



Wilson's Intrigue

Humanities Issue 3: March 2022

Featuring Atticus Fear's
Competition-winning article:

*“The Eastern Incarnation:
A Tale of the Second Coming
of Jesus in China”*

With nominated articles from:

Eeshaan Iyer

Gabriel Gardiner



The Wilson's Intrigue team proudly welcomes you to the third issue of our Humanities Magazine, written by students for students.

There is perhaps no greater value in life than studying the humanities. As Socrates said, "the unexamined life is not worth living", and learning more about ourselves and the world around us relies on study of philosophy, history, geography, and other forms of the humanities. The ethos of this magazine is to help everybody broaden their knowledge of all these subjects through excellently written and well researched pieces spanning a breath of topics that are accessible, relatable, engaging, and informative. We hope you enjoy the third issue of the Wilson's Humanities Intrigue.

For this issue, we were so pleased with the huge number of informative and accessible articles submitted for the magazine. The volume we received means we have had to split the issue into two, with this being the first part and the second half to come at the end of the Spring Term. This issue also saw a number of changes, welcoming creative pieces for the first time and introducing some games into the magazine to supplement the reading experience.

This magazine is the culmination of a creative process of huge collective effort over many months. Listed on the following page are all the students involved, who have each devoted hours of their time to the magazine, but a special thanks too must be given to all the following teachers for proofreading and verifying the accuracy of our writing.

Thank you to Mr Lissimore, Mr Fletcher, Ms Wells-Cole, Miss Denison, Mr Gore, Miss Riddle, Miss Grant, and Dr Meddleton.

Thanks must also go to Divy Dayal, who is stepping down as chief editor. Divy founded this magazine almost two years ago now and has been the driving force behind its continuation, an inspiration to us all. Divy's fantastic article grappling the economics of conflict can be found on page 14.

The editors were blown away by the quality of all the pieces, so it has been a difficult decision to pick out our favourites. After much thought, we chose the winner of the best article competition: Atticus Fear, whose breathtaking article on Hong Xiuquan and the Taiping Rebellion can be found on page 29. Also nominated was Eeshaan Iyer's article on the European Super League on page 6, and Gabriel Gardiner's article on selflessness on page 35; all three are excellent starting points for your exploration of the magazine. Well done Atticus, Eeshaan, and Gabriel!

If you would like to be a part of future editions of the Wilson's Humanities Intrigue, please email Nicholas at JAMESN@WILSONSSCHOOL.SUTTON.SCH.UK (Y12-13) or Ben at SHORTERB@WILSONSSCHOOL.SUTTON.SCH.UK (Y10-11).

The banner of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the subject of Atticus Fear's competition-winning piece, adorns the front cover of the magazine, designed by Shahzeb Ahmed.

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ECONOMICS



**What is the impact of increased national debt from the pandemic?
Read Biranavan Lambotharan's article to find out.**

ARTICLE

EESHAAN IYER Y12

48 Hours and Beyond -
Nominated for Best Article

Page 6

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LAMBOTHARAN Y11**

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48 Hours and Beyond

The European Super League: betraying the beautiful game.

EESHAAN IYER Y12

Nominated for best article

There are few experiences in world football that can legitimately claim to rival the magic of a Champions League night. The unmissable theme, the unrelenting support and stadiums illuminated under floodlights all combine to create one of the great spectacles of the beautiful game. Admittedly, it is not without its flaws, but the chance to compete for 'Big Ears', the nickname for the winner's trophy, remains the pinnacle of achievement for European clubs. The Champions League will always be revered within football and, therefore, the mere fact that the proposed European Super League threatened to undermine the sanctity of this tournament struck the heart of the footballing world. Crucially, it raised the question: how willing are those in power to betray the values that made the beautiful game what it is?

To the modern football fan, the value of fair competition within football may seem alien. The influx of ultra-wealthy owners, coupled with the skewed distribution of league revenue, has meant that the fairy-tale underdog story remains just that, at least until an investment group from the Middle East comes calling. However, only 20 years ago, Leeds United were reaching Champions League semi-finals and Tino Asprilla was scoring hat-tricks for Newcastle against Barcelona, while more recently Leicester scaled the heights of the Premier League before reaching the



Champions League quarterfinals the next year. Even this September, Sheriff Tiraspol, the Moldovan champions, stunned Real Madrid 2-1 away from home—Sheriff didn't reach the knock-outs and Real Madrid progressed regardless, but moments like this sum up the magic of football and the great necessity for fair competition to be preserved.

What exactly was the Super League?

'The saviour of football' as its creators claimed—or merely an attempt to deepen the pockets of those driving it? Announced by a press release on 18 April 2021, the proposed breakaway league was the brainchild of Florentino Perez, Real Madrid's divisive chairman, who was ably supported by his four horsemen. These were the Juventus chairman, Andrea Agnelli, and the American owners of 3 English powerhouses (Liverpool, Manchester United and Arsenal), John Henry, Joel Glazer and Stan Kroenke. It is important to note that no one exemplifies disconnect between ownership and a fanbase quite like them: it was

Kroenke who famously said he didn't buy his Arsenal stake to win trophies, instead considering a historic institution to be nothing more than a mere financial asset.^[1]

The proponents of the Super League claimed it was a direct consequence of the financial impact of Covid, which they claimed "accelerated the instability in the existing European football economic model".^[2] Supposedly, talks regarding the future of existing European competitions had been a failure, with all solutions unable to satisfy the core need for higher quality matches and economic support for the football pyramid.

Their solution: a closed shop including 15 of the biggest teams across the continent (the English 'Big Six', Juventus, Inter and AC Milan, Barcelona, the two Madrid clubs, and three others) as founders, with a separate mechanism to allow five non-founder clubs to qualify yearly.^[2] It was an attempt to introduce the lucrative American model into European football; Kroenke, Henry and Glazer's ownership of franchises in American leagues, including the NBA, NFL, and MLB meant they knew the

benefits it would bring them. It would function as a direct substitute for existing European competition, and although teams would continue to take part in their respective domestic leagues, these would lose significance without a qualifying incentive process for the founders. The format of the Super League and its outcome was essentially redundant. It wouldn't matter if Tottenham lost every game 7-0 and finished bottom of their group, given their guaranteed place in the competition.

Merit-based qualification was no longer in fashion — the only criteria relevant were the number of fans a club would bring and the size of their brand.

A failure both moral and fiscal

If the pretentious nature of the tournament wasn't enough of an issue, the staggeringly high levels of revenue clubs would receive added to fears that the breakaway league would simply worsen the pre-existent spending disparity between bigger and smaller clubs. The twelve founder clubs (worth a combined \$34.37bn)^[3] signed a long-term commitment to receive uncapped solidarity payments, which exceeded \$10bn across the initial 23-year period and would rise in accordance with the league's overall growth. In fact, the founder clubs were to be paid €3.5 billion (around €300 million per club) upfront to offset the impact of Covid, purely in return for their commitment and cooperation.^[4] Curiously, the deal had been significantly bankrolled by the American investment bank JP Morgan Chase (estimated to be around \$3.25 billion), adding to the evidently Americanised nature of the new league.^[5] According to Perez, the increased revenues would trickle down to clubs outside

the Super League through a “sustainable spending framework”, perhaps reminiscent of the Reaganomics of the 1980s.^[2] The timing of the deal could not have been worse, with clubs at the lower levels of the football pyramid struggling desperately due to the pandemic. At a time when the wider footballing community needed financial support, the owners of these clubs neglected compassion for greed.

The financial aspect of the Super League only proved that, in the eyes of disinterested owners, there was a price at which fair competition and integrity within football could be sold.

The influx of new fans from around the globe was cited as a justification for the Super League—what better way is there to be introduced to a new sport than to see the best compete against the best every week?

However, in an attempt to capitalise on the growing worldwide popularity of football, the creators of the Super League forgot rule number one: remember who and what you represent.

Footballing institutions are built on so called “legacy fans”, who care about their club's heritage and values.^[6] It may well have been that the “fans of the future”, who focus on superstar names over history, presented a more attractive financial proposition for club stakeholders, but the legacy fan still represents the backbone of a football club, meaning any attempt to sideline them and ignore their criticisms would inevitably fail.

What went wrong?

The danger of this oversight was most apparent in the eventual demise of the Super League, as fans across Europe, mainly in England, rallied against the corporate invasion of their sport. Large protests, led by the Chelsea Supporter's Trust, began outside Stamford Bridge on the eve of Chelsea's fixture against Brighton on 20 April, with the 0-0 draw a mere footnote on this momentous night. Similar concerns were raised by the supporter trusts of other founding clubs, with a YouGov survey showing that 79% of all British football fans and 76% of British fans of Super League clubs strongly opposed the project.^[6] Concerns were shared across the footballing world, with ex-footballers and pundits such as Gary Neville especially garnering attention and appreciation on social media for calling the plan a “criminal act against football fans” and calling for the FA to “deduct [the involved clubs] all points tomorrow” and “put them at the bottom of the league and take the money off them”.^[7] The project was opposed in equal measure by politicians, with Boris Johnson and Keir Starmer uniting in their condemnation of the league while the Italian, French, and Spanish governments were equally critical.





