Exorcising the Demons - A Critique of the Totalizing Political Ideologies of Modernity

Chapter 1

Karl Marx once famously wrote in the *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* that “Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historic facts and personages appear, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.”¹ Marx forgot to add, however, that on occasion the twisting wheels of fate do ordain that history repeat itself thrice: first as farce, second as an embarrassment and third as an abject display of hilariously miscalculated human incompetence. This is the story of “Brexit Live presents bpopLIVE”, the self-proclaimed ‘biggest rally in British political history’² and pro-Brexit music festival. “bpopLIVE” was originally conceived as the UK’s answer to American ‘Rock the Vote’ style events, which are typically non-partisan affairs focusing on registration and voter mobilization without any further political agenda. ‘bpop’ eventually evolved into a pro-Brexit political rally with speeches from such figures as United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) Chairman Nigel Farage. It was well-funded, prominently-advertised and had procured for itself one of the UK’s top venues, the Genting arena in Birmingham, yet it is remembered as one of the most amusing failures of the entire Brexit campaign. The concert was eventually diminished to a


laughing stock with its lineup reduced from ‘A listers’ to three quarters of 80’s pop group Bucks Fizz and an Elvis impersonator.³

The⁴ organizers of the event, anti-EU pressure group Leave.EU blamed the British Government’s Electoral Commission for the failure of the concert. Leave.EU claimed that the Commission was “pursuing a spiteful vendetta against us since we reported their crooked activities during the Leave campaign designation process to the Treasury Select Committee⁵.” According to the organizers the exact nature of this vendetta was thus “After insisting we tick all sorts of superfluous boxes and fill in various time-wasting forms in triplicate, the elections watchdog issued a final demand for more information.” The Electoral Commission simply replied that they had no intention of trying to prevent the event from taking place and were merely ensuring that the rally was in compliance with standard political finance regulations.⁶ The aforementioned incident is especially telling as it hints that the organizers themselves were either deeply uncomfortable or inexperienced in dealing with the organs of a contemporary bureaucratic state; some level of this is to be expected in any anti-establishment or populist campaign such as Brexit but the tone they took in this instance was extreme even for a campaign of that nature.


⁵ ibid
⁶ ibid
The battle waged by Leave.EU against the UK government and its admittedly notorious demand for paperwork was not, in fact, the significant material reason for the event’s cancelation (though it is worth pointing out that there is significance to the organizers’ lack of familiarity with the institutions of modern government, at least in its interactions with political actors). The real problem that ‘bpop’ faced was its lack of understanding of its audience and the artists it hired with the vast majority of hired acts dropping immediately after learning the political nature of the event. The sentiments of the entertainers hired were summarized by the remarks from boy band ‘5ive’ who stated that they were not aware that the event was political and that they had “no allegiance either way, only to their fans.”

Although highly amusing, the events surrounding the ill-fated music festival reveal something important about the nature of the Brexit campaign and about political ideology itself. The organizers of the event showed through their actions that they did not understand the nature of their constituents, the opposition, and the music industry. An example of this failure would be when boy band 5ive removed themselves from the event, organizers shot back by declaring that they had absolutely no idea why anyone would do such a thing and that they had missed “a fantastic opportunity.” While some of the blame for the failure of the enterprise falls on a lack of organizational ability in general, since the wrong memos were sent out to the press and artists stating that the event was a pro-Brexit political rally instead

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of a “Rock the Vote” type event, at least according to Leave.EU’s organizers.⁸

Organizational issues aside, the idea that the Brexit campaign would be fertile
ground for the organization of a music festival was an amusing miscalculation in the
first place because its supporters were mostly older voters, usually poorer than
their Remain counterparts; who were concerned about issues of community,
regulation, sovereignty and education—not the typical demographic for festivals.

More interesting than the failure of the organizers to understand their own
demographic was their failure to understand that their event was in anyway
partisan. Organizers said that it was a suffrage promotion event in one memo and a
rally in another. Leave.EU had invited Nigel Farage to speak in one email and then
said that it would be okay if its acts played in “In Remain campaign t-shirts”.

Leave.EU demonstrated sufficient organizational ability in booking the artists,
securing funding and the venue; they internally had a clear goal of what they wanted
to achieve. The fact that they did demonstrate that they were capable of arranging a
concert of that size and prominence distinguishes it from similar debacles such as
the notorious ‘Fyre Festival’ on the island of Great Exuma which left concert goers
without adequate accommodation and was subsequently described as a ‘Hunger
Games for rich people’⁹. The key detail is not the incompetence in general; this is not

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in itself a story about substandard concert promotion, but the organizer’s incompetence in the political arena. It seemed as if Leave.EU was absorbed by their cause, they did not expect their event to cause controversy, did not argue their case and instead failed to understand the perspective of their critics and especially the Electoral Commission (who weren’t even directly criticizing the concert, they were merely performing their duties as a regulatory body). It is hard to imagine that the marketing of the event would be a secondary concern to politically savvy actors and it is especially difficult to understand how the wrong memo was released to the press. The situation is probably best summed up in this way: proficient organizers were so convinced of the rightness of their cause that they discounted the possibility of controversy entirely, simply believing that people would automatically fall in behind the colors. This miscalculation ultimately led them to believe that political positioning was of secondary importance; this then resulted in them being unable to properly contain and manage the fallout and issues generated by their event. Their response to 5ive, ‘I don’t know why they would do that,’ says everything.

The goal of this chapter is to explain the effects of ideology on campaign structure, human action and results in the context of two recent and prominent political struggles. The exact nature of ideology in relation to the grand scheme of the project will be elucidated on in a more comprehensive manner later on; for now we shall define it as a set of abstract principles or theories that underlay and provide motivation for human action. Debate can be conceived of in two ways, the first is an argument from first principles either an argument from morality, reason or the primacy of a specific principle. The diversity of such arguments from
principal is, in practical terms, functionally limitless and the sheer variety of such arguments form the majority of the world’s ideologies (with the possible exception of those who deny the utility in doing so). The second is an argument concerning policy of state; this type of debate is only possible once sides agree on the problems at hand. The bulk of these arguments typically concern the mechanics of material solutions to material problems, if they involve principle that principle performs an underlying or guiding force in the minds of a policy’s creator and need not be expressly stated. The goal is to prove, or failing that at least suggest, the supremacy of debate concerning policy rather than debate concerning principle. The former is open (anyone who recognizes the situation to be resolved is free to participate), the latter tends to be closed (when disagreement based on principle is expressed often a debate can go no further). Debate concerning policy is practical, it concerns material problems, a debate based on policy-no matter how fierce or divisive can be resolved at the point where the material problem is physically solved. When national debate concerns matters primarily of policy continued stability is usually ensured as reconciliation between the competing sides who understand themselves as "merely" disagreeing about strategies of implementation are facilitated toward compromise by their background of common cause.

Conversely argument from principle is divisive but more importantly unresolvable, ideological drift is notoriously hard to repair and tends to lead to divides seen as unbearable by the partisans of respective ideologies. Argument from policy is marked by an ability to facilitate conflict resolution.
In a way, the fate of ‘bpopLIVE’ mirrors that of the Brexit campaigns themselves, which seemed to be defined by a failure to understand the opposition and its perspective. If we, for a moment, abandon the idea that they were acting in concert with modern developments in campaign strategy, which focus more on mobilization than in the process of persuading the opposition, then we see the exponents of both positions speaking very different languages. The ‘Remain’ campaign focused more on the possible economic impact of a British exit from the EU; echoing somewhat of a homo economicus view of a person's place in society, i.e that one's ability to acquire material goods should be the sole criteria necessary to convince to the extent that they counter the non-economic arguments of the ‘Leave’ campaign it is done so by pointing to extent figures. Conversely the ‘Leave’ campaign conversely focused on cultural arguments, problems relating to immigration, labour, and issues of national sovereignty—to the exclusion of most economic arguments (though an economic case is the primary mode of expression of discontent with EU regulation).

Articles published during the Brexit campaign in order to better understand the issues, ideologies, and general worldviews being expressed by the two opposing blocs. In pro-Brexit circles, the standard lists of reasons intended as quick reads begin with a focus on immigration (on a popular level the most popular reason for secession, at least in public conscience) Clare Foges, a former speechwriter for David Cameron, declared it the Leave campaign’s ‘trump card’ in a column published in The Times “immigration and strong borders, the issue that has
remained at or near the top of voters’ concerns for years.”

Opposition to immigration in British circles during Brexit centered around the availability of state services, for example the then-Minister of State for Employment, Priti Patel, claimed that parents would miss out on their first choice primary school because of “uncontrolled immigration,” and that "shortage of primary school places is yet another example of how uncontrolled migration is putting unsustainable pressures on our public services.” Former Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor Michael Gove a prominent ‘Brexiteer’ primarily expressed concern that increased immigration from the European Continent would put too much pressure on the UK’s state healthcare system the National Health Service (NHS). The former Justice Minister characterized the strain on the UK’s social services thusly: “We cannot guarantee the same access people currently enjoy to healthcare and housing if these trends continue. There is a direct and serious threat to our public services, standard of living and ability to maintain social solidarity if we accept continued EU


\[\text{12 ibid}\]

membership.” Gove, who began his column in praise of the reforming government, expressed dismay that- as of that moment- the UK government had been unable to seriously achieve substantial reforms of the EU; he wrote that “The prime minister laid out the problem with great clarity and force in his Bloomberg speech in 2013. He advocated change with great eloquence and sincerity. But Europe didn’t change. We were given a polite hearing. But the orthodoxy didn’t alter.”

Gove alleges that the EU in a crisis always doubles down on its commitment to greater integration quoting President of the European Council Donald Tusk’s statement that “everything is in conformity with the treaties,” meaning nothing about the nature of the EU has changed. The idea of “ever closer union,” shows up as an object of deep anxiety in pro-Brexit literature that materializes as a fear of the EU’s largely unaccountable (in the eyes of the campaign) organizations and of a loss of national sovereignty. The phrase in its current configuration itself originates from one of the founding documents of the European Union “the Treaty of Maastricht” which states that the signatories resolve to “to continue the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.” The fear expressed by the Leave Campaign was that

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14 ibid
15 ibid
16 ibid
17 Similar language does appear in the 1957 Treaty of Rome
being treaty bound towards union would eventually lead to a full subsumption of the UK’s government institutions into EU apparatus. This fear has been a powerful factor in the United Kingdom’s relation with the union since the very beginning, after sovereignty was downplayed as an issue during the original 1975 referendum despite the protest of prominent politicians Enoch Powell, on the right and Tony Benn, on the left. At that moment in time the Prime Minister Harold Wilson was urged to attempt to have a clause placed into the language of the treaty that would allow the UK to refuse European directives but it was shelved as being incompatible with membership. Legally speaking, Parliament had not and did not cede sovereignty to the EU in the sense that it lost its status as the final arbiter of what counts as law on British soil. Parliament approved and legally ceded power to institutions in Brussels of its own volition and of course was always free to depart from those institutions as soon as they failed to serve UK state interests. However the leave campaign has stead that as long as the preeminence of EU law is placed into statute then it is almost impossible for the UK to veto any laws coming from Brussels. This in their eyes reduced the UK to sovereignty in name only, though it is still affirmed that Parliament can act to restore its power over domestic affairs with


20 ibid
21 ibid
a leave vote. Other sovereignty claims made against the EU concern matters like fishing rights, resources, business regulation, trade agreements and diplomacy (to a limited degree).

Closely aligned with sovereignty claims are economic arguments that argue on Neoliberal grounds that EU regulation strangles the ability for the UK to compete properly concerning prices with the rest of the world, and smothers economic growth. The concern shown by Leavers to economic issues was framed entirely around issues sovereignty, more specifically the need for the United Kingdom to have control over its own economy to flexibly adapt to changes in the international economic order. Gove states “More EU control of our economy will increase regulation, hold back innovation, slow growth and reduce the amount of money available for our public services.” A pro-Brexit economists’ report declared that a British exit from the European Union would raise economic output by 2% by the end of the decade, ensure that the country was 5% more competitive on global markets and raise real wages by 1.5%. The main argument used by Leave campaign economists was that the UK economy would be better off without the regulatory burdens, allegedly wasteful spending and political attention on matters

22 ibid
23 ibid
24 ‘Soviet Style Control Freaks’

26 ibid
27 ibid
of EU reform, which they claim contributes to a slow rate of growth within the single market.\textsuperscript{28} Gerard Lyons, the chief economic advisor to former Mayor of London Boris Johnson, wrote in the \textit{Evening Standard} that “the EU is badly placed to prosper in the future global economy. Globalisation, technical change, communication and innovation are changing the outlook. Geography is no longer a barrier to trade. Economies that will succeed need to be flexible, adaptable and control their own destiny. Brexit allows us this. In contrast, the EU has become centralising, regulating and controlling, the opposite of what is needed for jobs and future success.”\textsuperscript{29} Lyons also states that EU tariffs drive up food prices and that the UK would benefit from the ability to buy food at world prices rather than those inflated by EU protectionist tariffs (resulting in cheaper food) and that technical and scientific enterprises could be funded directly from the UK rather than through EU institutions.\textsuperscript{30}

Though the Leave campaign did utilize economic arguments that those arguments took a secondary role to problems of sovereignty and immigration. A \textit{YouGov} poll from August of 2017 found that “Fully 61\% of Leave voters say that they think that “significant damage to the British economy to be a price worth paying for bringing Britain out of the European Union,” while only one in five Leave voters (20\%) are clear that such a price is too high for Brexit – the remaining 19\% don’t

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\textsuperscript{28} ibid
\textsuperscript{30} ibid
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The percentage of people who are willing to undergo economic hardship, either personally or nationally for their side of the debate is significantly higher in people within the Leave camp. The same poll found that among Remain voters “a significant minority of Remain voters would be happy for the economy to suffer should it mean that Brexit were averted. One in three Remain voters (34%), say that (sic) “significant damage to the UK economy would be a price worth paying if it meant that Britain stayed in the European Union”. This was only a slightly lower figure than the 38% who thought that averting Brexit at such a cost was too high (the remaining 27% don’t know).”

