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Contents

The Age of the Sporting, Soaplocks, and Separate Spheres

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Before starting a long night of gambling and smoking, a young man walks into the local saloon and orders a stiff whiskey with a sure voice and a heart beating rapidly from the excitement of wondering where the night will take him. Perhaps he will go place a bet on a bare-knuckle boxing match or get into a scrum himself. Perhaps he will end up in the warm embrace of a "celebrated nymph" he could procure from Mrs. Shannon's House at No. 74 West Broadway.[1] No matter his path, the night is certain to hold fast-paced excitement and constant stimulation so he can show his bravado. Although the year is 1840, this man isn't a gristly cowboy in the American West. This is a man on the border of a different frontier of antebellum America—New York City.

With the emergence of a new market economy in America, the process of industrialization spurred on increasing numbers of people to forsake their homes in rural areas in favor of the rapidly growing urban areas. This influx of new residents, influenced by changing ideologies and lifestyles, brought with it a population of young men eager to begin new lives. A new culture emerged around these men as they took up jobs as clerks and office workers. It was an exciting life rivaling that of the western pioneers and was full of

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[1] "Lives of the Nymphs," *Sunday Flash*, October 17, 1841, in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America* (Boston, MA: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006), 132.

gambling, gossip, girls, and gallons of whiskey. Who was this young man on the fast track? What were his interests and what filled his routine? Perhaps most important of all, what impact did the emergence of the new man have on urban society and the larger picture of American culture?

Editorials, news articles, and most fascinatingly advertisements all combine in a collage of details. The newspapers provide historians with basic information such as what jobs were available for young men, where they lived in the city, and what distractions they enjoyed. Further observation provides one with a look at the reason why they acted as they did within changing cultural norms. Lastly, one can see the larger impact these men had on urban and American culture at large as their actions reveal the evolving society around them. The young men infatuated with sporting culture were not one-dimensional, just as the lifestyle itself was multifaceted. Taking up the largely synonymous nicknames of rowdies, dandies, and soaplocks, the sporting culture was one that transcended class barriers. The lifestyle's hypermasculine aspects appealed to the poorest men in the Five Points to those in the emerging middle class who worked in respectable occupations. Understanding who the new city gentleman was may be crucial for a better understanding of not only the antebellum period, but our modern world as well. Echoes of the cultural changes brought about because of the role urban men played can still be felt today in our own social structure. It all owes itself to the emergence of the "sporting man."

The Market Revolution was the spark for huge changes in that, not only were people working in factories and offices, but they worked for wage labor. The hourly pay cycle opened the door for a new breed of worker who would eventually become the white-collar, middle-class employee. Abandoning the traditional apprenticeship custom, men entering the city looked for new jobs in offices. Perhaps one of the most common newly formed lines of work was that of the clerk. Young men sought out positions as clerks in

firms and offices across the city and supply was easily able to meet demand. As seen in an early 1840 advertisement for such positions in the *Morning Herald* of New York, numerous businesses posted clippings saying "Several smart, active young men and youths wanted; those who have had some experience in the business."[2] The white-collar worker can tie his roots back to the birth of the clerk position and, as revealed through similar advertisements that litter papers, it is clear that there was little shortage of positions for decent men. These ads appeal directly to the "active young men and youths" who began to flood the city. The eagerness of men to take on such roles would eventually lead to the development of immense cultural changes as well. However, while the daily jobs of young men in New York were influential on society, few of the active youths called for in ads would have agreed their lives revolved around their professions.

Although the gentlemen of the cities may have seemed tame in aspects of their choices of career, education, or home life, it is in their social life that some of the most distinguishing characteristics can be found. The allure of city life brought with it tantalizing distractions that provided an outlet for restless young men with earning power. As Amy Srebnick writes in *The Mysterious Death of Mary Rogers* "sporting culture served as the urban counterpart of the mythology of the frontier."[3] So-called because of its infatuation with sports of boxing and horse racing, the sporting culture emerged in full form in the 1830s. The city offered more than just careers or education to these men; it was an opportunity to be a part of something new. The metropolis tempted young men by providing a place that was seen as equally exciting and dangerous. Feeding off the energy of city life, many men became determined to not be defined by their occupation and instead find identity in their activi-

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[2] "Clerks Wanted," *Morning Herald*, New York, NY, 10 January 1840, col C.

[3] Amy Srebnick, *The Mysterious Death of Mary Rogers* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1995), 53.

ties and social life. Thus they developed their own forms of excitement in rambunctious, hyper-masculine ways. It was a chance to be involved in a brand new society, and for the men of the sporting culture, that meant unique amusements to keep one entertained.

For the average young man traveling to or living in the city the ideas of masculinity and proving one's virility through activities took on an almost mythical quality. However, such ideology was not specific to the cities. Throughout the antebellum period, one can find advertisements in papers detailing events and travels west. It is Srebnick again who says in her book that similar to the ideas of the frontier "this urban form championed the public display of aggression and featured an ethos dependent on rough behavior and male amusements."[4] Upon further observation the link between the West and the city become clear. Both were frontiers at the beginning of an era of unprecedented growth that would change America forever. Those who dared found themselves in an environment they were unfamiliar with and thus the setting bred a new man. The ideals of what it was to be masculine drove men to partake in entertainment sources based on violence such as boxing and lust, as seen in their fascination with brothels. Many of those involved in the sporting culture partook in the mass consumption of alcohol, other forms of gambling, and the purchasing of prostitutes. This was what it meant to be a true "sporting man."

For many, the desire to show one's sporting bravado was intermingled with political activism. Politics, as historian Elliot Gorn states, "offered a cluster of deeply satisfying symbols and rituals, affirming aggressive masculinity through displays of ethnic chauvinism or blustering nationalism."[5] Sporting culture was one that was deeply tied with fraternal ideals, thus lending itself to development of gangs such as

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[4]   Ibid

[5]   Elliot J. Gorn, "'Good-Bye Boys, I Die a True American': Homicide, and Working-Class Culture in Antebellum New York City," *The Journal of American History* 74 (Sept., 1987): 408.

the Irish Dead Rabbits or nativist Bowery Boys and, by ex-
tension, political organizations. Secret societies such as the
Order of the Star Spangled Banner soon became involved
in politics and the Order, later renamed the American Party
or the Know-Nothing Party, would go on to overtake the
Whigs as a major entity. The Know-Nothings were able to
attribute their success to the rampant anti-immigrant senti-
ment found in urban centers such as New York. The over-
whelming desire to prove one's masculinity often appeared
as a powder keg of tension that would violently explode.
As the Know-Nothings held a firm anti-immigrant and anti-
Catholic platform, their advocates took up arms—as seen
in an 1854 incident in which "a disgraceful fight was going
on between the hearers of a street preacher and a band of
men who are said to have been Irishmen."[6] The line between
gangs and political party supporters was often blurred but
was one that cut deep in the sporting culture.

While papers of the time worked overtime to portray na-
tivist young sports as either heralds of liberty or degraded
ruffians, historians' perception of the political importance of
sporting culture has developed to suggest that it was a life-
style which transposed many borders. Sporting culture was,
as Gorn claims, "an all-male subculture, deeply divided
along ethnic lines, yet embracing diverse individuals with
a shared set of values, behaviors, and ways of interacting."[7]
The young sport enjoyed the bare-knuckle boxing matches
imported by the Irish just as much as he loved the gambling
and saloon regime of the American West. Although their fi-
ery drive to prove their red-blooded masculinity was often
what pushed the men to battle each other in the city streets,
it was ultimately what also united them. However, gangs
and politics were not the only happenings that defined what
it was to be a young sport.

It was the nighttime activities of men in the city that were
highlighted the most in newspaper sections such as editori-

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[6] "Street Preachers and Riots," *The Weekly Herald*, New York, NY, 10 June 1854.

[7] Gorn, "Good-Bye Boys," 401.

als. A young sport could often be found late at night at one of New York's estimated 200 brothels.[8] An article from the *New York Herald* in 1844 went so far as to say, "Broadway is indeed nightly infested with rowdies and prostitutes, and that something ought to be done to check this evil."[9] It was the corruption from gentlemen to "rowdies" that many contemporaries feared and that they hoped something would be done about to pull such men away from the edge of promiscuity. While prostitution had long been a part of New York life, never before had it been so publicly discussed as during the 1830s and beyond. In 1831, an urban missionary named John R. McDowall published *The Magdalen Report* in which he warned of the dangers of the "ten thousand harlots" who turned the city into "a most appalling picture of moral degradation."[10] While Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz determines this to be a gross overestimate, the fact it was printed is revealing nevertheless. Not only was it significant in that it was so rare to find public discussions of topics pertaining to sexuality, but it likely helped spur the development of sporting culture. A young man from a rural area may have read the article and, imagining being surrounded by thousands of prostitutes, hopped on the next train to the city.

The first public discussions of sexual behavior were part of a larger trend brought on by the emergence of the penny press and increasing literacy rates across all classes. For men of the sporting culture, newspapers played a key role in their daily activities as the development of their lifestyle was intertwined with commercial advances. Nearly every paper contained a "Sporting" section with subjects such as the results of horse races. However, print media of the period also had a more vulgar side—as seen in the flash press. In papers such as *The Sunday Flash* and *The Whip*, editors detailed sports updates, characterized urban socialites, and

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[8]   Horowitz, ed, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America*, 126.

[9]   "Editorial," *New York Herald*, New York, NY, 24 January 1844, col E.

[10] John R McDowall, "The Magdalen Report," in Horowitz, ed, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America*, 127-8.

most prevalently chronicled the stories of women who became prostitutes. In one edition of *The Sunday Flash*, the sad story of Amanda Green's rape and subsequent turn to prostitution was told. The article depicted her as a victim: "May those who have not yet sinned, take warningfrom her example."[11] However, the editors never meant such statements to be the focus of their reports. Instead, the true message was revealed at the very end where the authors were sure to inform the reader that they could admire Miss Green's tall, full, and handsome features for themselves at Mrs. Shannon's, No. 74 West Broadway.[12] Thus, the deviance of their culture could not be quarantined thanks to societal developments such as the penny press.

What is perhaps most striking regarding the press's discussion of the late night activities of the rowdies was its portrayal of the young men. Instead of actively chastising the countless patrons of brothels, editors often portrayed *them* to be merely "unhappy victims of seduction." This is best exemplified in the rhetoric in the *Magdalen Report*, which warns of the "abandoned women" and "pollution" of such girls, and concludes with the statement that, "bad women multiply the seduction of heedless youth, more rapidly than bad men seduce modest women."[13] While popular culture of the period may have not approved of the subject matter in which young sports partook, it remained hesitant to directly criticize the men themselves and frequently blamed other groups such as women or immigrants for corrupting gentlemen into rowdies. A complex system of scapegoating emerged for nearly all aspects of sport culture. The activities the sporting men engaged in were not ones that lent themselves to what would be considered civil society today, and while not many crusaded against the sports themselves,

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[11] "Lives of the Nymphs," *Sunday Flash*, October 17, 1841, in Horowitz, ed, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America*, 132.

[12] Ibid.

[13] McDowall, "The Magdalen Report," in Horowitz, ed, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America*, 127-129.

there were numerous examples of people taking up arms against the culture as a whole.

It is perhaps more important to derive what one can learn from newspapers regarding why the men thought and acted the way they did. With the world changing around them at a rapid pace, the sporting culture was merely an offspring of the society that surrounded it. Historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz states in *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America* that "Sporting men made up a loose fellowship that sought pleasure and actively resisted pressures to conform to middle-class standards."[14] While it can be seen as a form of counter-culture of the period, the young sports were not immune to all the appeal of more mainstream aspects. The new crop of young men moving to the city had their choice regarding what aspects of the culture they wished to partake in. Despite the prevalence of sporting society, it was not one-dimensional and neither were the men who engaged in it. As the Market Revolution widened the gap between upper and lower classes, it also expanded the middle-class into a culture that often attempted to mimic aristocratic activities.

