizabethan Puritanism (New York, 1971), 10ff. Whereas, Porter offers four categories of Puritans: (1) the English Separatists; (2) the ‘evangelical Puritans;’ (3) the radical dissenters; and (4) Presbyterians. (H.C. Porter, Puritanism in Tudor England (1970). Both references cited in Cited in R.T. Kendall’s Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 6.
187. As Carl Trueman notes, “the work of Marxists such as Christopher Hill has attempted to forge a link between the ideology of Puritanism and the rise of the early modern bourgeoisie, thus giving it a more progressive image...” Carl Trueman, John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007, 16 fn 42. Michael Walzer’s Revolution of the Saints: The Origins of Radical Politics is equally susceptible to this critique, where he ignores “the intricacies of covenant theology,” but instead focuses on the “the diligent activism of the saints... [that] marked the transformation of politics into work.” Walzer, Michael, The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics (New York: Athenaeum, 1968), 2; 167.


189. Vast debates have raged in the 20th century concerning the suggestion that the 16th and 17th century Puritan use of covenant undermined the reformers’ emphasis on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in election. Among those backing this thesis, Perry Miller’s work stands out as the dominating treatment of Puritan covenant theology to which most secondary literature defers. (See Perry Miller, The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century, ch. Xiii, especially p. 395) From a theological standpoint, and for different reasons than Perry Miller’s work, Karl Barth’s critique has significantly influenced subsequent religious treatments of Puritan covenant theology, for instance J.B. Torrance’s work. (See Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, vol. IV/I, trans. G.W. Bromiley, Edinburgh, 1956, 54-66.) However, in more recent years, increased scholarly work, especially specific studies of individual Puritan divines, has called this thesis into question (See Mark Dever, Richard Sibbes: Puritanism and Calvinism in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2000), 110; 216, J.I.,Packer, A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life (Wheaton, Il: Crossway, 1994), 85; Carl Trueman, John Owen: Reformed Catholic, Renaissance Man (Hampshire, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2007), 71.) For an extended treatment of this question, see D.A. Weir, The Origins of Federal Theology in the Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought (Oxford, 1990)


191. Miller, 376.


193. J.B. Torrance explains how “the concept of a contract of government between monarch and people was not new; it had a long history in Scotland and France as evidenced by ancient coronation oaths as well as the practice of banding and contracting in feudal society. History provided the reformers with considerable evidence that monarchs existed by the will of the people, for the good of the people, and might therefore, be brought to account for misgovernment.” Daniel Elazar; John Kincaid, editors, The Covenant Connection: From Federal Theology Modern Federalism (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2000), 150.
194. Dever explains the twofold aim of the covenant: “Primarily in description of God’s saving covenant and secondarily in description of the obligations of the Christian to God and others” (Dever, 111).


196. Miller, 378.

197. Trueman, 67.

198. J.I. Packer notes “The Puritans developed what has been called ‘covenant theology’; they saw this as the scriptural setting in which the jewel of justification by faith should be exhibited…” (Packer, 154). When the devotional writings of Puritan divines such as John Owen, Richard Baxter and Richard Sibbes are contrasted with the secondary works of scholars such as Perry Miller, Michael Walzer and Christopher Hill, it becomes evident that undue emphasis on potential political or social consequences of covenant theology distracts from its emphasis on the doctrine of justification.

199. Trueman, 78.

200. Miller, 406.

201. Witte, 581.


203. Trueman, 75

204. Packer, 202.

205. Witte, 581.

206. WC, VII:iii

207. Mark Dever notes intimations of the pre-creation intra-trinitarian nature of the covenant in the writings of Richard Sibbes: “He [God] being the foundation of the covenant, there must be agreement in him. Now Christ is the foundation of the covenant, by satisfying God’s justice, else God and we could never have come to good terms…. God is satisfied with the death of the mediator.” (“The Demand of a Good Conscience,” in Works, 7:481-2. Cited in Dever, 118).