In the campaign materials of the Remain camp, economic arguments take complete priority as former Cameron speech writer Clare Foges succinctly wrote “Prosperity is necessarily the first theme of a political campaign,’ said Woodrow Wilson, and for the Remaines it should be the first, second and third.” The Economist writes concerning the idea that Britain could acquire a favorable trade deal outside the European Union “The Brexit camp’s claim that Europe needs Britain more than the other way round is fanciful: the EU takes almost half Britain’s exports, whereas Britain takes less than 10% of the EU’s.” The treasury stated in a report


32 ibid
33 Reklaitis, Victor

that the British economy would likely shrink 6% by 2030, and that Brexit may well cost households £4300 per year at least with upper limits being about £6000. Business lobbies and major financial institutions also fear the loss of London as a financial center with ‘passporting’, the ability to trade financial services across the entire EU without the need for middlemen and ad hoc regulators. The loss of passporting- a result of the EU single market could cost billions of pounds and the City’s position as the world’s premier financial center. According to the Remain lobby sovereignty is not the absolute construct that it is portrayed as in Leave circles, to them it is an inherently pooled concept something always given or received to deal with external circumstances, in such a manner that a nation is never fully sovereign. To the Remainer it is imperative that Britain retains its ‘clout’ in the world through membership in NATO, the IMF and the EU, the resulting collective bargaining rights allow the nation to secure agreements in its national interest at a lower cost. The Economist writes "Britain gives up sovereignty in exchange for clout through its memberships of NATO, the IMF and countless other power-sharing, rule-setting institutions. Signing up to treaties on trade, nuclear power or the environment involves submitting to regulations set jointly with foreigners, in return


37 “The Real Danger of Brexit” The Economist
for greater gains. Britain outside the EU would be on the sidelines: notionally independent from, but in fact still constrained by, rules it would have no role in formulating. It would be a purer but rather powerless sort of sovereignty.”

Immigration is seen in a different light in the Remain camp; although most Remain personalities conceded that Brexit would allow more control over the boarder they concluded that the exclusion of immigrants would harm the economy. This harm to the economy would occur in two ways, the first was direct as they point out that restrictions on immigration would harm British businesses that rely on the skills of foreign workers. The second point of harm was that a restriction on immigration or tighter boarder controls would likely lead to the expulsion of the UK from the European Common Market leading to tariffs and administrative costs.

Another prominent strand of Remainer thought is that of the collective security lobby. Though security and intelligence services were and continue to be divided on the issue of Brexit, several groups believe that Britain exiting the EU could jeopardize European collective security. Those figures include “five former Nato (sic) secretary-generals and 13 former US secretaries of state and defence secretaries, all of whom have warned that the UK leaving the EU would help the West’s enemies.” One of the primary reasons for this fear, is the intelligence

38 ibid
39 ‘ibid
40 ibid
sharing abilities that have come out of data sharing arrangements between
European security services, as Sir John Sewers former head of the SIS opined “The
reason we would be less safe is that we would be unable to take part in decisions
that frame the sharing of data, which is a crucial part of counter-terrorism work that
we do these days.”42 The United States has also expressed support for pro-Remain
causes stating that it was the United States which urged the post war nations to
unite in order to prevent another war and that a strong EU is needed as a buffer
against a ‘resurgent and nationalist Russia.’43 The Remain camp has also stated that
they believe a Brexit would benefit international terrorism with former spy Aimen
Dean who infiltrated Al Qaeda claiming, “They [ISIS] believe in the long run the
strategic goal is to break up the body of the European Union that they perceive to be
a formidable enemy.”44 Unsurprisingly the lobbies that wished for a Remain vote on
security grounds seem to be those types who are enamored with the idea of a
monolithic West with its own security needs, a relic of the Cold War but at least
comprehensible with the rise of Russia and several Islamist actors, the former being
the default enemy for most of the youths of the current actors and the latter perhaps
being a concrete security risk, at least in terms of terrorism rather than existentially.

*The Economist* writes

42 ibid
security-debate-robertson/index.html.
44 ibid
Without Britain, it would be harder for the EU to pull its global weight—a big loss to the West in a troubled neighborhood, from Russia through Syria to north Africa. It is little wonder that Russia’s Vladimir Putin is keen on Brexit—and that America’s Barack Obama is not. It would be shortsighted for Eurosceptics to be indifferent to this. A weakened Europe would be unambiguously bad for Britain, whose geography, unlike its politics, is fixed.45

Brexit, as an idea and as a political campaign was incredibly strongly contested and bitterly received, it divided an entire nation philosophically, economically and demographically. However one year on from the seminal events of Britain’s exit, with the exception of some scepticism, the deep divides are healing. The Government and the Labour Part in opposition have both decided to carry out Brexit as the democratic mandate of the British people, Approaches differ with some arguing for a ‘Hard Brexit’ where all ties with the EU up to and including defaulting to WTO standards and leaving without a settlement are acceptable.46 The other camp is the so called Soft Brexit, which involves the UK losing its MEPs, its seat on the European Council and its European Commissioner, but it would keep unfettered access to the single market allowing free movement of capital, people, goods and


services. The speed at which both sides of the campaign closed ranks can be attributed to several factors. Although they presented their arguments in very different ways and in different terms, at the end of the day both sides were essentially trying to find the best route to what they agreed was best for Britain. Both campaigns, despite ideological differences, understood that Britain needed a strong economy, a degree of security and a sovereignty arrangement that was in the national interest. Even though the two campaigns sometimes had very different answers to how to achieve those ‘goods’, they were quickly able to come to terms to attempt to decide what was best for the nation as a whole once the decision to leave the EU was decided. In short, the very nature of the country and its identity were never matters in question, allowing all sides to rally around the decision easily, if with a degree of initial reluctance.

The events of Brexit have often been used to signify a “wave of nationalism” in reaction to the neoliberal world order. One event that Brexit is often used in conjunction with is the series of travel restrictions ordered by United States President Donald J Trump. The travel bans of the Trump are a series of Executive Orders that have been renewed throughout the year 2017, they restrict travel to the United States by the nationals of several states who’s rulers have been deemed either supporters of terrorism or insufficiently friendly to the United States. At the time of writing there have been three travels bans, for documentations sake the focus of this investigation will be on the first travel ban Executive Order 13769. Executive Order 13769 was in effect from January 27th 2017 until its replacement on

\[47\] ibid
March 16th of the same year. Executive Order 13769 caused massive public outcry and protest, as well as fierce support dividing the United States intensely becoming one of the first major political debates of the Trump presidency. The Order restricted travel from seven different countries considered to be dangerous to the United States; these were Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

The Official White House justification of the Executive Order and its resulting travel restrictions was based on whether a nation fits three categories that designate it as a security risk in the eyes of the administration. These categories are as follows; the first is whether an alien from the country in question is likely to pose a credible threat to the national security of the country.\(^{48}\) The second is “whether a foreign terrorist organization has a significant presence in the country or area.”\(^ {49}\) Finally the third criterion is whether the country is considered a “safe haven for terrorists.”\(^ {50}\) An additional justification provided by the authorities was that there was some concern over the effectiveness of vetting in matters of national security expressed by some members of congress; after the recent prevalence of terrorist attacks in Europe.\(^ {51}\)

The immediate reaction to the Executive Order and the ban was dramatic with many protests, some in excess of a thousand strong, convening on US airports,
after in excess of 100 people were detained on the first day of the ban. The protests continued until the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) managed to achieve a temporary hold on the order in a New York Federal Court. From the very beginning discourse around the travel ban revolved around differing conceptions of American values and what it means to be an American. Protesters outside airports and organs of state, sang the Star Spangled Banner, utilized the famous quote from the Statue of Liberty “Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” and identified themselves as children of immigrants.

Some were more explicit in stating the reasons for their protest, Chelsea Clinton daughter of the defeated presidential candidate spoke thus after attending a protest at Battery Park, in Manhattan within sight of the Statue of Liberty “We will keep standing up for a country that matches our values and ideals for all.” Others such as Afnan Mossaad said that they were disturbed as Americans and described the policy itself as explicitly anti-American, “This is not America. These are not the American values that we all know and love...It’s time that we speak up. We can’t let [Trump] redefine America. You’ve got to resist. When there’s injustice, you’ve got to stand up for what’s right. This is democracy.”

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53 Ibid
54 Ibid
55 Ibid
56 Ibid
57 Ibid
58 Ibid
Several American human rights groups described the decision as sanitized religious persecution.\textsuperscript{59} The International Rescue Committee described it as “hurtful and hasty,” the ACLU characterized it as a ‘euphemism for discrimination against Muslims.”\textsuperscript{60} The President of Oxfam America noted that the ban would put families in danger of authoritarian governments in increased peril and stated that the refugees affected were “among the world’s most vulnerable people — women, children, and men — who are simply trying to find a safe place to live after fleeing unfathomable violence and loss.”\textsuperscript{61} Several U.S Diplomats and State Department personnel issued a dissent cable against the policy stating that the ban “‘runs counter to core American values of non-discrimination, fair play and extending a warm welcome to foreign visitors and immigrants...A policy which closes our doors to over 200-million legitimate travelers in the hopes of preventing a small number of travelers who intend to harm Americans ... will not achieve its aim of making our country safer,”\textsuperscript{62}

The government strongly rejected this interpretation of events stating that “The United States admits, from the Muslim majority countries of the world, more people every year than any other country on earth that is not itself a member of that


\textsuperscript{60} ibid

\textsuperscript{61} ibid

region,”63 and calling the notion that the travel restrictions were a Muslim ban “ludicrous.” The position of the government in the implementation of the policy revolved around three elements; the first was that the order was necessary to prevent “the ever present threat of domestic terrorism,”64 the second was that “No person living or residing overseas has a right to entry into the United States ... this is not travel ban, it’s the cessation of most travel with case by case exemptions,”65 and the third was that no person has the right to demand immigration services within the United States.66 The government has also directed that people who are admitted as refugees do not “pose a threat to the security and welfare of the United States,” through additional screening measures67. Despite the administration’s claims that the order was not a travel ban, Trump and his compatriots have used just that term; despite asking their offices to stop its use of “Muslim Majority nation,” the gag on the term was also followed by the Wall Street Journal, the official reason for the selection of the nations in question were that they were on former President Barack Obama’s list of places of most concern and therefore their proscription had nothing to do with the religion of its inhabitants.68


64 ibid
65 ibid
66 ibid
67 Shear D. Michael. Cooper Helene.
Trump while denying that the policy was a Muslim ban of the sort he wished to see on the campaign trail,\textsuperscript{69} he did state that he was disappointed at the numbers of Christian refugees being accepted into the United States; the President stated “if you were a Muslim you could come in, but if you were a Christian, it was almost impossible...I thought it was very, very unfair. So we are going to help them.”\textsuperscript{70} This statement was made despite the fact that almost as many Christian refugees were accepted in the previous year (2016 at the time of writing) as Muslims according to a poll conducted by Pew Research.\textsuperscript{71}

The Trump government also believes that their policy lines up with American values, a value set radically different to those who were protesting the original ban outside of airports. The aides that originally wrote the policy saw it as the beginning of a set of policies that would be more restrictive of the numbers of immigrants to the United States.\textsuperscript{72} On the campaign trail Trump suggested that ideological checks and restrictions should be imposed on people who wish to immigrate to the United States.\textsuperscript{73} The proposed measures that would constitute the policy of extreme vetting does not excuse those who assisted US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, even though those who assisted in ISAF operations in even the most mundane of fashions did so at often extreme degrees of personal risk.\textsuperscript{74} The three men who were in charge of Trump’s immigration policy at the time Stephen Bannon, Stephen Miller and

\textsuperscript{69} Gambino, Lauren, Sabrina Siddiqui, Paul Owen, and Edward Helmore
\textsuperscript{70} “Shear D. Michael. Cooper Helene
\textsuperscript{71} ibid
\textsuperscript{72} ibid
\textsuperscript{73} Bennett, Brian, and Bierman, Noah
\textsuperscript{74} ibid
National Security Advisor Michael T. Flynn, believe large scale Muslim immigration to be incompatible with the American experience. The LA Times states that “The trio, who make up part of Trump’s inner circle, have a dark view of refugee and immigration flows from majority-Muslim countries, believing that if large numbers of Muslims are allowed to enter the U.S., parts of American cities will begin to replicate disaffected and disenfranchised immigrant neighborhoods in France, Germany and Belgium that have been home to perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Europe in recent years.”

The imagined framing of the discourse surrounding the travel ban as a battle between internationalism and nationalism is highly inaccurate. What we see in examining the ways in which pro-travel ban factions and anti-travel ban factions communicate is actually a fight between two rival conceptions of nationalism. On the one hand we have a nationalism, which is defined as being open to American values, the school of nationalism usually referred to as Americanism. This school of nationalist thought utilized by the opponents of the travel ban can be defined by Seymour Lipset. He identifies five key elements of Americanism: liberty, egalitarianism, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire. He avers, “Being an American, however, is an ideological commitment. It is not a matter of birth. Those who reject American values are un-American’ (Lipset 1997, p. 31).” The opposite view, that held by the proponents of the travel ban could be defined by the label

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75 ibid
“radical anti-Americanism.” According to Adam Gopnik in his piece for the *New Yorker* magazine Trump’s anti-Americanism can be traced back to a line of thought in opposition to the traditional notions of Americanism, this thought is elucidated thusly as “an alternative view, one long available and articulated, that America is not an idea but an ethnicity, that of the white Christian men who have dominated it, granting a grudging or probationary acceptance to women, or blacks, or immigrants. This was the view of Huck Finn’s pap, as he drank himself to death; of General Custer, as he approached Little Big Horn; of Major General Pickett, as he led the charge at Gettysburg. Until now, it has been the vision of those whom Trump would call the losers.”

It is not Brexit, it is not “how do we acquire what we believe is best for our people.” The discussion over the Trump travel ban and its sister projects, the boarder wall etc, circulated around a more fundamental and prior question, this: “who is an American and what does the denominator American even mean exactly.” The debate over the travel ban cannot be settled by a broad agreement on achieving a certain outcome. Metaphorically speaking no common ground can be found because both sides disagree on a fundamental level about the ontological nature of the ground upon which they stand. Excepting the administrative distinctions between the Brexit decision and the travel ban, i.e one was a democratic vote while the other was an act by proclamation, which may have caused the travel bans far...

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78 ibid
more bitter reaction; we find a situation that’s irresolvable. Ideological differences have separated both sides so utterly that there is little hope of effective resolution, and even little language in which to pitch such a resolution. The situation seems all but irresolvable, and in most conceptual systems it would be abandoned as an irreconcilable difference in fundamental principles and it is. That however, is not the whole story, this project posits that there’s a way around such things. That way lies in the unexamined actions which taken in aggregate structure and control our lives.