Events such as balls had reasonably priced admission and were frequently attended by stylish young men commonly referred to as "soaplocks"—so called because of the massive amount of oil and grease they used to curl the sides of their hair. These men would have loved nothing more than to attend something such as the Bachelors' Ball that the *New-York Morning Herald* detailed in February 1830, where "The company consisted of upwards of six hundred, about four hundred of whom were ladies, alike distinguished for their beauty and excellent taste in dress."[15] Advertisements for events such as this can be found littered in newspapers of the period. The admission cost is usually listed as only a few dollars, which was more than the lower class could afford, but perfect for middle and upper-middle class. It was

[14] Horowitz, ed, *Attitudes toward Sex in Antebellum America*, 23.

[15] "The Bachelors' Ball," *New-York Morning Herald*, New York, NY, 17 February 1830, col C.

the desire to follow trends of the elite that developed the class of gentlemen called "dandies" whom, like the soap-locks, were often clerks or some similar occupation. These men certainly would have cared that the ladies at the Bachelors' Ball were stylish, as they knew that they themselves were. As an advertisement for Genuine Buffalo Oil located in the *Morning Herald* in 1840 would proclaim, to the urban gentleman it was all about "The hair! The hair!! The hair!!!"[16]

As men and women moved to the city, boarding houses began popping up in order to easily accommodate the in-flow of ever-changing residents. For many young men, the boarding house was the perfect option to provide them with some semblance of structure and stability. Not only were vacancies easy to find, such lodgings provided the men with something they might have been missing. This is revealed in an 1838 advertisement in the *Morning Herald* in which a young man posted that he was in search of boarding and "would prefer living in a domestic circle, where he could enjoy the advantages of female society." The author goes on to state that he anticipated "Breakfast would be required every morning and tea occasionally."[17] The desire for some-thing familiar in an unfamiliar environment was powerful for the men who were largely on their own. What they were accustomed to and what society had made the norm would not be lost on them. Both men and women congregated in boarding houses to hold on to some resemblance of a fam-ily structure, even if the people were always coming and going. Those who came to the city and stayed at boarding houses were in it together for however long they were there. The notion that one was not completely alone in the big city gave comfort. However, ultimately the advertisement also speaks heavily about cultural expectations in addition to the structure of boarding houses. Yet for many older folk who looked upon the developing generation with growing un-ease, such structure seemed to remain inadequate.

[16] "The Hair! The Hair!! The Hair!!!", *Morning Herald*, New York, NY, 7 January 1840, col A.

[17] Horace, "Rooms Wanted," *Morning Herald*, New York, NY, 14 March 1838, col A.

With so many men coming of age in a world where the urban life was increasingly seen as dangerous, those outside of the sporting culture began to worry about what would become of the men emerging from juvenile stages without set directions. Because of the fact that there was such a large number of these young adults as well as the shifting perceptions of the cities, the people of New York saw fit to establish another university in 1830. The University of the City of New York was founded to educate the rapidly growing city—specifically those who, as one editorial in the *New-York Spectator* describes, were a "floating number of young men, who have not made choice of a profession or line of business, or who are waiting in a dangerous period of life, for the time when they are to engage in practical pursuits."[18] In a society where it was expected that young men would be the future leaders, editorials such as this tell of a city worried about the directions men at an extremely vulnerable age would take without the structure of education or occupation. The biggest fear was that the young men would somehow become corrupted by the city, whereas structured settings could provide for proper guidance.

In the changing culture of the period, there was another group that had a much different view on matters than those who followed sporting culture. With the development of a culture so rooted in excess and alcohol, one may have found the creation of the New-York Young Men's Temperance Society interesting. In seemingly direct opposition to the ideals of rowdies and other groups, a young man would have to make a decision about which path to take as he considered his future. In an 1835 article from the *New-York Spectator*, the author describes a society meeting in which there was posed a "spiritual and eloquent appeal to young men to come forward to sustain the [temperance] cause."[19] The fact that spiritual appeals worked for a portion of young men in the

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[18] "New University, No. II," *New-York Spectator*, New York, NY, 15 January 1830, col B.

[19] "New-York Young Men's Temperance Society," *New-York Spectator*, New York, NY, 02 March 1835, col D.

city means that at least some of them held on to something higher. This provides a stark contrast to those the group in the article stood against. However, what is most striking is the image the article provides of a young man choosing which path to follow. Whom a gentleman would decide to associate with and in what group he would include himself indicated where he saw himself inside the society of urban America. In the end however, the sporting culture remained largely unaffected by the temperance movements.

The emergence of sporting culture was not something that was solely affected by the world around it. Instead, it too became a major driving force in the development of American society beyond the boundaries of cities and extending through time outside the 19th century to still resonate in modern day. Perhaps there was no greater impact the urban man had on broader American culture than the growth of separate gendered spheres and modern gender roles. As men both married and single left their residences to go to the office for work, society saw an increasing distance between the roles of men and women. This can be seen plainly in the advertisements for women's jobs such as one seen in a 1845 classifieds section in *The New York Herald* where employers sought a "respectable young girl as chambermaid or childmaid in a private Protestant family."[20] This advertisement provides a telling look at the demand for different types of female labor, particularly when compared to the "Clerks Wanted" ad referenced earlier. The male sphere was increasingly believed to be in the world outside the home while the female domain remained confined within the walls of their brownstone. While the want ads for men relate to clerks and other jobs that would take them out of the house, the only occupations for young women other than factory work were ones that were related to housework.

For many women, their only and most important job was that of the savior of their husband's morality in the face of the outside world. As observed with the growing tem-

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[20] "Wanted," *The New York Herald*, New York, NY, 20 August 1845, col B.

perance societies and proclaimed need for another higher educational institution, upper society feared changes like a growing urban population and wage labor would create a generation that would drive the country to ruin. It then fell upon housewives to be the last line of defense in protecting the souls of their husbands. In 1851, Emma Ball published an article in *Godey's Lady Book* stating "the perfection of womanhood…is the wife and mother, the center of the family, that magnet that draws man to the domestic altar, that makes him a civilized being."[21] This idealization of women as harbingers of the virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity created a standard to which most middle-class white women adhered to—that of true womanhood and the cult of domesticity. Thus it was in response to the growth of sporting culture that women were impressed with the duty of countering the lifestyle young sports loved.

As men left for their white-collar jobs, they entered their own sphere separate from that of women. This difference was also shaped by and shaped a new, uniquely masculine sporting culture. This was the development of men as the "breadwinners" of the family, a role that American society has largely clung to ever since. Such a designation was important, even for single men. Unmarried men in the city were constantly on watch for young women they could potentially woo. This can be observed in the article on the Bachelors' Ball referenced earlier in which out of six hundred attendants, four hundred were young women. Information like this highlights the importance of events like balls for finding suitable partners. Of course, there were plenty of other opportunities to interact with women, as brothels and prostitution were a cornerstone of the culture. However, the chance to meet a woman whom one might eventually call a wife remained the ultimate goal. No matter how fast or exciting a young sport's life was, he still longed for the opportunity to return home after work to a clean parlor and a lovely, submissive wife.

[21] Emma Ball, "Let Well Enough Alone," *Godey's Lady Book*, Vol. 42 (1851).

As America made the gradual transition from agriculture-based society to an industrial one, it brought with it the birth of a new culture. Although the long process of industrialization wouldn't be fully realized for another half century, the antebellum period witnessed the beginnings of a new urban society. Dismissing the conservative propaganda of the dangerous cities and the corruption that ran rampant through them, brave men and women immersed themselves in a new society at the start of the Market Revolution. This was a man who entered a world unknown in search of a new form of career under wage labor. This man lived in a boarding house because he desired remnants of a familiar structure while being provided with the excitement of new company. He engaged in gambling on everything from horse races to cock fighting, earning the name of a "Young Sport." Eventually faced a moral decision based on whom he associated himself with. Did he join the rowdies and soaplocks by engaging in drunken behavior and acquaintances with loose women? Did he join a newly formed temperance society targeted at men his age? Or did he float somewhere in the middle? No matter his choice, this man cared about four things: style, career, honor, and excitement

The advent of popular press and rapidly increasing literacy rates of the antebellum period lend themselves to providing historians with numerous sources with which to explore the psyche of the new breed of urban man. In the end, they depict a type of man who defied simple definition but would help define American life. It can certainly be said that the urban world around these young men molded them into what they became. However, it is particularly significant to say that the culture the young men produced themselves played a more meaningful role in shaping the American society and identity. The echoes of their influence can still be heard to this day and the biography of the young sport is forever etched in stone in antebellum newspapers.

"The One Bright Spot Where All Else is Dark and Hopeless:" Images of Class, Race, and Culture in Britain's Imperial Education System During the Nineteenth Century[1]

Jeff Grooms

One of the more timeless characters of late-Victorian Britain, Charles Marlow of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, said the following to his crew as they sailed down the Thames: "And this also has been one of the dark places of the earth." Marlow's statement is reference to the Roman conquest of ancient Britain, during which time the Roman conquerors, he notes, "were men enough to face the darkness."[2] Conrad's juxtapositions throughout *Heart of Darkness* – of Ancient London and Victorian Africa, of Ancient Roman and Victorian Briton – form a central theme of the work, reminding Marlow's crew, and the reader, that 'darkness' and 'barbarism' are relative to the one's definition of 'light' and 'civilization.' If Rome defined Britain as a land of 'barbaric

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[1]   Frank Nevill, *Original Papers Relating to West Africa*, vol. IOR/L/PJ/3/1371 (London: British Library), 48.

[2]   Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Blackwood's Magazine, 1899), Ch. 1.

darkness,' as Conrad argues, was such 'darkness' a *result* of Rome's comparison, or did it exist prior to Roman interest? In the same vein, was Africa a 'Heart of Darkness' because of European intervention, or in spite of it?

Such questions and comparisons offer commentary on Victorian attitudes towards non-western civilization, a topic often dichotomized, as Conrad does in *Heart of Darkness*, into a contrast of 'dark' versus 'light.' This dichotomy, central to the imperial ideologies of the late-nineteenth century, is rooted firmly in Britain's imperial history, Enlightenment notions of progress common to the western world, and the ethnocentric vision of Anglo-Saxon superiority. In short, the juxtaposition of 'darkness' and 'light' – or civilization and barbarism – is a common feature of the domestic and imperial histories of education throughout the nineteenth century.

Though color and shades of 'darkness' are generally associated with depictions of racial difference, color is more often used as an indicator of perceived civilization and/or literacy in the context of education. Such values, though often connected to race, were not exclusive to it: 'darkness' could be applied over a wide range of social divisions, including class, religious difference, language, and geographic location. Taken together, these social divisions, and the language of civilization that unites them, are essential to understanding the behaviors and goals of educationists, and the outcomes of their policies, during the mid-nineteenth century. To explore these issues, this paper outlines the ideologies that underpin the language of education, and the relationship between this language and educational policy at home and abroad. These topics illustrate that the abstraction of 'civilization,' and the themes of 'darkness' and 'light' that surround it, are an essential part of how nineteenth century sociocultural relations should be studied.

The Enlightenment-influenced dichotomy of 'darkness' versus 'light' is built upon the assumption that 'civilization' is a quantity that can be studied, compared against a stan-

dardized (objective) value, and transferred across cultural and social barriers regardless of preexisting commonalities. The latter element of this assumption – transference – was of preeminent concern during the nineteenth century, as it was through transfer that the worth of a 'civilization' could truly be measured. Such a transfer could occur gradually as a result of extended cultural contact and trade, or via more direct means such as formal schooling. While the former was championed by some as a sign of Britain's civilizational preeminence abroad, political events and proto-sociological studies in early-nineteenth century Britain highlighted that informal measures were failing to spread Britishness at home, particularly amongst the lower classes. Chartist agitation, fears of nascent Jacobinism, and the unfathomable depths of cultural ignorance revealed by official education reports combined to paint an image of Britain not unlike that produced by ancient Rome. As a consequence of this, Britain's rural and lower-class populations were relegated to the civilizational 'darkness' many political elites had previously reserved for those outside of Britain. Such cultural segregation was largely a defensive measure – many elite Britons made clear their aversion to being associated with the 'barbarism' of working-class Britain – yet it was also an offensive tool: 'darkness' was an unnatural and dangerous attribute that, if not dismissible indirectly, must be actively expunged.