The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) was the ESL's strongest critic, calling it a "disgraceful self-serving plan" and warning that clubs involved would be banned from all other domestic and continental competitions, in a joint statement with the national governing bodies of England, Italy and Spain.^[6] The players involved would also be banned from representing their national teams (particularly significant given Euro 2020 was two months away). Although FIFA president Gianni Infantino said that FIFA shared UEFA's disapproval of the ESL, the New York Times later reviewed the founding contract of the Super League, which showed that FIFA had been in talks with the founders for months over endorsing the project and may have received \$1 billion as a solidarity payment.^[8] This perhaps suggests that their opposition was only driven by the public outcry following the announcement, rather than a desire to protect the values of football. Many football clubs, including those sought by the Super League (such as Bayern, PSG and Borussia Dortmund who rejected a chance to be involved) criticised the proposal and the founding clubs, with Leeds United referring to Liverpool as Merseyside Reds, the infamous unlicensed name used on PES and Everton accusing the Big Six of "betraying football supporters across England".^[9] Perhaps surprisingly, foot-

ballers themselves had a lukewarm reaction towards the Super League—although individuals such as Marcus Rashford, Bruno Fernandes and James Milner voiced their concerns, there was no collective opposition such as boycotts, with player unions such as the PFA and FIFPro preferring diplomacy through official statements of concern instead.

They think it's all over...

Nevertheless, the mounting opposition from within football and outside reached its crescendo on the night of the Chelsea-Brighton protests, forcing the club's technical director Petr Cech to ask for calm and eventually resulting in Chelsea becoming the first team to formally exit the Super League on April 20th.^[10] Like dominoes, the resolve of the clubs' owners and directors collapsed one by one, until, by noon on April 21st, all bar Juventus, Barcelona and Real Madrid had exited the ESL. The crisis seemed to have been averted, but closer inspection suggests that the idea is far from buried. The three rebel clubs remain confident in the value and benefits of the Super League, and, although Agnelli may have confirmed that the project has been halted, there is no indication that this will be permanent, with Barcelona chief Laporta openly saying that the Super League is "alive" because "we keep winning in the courts".^[11] Crocodile tears were shed by the owners and executives of the clubs who had exited, with senior Man. United executive Ed Woodward even resigning,

but there is nothing to suggest that they wouldn't jump at the opportunity of an amended Super League, were it to arise.

This is perhaps in part due to the action—or rather, inaction—taken by UEFA and other footballing boards: the FA fined the Big Six a combined £22 million (just over a third of Ronaldo's annual wage)^[12, 13] while UEFA refused to ban or remove any of the 12 involved clubs from European competition, merely agreeing to fine the clubs a combined £13.4m and withholding UEFA competition revenue for one season.^[14] Even this was later suspended, as UEFA were forced to abandon a disciplinary case against the 3 rebel teams by a Spanish court.^[15] UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin's speech reaccepting the clubs back into the fold was far removed from his angry outburst less than a month prior. Although UEFA's compromise held a clause which would make the clubs pay €100m each if they re-entered a breakaway league, the Super League claim that the 9 clubs who exited remain tied by binding contracts, as there is no legal way to withdraw from the league, without facing fines of approximately €300m.^[16] We can't know whether the greatest threat to the beautiful game has been truly defeated or if it is biding its time, waiting for its next opportunity to strike.

The Super League would undeniably be an entertaining watch, with mouth-watering clashes served every week and the biggest superstars playing on the biggest stage all year round. But this comes at a cost—the undermining of fair competition, the undermining of historic fanbases and the undermining of regulatory bodies—which the footballing community cannot afford. UEFA isn't perfect, and the proposed reform of the Champions League from 2024 onwards is equally as contentious but at least the door is open for miracles to happen. Sheriff couldn't beat Real Madrid in the ESL, after all.

EDITED BY SHUAYB MOHAMMED



Debt: The Straw That Breaks the Camel's Back

Biranavan shares a perspective on the impacts of governments' debts and the possible solutions to rising levels of debt throughout the world.

BIRANAVAN LAMBOTHRAN Y11

Throughout the world, public debt levels continue to rise at a staggering rate. While this trend has been exacerbated by COVID-19, its root causes are a result of structural economic planning throughout the 2010s. The national debt of the USA grew from \$20 trillion at the end of 2020 to over \$28 trillion in May 2021.^[1] This places the USA's national debt at 107% of its GDP. The USA has maintained a modest rate of growth but some fear that burgeoning debt could lead to sovereign default (the inability to pay off national debts).

Following the current trend, the USA's debt will reach \$89 trillion by 2027.^[1]

The US government and Federal Reserve have continued to raise the debt ceiling (the maximum legal amount of money that can be borrowed from creditors by the US government).

The UK's government debt is similar at 106% of its GDP.^[2] Furthermore, the rapidly emerging Chinese economy has also struggled with debt. The Chi-

nese national debt is officially \$7.0 trillion, but agencies such as Standard and Poor's Global Ratings believe that additional off-balance sheet debt in China could account for as much as an additional \$5.8 trillion.^[3] The Chinese real estate company Evergrande is possibly poised to default on \$300 billion in debt.^[4] Smaller, developing economies have also been affected by debt: Lebanon declared sovereign default last year. The risks of debt certainly cannot be underestimated. This begs the questions: how much debt is too much debt? Why is debt such a universal problem, and what can be done about it?



Clearing misconceptions: debt isn't always bad

'Debt' isn't usually considered to be positive. Whether it be a mortgage on a house, a pay-as-you go phone purchase or (at a **macroeconomic** scale) a government loan, debt is something we all seek to repay and avoid as far as possible. However, government debt is different. In fact, debt, to a certain extent, can be an indicator of a healthy economy. Modern economic growth is based on spending to generate demand, which often necessitates debt. Consumers buy goods and services from businesses. Oftentimes, they must take a loan and pay the cost of the purchase over an extended period as consumer credit. Businesses take loans from commercial banks and moneylenders to finance their operations and provide the capital needed to expand. Sometimes, larger firms may also purchase government loans and bonds to expand as a business. Quantitative easing is a key feature of modern economics—a supposed magical elixir to dips in demand (particularly applicable to today's pandemic situation). Central banks may purchase government bonds and other financial assets from businesses in order to inject money into the economy and generate demand. Furthermore, governments and moneylenders themselves often must borrow colossal sums of money to fund their own mac-

roeconomic incentives and operations. International debt is a murky tangle of countries and companies owing goliath sums to one another in debt to fund the extravagant spending needed to maintain the current world economy. As spending increases, growth will also increase in proportion as a result of increased aggregate demand.

However, this will almost always result in increasing debt as well. Simply put, debt is integral to the modern consumerist growth model. An apt example of this would be the economic boom in the USA during the 1940s and 1950s due to WW2 military spending and post-war business growth. Consumer credit soared by 800% as pent-up consumer

demand suppressed during the Depression burst into a spontaneous wave of economic growth and spending. During this time, the US economy's real GDP expanded from \$200 billion to \$300 billion.^[5] However, this runaway growth success also came with rising debt. Throughout this period, the USA maintained debt exceeding 100% of its GDP,^[6] although this gradually decreased to sustainable levels as the USA continued to expand its export industry which made productive sectors of the economy more efficient, reducing the need for government support and raising tax revenue.

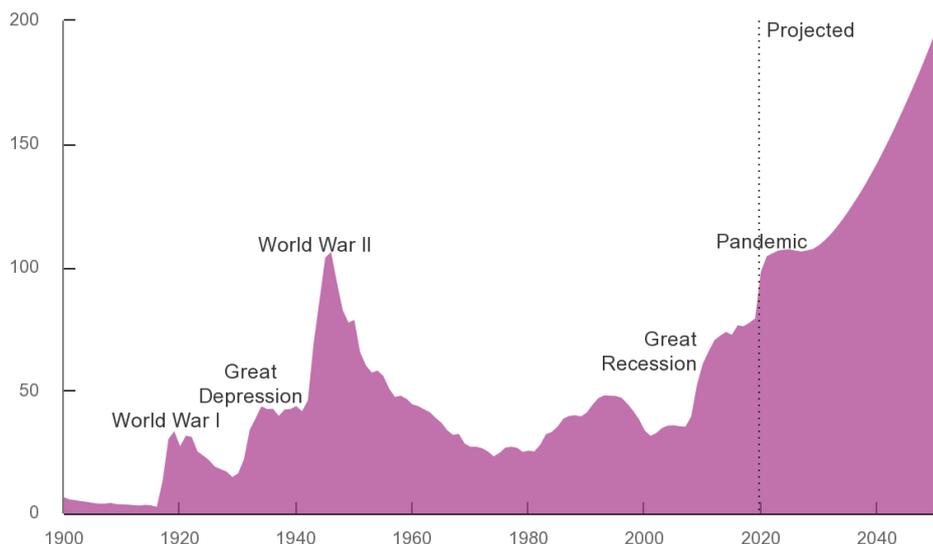
The UK has also incurred considerable debt over the course of its history. The war effort during the Second World War led to UK government debt peaking at 270% of GDP, before decreasing to 50% of GDP over the next three decades.^[7]

In both examples, debt was temporarily incurred as part of contemporary policies to propel the economy through a period of crisis and ultimately restore economic growth through spending. We are perhaps in a similar position today.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses have struggled to stay afloat. As a result, government spending was increased with stimuli and funding to keep the economy afloat. This has led to a

Federal Debt Held by the Public, 1900 to 2050

Percentage of Gross Domestic Product



Publicly held debt in the USA

return to growth (the IMF predicted a growth rate of 7.3% for the UK at the beginning of 2021 and a 6% increase in the global economy as part of a Covid recovery),^[8] but the great question now is whether debt and inflation can be controlled and brought back to sustainable levels to maintain levels of growth.