Chapter 2

Throughout the previous chapter we discussed the problems surrounding Brexit and contemporary American travel restrictions through the analytical lens of ideology. The definition of ideology, its sources and its relationship to politics are the subject of this chapter. I will elucidate these aspects of ideology in relation to cases in the first chapter returning explicitly to the questions regarding the relationship between policy conflicts and debate surrounding first principles or priorities. The first type of debate is not “merely” a question of practice or means; rather policy conflicts are still framed by ideology, though its presence is made manifest in a characteristically shadowy form; this is to say that it lies latent informing the material solutions to the problems that arise in the course of practical governance. The second form of debate, debate centered on first principles lies perfectly in the realm of ideology- policy commitments are derivative of incontestable ideological axioms.
So long as people disagree on first principles, if they believe those first principles to be universal to all humanity (or worse through the lens of conflict resolution—a logical necessity) then political discussion cannot proceed especially in matters of fundamental importance to the actors. Most unresolvable political conflict does not arise from policy disagreements, which are often framed as lack of agreement on how to achieve a mutually desired aim—but rather from these debates on fundamental axioms of political or ontological grounding.

For reasons that I will elucidate there should be extreme skepticism of the idea that any universal first principles can be discovered through Reason. I will assert instead that both the content of reasonableness and our deference to it as the source of first principles are themselves historically grounded and, ironically, ideological claims. Even if such principles were discovered they would have to be innate, as obvious to the sense as basic emotions of happiness, sadness, love, hate or fear something innate to the human experience. This is because all would have to be persuaded to accept them (in fact their very humanity depends on it)—if this is the metric of success for ideologies of universal rights or universal methods of reasoning then we must consider them to be a noble failure. The largest and most damning reason for this failure is fundamentally anthropological (in the descriptive sense of physical and cultural anthropology not in the philosophical sense of an investigation into the ontology of humanity). The twentieth century was distinguished by the universalist aspirations of its politics—a tendency a tendency to deify their cultural norms and raise them to the status of universals; they do this through justifying them through processes of reason. Reading Kant you can't escape
the idea that his theory of morality is basically a Cartesian project of stripping all
one claims to know and then reconstructing it in its entirety on the basis of a radical
new epistemology. In order to truly resolve (or more accurately move beyond
irresolvable) ideological disputes we must investigate how ideologies form, how
exactly people come to such radically different conclusions about life and political
association and how those assumptions interface with daily life.

With this goal in mind we must start from the very beginning: "ideological
foundations" and the foundations of ideology. In common usage “ideology” tends to
refer to worldviews holistic enough to suggest a coherence of independently
assented to parts. As it is necessary to have building material before one can possess
a building it is necessary to examine the compartment parts of an ideology and how
they are exactly acquired. In my view an ideology is an aggregation of material
practices in everyday life that generate coherence rather than a prior ideal to which
material practices conform. In elaborating this we shall utilize a modified theory
based on the writings of philosopher Max Stirner. Stirner, a contemporary of Marx
and Engels was first a Young Hegelian, and then an anti-Hegelian; he is largely
considered to be one of the founders of anarchism in general and egoist anarchism
in particular. Stirner believed that the first faculty of a human to develop was that of
mind; mind he argues arises out of the conflict of the subject (in this period a mere
child without reasonable faculties) to assert their own existence in a confusing
world. The end of this process of self-realization is the first ideological leap the

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79 Stirner, Max, Byington T. Steven, and Martin J. James. *The Ego and His Own The
deification of the world through the assertion that mind is beyond that of the material world\textsuperscript{80}. This is because the constant struggle for self-assertion takes place in the context of the surrounding world also asserting its independence\textsuperscript{81}. The objects and people in the world that the child interacts with demand precedence in action, and true to his Hegelian roots Stirner ends by asserting that one must dominate and the other serve (in essence restating a version of Hegel’s Master-Slave dialectic). The winner, normally the parent-or the educational elite\textsuperscript{82} asserts the rights of the victor i.e the ability to direct and the loser the duties of the subject i.e filial obedience\textsuperscript{83}. The development of mind and the realization of the supremacy of awareness of one’s circumstances in the material world come through what Stirner terms the process of “childhood liberation.” The process of childhood liberation takes the form of getting to the bottom of the world, taking things apart, seeing how things work, observing patterns-looking for the weaknesses in one’s parents. Eventually the child outgrows the fear of punishment upon the realization that it is not force enough to quell their insatiable thirst for the process of discovery and upon outgrowing the rod of discipline they realize that their power to resist stands above the external forces of punishment. Stirner posits that people who have become conscious of mind do not grapple as yet with reason. Reason according to Stirner comes later, this is in contrast to the majority Enlightenment claim that the ability to reason a-priori is inherent and present at birth.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid p.10
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid p.9
\textsuperscript{82} Here used to refer to the educational elite i.e those tasked with the transmission of knowledge to children, mostly teachers. Not the social elite of Marxist theory per se
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid p.9
The child imbued with consciousness of mind is swayed not by cold conviction or good reasons and still (though they possess refuge from punishment’s absolute dominion) find coercion and punishment hard to resist\textsuperscript{84}. In this period of time before that of reason but after that of comprehension, they are inundated with baseline or first principles. In practical terms this might take the form of the Ten Commandments, the Roman twelve tables, the three-character classic and basic fundamental principles of their respective societies. This basic acculturation may not take the form of recognized codified basic values but may take the form of things that tend to be regarded as merely normal practice like the values of sharing and inclusion typically seen in children’s television. The values inculcated in this period before the age of reason form the seeds that blossom into ideology—either supportive of those principles or in opposition to them since these are the principles that are examined and either declared for or against upon the age of reason. The objects received before reason tend to be the objects examined through reason once that faculty is properly developed; as Stirner notes later “we may have thought God made the world that we can think of the depths of the Godhead itself.”\textsuperscript{85}

The subject in their development from earliest childhood to independent adult transitions epistemologically from having a reflexive understanding, i.e believing that what is said by authorities is true simply because it has been said, to developing an ideology that sustains an account of how things work independently that is independent of the authoritative claims by others. On some level this is necessary, for example teaching children the proper way to interact in the fashion

\textsuperscript{84} ibid p.10
\textsuperscript{85} ibid p.11
considered polite by their society; or for teaching basic literacy—however because
“’cause I said so,” is not the most convincing of explanations. People inevitably come
to question not just the ‘hows’ of society but also the justifications behind it; it’s
natural that some non-descriptive explanation will be developed. These prescriptive
or non-descriptive elements are not necessarily accepted immediately, more often
they are examined and compared with other similarly constructed packages of
beliefs and once they have compared to their satisfaction they take one or two
(syncretism at a conscious or unconscious level is common whether that be
religiously speaking or political). Once selected these are often taken as objective
truth applicable to all humanity. Stirner seems to believe, that most people grow out
of such feeling, that everything one analyzes in the mind must conform to one
overarching theory or metanarrative, which he describes as everything that he (the
subject) proposes he is met by an objection of the mind, of reason, of his own
conscious

that is unreasonable, unchristian, unpatriotic,” and the like cries conscious to
us, and frightens us away from it.....not Poseidon’s wrath, not God or the
father’s rod of punishment that we fear but conscious.”86 And this is key
Stirner’s intellectual does not “try to get hold of things (for instance, to get
into his head the data of history), but of the thoughts that lie hidden in things,
and so, therefore the spirit of history.87

It is this insistence of the precedence of a-priori reasoning, without empirical input
that will end up making ideology such a dangerous construct

86 ibid p.11
87 ibid p.11
Jack Davies

Stirner later goes on to state that the human tends to develop past this point, eventually learning, or rather rediscovering the love they had for physicality and the corporal form that they jettisoned in their younger purely intellectual stage and then developing from this a mature egoist conception of the world. Stirner's conception of that realization is worth properly quoting:

As I find myself back of things and that as mind, so I must later find myself, in the back of thoughts-to wit, as their creator and owner. In the time of spirits thoughts grew til they overtopped my head, whose offspring they yet were; they hovered about me and convulsed me like fever-phantasies-an awful power. The thoughts had become corporeal on their own account, were ghosts, such as God, Emperor, Pope, Fatherland, etc. If I destroy their corporeity, then I take them back into mine and say 'I alone am corporeal.” And (sic) now I take the world as what it is to me, as mine, as my property: I refer all to myself.

On Stirner's account the universalization of ideology is a stage of immaturity. Since in a very Nietzschean sense actors like Stirner describes are the innovators, the ideologues and the prophets of the world it is essential to look at why one would want to create new ideologies; which they cannot help but do. Once one has become somewhat aware of an ideologies lack of objectivity it becomes incumbent on the follower to at least justify it to different groups (if such a position of subjectivity is untenable for them), which results in the creation of some sort of innovation. The

88 ibid p.13
89 ibid p.14
most common innovations are self-directed and created with full knowledge of their subjectivity on the part of the creator. Such awareness is what makes these people political actors.

Once the subject has through comparison of various competing totalizing systems of ideology or through other means become able to transcend the idea of absolute objective truth, they become a political actor. It is important to describe what is meant by that term, it is first easier to describe what a political actor in this sense is NOT rather than in the sense of what they are. Participating in the political process of a society (whatever form that may take) does not by itself make one a political actor in this sense. The political actor in this system is the creator of an ideological program in support of a specific program who is aware of the conditional truth, or to borrow a term of art from Buddhist philosophy ‘the empty nature’ of the ideology in question.\textsuperscript{90} This is in contrast to the previously discussed reasonable actor, who has their own logically or conditionally sound reasons for embracing ideology x or y, but who has not considered the nature of ideology itself because of this they believe that their ideology is universal (i.e the Truth\textsuperscript{91}). The political actor is not to be demonized, the influence of a sense of authenticity within the past centuries of philosophy might lead some readers to consider my political actor to be a manipulative, villainous or sophistic character. The political actor is neutral, their

\textsuperscript{90} This means they have no illusions as to their ideology being anything more than a method of motivation, a means to convince people to embrace a policy and carry it through to the end. The political actor does not think it is objective nor does the political actor believe they have ‘discovered’ something new.

\textsuperscript{91} Truth with a capital t refers to truth that is considered to be universally, gnostically or metaphysically true and applicable to the entire universe and all human actors within it. Truth with a smaller t is something that is conditionally true from a set of premises but does not claim intellectual monopoly.
behavior can only be judged on the merits of the policy propositions that they wish to implement. In producing and propagating any theory of philosophy-political or otherwise, it is impossible not to implicitly become a political actor in this sense. This is simply because the writer of philosophy must, in order to be skilled enough to produce an argument worthy of merit or consideration, read appraise and grapple with several arguments in order to reach their conclusion. Anyone who holds the implicit idea that a competing view to the one that they hold or expound, can have merit or be reasonably held has the characteristic critical to a political actor properly understood.

The political actor creates their doctrine as a means of motivating collaborative action in the face of a knowledge problem; it is easier to expound a set of principles (extrapolated over the course of the subject’s development, and which the mature subject understands himself to have actively participated in producing) than to explain the minute details of a particular project. In addition to those benefits political ideologies can expand and perpetuate meaning thus assuring the creator of the longevity of their program. The political actor creates for themselves the means to secure obedience and action on the part of their society. The problem arises once the actor is no longer capable of crafting or determining the content of their ideology. Once the ideology itself finds life problems occur, the utilitarian value of the ideology (its ability to solve the problem it was designed to deal with) is ignored and it enters the stage of being shaped and adhered to by its true believers—thus who believe it possesses universal metaphysical truth.
The truth of the subjectivity of the ideology and its connection to the original circumstances of its conception are obscured or are simply declared to be inconsequential. Part of the problem that leads to this line of thinking is the idea that simply because something is logically true that it by necessarily maps reality. Take $X=X$ for example, it is considered to be the most banal tautology in existence, it is commonly thought that it is impossible to argue against and this would be indeed true if one were to limit the depth of their analysis to pure rule. Let’s however imagine that the $X$ in question is a unicorn, a unicorn is a unicorn is by all measurable accounts a logically sound statement; however the logical soundness of the statement does not render useless the observation that as far as we are aware there is no such animal. The assertion that such an animal exists within logical frameworks does not necessarily make manifest such a creature within the realms of reality. If philosophy $X$ makes a convincing argument, that for example, utility is the guiding force behind human moral interaction; it does not follow that we ought to believe the conclusion simply because the argument logically follows. The Buddhist philosopher and Soto Zen teacher D.T Suzuki wrote on this tendency within Western Philosophy in general in his introduction on Shin Buddhism –it is worth quoting in full:

> In our intellectual endeavors, our ideas can be despotic too. We cannot always be in control of ideas. We invent or construct ideas and concepts to make life more convenient. Then these very ideas, which we intended to be so convenient, become unmanageable and control the inventors themselves. Scholars invent ideas and then forget that
they invented them in order to deal with certain realities. For instance, each of the branches of science, whether it is called biology, psychology, or astronomy, has its own premises, its own hypotheses. Each branch organizes the fields it has chosen—stars, animals, fish, and so on—and deals with those realities according to the special concepts its scientists have invented to enable them to handle the subjects of their research. Whatever situation comes along in the pursuit of their research or exercise of their ideas that does not happen to be amenable to those ideas, they drop. Instead of dropping the ideas and trying to create new ones in order to overcome the unexpected difficulties that arise, they stick to the old ideas they invented and try to make the new realities fit the old concepts. Or else they simply exclude those things, which cannot easily be worked into the network of ideas they have invented.92

On Suzuki’s account, the loss of perspective on the function, method of creation and intention behind creating an idea is precisely the moment where idea becomes something of a demon. Rather than examining reality and then trying to explain various patterns, material or intellectual the holder of the ideology begins on the path of the fatal inversion. That is to say that the ideologue now examines

reality through the lens of the ideology and doesn’t adjust the constraints of the theory to the changing states of the world but instead engages in apologetics in order to extend for eternity what was only applicable for a moment. Ideologies exist as motivational and analytical tools, they’re not true in themselves (the absolute truth of them is inherently unknowable—there is a counterexample to every abstract idea under the sun); when one takes them to be true by themselves especially in relation to the ideologues vision of human subjects the consequences can be deadly.

This can be for several reasons; the first reason in the minds of many would be simple misinterpretation as many have argued is the case with neoconservative misinterpretations of Kant. The second and much more insidious consequence of 20th century ideologies is essentialization, taking the analytical tool as something more than it is; taking a person’s analytical role in an abstract theory and projecting it (often with additional moralizing) on living breathing humans full of subjective experience and desires. The greatest example of this within the 20th century were probably the policies of Marxist-Leninist régimes, the benevolent landlord and the cruel slave driver; the honest businessman and the archdemons of Blake’s dark satanic mills are lumped into the analytic category of Bourgeois. The Bourgeois of the moralists is substantially different from the Bourgeois of Marx: in Marx’s original writings these were simply the rulers of an exploitative economic model, not by design and not deliberately but through the mechanics of the capitalist system which they now dominate. Marx’s Bourgeois could be ‘good’ people or ‘bad’ people but they were still recognized as sharing some humanity. The need for

93 Marx wasn’t what we’d call an orthodox humanist but he didn’t ask for Soviet
socialism was not expressed through a moral crusade but through natural courses of technological development, with the previous role of the Bourgeois acknowledged.