While conversion and evangelism remained important elements of British civilization, education overcame exclusively-religious activities as the primary catalyst of state-sponsored civilization during the mid-nineteenth century. Education – be it moral, academic, or technical – was believed the most practical, justifiable, and economic means of government intervention. Britain's imperial experiences in Africa, Ireland, and elsewhere compounded this belief in education as a civilizational tool, as it was a model that could be readily adapted to the myriad cultures over which it governed without overly offending religious, ethnic, or

social traditions. An example of this occurred on August 23, 1848, when *The Times* published the following editorial on Irish state-funded education:

> The System of National Education established in Ireland in 1831-32, under Lord Stanley's auspices, is the one bright spot where all else is dark and hopeless enough. Could we believe that twenty years hence the distinguishing characteristics of Irishmen would be changed, we should make up our minds to pull through with the present generation as best we might.[3]

This editorial, an attempted validation of the virtues of direct state intervention versus the problems inherent in private enterprise, is indicative of the typical trajectory of debates on education in the nineteenth century, debates which were generally built around – or against – Liberal ideology. Private initiative in education was championed by many Liberals as the most financially-prudent, and therefore politically-responsible means of disseminating public knowledge, as the social value of literacy could be directly traced to its economic value in terms of school rates, subscriptions, and teacher salaries. If a community valued education, so the argument went, it would support a quality school; if not, the school would suffer and, if unpopular enough, be disbanded, much like a poorly-managed business. Though this argument was popular, a growing body of politicians, many of whom aligned with liberalism in other ways, rejected this notion, arguing instead that public education was, in the absence of effective private initiative, the state's obligation.

The concept of 'state obligation' was built on Adam Smith's theories linking education and moral economics, many of which were ignored by staunch economic liberals due to their implications for the expansion of state author-

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[3] Frank Nevill, *Original Papers Relating to West Africa*, vol. IOR/L/PJ/3/1371 (London: British Library), 48

ity. Smith believed that the state was responsible for the intellectual standing of its population, as some amount of education was prerequisite to an individual's productive role in a free society. In keeping with the pragmatism of capitalism, Smith explains that such education should be practical in purpose, and based on "essential education" instead of "a little smattering of Latin."[4] Education was the catalyst, therefore, for an individual's ability to respect the inherent values of liberalism, especially property, even if state-funded education threatened to increase the social responsibilities of the government. This argument assisted in the political defeat of the staunchly-*laissez faire* arguments of economic liberals, and played a key role in the creation of state-funded education policies for Ireland in 1831 and England in 1839.

Though Smithian liberalism was useful for its pragmatic, political value, it was also an early source of metaphor regarding color, specifically 'darkness' and 'light.' When describing the relationship between education, religion and morality, Smith noted that illiterate people could not be effective members of society, as they were, in Smith's words, still locked in the "ignorance and darkness of pagan superstition" created by past cultures.[5] Smith's mention of religion links his argument to the dichotomy between 'darkness' and 'light' employed in the context of Christian evangelization. Evangelism and parochial education relied heavily on the metaphorical link between conversion and 'light,' each interchangeable with 'civilization' and/or 'enlightenment' as descriptions of missionary purpose and Ecclesiastic education. An example of this link comes from Dr. Chalmers, an official involved in the education debate in Ireland in 1854:

> It is not to turn an operative [student] into a capitalist, it is to turn an ignorant operative into

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[4] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), 372

[5] Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: A. Millar, 1759), 144; see also *The Oxford Handbook of Adam Smith* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2013), 477.

a learned operative– to stamp upon him the worth and the respectability of which I contend he is fully susceptible, though he rise not by a single inch above the sphere of life in which he now moves– to transform him into a reflective and accomplished individual: not to hoist, as it were, the great ponderous mass of society up into the air, where it would have no foundation to support it; but supposing that mass to be stationary on its present basis, to diffuse through it the light both of common and of Christian intelligence.[6]

Here, the relationship between Smithian and religious views on education is apparent: the utility of education is coupled with the virtue of 'Christian intelligence,' each built around the imagery of 'light' and the belief that elementary education was a revelatory process not unlike that of religious conversion. Narrative descriptions of this process of 'education as conversion' are common throughout the reports on elementary schools during the mid-nineteenth century, many of which, it should be noted, were provided to the state by clergymen and other religious officials. For example, in 1843 Rev. F.C. Cook visited schools in Kensington, at which he recorded the following change in the behavior of the students:

> Their countenances had undergone a change, the light of intelligence was kindled in their eyes; and the discipline, which at first could hardly be maintained with severity and unrelaxing attention, was this time evidently preserved by the influence of the master and, and of those children who had been long enough in

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[6] *Annual Report of Irish National Education, vol. II* (Dublin: Commissioners of Irish National Education, 1854), 124.

the school to feel both deference and affection for him.[7]

Such a conversion, as optimistically-envisioned by educationists like John Allen below, would move beyond simple behavioral changes and become the basis of a total elimination of the perceived defects of the working class:

> While education is not meant to raise the working classes above their condition, it may greatly multiply the comforts which they enjoy in it. It may preserve them from exchanging light, clean, and cheerful cottages for comfortless cellars; it may give them better clothes, better food, and better health; it may deck their windows with fairer flowers; spread cleaner linens on their tables, and adorn their dwellings with more convenient furniture...If in this way education may make the working classes happier, it is equally certain it may make them better; it may teach them to show civility to passing strangers instead of treating them with rudeness...It may further inspire them with loyalty to the Queen, and with love to their country; raise them above the temptation of a bribe in the exercise of any political rights which they may possess, and separate them from those who would seek any supposed amelioration of the laws by the methods of violence and injustice.[8]

Here, we see the grand ideals of mid-century educationists at work: the educated, working-class Briton is an effective, loyal contributor to British prosperity, freed from temptation towards vice and keen to understand, and appreci-

[7] *Minutes for the Committee of Council on Education, 1843-1844, vol. ED 17/7, National Archives, Kew* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1845), 71.

[8] *Minutes for the Committee of Council on Education, 1840-1841, vol. ED 17/4, National Archives, Kew* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1841), 73-4.

ate, the importance of social deference and manners. Such a transformation links together Smith's focus on economic value with Christian/Liberal concerns regarding religious and personal morality, the sum of which is best exemplified by Allen's figurative exchange of the 'comfortless cellar' with the 'light, clean, and cheerful cottage.'

Innumerable examples of the 'transformation' model can be found in texts on British education during the nineteenth century, each built on similar rhetoric, and goals, as that of Allen above. Though less descriptive than Allen's excerpt, another example comes from the *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette* in 1884:

> The darkness of ignorance is about to be dissipated [in Sunderland]. The day of intellectual culture for Sunderland is at hand. It is saddening to think how long the inhabitants of this town have groped in the dark.[9]

The themes present in these examples were popular, and widely used, because of their adherence to the positivist, optimistic belief in gradual self-improvement: positive change is viewed in each as the unavoidable consequence of literacy and improved morality, the two primary goals of the intellectual and religious improvement of Britain's working class.

If education had its own scale of 'darkness' and 'light,' so too did religion: for many Britons, adherence to any non-Protestant faith was a symptom, or cause, of 'darkness' not unlike that of gross academic ignorance. The most common examples of this emanated from the contrast of Anglicanism with Catholicism, a division as political for most Britons as it was theological. Ireland, by virtue of being predominantly Catholic, was the region most commonly condemned in Britain for religious 'darkness,' as seen in Stephen Dickson's 1792 *Essay on a System of National Education*:

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[9]   *Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette,* Friday, 4th January, 1884.

> Latin is learned by the poor of Ireland with a very different view from that of illuminating their intellect by a ray from the effulgence of ancient Rome. Their sole aim is to qualify themselves for the darkness of modern Rome. They aspire to be selected for the priesthood, and repair from their hovels to some hedge-school-master in eager quest of the little smattering of ecclesiastical language which he can afford them, and in full expectation of being sent abroad with a stipend and returning to enjoy that indolence, and that controul [sic] over the minds of their brethren, which too often mark our vulgar clergy.[10]

Dickson's disdain for Ireland's Catholic clergy is clear, as is his fear of the 'hedge school' and its potentially anti-British influence over the people of Ireland. With the Act of Union in 1801, this relationship became an issue of domestic politics, and Catholicism a key fixture of Anglo-Irish political relations, particularly with regards to the Test Act (and its repeal in 1828) and the establishment of Ireland's national system of education in in the 1830s. While the former issue created a great amount of immediate controversy, the latter was a source of heated debate up to Ireland's independence, as the core features of Ireland's national education system were religious neutrality and 'united classrooms' for pupils of different faiths. Such an arrangement, though theoretically neutral, was believed by Protestants to give too much authority to Ireland's vast Catholic majority, leading some to call for a return to a divided system that would protect Protestant children. Some Protestants, however, like Richard Whately, Archbishop of the Church of Ireland, focused on the merits of the united system, noting its proselytizing potential:

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[10] Stephen Dickson, "Essay on a System of National Education, Adapted to Ireland," *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* Vol. 4 (1792), 31.

> The reading of the Bible...without any explanation to the children...whether well or ill-founded, would find its way, in addition to all the other topics calculated to foment political and religious animosity, into the separate Roman Catholic Schools, supported by their share of the government grant [of education in Ireland]. And what chance would then remain of the Irish peasantry ever being enlightened, conciliated, and reclaimed from ferocious barbarism?[11]

For Whately, the threat of Catholic influence was outweighed by his own belief that association with, and conversion to Protestantism would be the only means for Catholic students to escape the 'darkness and barbarism' of their faith. Such sentiments engendered hostility amongst Irish Catholics, leading many of them to similarly fear *Protestant* influence on the national education system.

The linkage of religious difference, morality, and education in Ireland explains why the dichotomy of 'darkness' and 'light' was employed so frequently during discussions of Ireland's national education system by both supporters and detractors. Opposite Dickson's above-mentioned argument lamenting indigenous Irish education, *The Nation*, an Irish newspaper, published the following editorial in favor of indigenous education in December, 1855:

> Let us never forget, though the thoughtless and the unpatriotic may sneer at it as an idle folly, that Ireland was at one time a lamp amid the darkness – that when the whole continent of Europe was plunged in the thickest gloom, and even Italy had lapsed into barbarism, there were

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[11] Ibid., 12-13, 17; St. Patrick's Cathedral, *Memorial of the Dean & Chapter of St. Patrick's of Dublin* (London: B. Fellowes, 1832).

lights of splendid lustre and pure flame burning
on Irish altars and in Irish shrines.[12]

Such debates carried on throughout the nineteenth century,
shaping not just the trajectory of Irish national education,
but also, as this quote foreshadows, the language and his-
torical roots of modern Irish nationalism.

Just as Anglican-Catholic hostility was one of Britain's
most conflicted domestic relationships in the nineteenth
century, so too was religious tension a key element of Brit-
ain's overseas experience. As with the examples above, the
connection between religious conversion and academic
education is paramount, particularly in regions like West
Africa, where missionaries dominated Britain's overseas
education efforts in the early nineteenth century. These mis-
sionaries, provided by groups such as the Church Mission-
ary Society (CMS), began to operate in West Africa in the
wake of Britain's abolition of the slave trade in 1807, and its
inauguration of an official process of 'repatriation' of slaves
to Sierra Leone. Many abolitionist societies viewed Chris-
tianization and education as the fulfillment of Britain's new-
found promise to repatriated Africans, thus allowing for the
use of abolitionist and Christian arguments in the context of
overseas education. In 1818, for example, the Church Mis-
sionary Society issued the following instructions to Mr. and
Mrs. Morgan, Taylor, and Bull, new recruits for missionary
work in Sierra Leone:

> Yet yours is a far nobler mission–a mission of
> mercy and love–not to kill, but to save men's
> lives–not a victory of man over man, but of the
> Children of Light over the Prince of Darkness...