Debt is not necessarily negative, but too much of it could be. Japan also maintains considerable economic growth rates despite having government debt amounting to nearly 200% of its GDP.^[9] Import capital can accrue short-term debts but will increase economic growth and repay debts in the long term. For instance, a new machine in a semiconductor factory could increase overall economic growth through improved efficiency and output. However, a prerequisite to sustainable debt is continued economic growth to repay debts. If economic growth declines, debt becomes a serious problem.

Background: the adverse effects of excessive debt

To fully analyse the current state of the market whilst making conclusions and speaking of solutions, the manifold costs of having too much public and government debt must be outlined. Failure to repay debts, in both a **microeconomic** and macroeconomic sense, is unattractive to investors, firms, and moneylenders. When individuals incur temporary debts, such as a mortgage or a student loan, moneylenders judge applicants based on their credit rating. This is essentially a score and track record of an individual's past ability to repay debts to those they owe interest to. If an individual has a poor credit rating, it is likely that they will be rejected when approaching a moneylender for finance. It works the same way in a macroeconomic sense for national debt. If a country fails to repay its debts, its credit rating will be downgraded by agencies such as Standard and Poor's. If a country declares that it cannot pay its government bonds and debts wholesale, a state of sovereign default is declared—a country often has to

acquire a conditional bailout from international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Foundation (IMF) whilst putting austerity on its fiscal spending—essentially the macroeconomic version of a diet plan. In such a state of failure to repay debts, investors are effectively deterred from those with a poor credit rating. They opt to invest their money in individuals, companies and countries with a more reliable record of repaying the debts they owe.

Debt alone is not always a bad thing, but the failure to repay these debts is lethal in today's investment and spending-based economy. As per post-1990s modern monetary theory (which evolved from **Keynesian** monetary ideas of the 1930s) it is easier to avoid default if a nation has a reserve currency (examples include the US Dollar and the Great British Pound), as debts can be repaid in the same currency that they are owed in.

Printing money is a sure-fire way to increase inflation, but it can indeed work as a temporary repayment of debts in countries such as the USA (which has the foremost foreign exchange currency today). However, even foreign reserve nations are not immune to debt crises. In 1976, the UK endured a debt repayments crisis after taking a \$5.3 billion loan to stop the devaluation of the GBP. The government was unable to repay the loan by December. This ultimately resulted in the UK hav-

ing no option other than to take a loan of \$3.9 billion from the IMF to repay this short-term loan.^[10] This reflected an unprecedented failure to control debt and inflation, leading to a drastic reconsideration of the prevailing economic model of the time.

Now that we have outlined the adverse effects of excess debt, what relevance does this have to the current economic climate?

How might debt threaten us today?

Examples of sovereign debt default in recent times have largely involved developing economies. Lebanon declared a state of default last year, and other countries such as Argentina are also unable to repay debts.^[11] In such countries, loans have become increasingly difficult to acquire and a foreign exchange crisis has sharply curtailed the ability to import goods and services.^[12] This has increased prices for basic commodities such as food, water and electricity.

However, larger and more developed economies could also face challenges in regard to accumulated debt.

As the national debt of the USA continues to rise, Congress finds itself increasing the debt ceiling higher and higher. How high can the ceiling go?



The Chinese real estate goliath Evergrande is in a possible state of default as it has run out of money; it is speculated that this could pop the real estate bubble of the Chinese economy and bring much of the rest of the world down with it. An increasing debt, along with a multitude of other factors such as inflation and energy shortages (due to rising oil and gas prices) could lead to negative investor speculation, which can in turn lead to a decline in share prices and a subsequent economic recession. This would decrease economic output and increase unemployment. If the recession (defined as two quarters of negative growth) lasts for longer than two or three years, it could spiral into an economic depression (as seen during the 1930s after the Wall Street Crash in October 1929). A decrease in economic growth would also result in an inability to pay debts, which would further damage the economy.

The quantitative easing strategies employed during the pandemic have increased spending and growth (by reducing interest rates) but have also increased debt and inflation as money is continually borrowed to fund quantitative easing whilst an increase in the supply and velocity of money leads to increased inflation. This has brought us growth on borrowed time but could give way to a recession as continual borrowing cannot be sustained forever. For example, as

previously established, if the debt of the USA continues to rise until 2027 at current rates, it could reach \$89 trillion. This would be unsustainable and could damage long-term growth. Governments must enact macroeconomic policies which decrease debt and bring it back to controllable and sustainable levels. Along with other factors, debt must be controlled to avoid recession.

Bringing an economy back from the brink

Contractionary fiscal policy is the foremost method applied by governments to curtail rising debt. This involves increasing tax revenue whilst simultaneously decreasing government spending. It is a simple yet effective way of tackling rising debt levels usually applied in times of high growth and prosperity. Amidst post-lockdown growth, contractionary fiscal policy could help to reduce debt and help ensure long-term economic growth and stability. Furthermore, quantitative easing should be phased out to increase interest rates. This may temporarily reduce economic growth, but it would reduce debt and inflation, and stabilise the economy. Stability would then increase economic growth, as prospective investors would be more likely to invest their capital knowing that they will make returns on their investments. Additionally, in-

creased interest rates would also help in other areas such as land prices, as demand for real estate would reduce and so this would mean land prices would become more affordable for most consumers. Although increasing land prices (projected to increase by 3.5% annually)^[13] may seem to increase economic growth as house prices boom, they are ultimately unsustainable for the vast majority of new consumers seeking a home to live in.

A long road ahead for the camel

Ultimately, contractionary fiscal policy and an end to quantitative easing is needed to handle debt and fix the unsustainable, broken economic model of today. We can no longer assume that economic growth is a given and continue to keep borrowing and lowering interest rates at the expense of a sustainable long-term economy. This model ensures short-term growth but could ultimately hamper growth in the long term. To prevent the increased risk of default and recession, and maintain the ongoing economic recovery, the macroeconomic policy must focus on restructuring our economy away from dependence on inorganic growth. What we need is a sustainable system, rather than one which prioritises instant gratification at the expense of future growth.

Glossary

Macroeconomic - relating to the study of the overall, broad aspects of a national economy.

Microeconomic - relating to the study of small-scale economic activities, i.e. those of the individual or company.

Keynesian - relating to the theories of John Maynard Keynes, who advocated for increased government expenditures and lower taxes in order to stimulate demand.



The Two-Thirds Game

Can you solve this fiendishly difficult economics experiment that tests your rational abilities?

DIVY DAYAL Y13

Economics is a social science, which means that it often undertakes scientific experiments on human decisions to help better understand how we make them. While we may all want to think of ourselves as rational, economic experiments help show us that this isn't always true when we make decisions.

One very famous economic experiment is called the Two-Thirds game, and the rules are as follows:

- Everyone should guess a number between zero and hundred knowing that:
 - The guesses from a group of people will be averaged, and the mean average will be calculated.
 - The winner will be the person whose original guess is closest to $\frac{2}{3}$ of the average.

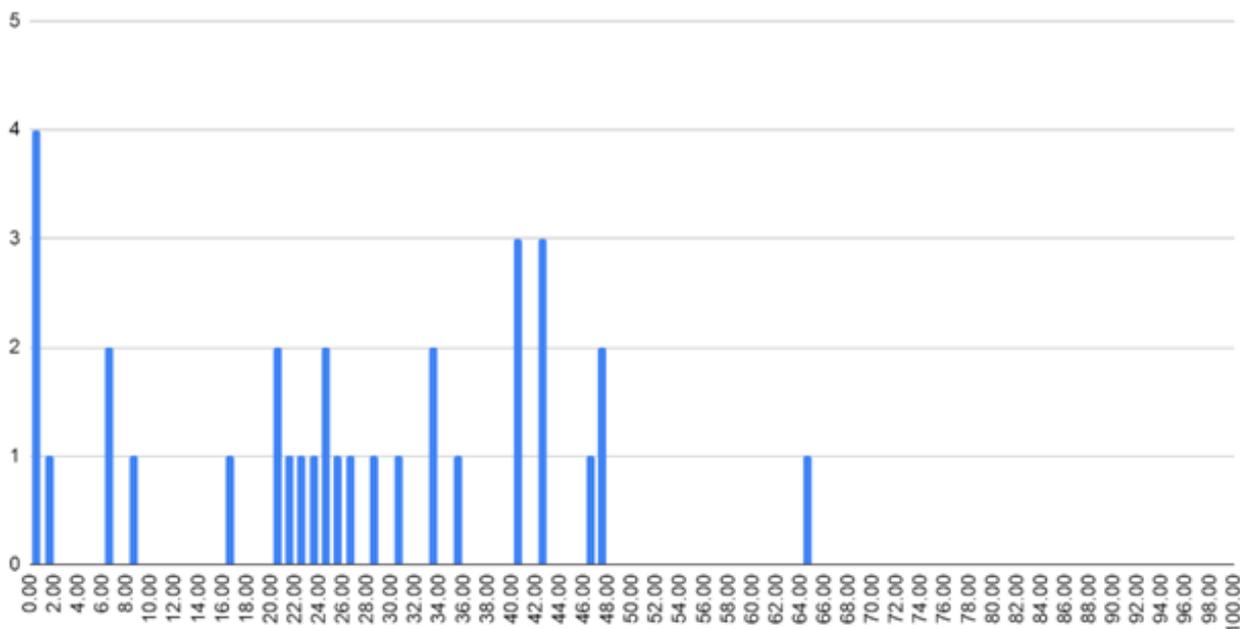
Intuitive guesses include 66 (two-thirds of a hundred) and 44 (everyone will guess 66 hence two-thirds of that is 44).