208. The Westminster Confession states at this point, “God gave to Adam a law, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience; promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it; and endued him with power and ability to keep it.” (WC, XIX:i)

209. The Westminster Confession clarifies that the Covenant of Works applies to all: “Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly; discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts, and lives; so as, examining themselves thereby, they may come to further conviction of, humiliation for, and hatred against sin; together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin; and the threatenings of it serve to show what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, although freed from the curse thereof.
threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, show them God’s approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof; although not as due to them by the law as a covenant of words: so as a man’s doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourageth to the one, and deterreth from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.” WC, XIX:vi

210. Again, we look to the Westminster Confession which recognizes the reality of duties owed to God and duties owed to man, evidenced in the Ten Commandments: This law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the first four commandments containing our duty toward God, and the other six our duty to man. (WC, XIX:ii)

211. Trueman, 68; 76.


213. Wootton summarizes Filmer’s argument for the divine right of kings in the following: “Filmer’s claim was that Adam was owner of the world and monarch of all his descendants; and that the powers of kings and fathers were identical and unlimited; and that monarchs should be regarded as substitutes for Adam and as fathers of their peoples.” Political writings of John Locke, ed. David Wootton (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003), 13.

214. Ibid., 13.

215. Ibid., 64.

216. A number of other scholars have frequently noted aspects of Locke’s deviation from a Christian framework. For instance, David Wootton argues that Locke subverted the orthodox Christian doctrine of original sin. (Wootton, 65). In doing so, Locke questioned the foundations of Christian political theory. It is unclear what kind of Christian Locke was, but he was certainly not orthodox (See Wootton, 23;65-7). Also see Leo Strauss’ Natural Right and History.


218. Strauss made a similar argument in Natural Right and History where he writes, “The Bible talks of man’s state before and after the Fall, but neither corresponds to a state of nature in which men were dependent only upon their own instincts and reason” (Strauss, 1953, 215)

219. Wootton, 262.

220. Ibid., 13.

221. In his introduction to Locke’s Political Writings, David Wootton portrays Filmer, not Locke as the author of liberalism. Wootton argues that Filmer, writing in 1630, long before any “liberal” position had been established, creates “liberalism” as a target to oppose. Filmer, not Locke, first writes “Mankind naturally endowed with freedom from all subjection.” As such, Wootton argues that the principles of Locke’s Second Treatise are already established by Filmer fifty years before they’re defended by Locke (Wootton, 15).

222. Wootton, 262.

224. Wootton, 262.
225. Ibid.
226. Ibid., 263-4.
227. Wootton, 264. Locke writes, “For men being all the workmanship... they are his property... not one another’s pleasure.” This natural state of equality for Locke—unlike for example Luther’s priesthood of believers—extends to “all mankind.”
228. Wootton, 264.
229. Ibid.
230. Ibid., 265.
231. Ibid.
232. WC, XIXi
233. Wootton, 264.
234. Packer, 202. “The Puritans were deeply and constantly concerned with the doctrine of the covenant of grace.”
236. Unless otherwise designated, all simple chapter:verse numbers reference Paul’s Letter to the Romans.
237. This author acknowledges literary theory contestations within the wider scholarly community. Salient to this point, while the author is aware of reader-response criticism, notably touted by Stanley Fish, Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1980), she rejects the premise that meaning is created in the interaction between reader and text.
239. References to “men” and “man” include both sexes, male and female, and should not be read as privileged or discriminatory. The rationale for this decision is to allow Paul to discourse in his own terms.
240. Though this author interprets Paul from an historically reformed position, she is aware of the “New Perspective on Paul,” most notably propounded by J. D. G Dunn and N. T. Wright.

The Archive
241. “Mr. Gladstone In The North,” The Times, October 9, 1862.
243. R.J.M. Blackett, Divided Hearts: Britain and the American Civil War, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 66. While the Manchester Times is unclear, this man is
presumably R. Rayford Jackson, identified by Blackett as a noted pro-Confederate organizer in the area.

244. “Meeting at Blackburn on the American War,” *Manchester Times*, August 9, 1862.
261. *Ibid*.
265. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, R. Pullins Company, 2002), Print, Book 5, chapter 5 (pg 91): “And justice is that by which the just person is said to be inclined to do what is just by choice, and inclined to distribute things, both to himself in comparison with someone else, and to another person in comparison with someone else, not in such a way that more of what is choiceworthy goes to himself and less to his neighbor, nor the opposite way with what is harmful, but so that each gets what is proportionately equal, and similarly with another person in comparison with someone else.”
266. St. Augustine, Book XIX, chapter 21 (pg 883).
267. *Ibid*.
268. Cf. *Republic* Book IX, particularly 581 (page 262) and 589a-b (pages 271-2).