As Marx himself wrote in *the Communist Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part. The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors”, and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous “cash payment”. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom — Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.94

Moralists took the economic arguments of Marx were boiled down to naked, almost fundamentalist, crusading. The previous roles played by others in history were ignored through essentializing projects. The utilitarian arguments for different economic systems were swept aside in favor of the concept of ‘class enemies’, liquidation and the reduction of the Russian second estate into “former-people.”

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This line of thinking could possibly be interpreted as a call for greater clarity in ideological writings, and it is indeed something to be considered, one must when writing political philosophy be mindful of the worst possible reading of one’s writing and then have that possibility liquidated through further argument. However this is not the case. The larger point is that language is quite a poor medium of transmission of information. Language is of course perfectly sufficient for describing logical processes, the theoretical content within ideas and policy recommendations. However language is fundamentally flawed in its ability to convey essence, intent, context or relevance. It is as the old Zen koan attests ‘like pointing to the moon’, the very genre of literary criticism exists, with all of its intricacy because language is inadequate to contain and single out the exact meaning of a work from a range of possible interpretations. Language cannot do the work that ideology has failed to accomplish – it cannot secure a singular meaning; it cannot stabilize a shared referent. It cannot directly encode the thoughts of an author in such way that the author’s gnosis (fully conceptual understanding of the matter in question) is flawlessly translated into the mind of the reader. The author is always, because of the limitations in language as a medium, somewhat alienated from their work; even the most technically written work can be interpreted in a number of ways. The work can be amended through further epistles but the alternative interpretations can never truly be eliminated. The classical Chinese Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi had this to say on the subject:

Books are nothing more than words, and words have value but only in terms of their meaning. Meaning is constantly seeking to express what cannot be
said in words and thus passed on. This generation values words and puts them in books, yet what it is perhaps mistaken, because what it values is not really all that valuable. So we look at things and see things, but it is only an outward form and colour, and what can be heard is just the name and sound. How sad that this generation imagines that the form, colour, name and sound are enough to capture the essence of something! The form, colour, name and sound are in no way sufficient to capture or convey the truth, which is why it is said that the knowledgeable do not speak and those who speak are not knowledgeable. But how can this generation understand this.95

My goal in this section was to demonstrate the insufficiency of political ideology; in it’s modern 19th and 20th century sense, to properly and peacefully order society. The philosophical anthropology of those ideologies tends towards essentialism privileging one aspect of human experience over some other declaring statements such as “humans are predominantly rational,” or are “productive beings,” or that they are always “radically subjective and inclined towards their national communities.” All of these essentializations serve to block out or bracket the aspects of human experience that the progenitor of the ideology in question deemed either not useful, not primary or not worth politically considering. This bracketing of aspects of human life, centering some, marginalizing other practices, too often serves as the basis for creation of in-groups and out-groups in supposedly universal accounts of political organization before they are even implemented. This tendency

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to ostracize without intent is magnified by the trend among moral philosophers to translate moral precepts from their cultural/religious background into new epistemological frameworks and then claim that those precepts are universal, self-evident and applicable to all human. The old civilized vs barbarians dichotomy was replaced with, depending on the school of thought the modernist ideologue embraced, “the democratic or ‘free’ world vs the unfree or despotic world, the socialist world vs reaction or the national community and its enemies/contingent allies.

The moralization of the merits of one political constitution over the other placed in a universal framework, where alternative forms of government to the ideologue’s are inherently, by virtue of constitution alone deemed to be illegitimate. Where such universal frameworks ground for intervention, overthrow or even diplomatic pressure they undermine possibilities of a truly pragmatic and compassionate world order- one where the needs of actors are considered in context with cultural and religious differences respected within their own context. The ideological revolutions of the 19\textsuperscript{th} and 20\textsuperscript{th} centuries ended up turning just-war theory upon it’s head; no longer was it simply acceptable to repel invaders it was now acceptable to invade, overthrow and pressure nations on the basis of their organization and beliefs alone. One may argue that in earlier ages religion served as a similar justification, but the universal acquiesce to the liberal theory of organization has provided a much more dangerous rational than the radical subjectivity of the old religions. Claims of revelation, prophecy and sanctity could be challenged on the basis of veracity with most of the systems used claiming direct
events and experiences of the divine as the justification of its dictates. The old religions did not usually declare that someone was not human, or ‘fully-human’ through the rejection of their precepts. By contrast the ideologies of the 20th century used claims about the nature of humanity itself; it became necessary to justify or argue a vision of philosophical anthropology in contrast to the ideological force one was trying to defend against. Its more extreme forms used ideas of delusion to justify a paternalistic absorption and administration of those who did not assent. If one denied Marxism as a worker than one was experiencing false consciousness; as a member of the bourgeoisie it was because you wanted to hold onto your power.

The radical universalism of those forms of epistemology and anthropology combined with teleological ends allowed the 20th century systems to create total systems. Within these total systems all information and phenomena analyzed could be incorporated under the system-leaving room for no counter arguments, which could simply be brushed aside by valuing it and incorporating its place in the world using the broader axioms of the system. Some like Kantian liberalism even questioned the moral personhood (though not moral worth) of someone who disagreed with it. Kant considered those not able to legislate on the basis of his moral laws to take the status of children or animals (to be taken care of but not capable of making their own decisions).

Modernist ideology also fails to live up to its greatest touted asset; it does not work well as a unifying set of beliefs not contingent onto cultural factors. If we leave aside for a minute the tendency for those systems to end up incorporating very culturally specific ideas about governmental legitimacy or moral behavior we can
look at language itself. The ideologue in the 20th century believed that their creeds could, and should, be adopted by anybody who could rationally assent to it. While true that this was the case for a version of that organizing theory it could never be the direct beliefs of the ideologue. Due to the failure of the written word to accurately convey thought, schism is inevitable and even if a society comes to accept the axioms of an ideology as axiomatic the kind of unity imagined by the modernists is functionally impossible. For example, view the United States’ Republican and Democratic parties who have the same liberalism forming the base assumptions of their cosmology but with vast disagreements on the nature of policy. Noting these inadequacies we turn to analyze the three most influential ideologies of the 20th century Liberalism, Fascism and Socialism.

Exorcising the Demons, Chapter 3,

In the last chapter I outlined general characteristics of 20th century ideology as universalizing systems of judgment. In this chapter I illustrate the particular workings of these systems of judgment in an examination of the three main ideologies of the 19th into 21st century, Liberalism, Socialism and Fascism. These political philosophies can be distinguished from their antecedents and forebears on the basis of their all-inclusive nature they are totalizing ideologies. Each one has an ontology, an epistemology, a view of history, an anthropology and an ideal polity. Each of these ideologies seeks to situate humans in a political order and explain every aspect of how it should inform their lives and experiences. Though each will claim at some point or another that they possess room for a private life within them-
on my reading of them this is not the case. Private actions by citizens are permissible only when they pass certain checks on what is acceptable human behavior within the confines of the ideology's ontology. I read these ideological traditions through representative texts considered authoritative or of central importance to each ideological tradition. In order to examine liberalism we’ll use the work of John Rawls with recent examples of practical political discourse that stretches the limits of what Liberalism seems to claim. For Socialism we will use the work of Karl Marx and early Prussian socialist Ferdinand Lassalle. Finally Fascism will be examined through the work of Giovanni Gentile with support from Mussolini and the Italian Futurists (an artistic movement that inspired many ideas within Italian fascism).

Before we begin such an investigation we should define terms. This discussion will mostly be a matter of ontology. Ontology is defined as the study of being, i.e the study of unconditioned being, formulated perhaps in the question ‘before education, or differentiation of any kind what am I—what does it mean to exist?’ According to the classical definition posited by the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the study of ontology is the study of ‘what there is.’96 This is not considered to simply what can one see but also what one is, classically this is a analysis of formal quality, i.e what it means to be, for example, human in the essential formal sense. What is the basis of thought? What is our goal in life? Is there

in a goal in life? What distinguishes us from other things? Answers range from the basic, for example the Platonic ‘featherless bipedal animal....with broad nails,”-- that particular addendum added after Diogenes declared a plucked chicken human. Modern ideology always tends to start from an ontological assumption, the famous liberal formulation of course being “all men are born free and equal endowed with certain inalienable rights by their creator,” Marxists tend to believe that humans are essentially productive beings and Fascists believe that ontologically people are shaped by their nation state and dominant culture.

Ultimately however there is reason to doubt a tradition in philosophy where the sentiments of an author, moral or otherwise are considered to be a solid foundation for further investigation, as ontology is merely grounded in in intuition rather than historically or empirically verifiable claims. I believe that this approach though well intentioned often causes an author simply to confirm their previously held views with a more rigorous system of justification, the Cartesian trap. Instead of allowing one to come to a more considered opinion of political order as-such Rather than attempting to find a truth, or reasonable conception of political order through observation of the external world they instead attempt to seek the answer within themselves in line with Kant’s ‘Copernican Revolution’ in epistemology. Friedrich Nietzsche in Beyond Good and Evil expresses with much vitriol and against a most undeserving target (Spinoza, who generally agreed with the criticism Nietzsche raises), the major problem with this approach.

“[Philosophers] all pose as if their real opinions had been discovered and attained through the self-evolving of a cold, pure, divinely indifferent
dialectic...whereas, in fact, a prejudiced proposition, idea or ‘suggestion’, which is
generally their heart’s desire abstracted and refined, is defended by them with
arguments sought after the event...”

If we acknowledge that everything that exists on a physical plane and
is manifest within the cosmos is determined by chains of causation that we can
fathom from the observations of natural science, then the is-ought gap folds into
meaninglessness. The state of the cosmos at any given time (at least) on the macro
scale cannot be other than what it is. If mental cognition is based in the transfer of
information from various parts of the human brain via electrical signals then we can
say that there is no freedom of thought in the sense that is assumed in theories of
Kantian autonomy which now seem so normative in political theory. Understanding
causation in this way gives historical intellectual development and basic cultural
assumptions normative weight. As starting points as they can be rejected upon
further examination but in contrast to the rejected values, the superseding values
are consciously held as a rejection of a historically contingent normative system.

Zizek in his book *The Sublime Object of Ideology* makes the distinction
between two different types of innovation in philosophy. The first is called
‘Ptolemization’ where attempts are made to reevaluate a thesis in terms of its basic
framework. This paradigm acquired its name due to medieval attempts to

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Citing Friedrich Nietzsche in ‘Beyond Good and Evil’ p.118

p.vii
reinterpret Ptolemaic astronomy in light of recent scientific discoveries hoping to fit the new data into the old paradigm. The practice in itself is not necessarily a negative; in fact it seems to mirror our natural methods of cognition-humans are producers of patterns. Objects presented as such and not in relation to established information are incredibly hard to properly analyze and contextualize in a meaningful fashion. Problems arise however when the theory begins to drive cognition rather than being a result or rationalization of sincere analysis-as mentioned by D.T Suzuki in the previous chapter. The second type of theory that Zizek proposes is the Copernican theory, this is when contemporary modes of comprehension are not just complicated by the addition of new data or tempered with caveats; instead the very conceptual frameworks that contain the information being examined undergo change such that a new self-sufficient system is born.99

Zizek applies this framework to psychoanalysis but the framework he proposes offers a solid analytical approach to the measurement of innovation in a theoretical paradigm and by extension an approach to understanding changes in our politico-conceptual frameworks. How much, if any changes have we made to our fundamental assumptions over the last few centuries? Have we merely integrated new data and added new minutia; since the early 20th century have we really examined the frameworks under which we operate? It’s these questions, the question of whether universal political ideology can really survive the intersection and intermingling of diverse normativities and theories of political authority in any coherent way.

99 ibid
Liberalism is defined in its broadest sense as a political ideology that argues for the primacy of an individual and their liberties. Politically the liberal individual is defined as possessing formal rights within a political community that is composed of a compact between formallyautonomous individual subjects. The formal rights the liberal individual possesses are not held as granted by historical process, the law or social norms but through some quality of human nature or from external source. Liberalism's political paradigm then rests upon the ontological assumption that people are fundamentally autonomous of external forces and that the individual is rational (what is considered the proper object of that reason is debated among liberals). For an illustrative critique of liberal universalism we shall analyze John Rawls’ theory as argued in his magnum opus 'Justice as Fairness'. Entire books have been written on the subject of Rawlsian theory and this summery is in no way comprehensive enough to do it adequate justice as a system in its own right. I focus here on the ontological assumptions and fundamental axioms used, axioms that wittingly or unwittingly may be deployed in defense of authoritarian actions; needlessly to say the argument should be taken in good faith and not as an exposition of what Rawls actually believed or, as some do, a conspiratorial ‘this is what he meant to say.’