> The situation of the Colony of Sierra Leone...
> presents a danger, which, having already im-
> pressed the minds of some of the Missionaries,

[12] *The Nation*, December 22nd, 1855.

it is right should be mentioned to you. The Negroes are just rising from barbarism into civilization, from total ignorance even of the common arts of life into some degree of knowledge; and this has been much owing, under the kind protection and assistance of his Excellency the Governor, to the labours of the Society's Missionaries. But do not mistake civilization for conversion. Do not imagine, when Heathens are raised in intellect, in the knowledge of the arts, in dress and outward decency, above their fellow-countrymen, that therefore they are Christians...[13]

These instructions illustrate that the CMS was well aware of the necessity of combining education with conversion, and though these endeavors were interdependent, one did not necessarily lead to the other.

The potential danger of education without conversion (in other words, academic knowledge without moral training) was worth the risks outlined by the CMS, as most missionaries were convinced that the 'Prince of Darkness,' noted above, could not be removed from West Africa without them. The following excerpt, from a letter written by Rev. Frank Nevill, a CMS missionary to the Gold Coast in 1886, illustrates that this sentiment persisted well into the late-nineteenth century:

> "The darkness of the people is heavy, if the native Pastors and missionaries are to be trained well and are to be able to instruct the people, combatting this darkness, they must have the right men to do it. It will be long before the superstitions and darkness of mind are thrown off

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[13] Church Missionary Society, *Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, 1818-1819* (London: L.B. Seeley, 1819), 227-228.

by even the leaders, so they must have the best helpers it is possible to get."[14]

Nevill's conceptualization of 'darkness' paints it to be an entropic force that must be continually 'combatted' through the civilizing catalysts of education and conversion. Failure would not, therefore, simply result in the cessation of education or conversion, but rather the gradual relapse of the educated and/or converted African to their 'natural' state of barbarism. Fears of relapse and 'natural barbarism' were common themes in many of the discussions of education in West Africa, particularly with regards to repatriated slaves and westernized Africans. Historian Raymond Tong discusses this in his 1958 work *Figures in Ebony*:

> [the African] is himself completely entangled in this intermixture of opposing cultures. He remains truly a man of two worlds, anxiously absorbing all things new, feverishly groping for the white man's 'know-how,' yet never quite able to free himself from the compelling forces of his environment and the dark inheritance of his fore-fathers.[15]

Tong's argument connects the metaphoric notion of 'darkness as ignorance' illustrated above with the racial component of 'blackness as ignorance,' a corollary that is both impossible to ignore in the literature of this period and, historiographically, an essential link that binds together the education narratives of Britain and Africa during the nineteenth century. 'Darkness,' in its racial definition, *was* associated with ignorance, though its academic definition was not inherently static – in other words, it was believed that the educated African could overcome the 'darkness' of ig-

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[14] Nevill, *Original Papers Relating to West Africa*, Letter 6.

[15] Raymond Tong, *Figures in Ebony* (Benin: Cassell, 1958), 86; Dorothy Hammond, and Alta Jablow, *The Africa That Never Was: Four Centuries of British Writing About Africa* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 131.

norance *in spite* of unchanging racial features. Such a belief was part of Sir G. R. Collier's Report to the CMS of 1824, in which he states:

> the intellectual condition of the African is not to be despised...among them [are] men of great strength of mind and quick perceptions. In a general sense it is even asserted that the intellectual powers of the African are as rich as the soil of his country, and, with the same attention, could be made as fertile. Some who have received even a narrow education in England, have evinced proofs of a quick and extensive genius, and, with few exceptions, have not only become useful members of, but ornaments to, society.[16]

The racial dimension of 'ignorance as darkness' becomes more complex when the language of education in West Africa is compared to that of the British Isles. A striking British example is found in an October, 1862 editorial in the satirical magazine *Punch* entitled "The Missing Link." Playing on popular stereotypes of the Irish, as well as the popularity of Darwinian language, this editorial issues the following description:

> A creature manifestly between the Gorilla and the Negro is to be met with in some of the lowest districts of London and Liverpool by adventurous explorers. It comes from Ireland, whence it has contrived to migrate; it belongs in fact to a tribe of Irish savages: the lowest species of the Irish Yahoo.[17]

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[16] G.R. Collier, and Charles MacCarthy, *West-African Sketches: Compiled From the Reports of Sir G.R. Collier, Sir Charles MacCarthy and Other Official Sources* (London: Seeley and Son, 1824), 22.

[17] "The Missing Link." *Punch*, 18th October, 1862.

While *Punch* was often satirical, its depiction of 'Irish as savage' was directly linked to the popular association of the Irish with idleness, Catholic treachery, and academic ignorance, features which so appalled Charles Kingsley in 1860 that, in a letter to his wife, he stated,

> I am haunted by the human chimpanzees I saw along that hundred miles of horrible country [in Ireland]...to see white chimpanzees is dreadful; if they were black, one would not feel it so much, but their skins, except where tanned by exposure, are as white as ours.[18]

Here again the issue of race comes to the fore: the Irishman, by virtue of his lightness of skin and perceived lack of civilization, is believed *worse* by comparison to the 'blackness' of the African, the latter believed understandably uncivilized by virtue of the association between physical blackness and ignorance.

These issues are muddled further when depictions of the Briton (specifically the Saxon, as distinct from the Anglo-Saxon) are condemned as 'dark' by the political and intellectual elites of Britain in spite of the accepted racial links between the two groups. In 1848 Joseph Fletcher, Inspector of Schools, issued a report on the education and morality of Britain, the results of which were illustrated as maps shaded with various gradients of light and dark. Fletcher's report, condemnatory of the majority of the population of England and Wales, offers a powerful example of the connection between 'darkness,' ignorance, and immorality:

> From the southern part of this region, too, a dark shade, which we find reproduced in almost every branch of delinquency, extends

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[18] Perry L. Jr. Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1971), 84. See also, Mary J. Hickman, *Religion, Class and Identity: The Irish in Britain: The State, the Catholic Church and the Education of the Irish in Britain*, Research in Ethnic Relations (Wiltshire: Avebury, 1997), 49.

over the south midland and eastern agricultural counties, marking especially with those which have light domestic manufactures in the cottages of the poor, and attaining its darkest hue over Buckinghamshire. A medium tint occupies all the counties which lie between the metropolis and the English Channel. And although a darker tint is carried northward, along the course of mining and manufacturing industry, in Stafford, Salop, Cheshire, and Lancashire, yet in one only does there occur a darker tint than that of the medium southern counties between London and the Channel. This one is Cheshire, which stands alone it its inky blackness in every moral characteristic...[19]

Fletcher concludes his analysis with his discussion of "the darkest region of all," the south-midlands, noting,

In this map will be seen the general prevalence of a dark shade of crime as of ignorance over the intensely Saxon population extending from Dorsetshire to Norfolk...amidst which is projected a darker tint wherever manufacturing industry, accompanied by greater ignorance, prevails.[20]

Fletcher's arguments solidify the relationship between 'darkness' and ignorance posited by this paper, and, as such, lead to the following question: if 'darkness' is an issue of ignorance, and not necessarily race alone, how then should the language of race and 'darkness' be interpreted in the context of British history?

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[19] *Minutes for the Committee of Council on Education, 1848-1850 (Volume II), vol. ED 17/12, National Archives, Kew* (London: William Clowes and Sons, 1850), 302.

[20] Ibid, 313.

Ignorance and immorality were the essential metrics by which an individual's sociocultural standing were determined in nineteenth century Britain. As such, the historiography of the British Empire must incorporate education into discussions of racial, cultural, and class difference, as education was more influential on the nuances of imperial hierarchy than is traditionally allowed. This is not to say that education is more or less important than race, class, or culture in said hierarchy, but rather that education was a uniquely dynamic and variable element. On one hand, one's level of education could change over time based on self-improvement, unlike the static nature of racial and cultural categorization. On the other hand, it was socially-acceptable and encouraged to improve one's education, unlike the improvement of one's class. Education rested uneasily in the middle-ground between class, race, and culture, as it was seen as a vehicle for civilization, obedience, and self-improvement during a period in which Britain's social hierarchies were being strained and tested like never before. In the words of an Irish prelate interviewed in 1814 by the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Education, these factors made education "all the difference between wild beasts and useful animals, all the distinction between the Hottentot and the European, between the savage and the man."[21] As shown in this paper, such differences and distinctions are built around the symbolic language of 'darkness' and 'light,' terms employed by the inspectors and observers of education to justify their own mission, and to distance themselves from those they aimed to 'civilize.' 'Darkness' and 'light' are, in short, representative of the most common symbolic imagery employed in sources on education, difference, and sociocultural hierarchy during the nineteenth century.

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[21] *Report of a Committee to the Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor of Ireland* (London: John Jones, 1814), 49.

Reagan, Thatcher, and the Diplomacy of SDI

Tim Anglea

Cold War historians have long debated the role played by President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) in Cold War diplomacy, with a central question being whether SDI encouraged or discouraged arms control negotiations. Jack Matlock, a member of Reagan's National Security Council and Ambassador to the Soviet Union, believed that SDI presented both a "stimulus and stumbling block" in negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union.[1] John Gaddis, on the other hand, contends that SDI encouraged internal Soviet reforms, reinvigorated arms negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, and hastened the disintegration of the Soviet Union by exposing its political and economic deficiencies.[2] Whether one believes that SDI accelerated or hindered Cold War negotiations, it clearly changed the nature of US anti-Soviet containment policies, and even the entire debate between the two superpowers. Reagan's goals for SDI, as I will show in my argument, can be further illuminated by an analysis of the way the US allies, and Reagan's closest NATO member, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher

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[1] Jack F. Matlock, Jr. *Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended* (New York: Random House, 2004), 59.

[2] John Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 44-45.

perceived the project and its potential impact on East-West relations. The presumptive unilateralism of Reagan's initiative did not necessarily result in a predominantly bipolar debate between the two superpowers, especially at a time of almost equal diplomatic reassertion, and an accelerating integration process of America's Western European allies.

This article utilizes new sources released through the *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* and The National Archives of the United Kingdom, which contain an extensive record of correspondence by the prime minister on most international issues. While the sources necessarily approach SDI from a British perspective, they also detail wider European opinion towards Reagan's initiative. Both Thatcher and other NATO allies shared many of the same questions and concerns regarding SDI. How would SDI impact arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union? Would SDI lead to a decoupling of the United States from Europe? And, most importantly, would the adoption of SDI undercut NATO's traditional strategy of nuclear deterrence?

Reagan's Audacious Dream

On 23 March 1983, President Reagan surprised his administration, his NATO allies, and the rest of the world by outlining a plan to create an antiballistic missile (ABM) shield for the United States, which came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). While Reagan firmly placed SDI in the future, describing his decision as "a new hope for our children in the 21st century" and "one that may not be accomplished before the end of this century," he also provided insights into how he planned to use SDI in his diplomacy with the Soviet Union.[3] He believed that SDI "could pave the way for arms control measures to eliminate the weapons themselves."[4] Reagan assured the public and his European allies that the United States would continue

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[3] Ronald Reagan, "Address to the Nation on Defense and National Security," 23 March 1983, Washington D.C. *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum.* http://www.reagan.utexas edu/archives/speeches/1983/32383d.htm (Accessed 23 November 2014).

[4] Ibid.

to operate under the strategy of deterrence upheld by the idea of mutually assured destruction (MAD), but registered his opinion that MAD represented "a sad commentary on the human condition."[5] He thus sought to establish a defense program based on saving lives through SDI rather than avenging them under MAD. While Reagan believed that SDI would allow the United States to negotiate from a position of strength and create greater incentives for the Soviet Union to negotiate arms reductions, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe worried that SDI could disrupt negotiations and create instability in NATO if taken beyond the research phase. SDI thus reveals the different foundations on which Reagan and Thatcher based their foreign policies, and their respective views on the correlations between idealism and realism in international relations. Reagan understood Thatcher's strong will in international relations and her willingness to disagree with him. He thus sought to secure Thatcher's acceptance, if not approval, on SDI in order to curtail any inter-alliance disagreement. If he could not secure Thatcher's support, the prospects for wider NATO acceptance of SDI would be bleak.