What would you say?

If everyone were perfectly rational, the “correct answer” would be 0. This is because if 66 is the original guess, 44 would be the correct answer, however everyone else would also know that and in order to win, they will guess 30. The group will continue to undercut until they get to zero, since they know that all the other people will be doing the same.

We asked a group of students to play the game, however we did not assume rationality and hence opened the experiment to the irrational chaos of man. Below are the guesses made:

Histogram of Responses



From this we can see that the majority guesses were in the 20-30 range, perhaps as many made a calculation as to how “rational” the other respondents are. Some were less rational than others (such as those who put 66) and some overestimated the rationality within people (those who said 0).

For the moment everyone has been waiting for:

The AVERAGE was 25.8 and hence the WINNING SCORE was 17.2

Congratulations if you guessed correctly, but we must bear in mind that the sample was of a grammar school, begging the question of what the histogram would look like from a more random sample.



Economics of Conflict

Conflict is often seen as having a negative impact on the economy, but it has some surprising benefits.

DIVY DAYAL Y13

Economics is dependent on non-violent conflict, whether it be the struggle between consumers for finite goods or the conflict between producers for resources. We associate conflict with diverging interests and whether a conflict is successful is if we can get the outcome to align with our interests.^[1] However when we consider violent conflict, how can economic thinking and analysis be applied to the decisions made in war?

The Marxian model of thriving in war

Early economic thinking viewed the world as a fixed “pie,” i.e. that one person’s gain must come at another’s loss. This is partly to blame for the rise in

imperialism and colonialism, under which the rise of global empires was founded on the exploitation of indigenous populations—and the conquerors rarely believed in the prosperity of both parties.

Marx was fascinated with economic conflict, and believed that this imperialism and search for foreign power will inevitably lead to violent military conflict. In fact, he claimed that one of capitalism’s many flaws is that it provides only short term progress, through the exploitation of resources, whether they be domestic or international markets.^[1] He surmised the capitalist approach was to seek new areas where it was not established and exploit the

higher profit rates. Marx believed that once the entire world was “conquered,” there would be no more new markets to enter and capitalism would falter.

This was perhaps inspired by the Scramble for Africa wherein during the Berlin Conference of 1884, the invasion and occupation of 90% of Africa was regularised, such that European superpowers avoided conflict on foreign soil—not due to the respect for locals but due to the high private cost of long distance war.

Marx outlined that crises would happen due to realisation crises (where there exists an oversupply of goods, causing price to fall so much that they become



worthless) or an underconsumptionist crisis (where due to **exogenous** circumstances, wages plummet and levels of demand fall). He claimed that with global dominance and control over labour, wages would be pushed as low as possible where the underconsumptionist crisis would take place.^[1]

It is interesting to note that the Marxian underconsumptionist view of military expenditure may have inspired the basis of aggregate demand and Keynesian economics, one of which's main features is to capture the problem of overproduction and under-demand.

Kautsky in 1914 criticised this view, playing on Menger's principles of exchange: different valuations, knowledge, and ability to exchange. For him, the only way for the capitalist greed to be curbed and to prevent the race for land was to create a cartel; powerful nations would cooperate to limit the "supply of colonisation". Kautsky aimed to limit the ability to exchange to prevent the trade of conflict. Note that Kautsky was an advocate of peaceful capitalism and believed that there is no inherent need to exploit within capitalism.^[1]

The problem Marx faced was that during war (where he hypothesised the failure of capitalism would take place as nations would engage in conflict and unsustainably starve resources), capitalism thrived.

Marx believed that his underconsumptionist view would override any positive impact of military expenditure, since due to the pressures of war, wages would be suppressed and consumption compromised. This is where the concept of peace economics enters.

Peace economics

The problem Marx had at hand was the explanation of why capitalism did as well as it did during wars. Peace economics utilises institution building as a key tool in mitigating war. Perhaps the most notable example came after the Second World War with the creation of the Bretton Woods system and a number of supra-governmental organisations whose aim was to regulate and reset international values and rules. The human rights conventions and social development goals are perhaps the most famous creations of these, now being used as the key indicators of success in many worldwide development projects.

What these institutions do is provide domestic governments with scale and scope of intervention in the market and economy. Marx assumed the government to be involved in military spending—only here, the government looks to the military to increase their scope of intervention too. What this means is that the impact of the military is exaggerated: if the country wins a war, huge economic benefits follow after any reconstruction. Consequently if a country loses a war, its loss is compounded.

This is derived from Coyne's "boomerang effect", an effort to explain how there is greater scope of government intervention when military spending increases.^[1] For example, preparing for war may lead to the creation of new technologies, which given certain conditions may "boomerang" their way to common society with those innovations imported from the battle front. One perhaps more notable example is the increased military spending by the US Department of Defense in 1973, which helped

develop the basis of modern GPS.

Marx assumed that the benefit of the military would be limited to the wages of soldiers, not taking into account the increased scope and unanticipated consequences that may result. In many ways this is similar to the concept of **externalities**, however here the benefits and costs are borne by the same party involved in the transaction that was originally unaware (the government was involved in the transaction of funding defence but were unaware of the benefits of GPS when they first made the investment).

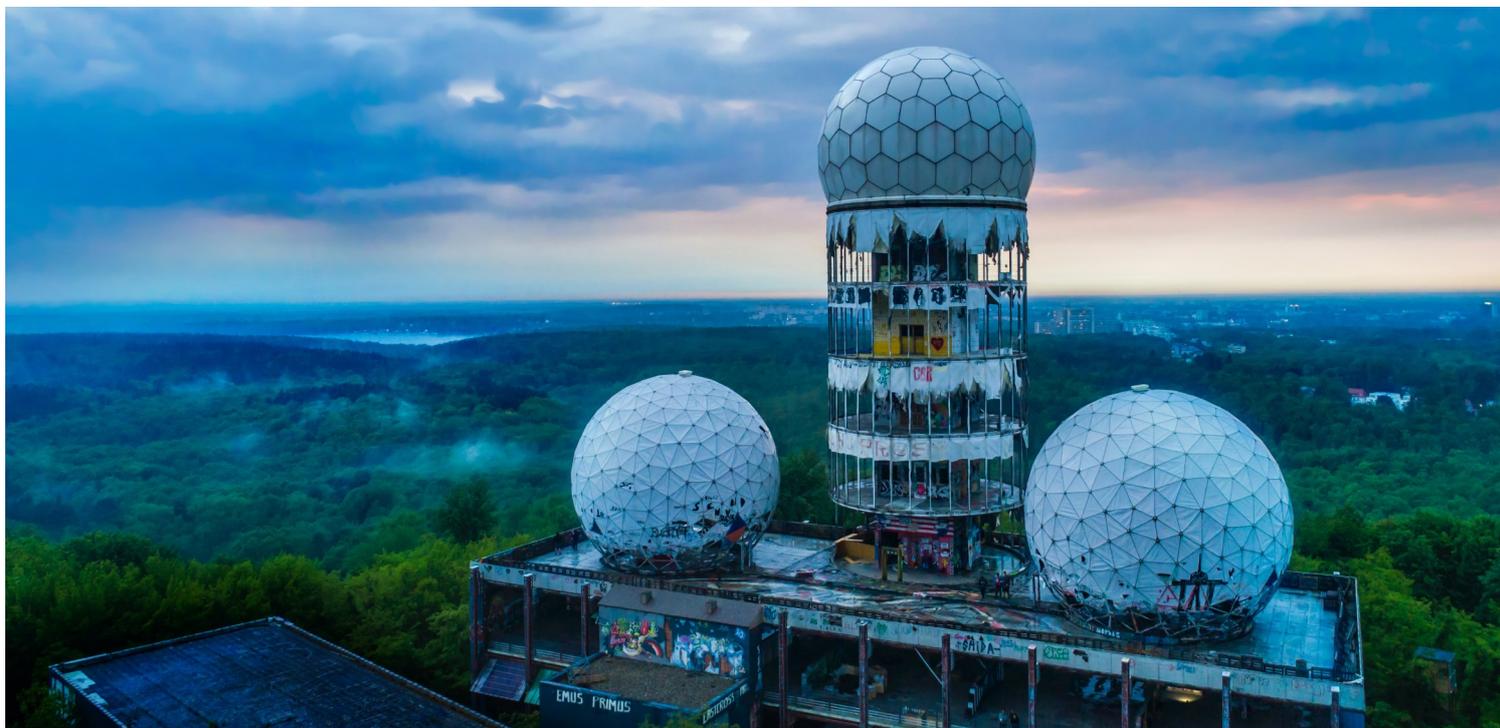
Keynes also discussed this in his work "Economic Consequences of Peace," in which he described the exaggeration outlined above.^[2] His work predicts the Second World War; caused by a desire to recompensate and "make the world pay" for the stringent restrictions and war reparations imposed upon Germany.

General causes of conflict



Although there are many nuances within the various economic causes of conflict, the most distinguishable reasons are greed-based determinants and the outcomes of game theory. The former is self-explanatory: nations and societies wish to gain more factors of production in a bid to maximise their own profits.