269. St. Augustine, Book XIX, chapter 21 (page 882).


274. St. Augustine, Book V, chapter 24 (page 220).


286. *Ibid.*, line 165 (page 34) for Charlemagne, line 407 (page 41) for Marsile.


300. Rousseau, page 27.


302. *Ibid.*, Book I, chapter 1 (page 17) “Man is born free and everywhere is in chains.”

304. Ibid., page 1.
305. Ibid., page 5.
306. Ibid.
307. Ibid., see pages 93, 130, 217, and 240.
308. Ibid., page 223.
309. Ibid., page 220f.
310. Ibid., page 218.
311. Ibid., page 70.
312. Ibid., page 38.
313. Ibid., page 183. This is reliably told as Ménétra casts Rousseau in the more positive light.
314. Ibid., pages 160 and 93.
316. Leo XIII, Papal Encyclical *Libertas* (1888), “One thing, however, remains always true - that the liberty which is claimed for all to do all things is not, as We have often said, of itself desirable, inasmuch as it is contrary to reason that error and truth should have equal rights.” http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_20061888_libertas_en.html (accessed December 17, 2012)

**The Parlor**

318. Ibid., 25.
319. Ibid., 11.
320. Ibid., 51.
321. Ibid., 60.
322. Ibid., 5.
323. Ibid., 6.
324. Ibid., 124.
325. Ibid., 117.
328. This is not to say that the phenomenon of the grotesque does not arise outside of America; indeed, Joseph Conrad’s ‘Kurtz,’ Emily Brontë’s ‘Heathcliff,’ Bram Stoker’s ‘Dracula,’ and Mary Shelley’s ‘Frankenstein,’ as well as countless others surely fueled the American appetite for the grotesque. It falls beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the ways in which the literature of the grotesque arises worldwide as the aristocratic age fades into the democratic age. We will limit our discussion to American fiction, fully realizing that these trends should apply to democratic souls in any nation.

330. Other authors of the grotesque include Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, Frank Norris, Jack London, Erskine Caldwell, Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, and Tennessee Williams, among others. This list of authors is far from exhaustive, for the grotesque has quite deeply penetrated the American literary imagination. Notably, the phenomenon of the grotesque transcends lines of genres, appearing with virtually equal frequency in naturalist and realist works, Romantic poetry and fiction, fantasy novels, dystopia fiction, and popular thrillers, among others. We may wonder whether it may, in fact, be more fruitful to list the few exceptions who, like salmon against the stream, have refrained from writing the literature of the grotesque.


333. Ibid.

334. Ibid., Author’s Introduction, 14.


336. Ibid., Author’s Introduction, 15.

337. Ibid., vol. II, part III, chap. 21, p. 642.


344. For the purposes of this paper, the distinction between high-culture literature and popular literature will not be explored; for all intents and purposes, the grotesque attends them both in a democratic age.

345. Perhaps there may be isolated works of genius in the democratic age, but they are few and far between, and few can recognize their genius.


348. This is not to say that the grotesque does not exist in aristocratic literature; on the contrary, figures of Greek and Roman mythology, Shakespeare’s ‘Caliban’ and ‘Malvolio,’ and the unknown *Beowulf* poet’s ‘Grendel’ haunt literatures of a democratic age. But, all of these characters are arguably either set up as moral paradigms or as characters of a lower social standing than their readers—and are thus rendered unsympathetic. The comparison between the Grendel we encounter in *Beowulf* and the Grendel we encounter in John Gardner’s 1971 novel, *Grendel*, highlights this aristocratic/democratic distinction. Whereas the Grendel of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem is an abstract force of darkness that inspires only
vengeful hatred, the Grendel of Gardner’s novel is portrayed as almost cuddly—a monster, yes, but one in the throes of existential crises, who courts the reader’s sympathies.