While Reagan clearly based SDI on an ideal, a nuclear weapon free future, he also believed that SDI could operate in the realm of realpolitik by quelling domestic discontent with the current level of arms control and bringing the Soviets to the negotiating table. Reagan notified Thatcher of his planned research into SDI just hours before his speech to the American people. In his letter, he assured the Prime Minister that "there is no near-term alternative to the maintenance of strong ready forces to deter the Soviet Union."[6] However, in order to address the increasing domestic pressure for a nuclear freeze and arms control negotiations, he believed that an alternative to MAD needed to be pursued.

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ronald Reagan to Margaret Thatcher, 23 March 1983. *Margaret Thatcher Foundation* (MTF hereafter), docid=131533 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

The president stated that most of the domestic criticism "is based upon fear which itself, rises from the perception that we apparently have no alternative to the perpetual building of more and more offensive weapons."[7] The alternative defense narrative presented by SDI, saving lives instead of avenging lives, could thus, with one stroke, quell domestic opposition to the nation's nuclear policy and provide the president with room to negotiate with the Soviets from a position of strength. However, Reagan would also need his allies' support for SDI to present a united front in any negotiations with the Soviet Union. He thus tried to address the concerns he expected from his closest European ally prior to his public announcement. The thoughts he offered to his friend and ally in London were meant to reassure as much as to reassert his heartfelt convictions: stated, "Are we going to a fortress America? --the president wrote in his letter -- Do we intend to violate the ABM Treaty in any way or depart from our commitments to allies? Are we going for a first strike capability? All of these notions are of course utter nonsense."[8] Whether Thatcher would consider these prospects nonsense or take them seriously, calling for a different path to negotiate with the Soviets was indeed the main issue.

President Reagan had his own take on realism: he believed that one advantage of SDI would be to allow the United States to negotiate with the Soviet Union from a position of strength, a point he made clear to Thatcher during a meeting in September 1983. While the discussion centered on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF), he also elaborated on his own view of arms control. He stated that "the main reason the Russians were at the negotiating table in Geneva was the build-up of American defences."[9] The Russians would respond to force, not reason. Reagan relayed to the British premier that if the Soviets "saw that the United

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Conversation between Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, 29 September 1983, 5. MTF, docid=128206 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

States had the will and the determination to build-up its defences as far as necessary, the Soviet attitude might change because they knew that they could not keep pace."[10] Consequentially, "when it was fully borne in upon the Soviet leadership that they could not match the American arms build-up they might conclude that it was better to negotiate in an attempt to retain parity" since "the Russians were now close to the limit in their expenditure on defence."[11] On the other hand, Reagan asserted that "the United States… had the capacity to double its military output."[12] He thus sought "to convince Moscow that the only way it could remain equal was by negotiation."[13] SDI would play a crucial role in bringing the Soviets to the negotiating table, but Reagan determined not to "trade our S.D.I. off for some Soviet offer of weapon reductions."[14]

However, questions remained within the Reagan administration itself concerning the nature of SDI. As Frances Fitzgerald records in her critical account of Reagan's SDI program, "Behind Reagan and his 'dream' of a shield against missiles and a non-nuclear world, the two warring factions within the administration pursued separate and contradictory agendas and fought for control over policy."[15] George Shultz, Reagan's secretary of state, learned of the proposed SDI initiative shortly before the president's planned address to the nation on the subject. He rushed to make changes to the president's speech, adding portions that addressed his concerns with the project. Shultz "favored the R and D effort but objected to the total lack of attention to our strategic doctrine and to our obligations under the ADM Treaty."[16]

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid., 6.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ronald Reagan, *The Reagan Diaries*, vol. 1, ed. by Douglas Brinkley (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 352.

[15] Frances Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 17.

[16] George P. Shultz, *Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State* (New York: Scribner's, 1993), 251.

He ultimately supported SDI as it "provided a potent argument against the increasingly forceful nuclear freeze movement–and against those who argued that the Reagan administration was heedlessly taking the nation down the path to nuclear disaster."[17]

However, Shultz, too, supported SDI for its value to negotiations with the Soviet Union. Shultz asserted that "the Strategic Defense Initiative in fact proved to be the ultimate bargaining chip. And we played it for all it was worth."[18] While Shultz emphasized the diplomatic role played by SDI, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger viewed SDI as a non-negotiable item, stating that "anything other than studying and building and *deploying* is to waste money and destroy the prospects of the single strategic concept that offers the most hope to the world since nuclear weapons were first deployed [italics in original]."[19] Concerning the Geneva disarmament talks in 1985, "Weinberger was adamant that the Strategic Defense Initiative should not form any part of the negotiations," while Shultz "was determined that SDI should at least be on the table."[20] Reagan, for his part, often presented contradictory opinions on the purpose of SDI. In various interviews he presented SDI as all things to all people, "maintaining that SDI could be the bargaining chip that Shultz wanted, or the means to develop a weapons system, as Weinberger and his aides hoped."[21]

Thatcher thus had an opportunity, as she often did, to take advantage of divisions within the Reagan administration to push her agenda. The debate over SDI, according to Richard Aldous' recent critical account of the Anglo-American special relationship, represented "a classic example of how members of the administration could use Thatcher to

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[17] Ibid., 260.

[18] Ibid., 264.

[19] Caspar W. Weinberger, *Fighting for Peace: Seven Critical Years in the Pentagon* (New York: Warner Books, 1990), 328.

[20] Richard Aldous, *Reagan and Thatcher: The Difficult Relationship* (New York: Norton, 2012), 188.

[21] Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 263.

gain leverage during internal policy disputes."[22] Shultz's ultimate victory (with Thatcher's assistance) on SDI represented a crucial moment in the Cold War. As James Wilson argues, Shultz "was the critical agent of U.S. foreign policy" during the latter part of Reagan's first term and the entirety of his second.[23] His ability to deflect "the blows of hardliners in the executive branch and the U.S. Congress" ensured that SDI accomplished Reagan's stated objectives of bringing the Soviets to the negotiating table and moving the world towards a nuclear-weapons free future.[24]

Thatcher's Response

Many in both the United States and the international community doubted the technological feasibility of SDI. Frances Fitzgerald asserts that the president's "proposal was so vague and so speculative that it was not taken altogether seriously at the time. Press attention soon shifted away from it and did not fully return until March 1985."[25] Geoffrey Howe, Britain's Foreign Secretary from 1983-1989, records that he had been contemplating ABM defences "almost entirely through a Treasury prism, which had made me technically as well as financially very sceptical about such projects."[26] Despite these doubts, the British took Reagan's speech very seriously. To be sure, Reagan emphasized that SDI could lead to the abandonment of nuclear weapons; but the British feared that it would actually call the president's commitment to arms control into question, since SDI entailed a renewed arms race in space and could potentially violate the 1972 Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty if SDI research led to deployment.

However, the British primarily opposed the strategic thinking behind SDI. The British government reasoned

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[22] Aldous, *Reagan and Thatcher*, 188.

[23] James Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation: Gorbachev's Adaptability, Reagan's Engagement, and the End of the Cold War* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2014), 5.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Fitzgerald, *Way Out There in the Blue*, 19.

[26] Geoffrey Howe, *Conflict of Loyalty* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 389.

that "if a completely effective defence against strategic ballistic missile defences could be achieved, it would no longer be possible to deter exchanges within the European theatre bythe threat of escalation to the strategic level."[27] This would undercut NATO's traditional European defence strategy which "was based on having a range of conventional and nuclear weapons so that the USSR could never be confident of overcoming NATO at one level of weaponry without triggering a response at a higher level leading ultimately to full-scale nuclear war."[28] Reagan's repudiation of the moral basis of MAD thus irked Thatcher, a firm supporter of MAD, who believed that "nuclear weapons were an effective deterrent against not just nuclear but also conventional war."[29] SDI also angered many British government officials by calling into question the continuity of Britain's independent nuclear deterrent. As a result, the Ministry of Defense concluded that "despite the careful drafting of the President's speech, it appears that the US Administration has taken insufficient account of our legitimate interests."[30]

In the months following President Reagan's SDI announcement, Thatcher asked her Foreign and Defense Secretaries (Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine respectively) to formulate a paper detailing the United States' SDI (or BMD – ballistic missile defense) policy and its potential implications for Anglo-American relations. The paper, published in October 1984, severely criticized SDI by concluding that "at the end of the day, after prodigious expenditure by both sides, and perhaps a period of severe strategic instability, the development of BMD would seem likely to leave the fundamental nuclear balance between the US and the Soviet Union unchanged."[31] Additionally, the paper dem-

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[27] Message from R.C. Mottram to John Coles, 29 March 1983, 3. PREM 19/979. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (TNA hereafter).

[28] Margaret Thatcher, *Margaret Thatcher: The Downing Street Years* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993), 332.

[29] Ibid., 465.

[30] Message from R.C. Mottram to John Coles, 29 March 1983, 5. PREM 19/979. TNA.

[31] Geoffrey Howe and Michael Heseltine, "Ballistic Missile Defense: UK policy towards the US Strategic Initiative," October 1984, 2. PREM 19/979. TNA.

onstrated that since the announcement of SDI "reaction to the President's plans throughout the rest of NATO has become increasingly critical and vocal."[32]

In spite of this warning, the prime minister took a different approach towards SDI than her Defense and Foreign Secretaries. Thatcher believed that "in the light of what the paper says of Soviet research in this area… the Americans have little option but to push ahead at least to the point where they can be confident that they are matching the Soviet Union."[33] Additionally, Thatcher was convinced that SDI's "technological and financial implications for the USSR were devastating."[34] Just as SDI would incur a cost on the Soviet Union, Thatcher, according to one account at the time, also "saw from very early on that the potential economic and technological benefits to be gained from participating in SDI research might be such as to outweigh any need for overt criticism."[35] However, Thatcher clearly wanted SDI to stay a research project open to negotiations, and remained uncertain of its potential impact on NATO's strategy of deterrence. She relied on the assurances of Oliver Wright, Britain's ambassador to the United States, that the Americans "appear increasingly to realise the need to carry wider alliance support for United States policy as it evolves and the grapple more effectively with some of the problems that the debate, particularly on SDI, is starting to expose both in the United States and in Europe."[36] She thus saw an opportunity to influence the direction of US policy on SDI.

Thatcher's opinion on SDI and its use as a diplomatic tool became apparent during her meetings with Mikhail Gorbachev and President Reagan in December 1984. Geoffrey Howe, Britain's Foreign Secretary, had previously dis-

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[32] Ibid., 6.

[33] Note from C.D. Powell to R.C. Mottram, 15 October 1984, 1. PREM 19/979. TNA.

[34] Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 450.

[35] Ivo H. Daalder, *The SDI Challenge to Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1987), 13.

[36] Ambassador Wright's letter to Foreign Office, 18 July 1984, 1. PREM 19-1188. TNA.

cussed the issue of SDI with Andrei Gromyko and Konstantin Chernenko (the Soviet Foreign Minister and General Secretary respectively) during his visit to Moscow in July 1984. At that time, Howe pressed the Soviets on the hypocrisy of their "position of refusing to accept yes for an answer to their own proposal" following "Reagan's agreement to discuss arms in space."[37] Thatcher further discussed SDI at length with Mikhail Gorbachev, then a leading member of the Soviet Politburo and the predicted successor to Chernenko, on 16 December 1984 during his visit to Great Britain. She asserted that "it was clearly not feasible to think in terms of stopping research into space-based systems. The critical stage came with translating the results of research into the production of weapons on a large scale."[38] The prime minister insisted that President Reagan was trustworthy and had a noble "dream, expressed through the Strategic Defence Initiative, of being able to rid the world of nuclear weapons."[39] However, she believed that SDI "was not a viable dream because the process of acquiring a ballistic missile defence would inevitably lead to a fresh twist in the arms race spiral and encourage the development of other types of offensive nuclear weapons."[40]

Thatcher thus made clear to Gorbachev her support for SDI research, but dismissed its viability as a deployable system. When describing her meeting with Gorbachev to President Reagan, she included slight differences from the meeting itself. She rightfully claimed to have "left him in no doubt that we did not see SDI in the same light as he does: still less did we see it as linked in any way to a US first strike strategy."[41] Clearly though her assertion that the United States and Britain "were at one on this issue" was somewhat

[37] Telegram from Ian Sutherland to Geoffrey Howe, 3 July 1984, 2. MTF, docid=134694 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

[38] Notes on meeting between Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachev, 16 December 1984, 3-4. MTF, docid=134730 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

[39] Ibid., 8-9.