Game theory is a theoretical framework in which the actions of one nation are dependent on another, as both nations work to minimise their loss. What this can mean is that the outcome is sub-optimal, as a situation where nations minimise their losses may not necessarily



be the situation with the minimal joint loss, as seen for example in the Cold War. Both the USA and USSR aimed to minimise their losses (engaging in a Cold War as a result) which wasn't the optimal outcome (the optimal outcome being not being involved in war at all). This derives from the fact that the NASH equilibrium (a situation in which both players in a game do not want to change and have a dominant strategy) is different to the Pareto efficient outcome, a situation of resource allocation in which one player can make gains without expense to any other player. This often leads to an arms race such as in the Cold War.^[3]

Lewis Fry Richardson’s arms race mathematical model

One other key model within the economics of conflict is to describe whether an arms race may or may not occur. It is a mathematical model to describe the competitive acquisition of military capability.^[4] The model is as follows:

$$\left[\begin{array}{l} \frac{dx}{dt} = ky - at + g \\ \frac{dy}{dt} = lx - \beta t + h \end{array} \right]$$

This model reflects the rate of gaining arms for country x and y . The three components that determine the rate are a response to the other nation (ky or lx), a common negative through fatigue ($-at$ or $-\beta t$), as well as a constant grievance factor.

The reason this model is so significant is that if $a\beta = kl$, the rates of change in the gains of weapons would be parallel. This is a stable situation and there is no “race,” however where this is not the case, exponential growth in the level of arms would occur.

Although simple, this model outlines the basic conditions of an arms race: a response factor; a negative fatigue factor; and a grievance factor. The biggest advantage of this model is that it can also model evolutionary escalation and more refined counter adaptations. In a biological context, foxes can hunt better but rabbits too can get better at escaping. This applies to the military context too, such as better aimed missiles (better hunting) followed by better anti-missile domes, such as the Iron Dome in Israel (better escaping).

It is important to consider that an arms race stability is not necessarily the same as political stability (arms race stability means both nations increase quantity

of arms at the same rate). Moreover, this model assumes a linear relationship and proportional response, which isn’t always the case.^[4]

Economics for the future

The decision-making of nations and societies may not be perfect in times of war, due to the additional pressure of loss of lives and diplomatic tensions. However with careful economic analysis and different theories, appropriate actions to mitigate the effects of war can take place. It was only due to Marx’s underconsumptionist view that Keynes requested for national infrastructure development directives in the inter-war period, and only due to the conflict between Axis and Allies was institution building as a global endeavour imagined. It begs the question as to whether economic analysis will be able to address current issues like climate change as effectively as it addressed 20th century crises.

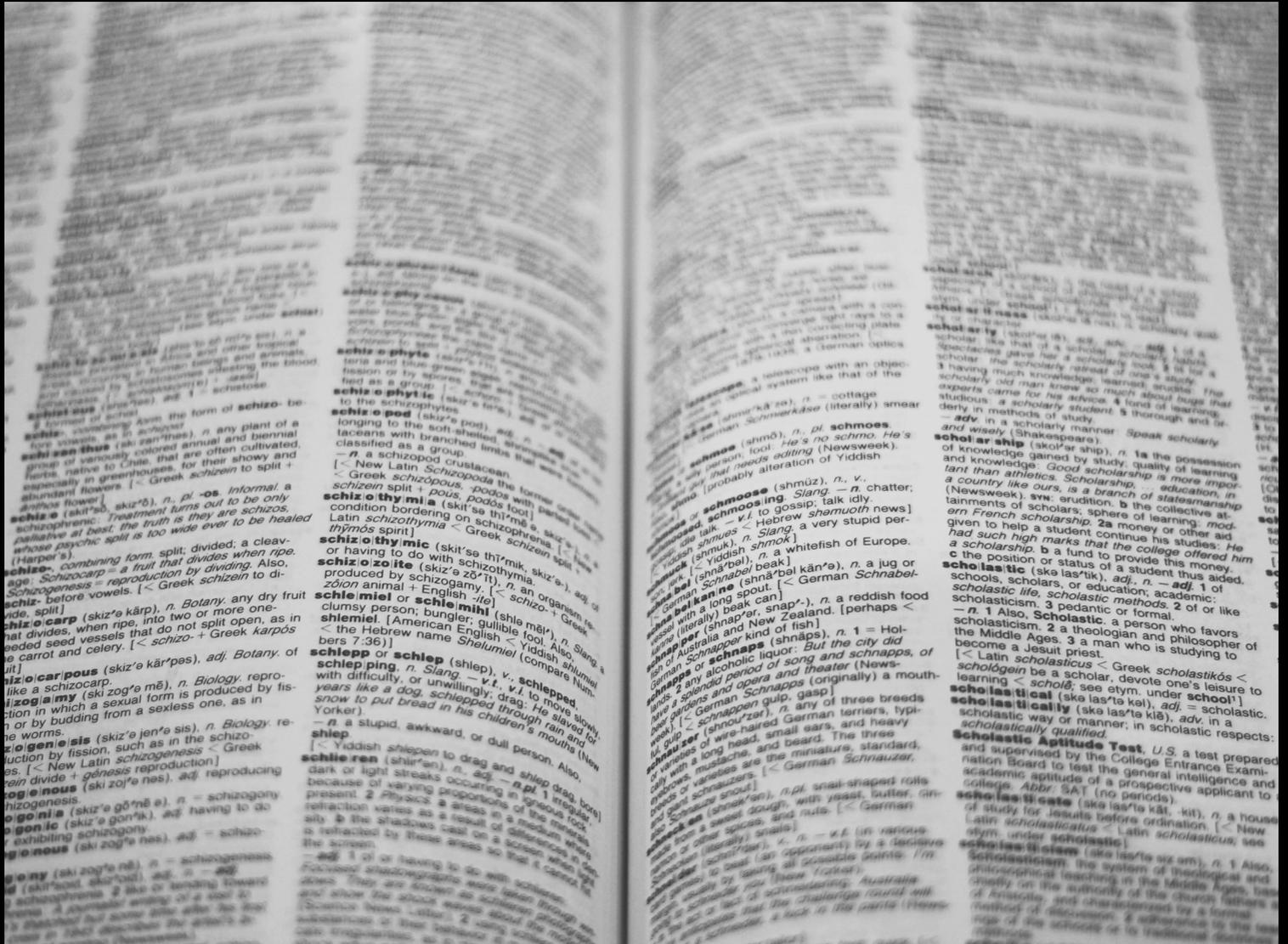
Glossary

Exogenous - having an external origin or cause

Externalities - impacts on third parties unrelated to the production of consumption of goods caused by the transaction

EDITED BY NICHOLAS JAMES

ENGLISH



What is the impact of using sophisticated vocabulary on society?
Read Aravindh Baskar's article to find out.

ARTICLE

ARAVINDH BASKAR Y12

The Irony of a Sophisticated Lexicon

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POEM

DAVID YUAN Y13

Atop Riemann Hill

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mental point. The reason for this confusion lay fully in the language Bentham used to convey his ideas. The exercise that followed helped to clear any confusion through the use of dictionaries to break this down into more understandable English, i.e. English we could use to explain this to Year 7 students with. Why would Bentham write in this level of language when conveying ideas that he believed every human ought to adhere to? Surely it is in everyone's interest for Bentham to write in language that could be understood by everyone, as in Bentham's eyes everyone should follow his principles. The primary reason for this would have been Bentham's audience.

In 1800 around 40% of men and 60% of women in England and Wales were illiterate,^[1] so his limited audience would have primarily consisted of academics who wrote and read at that sophisticated level and would have looked down upon lower levels of English. As such a high proportion of the population were illiterate, Bentham did not have to consider the understanding of the masses as they would not have had access to this material regardless. This was the general trend of Bentham and his contemporaries, writing material that was not intended to be for the majority of the population. By 2000 the number changed to only 1% in the UK being legally classed as illiterate. Although this drastic change to literacy rates in the preceding two centuries would theoretically lead to all written material being accessible to everyone in contemporary society, in reality the language used in literature and elsewhere still seems to divide the country.

In 2021 the average GCSE grade in English language and literature was between 4.9 and 5.1. Only 2.8% of students nationwide achieved a grade 9, which is a 0.3% increase from the previous year. What this shows is that the number of students with a high level of language is increasing ever so slightly, but also that the higher grades (7, 8, 9) are reached only by around 11% of the population.^[2]

Higher level language is much less accessible to 89% of the population, defeating its entire purpose.

Could this problem be entirely eradicated if we stop the use of high level vocabulary, so everyone could easily interpret the ideas that authors/speakers aim to convey? Not entirely. Authors carefully consider the nature of their audience and they do not use language so impetuously.

The problem, if there is one, only lies in when there is a disconnect between audience and level of language used.

For example, my mother attempted to read the self-help book, 'The Chimp Paradox' by Dr Steve Peters, which aims to help with confidence, success, and happiness, all three of which are indubitably universally sought after. She complained that she, a layman, could not decipher the language without the help of Google. A book in the genre of self-help, which one would think is aimed towards everyone so anyone could benefit, should not utilise a syntax that cannot be deciphered by its target audience as this is in fact detrimental to its mission statement of being a programme to help all. Pure irony.