Rawls begins by stating that all people inherently have some kind of sense of justice, and naturally as a consequence this justice is considered to be a good. The reason for his writing was to reject the theory of utilitarianism that he believed had

100 See Ch.5, autonomy in the liberal sense is considered to be the ability to set ends without the influence of others and with complete freedom of thought, this I hold to be a physical impossibility
long in one form or another dominated what he calls ‘the Anglo-Saxon’ political tradition\textsuperscript{101}. The need to de-throne utilitarianism is necessitated by that theory’s perceived lack of ability to protect democratic rights and duties in a modern constitutional society. These rights, Rawls states, are those which are held to be “taken for granted and the rights secured by justice are not subject to political bargaining or to the calculus of social interests.”\textsuperscript{102} In the very next line, Rawls calls these suppositions ‘common sense’.\textsuperscript{103}

Broadly speaking Rawls believes that a just system of social organization and economic distribution can be determined by processes of rational thought\textsuperscript{104}, which means we can place him firmly in the Kantian tradition, though without embracing all of Kant’s theories of say, personal morality. Rawls believes that the ideal system of justice is best created under a veil of ignorance where no one knows their particular situation in the society that will flow from deliberation and their knowledge is restricted to general principles.\textsuperscript{105}

For all of Rawls’ complicated argument from axiom to create a universal system of justice it still relies on axioms that seem somewhat unexamined. Why is justice considered to be the highest good? Why value autonomy-is autonomy even possible in the sense that he seems to believe? Why must we accept one constitutional order as better than others because that order fulfills those principles, which we are

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\textsuperscript{102} ibid p.25
\textsuperscript{103} ibid
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid p.221
\textsuperscript{105} Rawls, John ‘A Theory of Justice’ p118-119
\end{flushleft}
supposed to take as self-evident? From a western\textsuperscript{106} perspective the primacy of Justice seems to be somewhat self-evident, Stoics, Platonists and Abrahamic clergymen all extol the love of justice as one of the highest goods. However is justice really a universal good (when defined as making sure everyone gets what they ‘deserve’), philosopher and Buddhist monk Walpola Rahula writes in his ‘What the Buddha Taught;’ “The idea of moral justice or reward and punishment, arises out of the conception of a supreme being, a God, who sits in judgment, who is a law giver and decides what is right and wrong. The term justice is ambiguous and dangerous, and in its name more harm than good has been done to humanity.”\textsuperscript{107} Taking into account the grim toll of revolution, political experiment, wars of honor, the essentialization and then warehousing of enchained people in cages forever defined by singular moments and our widespread but seemingly unexamined idea that the life and welfare of the unjust person is inherently less than the just-I cannot help but agree. To put the blame of such things on theistic beliefs as Rahula seems to want to do is dubious, the Greeks had much of the same opinion and use for justice as later Abrahamic societies-while some forms of theism such as the Pantheism of Spinoza and New England Unitarianism take an ambiguous approach to the subject, theism doesn’t seem to be the issue; instead I’d place the ‘blame’ if such a thing was productive on the tradition from the Greeks stated that Justice was the highest aim

\textsuperscript{106} It would be wrong to assume that West here means Europe and North America, instead I use it to refer to any civilization built on the twin foundations of Christianity and Classical philosophy. This definition then includes the vast majority of the Islamic World as well as Eastern Europe and Russia.

of a human being from Plato onwards. Besides the problem would not be that a God who declared and set down the laws rewarded and punished people as it saw fit; the problem would be humans in their naturally small and ignorant state taking up the same prerogatives. The God would know who the person is, what their intentions were, their disposition towards the memory of the event and would (in most systems) punish with an aim to reform; in short divine justice mirrors restorative justice. Divine justice is not the blind goddess who mercilessly applies the sword without consideration of circumstance, usefulness or the wishes of those involved—all in the service of statute and principle. Rawls’ original position renders the former impossible and encourages the latter. This is because of Rawls’ original position whereby participants are to reason as to their ideal system, defined as the system that “that best advances their interests in establishing conditions that enable them to effectively pursue their final ends and fundamental interests108 the injustice of which is they knew nothing but general principles and facts is supposed to structure the justice system among other things. Any justice system created under such a system does not seem flexible enough to accommodate and assign correction based on circumstance; rather the people in the original position would seeking equality wish that the law was applied evenly and rigidly without considering individual situations (fearing arbitrariness) under such guidelines it seems impossible for restorative justice models to be acceptable in the original position.-punishment or

reparation would have to be applies evenly contrary to this wish of the people involved in a dispute in order to safeguard the principle. The inhumanity of such a justice system is not a result of the content of the statutes but a result of the framework itself; which because actors inside the original position are forced to reason without knowledge of circumstances they’d be forced to select time and time again.

Rawls calls the idea that rights secured by justice (which via the mechanics of the Original Position would be universal) are politically nonnegotiable to be common sense. Common sense implies that these principles can be produced simply through conventional wisdom or observation-in other words unreflective thought shared by all, or at least most people. However it seems that the idea of political rights that are non-negotiable is fairly recent with clear historical precedents and places of origin. As the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy notes that the language of rights in this context has its origin in Locke or earlier\(^9\), if something has a definable origin it is not eternal, but contingent therefore logically the institution of rights cannot be inviolable via common sense-merely through cultural assumptions as to the nature of political power and sovereignty. Due then to the political non-negotiability of the rights guaranteed in Rawls’ system and a moral requirement to oppose unjust systems, it doesn’t take too long until one can justify military intervention as a positive good in order to bring freedom and democracy as decided through liberal theory forcibly to other sovereign nations without those nations

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having grounds to defend themselves against liberal attack-as liberalism requires universality in order to function. Although theories have been constructed to restrain such aggression and many of those theories have come from the liberal tradition (against the Neo-Conservatism, itself despite the name being a form of liberalism), the Jacobin impulse is hard to argue against from the axioms established as normative since the French Revolution.

Marx takes an opposite approach to that of Rawls’ as far as the projects of the two philosophers can be realistically compared; famously opening the Communist Manifesto with the declaration that “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”\textsuperscript{110} Marx, speaking broadly means that the history of the world is a story of dialectical struggle between two opposing class categories within the framework of a hegemonic economic system. To Marx, economic and social change were not, as in Liberalism a result of moral or philosophical change, but merely a result of economic and physical processes-ideology was and is created by background economic conditions in order to justify the present state of affairs, “Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master (3) and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.”\textsuperscript{111}

Marx believed that philosophy does not shape reality, instead reality taken as all extent material forces operating in a system (as expressed in the current

\textsuperscript{110} Marx, Karl
\textsuperscript{111} ibid
economic system of the writer) influences philosophy—therefore the ideas being produced and used at a time are profoundly shaped by the economic and material conditions the writer is writing against creating the background assumptions the author is either promoting or criticizing. Marx did not believe that the truth or desirability of a proposed state of affairs or an idea of social organization could be determined from first principles—as Rawls does. Instead Marxist epistemology can be summed up like so,

"Examine any alleged state of affairs as related to and distinguished from a total environment, and you will know whether or not the sentence alleging that state of affairs is true." \(^{112}\)

According to the views of Marxist epistemology, existence itself does not require perception; the world has existed without being known as it has done before the advent of humanity. \(^{113}\) This view taken in relation to the whole system especially in relation to the doctrine that a state of affairs must be related to a total environment to be true; seems to imply that the truths of matters exist outside of our ability to know them. In fact our perceptions serve to cut us off from reality, as it is, one does not have access to unfiltered unmediated reality it sits behind the dark glasses of our senses and consciousness always being filtered by our received notions and presumptions. Yet Marxism claims the truth of a claim is ‘out there’ in a real way; in order to determine that truth it requires figuring out where a proposition, or even the proposers own perception sits in the ground scheme of


\(^{113}\) ibid p.366
things. It is necessary to find out where one sits in the aspect of eternity but also in the aspect of the age. A question leading to a certain degree of truth for the Marxist requires that the questioner asks something like “What ideas or influences led to my thought processes, what is the context for my philosophizing, socially, economically, how does my class etc background alter how I perceive what I’m proposing and how have material factors necessitated that someone attempt to answer that question?”

In short Marxists see the human being as just a small part of larger systems that could be fairly called social eco-systems; therefore someone reasoning and deducing universals from first principles appears to be duping themselves. Duped in the sense that they use epistemology in order to raise their own opinions to the status of universals without realizing that their opinions that they’re using as axioms are themselves a result of societal conditions—thus at best they end up being Zizek’s Ptolemaic thinkers.

When it comes to constitutions, Marxists do not start with a list of philosophical rights to preserve and protect; nor do they reason from any starting principles except for those, which allow them to make accurate empirical inferences. Written Constitutions are considered thusly

……nothing is more illusory and superficial than such an approach. Written constitutions are merely juridical expressions of class relations which have been established as a result of intense struggle in society. They remain in
force only so long as no profound change occurs in the existing relationship of forces which created the constitution.\footnote{Lassalle, Ferdinand. "On the Essence of Constitutions." \textit{Marx/Engels Internet Archive}. Accessed March 21, 2018. \url{https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/fi/vol03/no01/lassalle.htm}. from Fourth International, vol.3 No.1, January 1942, pp.25-31.}

According to the early socialist Prussian statesman Ferdinand Lassalle, a constitution is nothing more than the existing arrangement of material forces in a society.\footnote{ibid} Lassalle asks us to participate in a thought experiment. In this experiment all of the laws of the Kingdom of Prussia have been destroyed in a fire. He asks the crowd whether it would be feasible then to pass whatever laws they saw fit without regard to the old-for instance now reducing the power of the monarchy.? Lassalle believes this notion to be absurd he answered

\begin{quote}
To this the king would merely reply: The laws may have been lost, but what of it? Actually, the army obeys my command, and marches wherever I order; actually, it is on my orders that the commanders of armories and barracks issue the cannon and send the artillery into the streets; and resting, as I do, on this actual force, I have no fear that you will grant me any other position than the one I desire.......You see, gentlemen, a king whom the army and cannons obey – this is part of a constitution!\footnote{ibid}
\end{quote}
He goes on to repeat the same argument for the abolition of landed nobility and the House of Lords, as well as the reinstitution of the guild system and argues that the second estate and the factory owners would respond as the King.

Lassalle then says the day-to-day practices that make up the pattern of living in a society are also part of the constitution. These unwritten parts of the constitution include things like the banking and financial practices of a nation, its general culture and principles, and the risk of revolt all form part of a nation's constitution or basic law. The reasons for unwritten customs and expectations between citizens and the state outside of statute are considered to be part of the constitution by Lassalle’s reckoning is because in some real way a society is governed by them, it governs what kind of laws people consider just, it governs the kind of interactions people expect between themselves. If a constitution is to be defined as a basic law that applies to all people in a society and structures the expectations upon which all other laws (those as a result of deliberation or decree from the powers that be) rest upon-then those forces, though they be unwritten are as much a part of the constitution as enumerated articles.

This is one of Marxism’s principle strengths-it possesses through its means of analysis a realistic, a historical material view of how institutions are used by people in authority and how those institutions use power as something separable from their formal purpose as designated in written law. This, in a certain, way deprives political philosophy of its ability to justify practices, which a society (any society, and according to its own standards) considers oppressive or offensive to their sense

\[\text{ibid}\]
of justice whatever that may be. This realism does however have a dark-side namely because of the idea of the end of history. The Marxist idea mandates that the mechanics of a capitalist economic system are inherently unstable and will eventually destroy themselves to be remade into something else. Thus while providing a powerful analytic tool against obscuration, Marxism can rule out the idea that people can and do act in good faith based on their own first principles be they religious or philosophical. The Marxist can then reply that any opposition to Marxist policies is either based in class interests, or because the person is deluded as to their true self-interest and is therefore exhibiting ‘false consciousness’. The ideas of the end of history and false consciousness have the ability to remove any effective way of criticizing or acting contrary to the wishes of the Marxist, as these ideas form the ideology into a closed, or ‘total’ world view where every piece of additional information can be taken and added into the framework-when this is the case there appears to be no outside of Marxism: incommensurability is incoherence.

Fascism as a concept is notoriously hard to define, partially because it rejected the universal in practice, and in particular but not in theory. Fascism looked so radically different in Italy, Germany, Japan Brazil, Spain and Portugal partially because theory dictated that it was important to emphasize the particular habits and qualities (real or more frequently the result of 19th century romanticism) and because of self-professed Fascists ‘opportunism’ and willingness to cooperate cynically with existing powers to garner electoral success an political power. Opportunism was rendered in scare quotes, because although Fascist parties were quite comfortable changing and molding their platform to whatever made voters
feel most comfortable this is completely in line with their abstract philosophy and so paradoxically perceived 'heterodoxy' became to all but the (usually) longest serving members an orthodoxy. All of these particulars aside we can come to a general agreement as to the fundamental points of Fascism.

Speaking as broadly as possible Fascism is an ideology that takes the state as the only truly existing thing in human societies (at least as a source of meaning), with everything else only existing or creating meaning in relation to the larger whole, as Giovanni Gentile put it:

The foundation of Fascism is the conception of the State, its character, its duty, and its aim. Fascism conceives of the State as an absolute, in comparison with which all individuals or groups are relative, only to be conceived of in their relation to the State. The conception of the Liberal State is not that of a directing force, guiding the play and development, both material and spiritual, of a collective body, but merely a force limited to the function of recording results: on the other hand, the Fascist State is itself conscious and has itself a will and a personality -- thus it may be called the "ethic" State....

In Fascism the individual is a predicate of the state not merely in relation to its role as the educator and setter of values but as a guiding force, a director of history. The worth of a person or a group of people is measured entirely in their relation, or

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usefulness to the state usually in some sort of military capacity as armed conflict was considered to be one of humanities 'highest callings', as Mussolini wrote in the Italian Encyclopedia "War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put men into the position where they have to make the great decision -- the alternative of life or death...."\(^{119}\)

Theologically speaking this ‘personal state’\(^{120}\) could almost be seen to usurp authority traditionally reserved for God (here used in an Abrahamic sense). The Fascist state wills into existence the morality that will apply to the citizens under its aegis and as previously mentioned judges them on the plumb line of its favor. In so far as the state is supposed to be obeyed unconditionally as the arbitrator of social worth and its influence is supposed to be "all-embracing; outside of it no human or spiritual values can exist, much less have value."\(^{121}\); the state takes on aspects of the dispenser of a covenant and becomes a subjective ‘Big-Other’ that subverts and attempts to destroy divinity and its transcendence over humanity itself. This ‘Civil Dispensationalism’ works to give the order of the state the force of divine commandment and grants the Fascist the ability to destroy epistemological skepticism and political space to question in their entirety. As Fascism celebrates

\(^{119}\) ibid
\(^{120}\) Here meaning a state with a claimed definable ‘personality’, not as a personal state where political authority is ideologically vested in one person a la Louis XIV
Quoting Giovanni Gentile
the local over the global, and allegedly the subjective over the universal you'd be forgiven if you understood fascism as amoral, as resisting the very impulse to universality that defines morality. But this would be a misunderstanding. Fascism scorns universals that it believes decreases the absolute importance of the state and extols values that ‘strengthen’ the fascist state by providing people that are fit for war and production. Principles nine and ten of *The Futurist Manifesto* a tiny five page dramatized statement of artistic ideals that had a massive effect on Italian Fascist thought has this to say about morality

“ 9. We want to glorify war - the only cure for the world - militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas which kill, and contempt for woman.

10. We want to demolish museums and libraries, fight morality, feminism and all opportunist and utilitarian cowardice”\(^\text{122}\)

On closer inspection the Fascist is not seeking to ‘fight morality’ but to replace one morality with another. The idea is to produce a Fascist ‘New Man’ who would be the perfectly suited actor for the institution of the Fascist political project. The New Man would be physically strong, and hard emotionally and morally, having the fortitude and mental strength to carry through the commands of the Fascist state without hesitation or pity.\(^\text{123}\) The Fascists took inspiration for the New Man


from the Barons of Medieval Europe and the legionaries of Ancient Rome, they believed when such individuals fail to be glorified then the process of societal decadence set in.