[40] Ibid., 9.

[41] Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Ronald Reagan, 22 December 1984, 2. MTF, docid=13470 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

misleading given her dismissal of SDI's deployment capabilities.[42] Thatcher concluded that "the over-riding impression left was that the Russians are genuinely fearful of the immense cost of having to keep up with a further American technological advance and are therefore prepared to negotiate seriously on nuclear weapons if they believe that you are politically committed to reductions."[43] Thatcher and Reagan thus agreed on SDI's importance in the continuing arms control negotiations between NATO and the Soviet Union. However, while she presented a united allied front on the issues of arms control negotiations and SDI research, a gap remained between Thatcher and Reagan's understanding of SDI's future.

Other European allies also questioned the merits of SDI. Arnold Kanter, writing in 1985, stated that SDI "feeds European concern about American tendencies toward unilateralism, if not isolationism."[44] It also forced European leaders to "walk the tightrope of adhering to the arguments they were using on behalf of INF without provoking an argument with Washington over the strategic rationale for SDI."[45] The French not only feared SDI's challenge to NATO's traditional strategy of deterrence but also its potentially detrimental effect on greater European integration. As Frédéric Bozo explains, French President Francois Mitterrand sought to maintain "the right balance between independence and solidarity" in its relationship with the United States and NATO.[46] Prior to Reagan's SDI announcement, Mitterrand believed that "Reagan's anti-Soviet crusade… reinforced the hand of the Americans in the Western bloc and comforted them in a 'conception of leadership' that contradicted

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Arnold Kanter, "Thinking about the Strategic Defence Initiative: An alliance perspective," *International Affairs*. Vol. 61, No. 3 (Summer 1985), 451.

[45] Ibid., 452.

[46] Frédéric Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, trans. by Susan Emanuel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), 6.

the very 'notion of alliance.'"[47] As a result, he thought that SDI "might strengthen the United States' technological hold over, as well as dominance of, the Western alliance while increasing the risk of Euro-American strategic 'decoupling.'"[48] However, as political scientist John Fesnke observed in 1986, European cooperation in SDI research could provide the "grand design" needed to overcome "its obsession with the comparatively petty problems of agricultural policy."[49] Thus, "in terms of prestige, economy, science, technology, and industry, a coordinated or joint European response to the SDI is a promising adventure."[50] By 1986 Mitterrand also worried about the impact of SDI on Gorbachev's position within the Politburo. Reagan's refusal to negotiate on SDI thus presented a threat to Gorbachev, who sought to shift Soviet expenditures to revitalizing the economy rather than its ABM defences. Mitterrand thus encouraged his NATO allies "to support Gorbachev rather than to profit from Soviet difficulties."[51]

The Federal Republic of Germany under Helmut Kohl shared many of France's concerns with SDI. Kohl took a line very similar to Margaret Thatcher. He gave qualified support for SDI, approving research while rejecting any effort to replace the strategy of deterrence. Christopher Bluth wrote in 1986 that "the West German government would like the United States to use SDI as a lever to obtain concessions in arms control, something which the United States is at present not prepared to do."[52] However, Kohl could not refuse the potential benefits of participation in SDI research. He thus remained ideologically opposed to SDI but ensured that West Germany would participate "in the re-

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[47] Ibid., 4.

[48] Ibid., 11.

[49] John Fenske, "France and the Strategic Defence Initiative," *International Affairs*. Vol. 62, No. 2 (Spring 1986), 246.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Bozo, *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, 15.

[52] Christopher Bluth, "SDI: The Challenge to West Germany," *International Affairs*. Vol. 62, No. 2 (Spring 1986), 250.

search process and reap whatever economic and technological benefits might come its way."[53] In each case, European leaders seemingly agreed with Kanter that "NATO's interests would seem to be better served by European acceptance of an arguably inconsistent US rationale for SDI than by a successful effort at clarification which produces undesirable answers."[54]

During Thatcher's visit to Camp David in December 1984, she made SDI the key topic in her meetings with President Reagan, and attempted to formulate a clear, united Anglo-American position on the issue. Richard Aldous has recently chronicled the importance of this trip, stressing Thatcher's relentless attempts to get President Reagan to confirm that SDI merely represented a research program and not a break with NATO's traditional policy of deterrence. While the meeting had been bruising, Thatcher "left Camp David thinking that Britain had secured major concessions for Western Europe from Reagan on his pet project."[55] Aldous concludes that "Thatcher had agreed to give public support to SDI," and Reagan "had conceded that he would neither abandon the broad principle of deterrence nor unilaterally deploy SDI."[56] Reagan and Thatcher agreed on four points concerning SDI. The British Prime Minister thus presented them to the public following the Camp David meeting:

> 1. The US, and Western, aim was not to achieve superiority, but to maintain balance, taking account of Soviet developments;
> 2. SDI-related deployment would, in view of treaty obligations, have to be a matter for negotiation;
> 3. The overall aim is to enhance, not undercut, deterrence;

[53] Ibid.

[54] Kanter, "Thinking about the Strategic Defence Initiative," 462-463.

[55] Aldous, *Reagan and Thatcher*, 187.

[56] Ibid., 188.

> 4. East-West negotiation should aim to achieve
> security with reduced levels of offensive sys-
> tems on both sides. This will be the purpose of
> resumed US-Soviet negotiations on arms con-
> trol, which I warmly welcome.[57]

Thatcher records that "what I heard [at Camp David], now that we got down to discussion of the likely reality rather than the grand vision, was reassuring."[58] Part of this reassurance came from the strategic framework in which Reagan presented SDI. The President emphasized that "keeping up with the United States would impose an economic strain on the Soviet Union."[59] He further argued that "there had to be a practical limit as to how far the Soviet Government could push their people down the road of austerity."[60] However, he undercut this argument by promising that "if the SDI concept succeeded, he would be ready to internationalise it so that it was at the service of all countries."[61] Despite the remaining disagreements, Thatcher believed that she had influenced President Reagan's thinking on SDI and brought it closer to the opinion of the British government.

While Thatcher never completely agreed with Reagan on the foundation of SDI – Reagan's dream of a nuclear free world – she "began to see that SDI would strengthen not weaken the nuclear deterrent."[62] She believed that while "SDI could not offer one hundred per cent protection… it would allow sufficient United States missiles to survive a first strike by the Soviets" and respond in kind, thus lowering the likelihood of a Soviet nuclear strike. Thatcher's strong adherence to MAD and Britain's independent nucle-

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[57] Prime Minister's statement to the press following Camp David meeting, 22 December 1984. PREM 19/979. TNA.

[58] Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 467.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Conversation between Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan at Camp David, 22 December 1984, 3. MTF docid=136436 (Accessed 23 November 2014).

[62] Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, 466.

ar deterrent led her to accept SDI on very different grounds than Reagan. In her memoirs she stated that:

> The decisive argument for me… was precisely the one which made me reject President Reagan's vision of a nuclear weapon-free world. It was that you could not ultimately hold back research on SDI any more than you could prevent research into new kinds of offensive weapons. We had to be the first to get it. Science is unstoppable: it will not be stopped for being ignored. The deployment of SDI, just like the deployment of nuclear weapons, must be carefully controlled and negotiated. But research, which necessarily involved testing, must go ahead.[63]

Ultimately, Thatcher's meeting with President Reagan at Camp David proved crucial both within Reagan's administration and in the international community. While Shultz believed that Thatcher got the better of Reagan at Camp David, the document produced by their meeting clearly supported his position on SDI rather than Weinberger's hawkish plan for SDI. While Thatcher sent no letters to her NATO counterparts in Western Europe following her meeting with Reagan, the resulting document addressed many of their concerns with SDI. Key elements of that document also appeared in Reagan's letter to allied leaders in January 1985 detailing the resumption of arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union in Geneva. He stated, "I plan to authorize Secretary Shultz who will be joined by Paul Nitze and Bud McFarlane, to indicate that the US is prepared to begin negotiations on the full range of nuclear arms, both offensive and defensive, and to address Soviet concerns on space-related issues as they apply in the context of negotiations on offensive nuclear forces

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[63] Ibid.

and defensive nuclear forces."[64] Additionally, Shultz "will reaffirm that the US Strategic Defense Initiative is a research program that is permitted and being carried out in full conformity with the ABM Treaty, and note that any decisions as to testing or deployment of systems not permitted by the Treaty would be a matter for negotiation."[65] Finally, Reagan asserted that "new forms of defense against the threat of ballistic missile attack may, in the long run, offer a means of *enhancing deterrence* and reducing the importance of nuclear ballistic missiles in the overall strategic relationship [emphasis added]."[66] Thus, Thatcher saw each point she raised at Camp David supported by Reagan in his letter on the resumption of negotiations.

Conclusion

Reagan's SDI announcement represented a crucial moment in the Cold War. However, historians continue to differ on its importance to the Cold War's conclusion. Wilson argues that the adaptability and improvisation of Soviet and American leadership led to the Cold War's conclusion. Thus, "Reagan, by means of SDI and other initiatives, did not win the Cold War. Rather, he established the terms for the big debates between Washington and Moscow in the 1980s."[67] Gorbachev, for his part, "pressed forward not because of SDI but in spite of it."[68] Ultimately, Wilson argues that SDI proved crucial in concluding the Cold War due to what it revealed about Reagan. While Reagan's proposal represented a fantasy, he "believed in SDI, and his sincerity elicited Gorbachev's trust."[69] Gaddis also argues that SDI played a part in bringing the Cold War to an end as a result of what it revealed about underlying issues in the Soviet economy. Reagan's SDI announcement created a

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[64] Reagan letter to allied leaders, 5 January 1985. *MTF*. docid=109369 (Accessed 11 April 2015).

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Wilson, *The Triumph of Improvisation*, 4.

[68] Ibid., 88.

[69] Ibid., 199.

"sense of desperation" in Moscow that "made the need for new systems of economic and political organization crystal clear, even to those who had hitherto resisted the idea."[70] The technological advances required by SDI thus exposed the inadequacy of the Soviet's economic and political foundation. Gaddis asserts that "a totalitarian state running a command economy… [could] not work to produce foolproof computer programs, miniaturized electronic circuitry, or pinpoint guidance systems in the late 1980s."[71] Consequentially, Gaddis argues that "the means of production had shifted… and it was this, as much as anything else, that brought the Cold War to an end."[72]

1983 proved to be a crucial year in Anglo-American relations and in the history of the Cold War. President Reagan introduced the possibility of a nuclear-weapons-free future just as NATO prepared to deploy American cruise missiles as a part of the dual-track strategy. Thus, his declaration that MAD was immoral irked his European allies. Thatcher, in particular, refused to view the strategic doctrine of deterrence as immoral, pointing to the countless British and European lives that would be lost in a conventional war as proof positive that nuclear weapons encouraged peace and security. She walked a tightrope diplomatically to ensure that the United States remained tethered tightly to Europe's security while supporting Reagan's research efforts into SDI. However, her greatest contribution to the debate concerning SDI may have been the support she gave to Shultz and those opposed to hard-liners in the Reagan administration. Other NATO leaders responded to the United States in a similar manner to Thatcher, providing support for SDI's research objectives but continuing to oppose any move away from the strategy of deterrence.

In 1983, Reagan recognized the weaknesses of both the Soviet economy and the conventional wisdom behind NA-

[70] Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War*, 44.

[71] Ibid., 44-45.

[72] Ibid., 45.