The lexicon of the modern media and political class

In contemporary society, as the aforementioned literacy rate is much higher than it once was, mediums, such as the media, flourish due to the larger potential audience and accessibility. Naturally, this attracts politicians and public speakers who wish to push their agenda on a potentially huge platform, in the majority of the cases, using their language. Mainstream media faces the unique challenge of having to appeal to the masses, having a potential target audience of the entire planet, and so the language they use is of paramount importance. The language used must be simple enough that the layman can clearly understand the ideas conveyed



and yet engaging enough so the viewer or listener doesn't lose their attention. Although, on the surface, this seems to be positive as no one is neglected as everyone with access to the media can clearly understand what is said in it, it has shown to be detrimental to the people's well-being as it can be easily abused. The trade off of the accuracy that is intrinsic to high level, sophisticated vocabulary in return for the accessibility of easier-to-understand language is a dangerous one.

There is one man who personifies this danger more than anyone else: Donald J. Trump. No need for an introduction. In particular, the way that Trump uses the phrase 'peaceful transition' proceeding his loss in the 2020 election exemplifies the danger of the trade that he has deliberately chosen to make. After losing office Trump made many comments—that I am sure we have all seen—on how the election was not fair and has cast unjustified aspersions on mail-in voting—claiming without evidence there has been and will be widespread fraud.^[3] After being accused of making the transition as difficult as possible for Biden, he equivocates on the phrase, "peaceful transition of power".^[3] Traditionally, this phrase refers to the process of handing over the office and the subsequent power from one president to the next. The word peaceful refers to the open acknowledgement that it was a fair and just election and therefore that there was a clear winner, in addition to cooperation between the former and to-be presidents, e.g. by sharing intelligence briefings as well as vacating the White House when the time comes.

But in the presidential debate pre-election in 2020 Chris Wallace poses the



question, “are you prepared to reassure the American people that the next President will be the legitimate winner of this election?” to which Donald Trump replies, “so when I listened to Joe talking about a transition, there's been no transition from when I won. I won that election. And if you look at crooked Hillary Clinton, if you look at all of the different people, there was no transition. Because they came after me trying to do a coup. They came after me spying on my campaign. They started on the day I won and even before I won.” Trump attempts to redefine the phrase ‘peaceful transition’, stating it could have only happened if his opposition had not impeached him and (apparently) spied on him and his administration, fundamentally saying his predecessors did not gift him a peaceful transition simply by criticising him and objecting to his actions and/or policies. Here is where we see the danger of using less specific yet more accessible language. I would argue that the majority of English-speaking people would find the phrase “peaceful transition” to be a straightforward one to understand, but the fact it is not very specific allows the abuse of its vague meaning. This defeats its entire purpose of being straightforward and easy to interpret, ironically rendering it the exact opposite of that: complicated.

I find that among Trump’s opposition globally they believe pro-Trump supporters and Trump himself to be less intelligent and not well-spoken or well-read. Whether this is the truth is an entirely different argument, but this view itself speaks volumes as to the prejudices that are made on the grounds of how someone speaks. This is perfectly personified in a quotation from the Washington Post: “Former president Donald Trump’s

Twitter feed—back when he still had one—was rife with glaring misspellings as well as absurd lies. Some even suspected the misspellings were deliberate—intended to signal his contempt for eggheads who might care about such niceties.”^[4] Although this quotation is not directly speaking to Trump’s vocabulary, it still evinces the view that not only is Trump unintelligent because of the way he speaks, he is anti-intelligent somehow for his “contempt for eggheads”. It is unreasonable to assume that Trump is not intelligent and that how he speaks in any way provides evidence for that assertion, but it is a trap that is easy to fall into and one we must aim to avoid.

It’s not just you, Donald

This linguistic discrimination happens across the globe and across a multitude of languages, dividing us further rather than uniting us as language should. A French politician has brought forward a new law to make “glottophobia” – prejudice against regional accents – a criminal offence, after a former presidential candidate mocked a reporter for her pronunciation. This phrase has been coined by sociologist Philippe Blanchet of Rennes University to describe discrimination based on pronunciation and tone as well as vernacular. It is very easy to look down upon English which is not spoken in received pronunciation, but this prejudice is just that—a judgement without any substantial evidence of anything. In the UK we are lucky to have our various dialects showcased by various high-profile celebrities on television, but the same coverage is not present worldwide for other languages in other countries.^[5] The reaction I think we ought to have to the events in France in 2018 is one of disgust to this outright discrimination purely from the accent and vernacular of the reporter, especially by someone running for President whose primary goal should be to unite all French people.

The most radical, yet hypothetically strong option, would be to introduce one global language with one global

dialect and accent. Is this realistic? Absolutely not and this is summarised by the angry response from Parisian MP Laetitia Avia, who tweeted:

“Do we speak French any the less with an accent? Must one suffer humiliation if one doesn’t speak standard French?”

- Laetitia Avia

She went on to say, “because our accents are our identity, I am tabling a bill to recognise glottophobia as a source of discrimination.” The specific phrase I would like to focus on is “because our accents are our identity”. The way we speak and the words we use to convey our ideas are naturally such a seminal part of our identity and we should not be forced to speak a way which does not feel natural to us as that takes away our sense of self.

Although language has always been a divisive factor in society, it runs off the pretence of uniting people through the ability to communicate. It is ironic how detrimental it is to its own singular purpose: being able to convey ideas. Although communication is arguably at the best place it has ever been in the history of humanity, it is still forever more going to be a disconnecting factor and with the rise of cancel culture it only seems that the disconnect will further widen. On one hand, language seems to only be becoming more and more segregating. On the other hand, there is a case for how information is becoming more and more accessible, with the rise of applications like TikTok, YouTube Shorts and Instagram Reels forcing media outlets to put the important attention-grabbing news into condensed clips that all of the millions of users on these applications would feel inclined to click on, but nonetheless only convey half-baked, most of the time useless, information that has the best chance of going ‘viral’. The irony of a sophisticated lexicon has never been so prevalent.

EDITED BY NEEL PATEL

Atop Riemann Hill

David takes us with him for a short, yet poignant, climb up Riemann Hill.

DAVID YUAN Y13

Beads of toil lace my sizzled, scorched skin.
Cursing at the solar wrath, I soldier onwards towards the summit,
Crushing myriads of yellowing blades beneath my feet.
And then, a haven.
Shielded from the relentless inferno by the verdant oak atop Riemann Hill.
Never has cold darkness been so welcoming.
And now
You appear before me.
Your intricate locks, as dark as Pluto's stallions.
You're my love, my Juliet, my everything.
If only we could be here together forever.
"Well...
I brought you something -
A few roses."
The petals, milky and elegant as if they were feathers
From a dove, and along the stems one can find the claws.
I can't hold back the copious tears, which wet my cheeks
As I place the flowers on your grave.



GEOGRAPHY



Oil has transformed the way we live our lives, but do its drawbacks outweigh its benefits?

Read Joseph Nestor's article to find out.

ARTICLE

JOSEPH NESTOR Y12

Is Oil a 21st Century Curse or Blessing?

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ARTICLE

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Will Overpopulation Be the End of Our Future?

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Is Oil a 21st Century Curse or Blessing?

Every nation wishes it had oil reserves,
but is it really worth the hassle?

JOSEPH NESTOR Y12

Oil. The liquid that modern economies are built upon. Crude oil, in all its divisions (petroleum, diesel, kerosene, etc.), has a huge impact on worldwide economies today. From powering our homes and factories, to fueling our cars and buses and even allowing our skincare and cosmetic products to exist. The fossil fuel that supplied 48.2% of the world's energy at its peak in 1973 is the symbol of a post-industrial and modern economy in the 21st century.^[1] But in today's society, some of the economies that were frontrunners in oil production in the mid-to-late 20th century have gone from having the strongest economies and most desirable living conditions to some of the most oppressive political systems and worst living conditions in the world, whilst some others have risen to become economic, scientific and architectural powerhouses. This begs the question: is the production of oil for better or worse for the modern government?

The UAE

We cannot begin our exploration into the negative impacts oil can have on a state without first talking about the egregious amount of wealth oil can bring to a country. Since the foundation of OPEC (The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) in 1960, which included an all-star cast of the richest and poorest economies in the world, oil production has been a stunningly effective way to stimulate an economy.^[2]

One need look no further than the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for a shining example of how oil seems to stimulate an economy to the outsider, and yet it also perfectly demonstrates the flaws with accelerated development that oil production supplies. After finding first signs of oil in 1966, at which point the country was not united, with a multitude of smaller colonial states housing a largely illiterate population,

the UAE was unified under one country by 1971, and quickly pressed on with oil production, finding 3 oil fields that all started producing oil by 1984.^[3] The UAE produced a massive 2.2 million barrels per day by 1990, rising to almost 3.8 million barrels per day in 2016.^[4] This catapulted the UAE from having a tiny GDP per capita—1.7bn Dirhams (£340 million)—at its formation in 1971 to 59bn Dirhams (£11.73 billion) by 2001.^[5]

This extreme growth has characterised the region, particularly its major cities—Dubai and Abu Dhabi—as some of the richest, most adventurous in the world. Dubai, for example, has become a hub for architectural innovation and megastructures, with architects flocking to the city hoping to be able to build their ideas on a near limitless budget. For example, the ten most expensive structures planned to be built in the ten years from 2014-2024 are projected to cost a shocking \$240 bn when combined (more than the annual GDP of nearby Qatar!), showing just how much funding goes into architecture in Dubai.^[6] The most expensive of these is Jumeirah Garden City, an entire 9,000,000 sq. metre urban development planned to cost around \$89 bn. This list reveals a lot about the amount of wealth the UAE has, while the developments in architecture and industry has led to Dubai and other urban areas becoming political hotspots of the Middle East. Housing prominent embassies of western nations, the city itself acts as a mediator between western governments and their political rivals, in an area that is highly disputed by every developed nation in the world. However, I would argue that this accelerated economic, industrial, and architectural development in the UAE somewhat papers



over the cracks of growing inequality and human rights abuses that are so often heard about in oil producing economies, a problem that I shall further highlight.