The Fascist believes that there exists a historical pattern defined by the rising and falling of nations and believes that the population of ascending and declining powers possess certain characteristics. The Fascists saw materialism as producing a ‘decadent’ society, which constituted a society of hedonism, gender equality, self-indulgence, cowardice and the previously mentioned moral softness (human pity); as well as political democracy. To Anti-Semitic fascists the Jewish people constituted to highest level of societal decadence. The Fascists wanted to create a ‘spiritual world’ (which has little to do with traditional notions of spirituality), spiritual values included respect for hierarchy, military discipline, masculinity and emotional asceticism. This ‘spiritual ethos’ encouraged physical force and violence against dissenters and the ‘weak’ and promoted what was called ‘virile hatred in the words of Nazi SA commander Ernst Rohm “Virile hate, has been replaced by feminine lamentation. But he who is unable to hate cannot love either. Fanatical love and hate—their fires kindle flames of freedom.”

The spiritual ethos was to be maintained through the foundation of a People’s Community or integral nationalism the former being explicitly racist, the latter being based around a strict sense of national unity. These Fascist states were to be hierarchically and militarily organized with the population being made

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124 ibid
125 ibid
continually ready for armed conflict, the interests of the people were to kept subordinate to the needs of the state. As Mussolini and Gentile wrote “The Fascist State organizes the nation, but leaves a sufficient margin of liberty to the individual; the latter is deprived of all useless and possibly harmful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding power in this question cannot be the individual, but the State alone.”

Fascism then represents not a deeply irrational appeal to what might be deemed the baser demons of our nature, based on hatred for the sake of hatred, but a highly rational regimentation of society towards imperialism and war. Though its policies show a remarkable ability to bring out the worst in human beings, there is a reason (no matter how repellent) behind the actions fascist states take. Gentile, the founder of Actual Idealism the philosophical groundwork for Fascism believed that the past and the future existed only as mental formations-only the present moment, he argued, could actually be said to exist. The Fascist then believed that since history was merely a mental formation that held no baring on the future and did not in any real way restrict a range of a persons actions, as the Futurist Manifesto put it “What is the use of looking behind at the moment when we must open the mysterious shutters of the impossible? Time and Space died yesterday. We are already living in the absolute, since we have already created eternal, omnipresent speed.” This neglect of history and implied absolute freedom of the will, the

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126 Mussolini, Benito
glorification of unreflective action over reflection and praise of ‘moral hardness’ stripped humans of all of the things necessary for deliberative action, love and sentimentality creating the kind of mindset suited for genocide and wars of aggression. The Fascist state being the arbiter of the good and the bearer of the covenant stripped (more so than any other system in existence) the ability for the citizen to possesses external reference points by which they could decide their role in life or the righteousness of their actions. Since the fascist state was organized around the leadership of a single figure, the ideology served to subordinate an entire state and its military/industrial capacity to the personal will of a singular individual. Conjecturally a link could be drawn between the distaste of fascists for material and historical analysis and the actions fascist states took in the Second World War, with Hitler’s insistence that German military failure from 1943 onward reflected only a German lack of will to fight rather than the material and manpower superiority of the Soviet Union and Western Allies.

Fascism in its total rejection of history, culture and any conception of personal freedom other than that given conditionally and without security by the state represented one of the most oppressive and miserable developments of human political philosophy. Despite claiming to defend what they termed ‘traditional culture’ (the artifacts they tended to think of note were products of 19th century romanticism), the attitude of Fascists like the Futurists to their nation’s actual cultural and historical legacy was irreverent and destructive; believing that they should destroy museums and libraries which they compared to charnel grounds-fit only for the dying and the imprisoned who had no future of their own.
Fascism represented an experiment in total control, creating an army out of citizenry whose task in life was to prepare to die for the will of the leader or produce and raise those who would. Although not explicitly racist at its point of genesis “only with the principle of non-exclusion would it be possible to create the national culture,”128 war and imperialism were necessities both as a sign that a nation was healthy and ‘virile’ “Peoples which are rising, or rising again after a period of decadence, are always imperialist; and renunciation is a sign of decay and of death.”129 Since war and imperialism were essential for the establishment of a fascist state, no matter how Gentile might have denounced racism and the demonization of the other it was perhaps endemic to the system itself and at any rate made the system easier to maintain. In the end only Metaxas’ Greece resisted adopting racism into its official ideology.

Fascism then possess hidden universals but is no less as universal as the other ideologies of the 20th century basing the ontological duties of a human in that of the state rather than that of the individual (who is instead defined as limitless creative power). However though the Fascist state does not explicitly lay requirements to be counted as part of a political community, since that would limit the power of the state which the Fascist wants to increase to its maximum extent, it does claim both a normative right to conquer and establish empire over the land of other nations and espouses a normative morality that conditions the citizen to be

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129 Mussolini, Benito
effective in this role. Fascism then is not to be considered outside of modernity but almost modernity taken to its absolute extreme with normative regulation and social regimentation becoming positive goods in themselves with freedom (however one might define it) being characterized as a form of chaos and ‘weakness’

The investigation into ideology just concluded naturally raises a question: if ideology is so harmful for a modern state is it possible to act without ideology? This question was prompted by two distinct intuitions. First that modern ideology has been singled out, so perhaps the pre-modern period did not possess an ideology or maybe the post-modern period is moving us out of strict ideological thinking/ideology hegemony? Secondly that maybe there is a form of political action (or even social action-if for example one takes hegemony in its Gramsci mode seriously) that is absent or separate from a kind of guiding ideology. The answer to both these question is no, I shall first address the former concern. While it is true that the pre-modern age did not possess the kind of universalist ontologies, or conceptions of politics that the post-French revolutionary writers assented to guiding ideologies were still used as a mode of political persuasion. Octavian upon instituting the Roman Empire used Republican titles for both himself and his magistrates. Ashoka used Buddhism to religiously unify his Empire sending missionaries west into Afghanistan, Central Asia and Persia and east into China and Indochina. Ruling regimes have always sought an overarching ideological framework to legitimize their rule. The difference however between these historical examples and the modern state is that these pre-modern institutions did not require belief. The pre-modern state had neither the resources, nor the desire to force
ideological adherence among the population at large; practically speaking obedience was the level of the commitment the state demanded of its subjects. Apparent aberrations to this level of simple obedience do not follow persecutions of the modernist mode; for example the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire was ordered because they refused to give honor or sacrifices to the image of the Emperor—not for their professed beliefs per se. The charges brought in that case were framed in terms of what we might call ‘national security concerns’ in contemporary parlance; as refusing to honour the traditions of the ancestors and state religious duties might bring the wrath of the gods onto the state weakening its station in the international order. With that said however there was no systematic investigation into people’s private lives in order to ascertain the orthodoxy of ones religious beliefs as a reply by the Emperor Trajan to Pliny the Younger states.

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But

anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution.

For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.\textsuperscript{131}

The idea that political belief and valuation was provable through demonstration of reason made binding agreement to those principles (supposedly demonstrable) a pre-condition to full membership in the political community. It is through their claimed self-evidenced nature that allows them to gain totalitarian acceptance among the societies that adopted them, there are under such a system no different ways of life-only wrong views. It was/is no good to simply accept the principles of the liberal order; one must believe them, and believe them not just in the context of their own society and needs but also in the context of the whole of humanity. Even then one must accept them as not simply expedient and well suited to the time and place but as the best form of government that exists and as eternal in age (evidently laying unconscious through ages of manifest darkness) and Platonically Good in morality. The same standard of belief was true for the Marxist regimes of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, one must conform one’s principles to those of the Party and the People existent in their deified if not realistic forms; all criticism had to revolve around those sacrosanct principles. Fascist regimes also do not simply demand your obedience; they demand more than anything else that you believe in your country and leader (as manifestly better in everyway from its competitors),

and that you should lay down your life willingly and joyfully for the greater realization of national supremacy and unreachable purity of unity of principle. This latent universalism was not demanded by the pre-moderns and for what it is worth they were not in any position to enforce it.

The latter claim that there are personal and political actions that one can take that are free from ideology is also fallacious but a little more complicated. It certainly seems to most of us that we act in non-ideological ways in our day-to-day lives. We can sometimes be aware of the ideology in everyday things, Starbucks for instance has a plain ideology; but we often don’t see any ideology in sitting down and having a coffee. The ideology however is present even in the process of ordering a coffee or a drink at a bar. We have addressed before the issue of language and how it is both incapable of expressing the true nature of things but also how meaning itself is a cooperative affair and one does not really have control over the content as such of one’s speech only the order in which we arrange it (making even the simplest conversation more of a poetry of banality than an expression of true individual opinion per se). Every single thought, every single sentence even this work which aims to demonstrate implicit ideology has an implicit ideology, the writer of a work is incapable of really defining terms at most they can propose amendments but it is beyond the power of any single writer to determine the meaning and interpretation of their text. The process is the same for most spoken interactions.

More so than even the written word does ideology rear its head in the everyday non-verbal actions that we perform in society; not usually as a beast
(norms are not bad by necessity and avoid complicated explaining and debate concerning every aspect of ordinary existence) but it arises outside of oneself as a means of social expression at it’s most basic form. Let us bring ourselves back to the bar and the coffee line. No one outside of cultural acclimatization classes, as far as can be ascertained, in Western Europe or North America is ever given an academic lesson on how to order coffee or drinks at a bar. One simply does, perhaps one’s parents might have chastised you as a child for attempting to push in but really discourse began and ended there, and the action in adult life is performed almost at an unconscious level. Despite what we might be tempted to think these values are not the same in the entire world, in some cultures it is entirely acceptable to push and jostle to the front of the line or shout for a bartender. Our actions in everyday service etiquette tend to reveal two things, a generally egalitarian, or at least formal view of the relation between customer and provider and between customers themselves. One does not push in the coffee line because it is assumed at a subconscious level that you are no more worthy of being served as the person in front of you (as opposed to cultures who make room for elders). One does not shout at a bartender because they’re busy serving others, you have no right to demand service over others or to raise one’s voice (for one is not speaking to an inferior). In short these behaviors reveal somewhat deeper understandings of societal wide political ontology and the equality of citizenship, at least on a formal level.

Minor political acts show this implicit ‘totalitarianism of value’ to an even greater degree. Consider for instance the process of student organization registration in an American university. Usually such an organization be it political,
sporting, general interest or anything else must first conform to a set of contractual values vis-à-vis the university. Next the organization must be organized along a mirror of liberal democratic political procedure one must have a treasurer, president, vice-president, elections and so on as well as a written constitution. It is certainly possible to have a political order or a social group without written constitutions or hierarchy of any sort (or with greater hierarchy such as initiatory orders a la Freemasons). It is inconceivable that a university administration would accept a written constitution of a political organization run by a Soviet style initiatory Politburo which screens elections for suitable candidates for replacement at the end of a year. Organizational administration at this sort of level shows us the range of acceptable views mediated through hegemonic ideology.

It is not to say that these restrictions are bad as-such, simply that ideological norms have a way of seeping into every aspect of communal life. To say that it is possible to act without ideological grounds is wishful thinking. The goal then should be the creation of an ideological system that allows and accommodates disagreement on an ontological or philosophical anthropological level in the full life of a political order.

Chapter 4

In the last chapter we discussed and critiqued the axiomatic assumptions of the major ideologies of the 20th century. Though firm in the conviction that ontological assumption and axioms are poor methods to organize states, and are positively poisonous to productive diplomacy between nations a state must have some form of coherent organization and justification. Given what I have argued up to this point, an
optimal system of political organization (or the principles for establishing an
enduring political system) would have to be rooted in some sense of shared
meaning. This shared meaning would not be a universality rooted in normative
conceptions of the ideal human being, or the ideal government instead it takes the
form of more basic expectations of a shared reality and the 'rules of thumb' that
govern that reality. Shared meaning takes the form of the 'common' in 'common
sense'. \(^{132}\) Starting here, with the shared meanings that emerge out of the material
organization and practices of daily life is a way of properly bounding the claims we
make about commonality. This is not so as to recommend with the force of universal
reason specific policy proposals to all nations, in the absence of context or
circumstance. Rather such a view of commonality makes possible political
universalities as distinct from moral universalities. These political commonalities
can offer a useful framework for understanding political discourse, in an
atmosphere of humility that would allow for political cooperation between groups
that lacked shared core intuitions as to the nature of government and humanity.

Such political commonalities then would have to be divorced from moral
codes that stake their claim of obedience on values of universality or on

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\(^{132}\) Roger Smith in his work "Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S.
History" points out that different rules of thumb often apply to different groups
within the same society. This poses a problem to anyone who wishes to use shared
cultural conceptions as an anchor for the shared basic values of a society. However a
general skepticism towards the metaphysical claims those conceptions are often
rooted in (and the resulting humility) can be used as a catalyst to force analysis into
the material sphere, which gets us to sobornost and the ability to bridge
endosocietal disagreement through shared instances of suffering.
ontologies. This is not to deny that people within societies hold moral codes that are based in universal assumptions, which is why the word divorced (rather than jettisoned was chosen). People will hold beliefs, religious, ontological and theoretical concerning the nature of government, morality and human teleology. Nothing can be done about this fact, nor should anything be done for this would distract from the true pluralism I am trying to argue. All I wish to argue is that throughout history there have been several hundred different systems claiming to speak the truth about these matters, several of these ideas have had long and glorious histories inspiring some of humanity's greatest, pieces of art, literature, philosophy and architecture in addition to inspiring tremendous acts of charity, courage and reform. Indeed the enormous power of universalizing political ideology and religious belief stands testament to its ability to order and inspire incredible acts of organization when large groups with those shared commitments are able to come together with the strength and will to act. However with all that said, one of the things that these universal systems have not been able to do is convince everyone of their veracity, nor even to move beyond consensus based hegemony in specific societies. In all places where they have held sway these universalizing systems have never truly been universal. Deeply embedded ideologies like Roman Catholicism in Medieval Europe, or Confucianism in China have been challenged throughout history by different systems (most of them universal themselves) such as Protestantism and Buddhism. Sometimes a whole group of ideologies will be

\footnote{The statement should not be taken as a denouncement of all moral systems. The intuition comes from the fact that no moral system in existence has been universally accepted nor been eternal in scope.}
attacked by another set of universal ideologies as Enlightenment philosophy attempted to do with revealed religion (substituting the authority of scripture for the authority of natural law or reason) and that post-modernism is doing with the Enlightenment. Empirically time and time again we have seen ideologies that have claimed to be the universal truth gain preeminence and fade into one of many views held as acceptable by a society. Our ideologies and beliefs have shorter lifespans than we often care to think—though their core ideas become part of the ‘collective memory’ and background knowledge of the society they once had hegemonic status over and take new life in new format. Suffice to say one does not, I believe, have grounds to hold that a single set of principles or international norms will be eternal ‘nor comprehensible to all people in exactly the same way since those principles arose in response to specific circumstances and will get less and less relevant (or easily implementable) in the face of new circumstances. The only certainty is change, as the preacher in Ecclesiastes once opined “one generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever.”135

Instead as we view societies as the result of the aggregate consequences of an innumerable amount of individual decisions made in response to specific issues we must recognize, if not the impossibility, than the enormous difficulty in the face of the objections previously raised of converting the entire world to a certain set of principles. Maintaining those principles will always rely on some system of force whether bowdlerized as ‘enforcement mechanisms or not’ either through armed

intervention or the paternalistic ‘caretaker governments’ of Western colonialism. Colonial governments often believed that their systems of rights and liberties were so self-evident that the only reason that one could not assent to them was ‘civilizational backwardness’. The attitude just stated allowed John Stuart Mill to make his infamous statement

Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement, and the means justified by actually effecting (sic) that end. Liberty, as a principle, has no application to any state of things anterior to the time when mankind have become capable of being improved by free and equal discussion.\textsuperscript{136}

In Mill’s work we see that even the strongest advocates of liberty call for coercion across civilizational lines. In the approach I offer, the recognition of plural and always potentially incommensurable political commonalities cannot generate a basis for this kind of coercion. If there is a first principle of this approach it is the principle of non-intervention rooted in the recognition of these incommensurabilities. And I will argue it is this recognition of incommensurabilities nurtures a real and meaningful pluralism that resists both totalitarianism at home and colonialism abroad.