349. For the purposes of this paper, the sources of poetic inspiration are understood to be the sources of inspiration for the imitative (turned innovative) artist in general.


352. *Ibid*.


357. Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008), Book X.

358. As stated above, the sources of inspiration for the imitative artist become increasingly polarized; at the logical conclusion of this development, the democratic soul is left to ponder only his own troubled soul and the awesome God. Tocqueville claims that because His grandeur is no longer hidden behind the meditational layers of aristocratic beauty, “God shows himself more clearly to human perception in full and entire majesty” (486). It falls beyond the scope of this paper to investigate democratic man’s attempts to artistically portray the awesome God. It may be assumed, however, that man’s delinkage and shutting up within himself renders the possibility of his meeting God face-to-face in literature virtually obsolete, as his art becomes innovative—as his own psychological expression—instead of imitative. This paper traces precisely this movement.


362. Tocqueville describes the ‘delinkage’ of men that takes effect in the transition from an aristocratic age to a democratic age: the “one long chain” that once liked “everybody, from peasant to king” breaks down, “free[en] each link” and leading each man to fold in on himself rather than considering himself an integral part of a larger social fabric (Tocqueville 508).


374. Asking whether or how literature can be useful to the soul or to society perhaps thrusts us into the realm of utilitarianism; but perhaps democratic man can fit literature nowhere else (Tocqueville 465, 304-305, 458). As in religion, so in literature: the language of self-interest may replace the language of virtue (Tocqueville 528). Nonetheless, because the soul affects literature and that literature affects the soul, we move forward in our analysis. Further note: Tocqueville states that Roman and Greek literatures constitute the “best antidote against the inherent defects of the times” because they “provide a prop just where we are most likely to fall” (Tocqueville 476-477). Here, Tocqueville implies that the classics can counterbalance the dangerous literary tendencies of the democratic age. For the purposes of this paper, the potential that the literature of the grotesque carries to change the soul of man or the society as a whole is of more interest than its potential to simply improve the literature of the democratic age.
377. *Ibid*.
378. *Ibid*.
388. Genesis 5:20, ESV. Further note: The grotesque may again cause Tocqueville to proclaim, “What a happy land the New World is, where man’s vices are almost as useful to society as his virtues!”—this time, in an ominous whisper (Tocqueville 284).
389. Although in certain portions of the text like Tocqueville implies a certain meanness of soul, more often than not, he writes of man’s limitation rather than his cosmic guilt.
390. Situated in the rich intermediate period between conditions of inequality and conditions of equality, O’Connor and other authors among the Southern Agrarians enjoyed enough intellectual protection for their ideas to retain a degree of authority (Tocqueville 642).
Further note: Only here, notes O'Connor, can the grotesque become humorous, for “the maximum amount of seriousness admits the maximum amount of comedy.” She continues, “only if we are secure in our beliefs can we see the comical side of the universe.” O’Connor attributes the emergence of dry, dark wit in place of robust humor in literature (which the democratic soul has already stripped away as a veil) to the fact that when the writers of the grotesque are also relativists, they strive continually to justify the actions of their horrifying brainchildren on a “sliding scale of values.”


Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), Book II.


450. *Ibid.*, 76.


456. Ibid., 154.
457. Ibid., 139; 142; 145.
458. Ibid., 139.
459. Ibid., 156.
460. Ibid., 171.
461. Ibid., 120.

**The Clock Tower**

465. A reference to Victor Frankl’s great work, *Man’s Search for Meaning*.
466. Georgetown University Mission Statement.
471. Dante, “Inferno,” I, 4-5.
472. Dante, 75.
474. Ibid.
475. Ibid.
476. Dante, “Paradiso,” XXX, 40-42.
477. Ignatius, (Pg. 131).
481. MyDante site.
482. Ignatius, (Pg. 21).
483. O’Brien, (Pg. 18).
484. Ibid., 58.
485. Dante, “Inferno,” Canto XXXII.
486. Dante, “Inferno,” Canto XIII.
487. O’Brien, (Pg. 58).
488. O’Brien, (Pg. 57).
492. Citation.
497. CITATION – same as photo.
499. Email exchange with Professor Cline on July 5th, 2012.
500. Email exchange with Professor Chieffo on July 9th, 2012