Venezuela

Our next step in examining the impact of oil on a country is to discuss an economy that was not so fortunate after finding oil and suffered because of the wealth that oil brings. Venezuela—once thought to be the next South American superpower—now suffers an economic recession of close to 20% a year, its economy having fallen by 200% since 2008.^[7] The former oil producer was blighted by a large combination of factors, from allowing excessive foreign interference from the USA to corruption from within the government, highlighting the many problems with oil. Venezuela is an example of the faults with oil-reliant economies and the negative effects it can have in years to come. Venezuela discovered oil in 1922, at which point, according to Miguel Salas, expert in political and cultural developments in South America,

“The country lacked a nationally integrated economy.” ^[8]

- Miguel Salas

From this point onwards, Venezuela became one of the earliest oil-producing economies, becoming the second largest petroleum exploring country in the world by 1928, at which point global superpowers began taking note of this rapidly growing economy.^[9] The USA, so often involved in oil-producing economies, particularly began increasing influence in the area. From thereon Venezuela's economy grew exponentially, just as we see in OPEC economies today, but there was an undertone of extreme reliance on oil, with 3.5 million barrels being produced per day in 1998, leading to large investment by corporations such as BP and Exxon Mobil, causing the Venezuelan economy to further hinge on the success of oil exports.^[10] But all went well at the time. The Venezuelan capital, Caracas, had a growing reputation as ‘El Dorado—The City of Gold’ as industry

boomed in the state, led by newly elected president Hugo Chavez.

But then things took a huge turn for the worse. Oil prices started to decline in the late 1990s, led by the massive increase in proven reserves, caused by multiple Middle Eastern countries, such as the aforementioned UAE, beginning to produce massive amounts of oil. Suddenly, the loans that the Chavez administration had taken out to pay for more oil drilling in the area began to look unpayable, and the economy—99% reliant on oil—looked even worse. Exxon and other oil drilling corporations pulled out of the area after an increasing anti-American sentiment from Chavez.^[11] Suddenly, without the expertise needed to extract their main economy driver, the floor fell out from Venezuelan industry. Through the creation of a new oil superpower in the Middle East, the previously supported one had been completely devoured. Venezuela found itself in a debt crisis the likes of which hadn't been seen before in the region, reaching an unmanageable \$116 bn by 2010, and rising by a terrifying 10-20% every year for the next 5 years.^[12]

The Venezuelan economy floundered desperately, suffering from inflation and an extreme poverty crisis until 2013 when Hugo Chavez died. He was succeeded by politician Nicolas Maduro



who has ruled Venezuela in a far more oppressive manner ever since, with brutal responses to anti-regime protests, heavy corruption and further mismanagement resulting in a further reduction

in the already low quality of life. Indeed, Venezuela is the archetype of a failed economy, one that by not future proofing itself, went from the largest oil producer in the world, with a stable government and high expectations from the rest of the world, to one that has no major industry and is under an oppressive, authoritarian regime and suffers with debt up to three times the national GDP. Venezuela is a perfect example of how the reliance caused by oil can eventually lead to a country's downfall.

A curse in disguise?

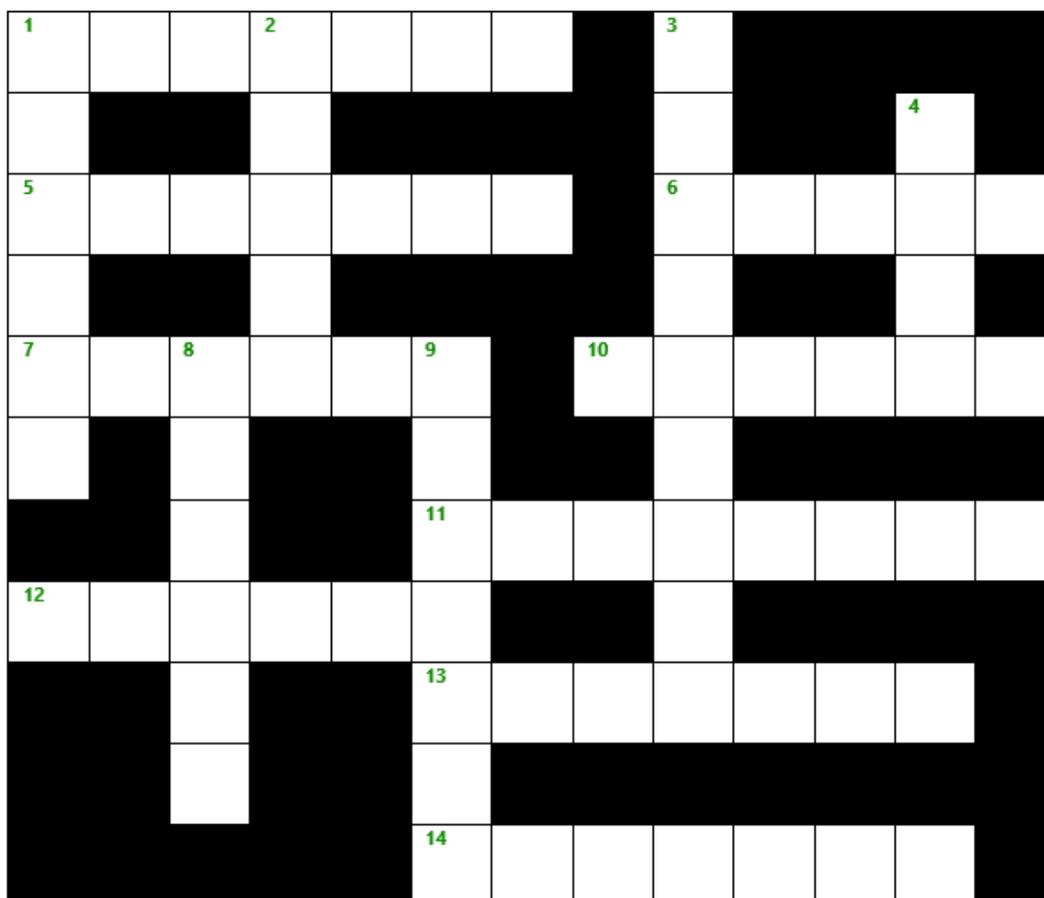
Oil can result in rapid and beneficial changes for economies, particularly in the developing world, with some countries, both developed and developing, benefiting from oil production. It is also worth stressing that without careful finance management, or even a stable administration as seen in Venezuela, oil can lead to absolute disaster later. In this regard, I would class oil as a curse in disguise, especially to underdeveloped economies, as, whilst appearing as a factor that provides consistent cash flow, one of the reasons why oil is a curse is because the revenues from it are ultimately limited. As a result, an over reliance on oil production can cause catastrophes when supply runs dry, as accelerated development without focus on a secondary, sustainable industry leaves a country with nothing but debt when oil production is no longer manageable. Combine this with the extremely morally dubious corporate micro-management of oil supplies in less developed countries, leading to even less income gained from oil, and suddenly it is possible to see how Middle Eastern economies could collapse in the same way Venezuela did. This collapse has resulted in millions of economic refugees fleeing from Venezuela to neighbouring nations in South America and the Caribbean. With some Middle Eastern economies already having extreme inequality between urban and rural regions, the humanitarian crisis caused by economic collapse in the region would be severe. If the curse that is oil were to befall a country anew, the consequences would be catastrophic.

EDITED BY EESHAAN IYER

Crossword

Have a go at this crossword to test your country naming skills!

The answers can be found on page 50.



Across

- 1** This European country borders 9 others, including Denmark, Luxembourg and the Czech Republic. (7)
- 5** This country came second in the 2020 UEFA European Football Championship. (7)
- 6** This country's capital is Khartoum. (5)
- 7** This country has the most donut shops per capita than anywhere else! (6)
- 10** This country is home to more national parks than any other country in the western hemisphere. (6)
- 11** This nation is sometimes known as the 'teardrop of India'. (3, 5)
- 12** This country has more oil reserves per capita than any other. (6)
- 13** This country borders Bulgaria, Moldova and the black sea. (7)
- 14** This country is the largest one in Africa and the Sahara makes up more than four-fifths of the country's area. (7)

Down

- 1** Famous people who originated from this country include Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. (6)
- 2** This is a tiny country in the Mediterranean Sea. (5)
- 3** This country is the largest island in the world. (9)
- 4** The capital of this country is Bamako. (4)
- 8** This country gives a Christmas tree to the people of London each year to show its gratitude for Britain's support during WW2. (6)
- 9** This beautiful Alpine nation was where "The Sound of Music" was set and filmed. (7)



Will Overpopulation Be the End of Our Future?

Sang-Hyun explores the dangers of overpopulation and the changes that we need to make to preserve the planet.

SANG-HYUN LEE Y13

7.9 billion—the number of people on the planet at this moment in time.^[1] To understand the concept of 7.9 billion better, let us use a comparison. If every person had a height of 5'8" (roughly 172cm), 7.9 million people stacked on top of each other would be equal to the distance between London and Australia. In contrast, 7.9 billion people would be enough height to cover the distance between the Earth and the Moon roughly 35 times. This giant leap in magnitude between a million and a billion should put into perspective how many people are alive at this moment. However, the human population has been growing slowly for the most part of human history until now.