What is needed is a system that can accommodate all existing societies and forms of government while allowing people the freedom to embrace their own ideologies, political and religious in nature according to the traditions, norms and historical

development that structure their day-to-day existence. The only absolute political value to be held beyond all others due to the incommensurability of systems of meaning is a general principle of non-intervention. Since values held to be universal when forced onto societies through some method or another have caused immense suffering and in the knowledge that time and time again people who believed that they were in possession of the absolute truth have either changed their minds or evolved; we have to approach questions of political legitimacy and universalism with skepticism and humility. No one human can know for certain, though they may have good grounds for belief, anything about the nature of reality or constitutions; we must come to terms with the fact that we see through a glass darkly. The alternative is grim Pankaj Mishra eloquently wrote in The Guardian that the “pernicious myth that every society must evolve along western lines,” poses a great threat to international security and human wellbeing.\textsuperscript{137} This is due to the fact that the success of particular societies, especially those in the West were cotangent on historical actions that would be condemned as brutal and unnecessary by those who champion the liberal faith that those actions resulted in. Once the European powers had the efficiency of Napoleon’s conscript army demonstrated to them through the loss of independence and heavy indemnity, European nations found that it was in their best interest to formulate a modern bureaucratic state system with

standardized courts, infrastructure, military technology and educational systems with a sense of belonging to keep it all together. The creation of this synthetic nationalism was often accomplished through the destruction of regional languages, culture and the creation of enemies foreign and domestic through the introduction of prejudices like anti-Semitism. This phenomenon was noted 19th century luminaries like the Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard even while unaware of the atrocities of European colonialism that ensured that huge swaths of people across the global south and the Americas experienced liberal democracies and enlightenment values as condescension, exploitation and Western supremacism justified by Mill and Kipling’s White Man’s Burden-as James Baldwin declared “The West has no moral authority.” Mishra declares

The enabling conditions of Europe’s 19th-century success – small, relatively homogenous populations, or the ability to send surplus populations abroad as soldiers, merchants and missionaries – were missing in the large and populous countries of Asia and Africa. Furthermore, imperialism had deprived them, as Basil Davidson argued in The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State, of the resources to pursue western-style economic development; it had also imposed ruinous ideologies and institutions upon societies that had developed, over centuries, their own viable political units and social structures.

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138 ibid
139 ibid
140 ibid
Recklessly exported worldwide even today, the west’s successful formulas have continued to cause much invisible suffering. What may have been the right fit for 19th-century colonialists in countries with endless resources cannot secure a stable future for India, China, and other late arrivals to the modern world, which can only colonise their own territories and uproot their own indigenous peoples in the search for valuable commodities and resources.\textsuperscript{141}

With the unpleasant results of the evangelizing attempts of even the most humane of the universalizing ideologies of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century proving unsatisfactory for a system of global pluralism and cooperation. I propose that a modified form of Burkean conservatism can fill the need for a system of organization that can heal internal conflict within a society and mend divisions leading to a more harmonious existence within any existing system of government and society anywhere on the planet. This is to be done by taking our epistemological limitations into account and approaching politics through a careful humility. This conservatism is not the same as the conservatism pushed in most business parties around the world such as the United States Republican Party or post-Thatcherite Tories, one should not be thinking natural rights and limited government, as the Burkean tradition of conservatism works just as well with Soviet style communism, social democracy, corporatist states, limited capitalist government up to and including absolute monarchies etc. The conservatism to be examined here is nothing less than preference for the inherited and historically contingent institutes of society over the

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid
requirements of an ideal rooted in a conception that society is in some sense organic
“that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a
living organism comprising closely connected, interdependent members.”\textsuperscript{142}

One of the founding scholars of William F Buckley’s New Right, Russell Kirk
composed ten fundamental principles within a conservative system. Kirk claims that
conservatism isn’t an ideology at all but an attitude a character and a way of looking
at political and social order.\textsuperscript{143} In addition he believes that there is no model
conservative, no blueprint for what a conservative actor looks like but instead
believes that it is someone who adheres, to one degree or another, to the body of
opinion written by conservatives in the past two hundred years.\textsuperscript{144}

Despite Kirk’s claims to the contrary I would classify conservatism as an
ideology. Conservatism certainly has recommendations for how societies should
consider political issues; it has a canon of sorts (even if no single work defines it)
and it has inspired massive works of political reform and rejuvenation throughout
its history. What conservatism is not however is a totalizing ideology; it does not
claim from common principles to possess a plan that works in all places at the same
time and does not assign normative requirements for the moral status of a human.

\textsuperscript{142} Viereck, Peter, Ball Terence, Daggar Richard, and Minogue Kenneth.

\textsuperscript{143} Kirk, Russell. "Ten Conservative Principles." The Russell Kirk Center for Cultural
conservative-principles/.

\textsuperscript{144} ibid
Conservatism allows for wide difference in opinion about most subjects in general and a limitless amount in specifics; Kirk does come close to describing normatively what a conservative is in his phrase “In essence, the conservative person is simply one who finds the permanent things more pleasing than Chaos and Old Night. (Yet conservatives know, with Burke, that healthy “change is the means of our preservation.”), the key then is the privileging of experience over abstract design.

Let’s list and attempt to exposit the ten principles.

First, the conservative believes that there exists an enduring moral order.

Second, the conservative adheres to custom, convention, and continuity.

Third, conservatives believe in what may be called the principle of prescription.

 Fourth, conservatives are guided by their principle of prudence.

 Fifth, conservatives pay attention to the principle of variety.

 Sixth, conservatives are chastened by their principle of imperfectability.

 Seventh, conservatives are persuaded that freedom and property are closely linked.

 Eighth, conservatives uphold voluntary community, quite as they oppose involuntary collectivism.

 Ninth, the conservative perceives the need for prudent restraints upon power and upon human passions.

\[\textit{ibid}\]

Kirk’s principles roughly speaking lay out a system steeped in caution, the whole doctrine begins with the imperfectability of humanity; this is, in my reading not a declaration that humans have some innate evil that’s unable to be stamped out or remedied-in instead this is the empirical fact that the world in particular and the universe in general contains so much information that it is impossible for any one individual to have a perfect understanding of things. Sure, it appears that we can walk around and act with a satisfactory provisional understanding of one’s society and the world around us such that we can navigate the daily concerns of our existence without too much in the way of pain. However when it comes to complex policy we are left in a significantly darker position, when faced with the vast amount of variables that are encountered in matters of policy. It is true that with our understanding of statistics and our improved methods of data-collection it is easier than ever before to have accurate information on the material factors in question reducing significantly the chance of being burdened with unpleasant unforeseen consequences. This consideration though only takes into account the material effects of a single decision-we simply cannot know most of the time, to an accurate degree, the profundity of our actions, seeing how a change in a policy can effect another sector, cannot accurately predict the legislated upon sector’s reaction in the
political sphere and the material consequences of those actions extended into the future. Concern for skepticism and humility though goes deeper than those considerations. The ideologies that defined the 20th century were so sure in their convictions and in the plane righteousness of their causes that dissent was sometimes considered to be a result of ignorance or malice rather than true disagreement on the basis of different values or reasoned argument etc. We are stuck in a world where our intuitions concerning the nature of morality, the purposes of politics and our place as a human being are so ingrained to be almost unquestionable. Ideology that has reached hegemonic status might seem so true, it might be taught as the basics of civic education, being reinforced in popular culture, from peers, parents, the academy and even from the pulpit. Political projects have often been given divine sanction – sometimes explicitly, often implicitly; in addition most nations will have a sect that has the cultural power to set ideological or theological orthodoxy and control even one’s conception of divinity itself.

Our humility then manifests itself primarily in skepticism in our ability to perceive and know absolutes as they are in reality. Liberals for example consider their rights inalienable and derived either from reasoned consensus based universal moral law, or by Providence, the socialist disagrees and believes that those rights given sacred import are merely conditioned responses of material conditions through history. The existence of well-argued alternatives doesn’t preclude one ‘nor the others from being true its simply that as humans we have no way of knowing which one is metaphysically true with the tools available to us. The question is also somewhat irrelevant to political order, as these disagreements concerning
metaphysical details are and have always been a fixture of political and civil life—the
center of political philosophy should be how to minimize occasions for violent
conflict and to ensure that the grounds for political participation are not defined
normatively by overarching theories such that communities can determine them for
themselves. Even if one doctrine was found to be true among all others being perfect
in every way—it would not be a helpful project to attempt to force acceptance of that
doctrine across all nations, if doing so would cause massive societal upheaval and
bloodshed—the principle of variety in political expression becomes important to long
term peace building between societies.

Humility then leads us to accept differences and diversity in ideologies,
government types, political anthropologies, ontological/theological beliefs and
conceptions of the Good Life. A system of political organization that takes into
account and takes seriously those competing claims must consider their
unknowable nature at an axiomatic level. This commitment naturally drives the
conservative to consider prudence and established customs as guides; if something
has the ability to order a society in such a manner that the needs of the people in
that society on their own terms are being met then there is no ground for complaint.
Old systems that do no harm and elicit a sense of history have positive good not in
their fulfillment of concrete policy X but by forming symbolic authority. Symbolic
authority is useful because it provides a means to voluntary order and obedience in
the absence of naked statute, discipline and punishment; allowing for communities
to be more voluntary, open and community minded. Of course there will always be
the need for rules in society, to ensure a certain regularity of life and to protect its
members from what is considered unwarranted harm. The rules used to structure society in this way though are not totalizing—they are not based on some philosophical speculation into the nature of the human and the moral life but out of a pragmatic need for regulation. Since the conservative recognizes the need for change to constantly reconstitute and rejuvenate society these rules are open on justification so that all may assent and should be open to question in dialogue with the principles of prudence and skepticism.

Tradition does not have a normative moral force, in itself. Instead it can be said to have a synthetic normativity within a culture as long as those existing within the society in question consider the tradition to be a source of moral and political authority. The perceived value of traditions waxes and wanes and when the tradition no longer serves its purpose for the regulation of society in voluntary community it no longer fulfills a social function and can be prudentially removed if the population so wishes. Burke noting the destruction of the French Constitution by the revolution wrote thus

It (the mutiny and desertion of the French Army) is a desertion to a cause the real object of which is hostility not to servitude but to society—leveling all those institutions—breaking all those connections, natural and civil, that regulate and hold together communities by one chain of subordination: raising soldiers against their officers: servants against their masters: tradesmen against their customers: artificers against their employers: tenants against their landlords: curates against their bishops and children against their parents. How wou’d You Mr Speaker and how wou’d
any of You Gentlemen like to have your mansions pulled down and pillaged—your title deeds brought out and burnt before Your faces—your persons abused insulted and destroyed—and your families driven to seek refuge in every corner of Europe—and all this without any fault of yours or any other reason than this—that you were born gentlemen and men of property—and were suspected of a desire to preserve your estates and your consideration.\textsuperscript{147}

Although Burke seems to be condemning the entire revolution without nuance, the statement has to be qualified with a prior declaration that the French should have when they met as separate orders in the Estates General addressed the stability and thus the independence of the state as the king has ordered and then afterwards redress grievances.\textsuperscript{148} This does not mean that governments cannot change but this should be done within established channels as much as possible, separation and succession needs to be treated as a grave matter with revolution (and the resultant almost inevitable civil war) treated as an absolute last resort for a society that believes it to be necessary. Revolution is to be avoided whenever possible as it forces political ontologies and normative goals to be the sole plumb line of worthiness and guilt for a nation often resulting in tribunals that analyze subjects for ideological purity often resulting in violence over theoretical disagreement. The


\textsuperscript{148} ibid
result of a revolution in a society is often the dominance of a universal political ideology and the ultimate constraint of that society to the normative requirements of its morality driven by an inflexible ontology that allows for little sincere, good-faith disagreement with revolutionary action.

I believe however that Kirk errs somewhat in asserting the existence of a universal moral law— even if he qualifies this by acknowledging that we cannot directly know exactly what it is. It is often used to hamstring attempts at measured pragmatic change and seems to be rooted in conservatism’s early history as a response to the French Revolution and its attack on religious piety. Perhaps the principle can be reinterpreted to mean that the countervailing values of a society need to be taken into account in policy until they no longer serve their purpose as an accepted consensus on ethical behavior—this would serve to maintain a consistent plurality Natural Law itself comes out of a distinctly Western philosophical tradition, Indian Dharma or the sacred laws of other cultures fulfill a certain goal but in the absence of exposition the idea that humanity is governed by an intelligible moral law doesn’t seem helpful when governing with conservative principles because the world hasn’t come to a general consensus around what that actually might be.

Instead of appeals to natural law, humility and prudence can be used to determine policy. To be properly prudent one should never launch into a policy without understanding why it is necessary to legislate in the first place; this requires having a deep understanding of how the institutions and social forces you are dealing with came to be and how they function in society. Doing this requires a look
at material conditions, opinions and hard data so that the post possible decision can be made. This forces discussions about legislation into a policy rather than ideal based system (as discussed in the first chapter) as once an issue is decided a decision should only be made when a ruling group understands the probable outcome of an action-this reduces legislative conflict. Different societies can (and most likely will) analyze their history and use it to craft meaning creating synthetic teleologies that help inform people's practical understanding of the history of their nation but this system itself remains agnostic about declaring a teleology for all of history. Taken as a whole then, the Burkean model allows for the data based and productive system of dialectical materialism to be deployed without declaring an end of history-thus allowing for a powerful method of analysis and open ended meaning creation that allows each society to decide its own perception of itself, its destiny and its place in the world.