TO's arms control strategy, and challenged both through SDI. He believed "in the potency of ideas, and in the uses of *drama* to shatter the constraints of conventional wisdom."[73] He relied on both in promulgating SDI, and, as a result, took great steps towards his ultimate goal of ridding the world of nuclear weapons by securing massive reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. Whether a direct correlation can be drawn between SDI and the end of the Cold War remains uncertain, but SDI clearly encouraged the Soviets to resume and expand their negotiations with the United States. NATO members maintained an uncertain relationship with SDI. President Reagan attempted to keep NATO input on the subject limited, and NATO's European members recognized that "simple opposition seemed likely to be counterproductive in the light of President Reagan's determination to proceed."[74] Each nation instead sought to influence the diplomatic use of SDI on a bilateral basis, avoiding the potential for a major disagreement arising at a NATO summit or upsetting the precarious balance within the Reagan administration between hard liners and moderates. Margaret Thatcher took it upon herself, as she did in on many other occasions, to influence Reagan's position on SDI to better match NATO opinion. Thus, her success at Camp David and the support she provided to George Shultz within the administration ensured that European concerns regarding SDI were addressed prior to the resumption of US-Soviet arms control negotiations in Geneva in 1985. Her efforts, along with those of George Shultz and Mikhail Gorbachev, enabled SDI to remain an impetus for rather than an obstruction to Cold War diplomacy.

[73] John Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 222.

[74] Trevor Taylor, "Britain's Response to the Strategic Defence Initiative," *International Affairs*. Vol. 62, No. 2 (Spring 1986), 226.

Performing Piety, Commerce, and Community in the Medieval Italian Town

John D. Treat

The French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre proposed that each society and each mode of production created its own space.[1] For Lefebvre, the first millennium of Christianity's space par excellence was the crypt, which "was supposed to concentrate … the life and death forces diffused throughout the 'world'" and fit nicely with the worldview of "an agricultural society of mediocre productivity where agriculture itself … was degenerating."[2] In the emergence of the medieval town, he saw "a landscape filled with broken lines and verticals," signifying society's liberation from the "crypted" space of the economic and philosophical morbidity of the so-called Dark Ages. Lefebvre's views share much with the thinking of architectural historian David Friedman, who analyzes the towns of medieval and renaissance Italy and sees a "new prominence given to the street as an instrument of spatial organization by the merchant-artisan regimes that had gained control of the state in this period."[3]

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[1]   Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 1st ed. (Blackwell, 1991), 32–3.

[2]   Ibid., 254.

[3]   David Friedman, "Palaces and the Street in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Italy," in *Urban Landscapes: International Perspectives*, ed. P. J. Larkham and J. W. R. Whitehand (Routledge, 1992), 69; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 256.

In what follows, I briefly explore the characters and set–like aspects of the Italian medieval town where much of the drama of the emergence of the modern individual and economy played out. The transition from feudal and rural patterns to early urban capitalism can be seen in the transformations not only of noble palaces, merchants' houses and churches, but also in the understanding of and presentation of the body, which would itself be commoditized. This commoditization would not begin, as one might expect, with the newly liberated merchant class of the towns, but was perhaps first and best embodied by cloistered nuns, then by mendicant friars. To trace this unlikely development, I will examine the various changes in the presentation of the human body within Christianity and the evolution of the façades of the buildings of the medieval Italian street. This dialectic process illustrates a world in which the decline of feudal allegiances based on an agrarian social order created new possibilities, but also reveals a society in which new webs of overlapping identities as family member, citizen, Christian, and economic actor still restrained the individual in ways more complex than those imagined by Friedman and Lefebvre. The inhabitants of the expanding towns of medieval Italy were fashioning new concepts of the self, which were in part shaped by the density of new urban spaces in which social relationships lacked the clarity of the feudal countryside and by new demands placed upon the individual in a way of life defined by what were often transient commercial relationships rather than by fixed orders of society. This growing cash economy called for new types of relationships and accompanying new markers of individual status.

An early way forward for negotiating life in this rapidly changing world would come from a new class of religious order, the mendicants. Unlike the older Benedictine monks, whose lives of prayer and work were supposed to exemplify the older, rural agricultural world, these new friars would make their lives in the city, living on the alms of a cash econ-

omy and in return offering value to the urban masses with edifying spectacles from public sermons to new participatory devotions. Rather than being a force of conservatism, this new form of religious life would seize upon the opportunities offered by a world in flux, and no individual would better represent this than St. Francis of Assisi, whom today we most often find in garden settings in cast concrete, far from the give and take of the marketplace. Francis's would be the first public performance of this new bodily piety, but it followed in the wake of a style developed by consecrated women in the privacy of their cloisters.

In a ground-breaking essay, Caroline Walker Bynum acknowledges Lefebvre's moribund crypt, seeing medieval women's view of the body as rooted in the agrarian concepts of "fertility and decay," but, rather than arguing that this was a somatic echo of an outmoded economy, Bynum finds "a horrible yet delicious elevation—into a means of access to the divine."[4] Rather than being an "enemy of the soul" to be despised, Bynum argues that medieval women's devotional practices commoditized bodily performance as an integral part of a new economy of salvation, a sensibility with deep ties to the emerging stress on the display of the body of Christ in the mass.[5] The bodies of these women pioneers of the older religious orders remained within the retreating society's encrypted space of the cloister, but a new sort of male religious would take their spirituality into the emerging mercantile towns, making the presentation of the pious body—a commodity as portable as a coin—their chief form of capital.

Francis of Assisi (c. 1181-1226), a cloth merchant's son living in the world with his followers, received the stigmata of Christ's passion showing, in the words of his biographer Bonaventure, how "Christ had transformed his lover into his image." Bonaventure foregrounds Francis's relation-

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[4] Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion*, First Edition (Zone Books, 1992), 182.

[5] Ibid., 222.

ship to the mercantile world in the opening lines of his Life of St. Francis, where he records that in his youth, "not even among merchants did he place his hope in money or treasures although he was intent on making a profit." Instead, God was the wise investor who "implanted in the heart of the youthful Francis a certain openhanded compassion for the poor," which "[g]rowing from his infancy . . . filled the heart with generosity." This portrayal contrasts with that of Francis's father, whose "avarice was somewhat alleviated by the draught of money."[6]

Unlike Bynum's women religious, Francis and his early followers, who shared his mercantile background, saw these and other divine favors as potential commodities. Bonaventura writes, "Francis had reached such purity that … God ordained that creation which serves its Maker should be subject … to his will and command."[7] Poverty and asceticism were now investments paying dividends, whose surplus returns could be exchanged in the soteriological marketplace. Francis and his followers lived by begging and, while this was a critique of excessive materialism, it paradoxically allowed those who supported them to purchase a stake in their piety. As the emerging economy of the mass offered salvation by the adoration and consumption of the "spotless victim," Franciscans offered anxious merchants a share in their privation and bodily suffering, selling their surplus merits as offset credits to market-place avarice and the pollution of what some religious authorities referred to as "copulating" money, which immorally reproduced via interest rather than via labor. Many shrewd merchants quickly found this tangible exchange preferable to the uncertainties of privately invoking the saints. This theatrical performance of piety for public consumption and benefit not only alleviated mercantile anxiety in a society with a limited theological vocabulary for commerce, but also sanctified the

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[6] Bonaventura, "The Life of St. Francis," in *Bonaventure*, ed. Ewert Cousins (Paulist Press, 1978), 307, 185-186, 193.

[7] Ibid., 225.

stage itself, declaring the town to be a fitting backdrop for a new vision of the apostolic life. Bynum's women acted out their piety in intimate duets with their savior, but the Franciscan performance drew in the urban ensemble and made the town a stage (Figure 1).

This new public and performative piety is demonstrated at several points in Bonaventure's Life of St. Francis, a notable example being the famous scene of Francis's publically stripping himself of his clothes and standing naked in public before the father whose lifestyle he was rejecting and the Bishop of Assisi, who embraced him and covered him in a poor man's mantle. Later, there was Francis's passage through the town of Borgo San Seplocro riding a donkey because of his weakness. The crowd surged around him, but Bonaventure reports that though the crowd "pushed and touched all over; yet he seemed insensible to it all and noticed nothing at all of what was going on around him, as if he were a lifeless corpse," because he was so deep in prayer and contemplation. Only long afterwards, when stopping at a house of lepers, did Francis ask whether they would soon be approaching Borgo San Sepolcro. If the riding of the donkey into a town where a crowd surrounds him seems to be a conscious acting out of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, other instances of publicly reprising the ministry of Christ are even clearer. At Bevagna, a blind girl is healed when Francis applies his spittle to her eyes, as Christ had done in the gospel of Mark.[8]

While Bonaventure neatly organizes Francis's transformation from merchant to mendicant, the emergence of the Franciscan stage of the town in the late Middle Ages defies any neat telling. As men and women of the agricultural class moved into the city, expanded the artisanal class, and created a new magnate class of wealthy merchants, older forms of production and authority and their established building practices came with them.[9] Noble families moved their

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[8]   Ibid., 193-194, 274-275, 279; Mark 8:23.

[9]   Stuart Elden, *Understanding Henri Lefebvre* (London: Continuum, 2004), 184.

bases of operation to the town, bringing along their sym-
bol of preeminence, the tower, which Lefebvre skewered
as "[t]he prestigious Phallus," which "forces its way into
view by becoming erect" (Figure 2).[10] The medieval town
was a new frontier without established conventions, a con-
tested space with Lefebvre's absolute, crypted space of the
old order's closed towers rising up out of the landscape like
mushrooms to confront the new mercantile class' "space of
accumulation," typified by its swelling houses, which com-
bined family life with the production of the workshop.[11] It
is easy to forget that the inhabitants of the early communes
did not know that they were in the vanguard of creating
a worldwide urban and capitalist society. Lefebvre catches
the uncertainty and open-endedness of the process of ur-
banization saying, "Social practice—which did not know
where it was going—made space available for something
else."[12] One might index the progress of this transition that
"did not know where it was going" in observing the way in
which merchants moved from aping the closed space of the
tower to adopting a more open architectural idiom express-
ing the ideas of the commune liberated from feudal author-
ity and its resistance to the fixity of the old order. It would
be an ascendant merchant elite who once again closed and
privatized space, but only but even then, these new dwell-
ings would have a conspicuous veneer of openness thanks
evolving styles of street facades.

   Initially, town dwellings were covered in a "wooden
screen" of windowless jetties projecting over the street,
which extended rooms and acted as passageways and toi-
lets.[13] The unexpressive walls of these houses echoed the
blankness of the noble tower, concealing life within from
the social uncertainty without (Figure 3).[14] Friedman sees
laws requiring the removal of jetties as a strategy favoring

[10] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 262.

[11] Ibid., 263.

[12] Ibid., 263-264.

[13] Friedman, "Palaces and the Street in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Italy," 16-19.

[14] Ibid., 81-83.

the new importance of the street, but it may also be seen as a tactic for regulating individual and familial ambition in an environment where the competing claims of new social relationships and the appropriate scope of these ambitions was as yet undetermined. A tower or jetty not only blocked a thoroughfare or vista, it made claims about the social order in a world where architecture was an active player in formulating new arguments about the role of the town in a more liberated age. Blank walls shielded individual motives and a jetty might be seen as a merchant imitating the feudal past and sallying out of his urban keep to claim common space in a world where such a concept was, as yet, in formation.

Looking at a somewhat later period, historians Ronald F. E. Weissman and John Jeffries Martin observed that, "Renaissance identities, especially in the towns, were inevitably defined, in part at least, by the overlapping loyalties that particular 'individuals' had to family, to guild, to parish, to the workplace, and to patrons."[15] Weissman went so far as to say that Renaissance towns "suffered from too much community rather than from individualism," an insight that does much to elucidate the social insecurity underlying a growing body of laws managing individual dress and architectural appearance in the commune.[16]

The removal of jetties and new laws requiring stone rustication to various heights above street level gave birth to the new form of the façade.[17] In embryo, these bi-level arrangements of finer stone below and plaster or rough stone above covering the scars of the jetty created the appearance that one is an "obedient citizen who desires the honour of the city," but, in the performative spirituality of the era, they also provided a stage for the public assertion of virtue, a hypocrisy unavailable on the older, closed street fronts,

[15] John Jeffries Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 27.

[16] Ibid.; Charles Burroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Façade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 47-49; Friedman, "Palaces and the Street in Late-Medieval and Renaissance Italy," 87-92.