Conservatism then can be shortened from Kirk's ten principles into the following short creed: Human beings as individuals although endowed with the ability to learn facts about the material world never the less see the world darkly. By this we mean that ontological and metaphysical truths especially those relating to politics are not easily perceivable and known. The proper response to this is to adopt an attitude of humility and skepticism towards those questions in the political sphere, refraining from imposing them on others abroad and from blindly utilizing them at home. National or communal ideas and creeds are useful in so far as they provide an imagined framework for action within the community but their falsifiability must always be considered. With this considered however they provide
a reasonably useful framework for organizing life and political institutions were they are widely believed ensuring a useful stability and regularity in life. Since principles are of secondary importance then to material institutions and their effects the legislator must consider material factors first and endeavor to change material consequences before resorting to an attempt to alter the foundational beliefs of a society. When practices injurious to a population, by that populations own reckoning are detected and demand is in place for their removal they can be removed safely within the framework of that particular localities belief system. Belief systems change over time, including through external influence, as new ideas are created whether from within that society or adopted and adapted from without (in order for new ideas to be successful the transition must be made organically and by leaders from within the society in question). On the version of conservatism I offer here, the conservative should be opposed to all forms of imperialism and ideological imposition anywhere in the world.

As the idea of natural law is a culturally determined metanarrative that requires some base assumptions, which I do not believe to be universal, I do not believe that it is useful for ensuring peace and unity within society. Nor do I think any universalizing ideology works to do the same. However our shared state of confusion, the necessity that we work and figure out a reason to do so. The fact that we suffer together and each other gives us ground to cooperate no matter what our beliefs may be. Social suffering is produced in two ways, the action an individual performs and the things that a person omits to act upon. We have all in some sense hurt, acted shamefully or spoke uncharitably-we may have even acted with noble
intentions with the end result being the death and suffering of millions, the results of the most charitable interpretations of war for democracy or the American War on Drugs, this is what is meant by individual action. The next form of social suffering is generated by omission. Homelessness exists because of our lack of will or ability to provide adequate housing, starvation our failure to provide food, police shootings on people who vote for tough on crime laws etc. This is not saying that one becomes legally responsible, but it is a challenge to the idea that only the perpetrators of certain actions need to be punished, as a society social ills are created and as a society only we can solve them; we are all bystanders in some way and inherit a social guilt-we are all guilty for everyone else. To better explain this we will utilize a theological concept, Sobornost in Eastern Orthodox thought, especially as filtered through the thought of Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Sobornost is a term used in Eastern Orthodox theology in general and is emphasized in the teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church. Sobornost itself means ‘spiritual community of many jointly living people,’ or togetherness. In Russia it was and is often used by opponents of Western style individualism and is rooted in the idea that humanity is a family or mystical community. When one moves through life they constantly act without knowledge or regard to potential


150 ibid

consequences, one’s actions can affect others in ways that will never be known to them directly. One ends up being, in some way responsible for the pain in their community. The guilt of Sobornost is not tied to punishment that idea merely being a Euro-American normativity concerning how one ought to treat the guilty; but rather a responsibility to mend flaws in the community, to take and ease pain and to suffer and hold each other up in the world. Sean Fitzpatrick writes in Crisis Magazine about Sobornost as conceived by Dostoevsky’s character in the Brothers Karamazov- the monastic Elder Zossima

Dostoevsky’s The Brothers Karamazov made the idea of sobornost, of all people being equally guilty, eternal in the history of human thought. “There is only one way to salvation,” Dostoevsky writes in the voice of the Elder Zossima, “and that is to make yourself responsible for all men’s sins. As soon as you make yourself responsible in all sincerity for everything and for everyone, you will see at once that this is really so, and that you are in fact to blame for everyone and for all things.” The notion of common responsibility arising from common culpability gives a powerful and staggering impetus to this holy and humanitarian philosophy. Given that all men are bound together on this earth, it is therefore true that everything that everyone does has some bearing, some effect, some influence, on others, whether known or unknown. “In sinning,” Dostoevsky wrote again in Demons, “each man sins against all, and each man is at least partly guilt for another’s sin. There is no isolated sin.” Every man and
woman is constantly sowing seeds of themselves, wherever they go, whatever they do; and with that, comes the responsibility to put down good seeds, as the mystical sense of the universal human condition and community unfolds.\textsuperscript{152}

Sobornost works as a pluralistic system of ensuring social cohesion because it does not assume any ontological axioms concerning the nature of humanity. Instead it roots the necessity to function and cooperate as a community in the empirical consequences of our actions and humility as to intention and the metaphysical background of those said actions. The fact that we either contribute to societal ills directly or do not band together to solve problems that we are aware of implicates us. But the commonality of our situation should bring us to work together for the social good; we are all stuck in a situation of responsibility for each other and are our neighbors hope for salvation as our neighbors are ours.\textsuperscript{153} This concept can be ported across religious lines, as the salvation spoken of is not otherworldly but something that can be achieved by humans and their material actions on Earth. Zossima recalls at another point in \textit{the Brothers Karamazov} the words of his dying brother “everyone is guilty before every other human being of everything, and if only people would come to realize this, it would result in a kind of paradise on earth.”\textsuperscript{154} In Tsarist Russia this sense of shared responsibility to the public good led people to declare to condemned prisoners that they were going to die in their place and that the executed prisoner should pray for them on the ‘other side’-all were in a

\textsuperscript{152} ibid
\textsuperscript{153} Zolatova, Kristina
\textsuperscript{154} ibid
sense considered to be worthy of death. This concept of guilt and responsibility was analyzed in James Baldwin’s ‘Rap on Race’, in a dialogue with cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead

MEAD: There are different ways of looking at guilt. In the Eastern Orthodox faith, everybody shares the guilt of creatureliness and the guilt for anything they ever thought. Now, the Western Northern-European position and the North American position on the whole is that you’re guilty for things that you did yourself and not for things that other people did.

[...]

BALDWIN: The police in this country make no distinction between a Black Panther or a black lawyer or my brother or me. The cops aren’t going to ask me my name before they pull the trigger. I’m part of this society and I’m in exactly the same situation as anybody else — any other black person — in it. If I don’t know that, then I’m fairly self-deluded... What I’m trying to get at is the question of responsibility. I didn’t drop the bomb [that killed four black school girls in Birmingham]. And I never lynched anybody. Yet I am responsible not for what has happened but for what can happen.

MEAD: Yes, that’s different. I think the responsibility for what can happen, which in a sense is good guilt — which is sort of a nonsensical term —

BALDWIN: Yes, but I know what you mean. It’s useful guilt.

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155 Fitzpatrick, Sean
MEAD: Responsibility. It is saying I am going to make an effort to have things changed. But to take the responsibility for something that was done by others —

BALDWIN: Well, you can't do that.

[...]

The conversation ends with the following upon which the whole concept of Sobornost is summarized

BALDWIN: No, my point precisely is that one crime is not more important than another and that all crimes must be atoned for.

MEAD: All right, all crimes... But when you talk about atonement you're talking about people who weren't born when this was committed.

BALDWIN: No, I mean the recognition of where one finds one's self in time or history or now. I mean the recognition. After all, I'm not guiltless, either. I sold my brothers for my sisters —

[...]

MEAD: I will not accept any guilt for what anybody else did. I will accept guilt for what I did myself.

[...]

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BALDWIN: We both have produced, all of us have produced, a system of reality which we cannot in any way whatever control; what we call history is perhaps a way of avoiding responsibility for what has happened, is happening, in time.\(^\text{157}\)

Baldwin’s statement contains the whole of the matter. We are thrown into a world where our basic assumptions, mental heuristics and ideological commitments are not our own. Instead they are part of a chain of causal action from the earliest times. We may not be, criminally guilty, for the crimes of ancestors but what we are is responsible for how our ideas and conceptions of the world mask and perpetuate those crimes and misdeeds further. Without examining the way we act in the world properly and without being aware of the origin and material effects of our conceptions we will continue to cause harm in the world despite our intentions very probably being in the contrary. No non-contingent abstractions will do as all acts of social reform and healing must work with historically embedded subjects. Since those embedded subjects will have different conceptions of themselves even down to their very ontological foundations. Solving problems in our society collectively requires the abandonment of teleologies and a greater consideration of the nature of historical contingency—in a word we must adopt an attitude of humility regarding ourselves (and our epistemological limitations) and others. We must recognize our shared guilt and responsibility for healing our broken world based simply on the fact that we must live together, no further normative claim must be made. This allows the idea of Sobornost to transcend religious and cultural barriers and serve

\(^\text{157}\) ibid
as a humble, motivating force for contingent limited human being trying to mutually live and improve each other in a hurting world.

Our view of community with a true recognition of shared guilt and responsibility should echo John Winthrop’s “Model of Christian Charity” preached on the deck of the Arbella halfway across the Atlantic to North America.

For this end, wee must be knitt together, in this worke, as one man. Wee must entertaine each other in brotherly affection. Wee must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of other’s necessities. Wee must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekeness, gentlenes, patience and liberality. Wee must delight in each other; make other’s conditions our one; rejoice together, mourn together, labour and suffer together, allwayes having before our eyes our commission and community in the worke, as members of the same body.\(^{158}\)

How this is to be practically achieved and how exactly change would occur in such a system is the purview of our conclusion.

**Conclusion**

We have established that the totalizing ideologies of the 20\(^{th}\) century failed to provide an adequate organizational framework for the running of the modern state with tranquil relations between its constitute populations and with foreign powers. The danger inherent in total ideologies does not come from their recommendations.

themselves (most of the time) but from the universal ontological and teleological claims used to justify those recommendations, those of policy and constitutional order, and render them mandatory. When a totalizing ideology claims something is teleologically necessary, or that the ontological nature of humanity itself demands the same, it is essentially stating that acting contrary to that recommendation is an affront not just to good government (as conceived by the ideologue) but also the laws of nature themselves. Responses to this problem, long recognized by the partisans of the ideologies of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, range from grudging toleration of the other, to conceptions of the necessity of exporting ‘the revolution’ (as conceived of by Trotskyists and Neoconservatives) or crushing the opposition (as fascists and Leninists will claim). It seems the world is bereft of projects that promote a genuine pluralism of government types, styles and ideas of meaning. Such pluralism is undertaken on the assumption that it promotes peace and genuine good-will across the planet and from a conception of change being for the best when groups are allowed to make their own meaning and relate newer technologies and ideas to their own older traditions. For a change in government type to be anything other than a regime implemented through force of arms it must be set up, governed and conceptualized within the greater scope of the history and traditions of the region in question.

Universal claims especially when political and metaphysical lines are blurred claim jurisdiction over non-believers. No universal claim in history has ever been accepted as the ‘gospel-truth’ by all people, in every nation all over the world. These claims may have achieved hegemonic status in certain societies where they
structure standard patterns of political discourse within those societies, and are or can be accepted as ‘self-evident’. However the existence of well-argued alternatives in the political sphere cause inevitable violent conflict between polities when metaphysical and moral claims are attached to political beliefs. Universals are always subject to incommensurability, due to linguistic and cultural differences resulting in variations across space. This means that cultural traditions and the basic assumptions given in the years of education prior to the development of self-reflection will always act as a mirror that one either rejects or builds upon but will always be referred back to as a set of defaults; thus basic beliefs will always be incorporated into an interpretation of a universal claim. Since basic beliefs and hegemonic ideologies differ across cultures and are sincerely believed it is difficult to argue that one is superior to others and should be ‘shared’ without resorting to some form of imperialism and imposition. When totalizing ideology is paired with moral claims it is easy to dehumanize or characterize opponents as evil or not truly human, or somehow deluded in which case violence can be easier to apply. Totalizing ideologies by making ontological claims about the subjects of their designs exclude some human qualities before even being implemented by bracketing out aspects of the human condition viewed as ‘unnecessary’, or ‘secondary’. This is evident in the liberal’s exhortation of rationality, in socialists in their definition of humanity as being essentially a ‘maker’ or in fascists as something completely defined and definable in relation to their society and nation. This exclusion of human qualities from political consideration combined with the exaltation of a model of humanity over the ‘real animal’ with his flaws was the
tragedy of the 20th century. The privileging of an ideal, a model over flawed historically contingent humans was the mechanism by which even the most ardent supporters of liberty or economic justice can justify imperialism in the name of morality, pairing the moral significance of human suffering with the correctness of the political ideology of the sufferer.

Political conflict seems easier to resolve when matters are focused on policy proposals rather than on core values; once agreement on ends is met the discussion of the means is often heated but not worth dying or killing over; ultimately the realization is there that your opponent at least has the best interests of the community at heart. Though it is not possible to reduce every political discussion to that level, it should be the goal of any stable system to ensure that political discussion is allowed to take place at that level for as much as possible. This means that it is imperative in political life to act with humility. The recognition of ideological incommensurability and humility allows for a generally peaceful existence of not only different societies with completely different ideological foundations but also divided societies. When modified Burke’s conservatism allows for a realization of the historically contingent nature of not only institutions, but also their ideological justifications that nonetheless takes those institutions and the beliefs regarding them seriously. This allows for political action which allows for change and dialogue with new ideas while allowing people to hold their ideologies and beliefs sincerely without universalizing them outward towards unwilling others.
We have seen that although totalizing systems failed to create adequate methods of avoiding violent conflict domestically or in diplomatic relations. The material fact that we have to live together and that we are the cause and the alleviation of the suffering of our neighbor gives us reason to cooperate without claiming anything about the teleological purpose of humanity, or making any ontological or normative claims about our nature. In our shared guilt we find a shared responsibility, in that shared responsibility we find our grounds for cooperation. Sobornost merely asks us to see in our neighbor the suffering in their lives and gives us the responsibility to mend it thoughtfully and cooperatively presupposing nothing. The principle of Sobornost asks us to consider the worth of institutions by how well they fulfill pragmatic human needs and consider all the factors in human life when designing new laws and institutions—rather than those which are simply valued by totalizing principle. We are also to look compassionately and with humility on differing ideas concerning authority and practices that we do not value or understand—in the knowledge that we do not know the answers and that all of our ideas are contingent to our time and place and will change with the ever present, unstoppable pressure of time.

There is only one way to salvation, and that is to make yourself responsible for all men’s sins. As soon as you make yourself responsible in all sincerity for everything and for everyone, you will see at once that this is really so, and that you are in fact to blame for everyone and for all things.159

159 Fitzpatrick, Sean, quoting Fyodor Dostoevsky in The Brothers Karamazov
Works Cited


Quoting Giovanni Gentile


Citing Friedrich Nietzsche in 'Beyond Good and Evil' p.118


Ecclesiastes 1:4