[17] Ibid., 86–7.

and decried by Dante, whose hypocrites' gay monks' robes hide leaden cloaks as their robes in life had hidden their sins.[18] These developments give credence to the idea that Franciscans were not the only urbanites to learn to perform an identity and that the merchant class grasped that what it might not be permitted to do with its increasingly regulated and scrutinized physical body, it might approximate in the body of its house. As windows and balconies multiplied and ornamentation crept up from street to roof, uniformity gave way to individualized presentation, much in the way the friar's body pioneered a spiritual solo that varied greatly from the hiddenness of the cloistered nun. If spirituality had moved to the street as economic activity had made the same move from the hall and keep, one's house now became an opportunity to participate in the street life. Ground level shops and upper level windows made their contributions as venues for the owner's performance of his public persona and also giving the women of the household a place to perform that could be seen from the street yet protected them from its threats. Even so, the fear of anarchy remained within the group consciousness and the emerging façade's presentation of "balance and harmony among all parts" asserted not only to the wider city's aspirations for peace, but the householder's desire to show himself a prudent manager of his financial and domestic affairs to the passerby (Figure 4).

If the public in general remained ambivalent about the gaze and potential chaos of the street and kept it at arm's length from their interiors with the carefully managed performance of the façade and the tableaux of industry and family life that might be seen through its windows, the Franciscans continued to elaborate new forms of a piety of the street and the tableau. Nowhere was this more literal than in Francis's own popularization of the veneration of the nativity scene, wherein the participant mimicked the secular streets' domestic voyeurism of gazing through windows, but transformed it into the holy exercise of observ-

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[18] Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XXIII, lines 58-81.

ing the ideal family. Francis first instituted the custom at Greccio near the end of his life. Perhaps conscious of the ostentation of the new devotion, Bonaventure tells his readers "So that this would not be considered a type of novelty [Francis] petitioned for and obtained permission from the Supreme Pontiff."[19] Later, in the fourteenth-century, Franciscans would popularize the Stations of the Cross, which combined the spectacle of processing with fourteen set points where friars and the laity would stop, gaze, and comment upon scenes from the passion of Christ, recreating the city of Jerusalem and transforming participants into a group of holy flâneurs.[20]

The friars' performative spirituality reshaped even the interior of the church, transforming the house of God into a sacralized loggia. For the merchant, the loggia was a porch cum proscenium that was the purpose-built locale par excellence for public performance of major life events like wedding feasts.[21] Church architecture would adapt itself to these new ideas of performative space as well.

Three centuries earlier, an emerging feudal class had pushed its way into the nave of St. Gall and other abbeys to claim its share of the merits of the relics enshrined in the altars, but the proto-façade of the choir screen had remained a barrier to their progress, both framing the view of the sacred rites and restraining lay participation. In the new world of the Franciscan urban church, the street and the merchant loggia can be seen as defining rather than invading sacred space. The wide boulevard of the main aisle still pointed to the high altar, but the focus had shifted. Under the influence of Francis and his followers, the focal point moved from the high altar to a large painted or, later, carved, crucifix, bringing the drama of the sacrifice out from the hidden

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[19] Bonaventura, "The Life of St. Francis," 279.

[20] Francesco Zaccaria, *Participation and Beliefs in Popular Religiosity: An Empirical-Theological Exploration Among Italian Catholics* (Leiden: BRILL, 2010), 156.

[21] Robert Tavernor, *On Alberti and the Art of Building* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 119.

priestly space and into the realm of visible spectacle.[22] More importantly, the day-to-day traffic of sacred commerce had moved to the north and south aisles, where the lay visitor observed the private masses of friars at the side altars, each figuratively selling his mass in his own shop—a street of loggias offering value to the provider of the mass stipend and an enticing spectacle to the casual passerby. The passivity of the lay spectator in the abbey church gave way to an interactive performance in which the lay observer now added value to the transaction by adding his or her own indulgenced prayers at the elevation. A merchant might now endow a chantry for long-term returns, hiring the best sculptors and artisans to create a permanent façade in the street of the church presenting his piety and rectitude in perpetuity with the prominence of the location that he could afford trumpeting his financial success behind a dissembling façade of piety. Lefebvre captured this cultural shift in his observation that "Alongside religious space, and even within it, there were places … for the space of exchange."[23] The benefactor would die, but the endowed spectacle would live on, perhaps with the donor's face painted in as that of a background figure on an altar fresco so that he could keep watch over his investment.

The merchants of Florence literally sacralized a loggia in their church of Orsanmichele. Originally a Cistercian church, in 1249 the structure became a grain market and in 1284 a loggia was added for merchants to transact their business. In the sort of blending of performances of commerce and piety that have been at the center of this essay, the Confraternity of Orsanmichele began singing lauds before an image of the virgin frescoed on one of the loggia's piers. Soon the image in the loggia developed a following for the miracles credited to it and the Confraternity began to distribute alms from the offerings. In the fourteenth centu-

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[22] For the Franciscan popularization of the crucifix, see Diana Norman, *Painting in Late Medieval and Renaissance Siena, 1260-1555* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 57-58.

[23] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 266.

ry, the grainery would once again become a church to house the famous image, to provide better space for the distribution of charity, and to be the home of the city's merchant guilds. Not surprisingly, the façade of the church became its own sort of performance with individual guilds paying for statues in the exterior niches and vying with one another to make the greatest show of both their piety and their worldly success.[24]

The new piety did not limit itself to the design of churches, but crept onto the altar itself. Among the items from Florence's Davanzati Palace auctioned in New York in 1916 was a thirteenth-century gilt altar reliquary from Siena shaped like a church with four rows of rock crystal windows and a stem finished with scenes from the life of St. Francis. The architectural detailing of this house for saints separated the rows into stories by stringcourses bookended by gothic arcades with the whole topped by a gabled roof. Out of each window peered bones and bits of cloth from 24 saints. This new style of "ostentaria" reliquary was a significant departure from older designs of reliquaries, appropriating architectural forms so that the saints enshrined in it both presented themselves to the gaze of the pious and also had a window upon the celebration of the Mass on the table of the altar. This vantage point allowed those enshrined in the reliquary to symbolically gaze upon the spectacle of transubstantiation—the transformation of the bread in wine into the body and blood of Christ, an emerging form of visual piety, wherein the celebrant now elevated the transformed elements for the congregation to view and adore. Where relics were formerly kept in the crypted space of opaque chest, in purse reliquaries, buried in walls, or in literal crypts, now the blessed joined the living in surveilling and scrutinizing passersby and even in the drama of self-presentation (Figure 5).[25] The bringing of the performance of piety out of the

[24] Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti. *Renaissance Florence: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 141-144; Andrew Graham-Dixon, *Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999) 72-75.

[25] American Art Association, Horace Townsend, Elia Volpi, Cesare A. Guglielmetti, and Arturo

cloister and into the street had come full circle in bringing new methods of performance into the church and into the liturgy.

Surveying this new spiritual economy from the vantage point of late Medieval and Renaissance England, historian Eamon Duffy observed that "[t]he picture that emerges is not that of a scatter of alienated individualists, but of highly conventional people vigorously appropriating a conventional but vigorous religion."[26] Like the men and women described in John Jeffries Martin's *Myths of Renaissance Individualism*, the individual saying his or her private prayers at mass remained part of the family or trade group gathered round the side altar among the many altars in the parish or guild church and yet blended this group performance with distinctly individual experiences. The monk and knight and their placement within a fixed order no longer dominated the social imagination, but the tradesman at a Franciscan altar remained bound within an evolving web of determinative personal and economic relationships, even as he transacted his private prayers. The capitalistic monad envisioned by Locke and Hobbes had not yet emerged, if indeed he ever did, but a new performative sensibility offered roles for both the individual and the ensemble and the new economic system gave unprecedented opportunity for the bold actor to rise in the cast.

Jahn Rusconi, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Exceedingly Rare and Valuable Art Treasures and Antiquities Formerly Contained in the Famous Davanzati Palace, Florence, Italy* (New York: American Art Association, 1916), item no 83. For the evolution of reliquaries, see Seeta Chaganti, *The Medieval Poetics of the Reliquary: Enshrinement, Inscription, Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 135.

[26] Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers, 1240-1570* (Yale University Press, 2006), 105.

Figure 1. Giotto fresco in the Basilica of Assisi showing spirituality as street theater with St. Francis confronting his father as the people and windows of Assisi look on. The naked Francis being blessed by the hand of God plays on iconography associated with the baptism and transfiguration of Christ and, by extension makes Assisi or any city a potential venue for forgiveness and salvation.[27]

[27] Perkins, F. Mason. Giotto (London, G. Bell and sons, 1902) 79, plate 13.

Figure 2. The closed towers of San Gimignano near Siena demonstrating
Lefebvre's contention that they assert noble dominance over the urban mer-
chant by sprouting their crypted space over the city like mushrooms.[28]

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[28] Perkins, F. Mason. *Giotto;* London, G. Bell and sons, 1902.
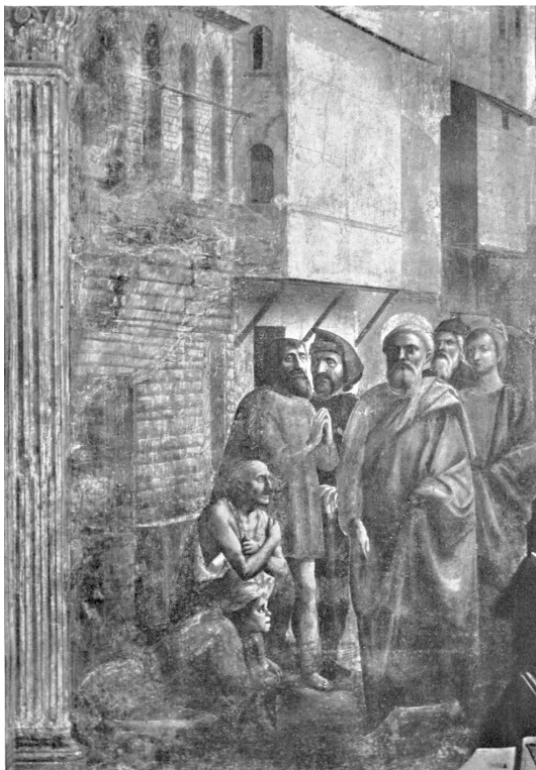 http://archive.org/details/cu31924016806170.

Figure 3. Masaccio, St. Peter Healing the Sick, Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria delle Carmine, Florence, 1420s, showing both closed, jettied houses aping the crypted space of the tower and St. Peter as Franciscan, acting out an urban scene of piety and healing the sick with the surplus sanctity of his shadow.[29]

[29] *Masaccio* (Boston: Bates and Guild company, 1907), 11.

Figure 4. Palazzo Davanzati, Florence, showing a nearly the full menu of façade possibilities with loggia, rustication at street level, rough stone above, and a virtual advent calendar of windows for public display.[30]

[30] American Art Association, *Illustrated Catalogue*, frontispiece.
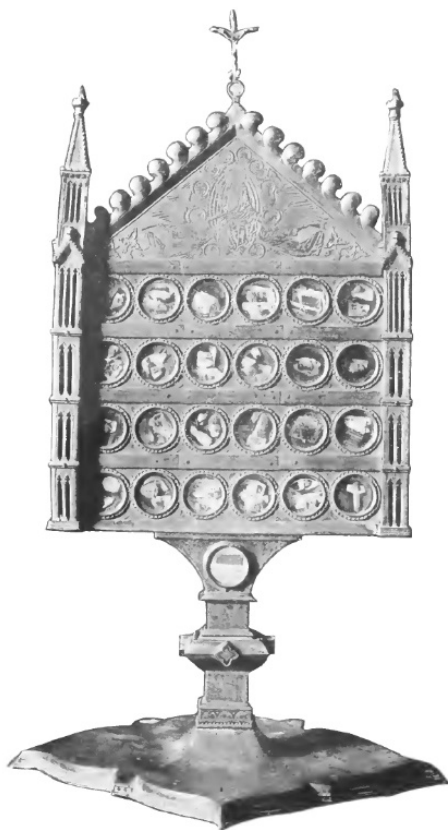
Figure 5. Thirteenth-century Sienese reliquary with scenes from the life of
St. Francis on the stem. Here even the saints show themselves through four
stories of rock crystal windows while they in turn gaze down on the body of
Christ in the celebration of the Mass.[31]

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[31] American Art Association, *Illustrated Catalogue*, item no. 83.

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