The average number of people on the planet at the same time has grown exponentially in recent centuries. Just 200 years ago, in 1800, demographers estimate that the world population was only around 1 billion people.^[2] More than seven times smaller than the world population currently. Time intervals between each billion have shortened from about 128 years between 1 and 2 billion to only 12 years between 6 and 7 billion.^[2] But why has our population growth accelerated so much? And perhaps more importantly, what does the future look like for us?

Factors such as disease, land, and resource limitation have kept the human population in check for the past couple of millennia. But recent discoveries

such as medicine, hygiene, and industrialisation have changed the boundaries and limits on people, allowing for rapid population growth. As the number of deaths fell, families remained larger and lived for longer. Families with high numbers of children due to high mortality rates suddenly had more of their children living until adulthood. Areas such as London and the UK went through periods such as the Industrial Revolution, resulting in the functional change of Britain from an agrarian and handicraft economy into an economy flourishing from industry and machines. Agricultural developments such as fertiliser and farming machinery allowed for the increased provision of food, while economic growth allowed for better living conditions for many people. This involved better provision of food, better quality of housing and supply of necessities such as water. As a result, estimates suggest that the population in England more than doubled between 1750 and 1850.^[2]

But with growing numbers and a finite world, how has this impacted our Earth?

Problems with resource provision

Our era has been dubbed 'The Anthropocene Epoch' by scientists to describe the period in our Earth's history during which human activity is the most significant factor harming both our climate and environment. Needless to say, humans have put a substantial burden on the planet, resulting in visions of an apocalyptic future. With the need to provide eleven tons of natural resources for every person on Earth, we have extracted 88 billion tons of natural resources in just 2017 alone.^[3] If Earth's history were condensed into a year, we have already depleted the Earth of one third of its resources in just the last 0.2 seconds. Unquestionably, this is unsustainable. But there are many other concerns as well. Malnutrition, famine, water shortages, climate change, conflicts, and over-

crowding also plague our visions of the future. 821 million people already suffer from starvation, and 1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to water.^[4,5] With an already existing issue with the distribution of vital resources such as food and water, the added pressure of an increased population will only result in more global supply problems.

Variance between countries

Although still very high, population growth reached its peak around 1962 and 1963 with a max annual growth rate of 2.2%.^[2] In fact, this can be attributed to the transition of countries through five different stages of the demographic transition model. Every country is thought to go through the various stages, with more developed countries being at the later stages. For example, two countries such as India and Japan are at different stages of the demographic transition. India (a country at stage 3) experienced an annual increase in population size of 0.99% in 2020.^[6] On the other hand, Japan (a country at stage 5) experienced a falling population size with an annual population decrease of -0.30% in 2020.^[7] But why are developed countries experiencing slower and even sometimes negative population growth?

If a country develops, it does not mean that it is only growing economically. Economic growth does play an important part, but other developments in societal attitudes and education are also crucial. Attitudes to women in work and

families, in general, have also changed in developed countries. In contrast to the previous gender role of women being the mother and stay-at-home caretaker, more developed and progressive countries seek equal rights and career opportunities for both men and women. A developed country like Japan experiences a 52% employment rate of women, while a country with a lower level of development (measured in areas such as Gender Inequality Index and GDP per capita) such as Iraq experiences an employment rate of only 12.3% for women.^[8,9] The evolution of gender roles and a career-orientated society, can lead to less want for children and a family as it can interrupt career progression. Birth preventatives such as contraception also play an essential factor in limiting population growth. Contraceptives such as condoms and pills are still relatively unknown and unavailable in developing countries. Bangladesh has a problem with the discontinuation of birth preventive methods at a rate of 36% in 12 months of initiation.^[10] This discontinuation means that Bangladeshi women often experience higher birth rates than desired, with an actual rate of children of 2.3 compared to the 1.6 desired on average.^[10] The lack of access to sex education, information, and support from the government for the public about birth prevention in countries such as Bangladesh results in more babies being born than desired. This can

result in overpopulation in less developed areas whilst there are birth-rate declines in areas of higher development.

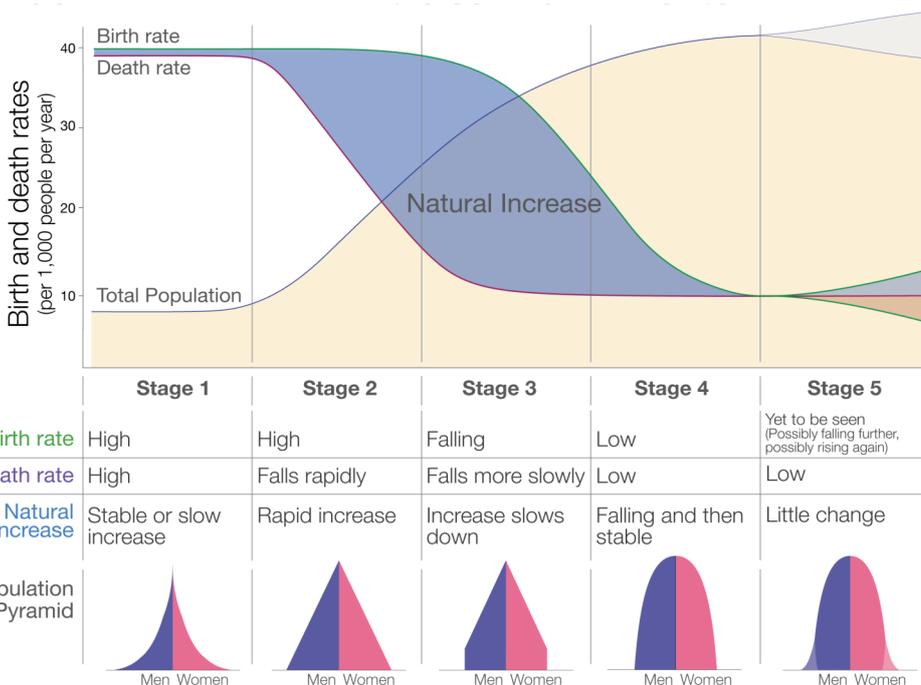
Moreover, it may not be overpopulation causing the undersupply of necessities such as food and water to poorer countries. There is also a significant problem with the way we manage and use the resources currently available to us. With food wastage being estimated to be around 1.3 billion tonnes in 2013 (a



third of the world's food produced), it does not make sense for there to still be people that suffer from hunger and starvation.^[11] It can therefore be argued that social changes and habits in recent decades are more of a factor in the increased depletion and supply of vital resources such as food, rather than the increase in the number of people. This can be seen in areas of rapid development such as China, where average meat consumption per person has increased more than tenfold.^[12] This massive increase in consumption inevitably leads to more land usage and more water usage in order to raise the increasing number of livestock needed.

So will overpopulation be the end of us? No.

Through education, better practices, and a change to our habits overall, the effects of the current rate of population growth can be managed much better and sustainably. Overpopulation poses challenges for the management of resources though. Therefore, the threat of overpopulation should be used as an incentive to fundamentally change our habits and provide a better environment for future generations to come.



EDITED BY AARON STACE

HISTORY



**What makes something a country?
Read Arko Mukherjee's article to find out and discover some of the
weirdest claims to become a country in history!**

ARTICLE

ATTICUS FEAR Y12

The Eastern Incarnation - Voted Best Article

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The Eastern Incarnation

A tale of the Second Coming of Jesus in China.

ATTICUS FEAR Y12

Voted best article

Although the Holy Lamb of God may never have walked upon England's pleasant pastures, he returned to the mortal plane as a Lion to dye the pink meadows of China blood red. The Taiping Rebellion erupted in 1851 in the Guanxi province and was fought between the 200-hundred-year-old Qing dynasty and the so called 'Heavenly Kingdom'. By its conclusion, an estimated 20 million lay dead—a toll greater than had ever been seen before, one which wouldn't be seen again until the Second World War. Despite the revolt's monumental consequences—an unprecedented loss of life in the short term and the shaping of the destiny of a global superpower in the long term—the Rebellion remains relatively unknown outside of China. The tale of how the hallucinations of an immigrant peasant purporting to be God's second son incarnate would ignite the second bloodiest war in history is both extraordinary and extraordinarily tragic.

Like any crisis, the Taiping Rebellion was the result of the combination of a number of factors, some so ingrained in Chinese society that they would repeat themselves during Mao's subsequent (and more successful) uprising almost a century later. The China of the mid-19th century was far removed from the communist autocracy of present times. The vast country was ruled in name by a figurehead Emperor, and in actuality by members of the imperial court in Beijing, around which an extensive bureaucratic network was centred. This govern-



ment presided over what was later labelled 'the century of humiliation'.^[1] The imperial regime was first weakened by the First Opium War (1839-42), in which the British Empire defeated China, imposing its right to freely deal opiates to the Chinese people. Compounding the country's woes, the Yangtze and Yellow rivers flooded, causing mass famine for the growing Chinese population, which had doubled during the 18th century, growing to over 400 million.^[2] The people of China were angry, restless, and starving—in prime position to be swept up by the promises of a Messiah.

The name of this unlikely saviour was Hong Huoxiu. Not only had he been born to peasant farmers in a small village in the South-East, but Hong also started life with an additional handicap: he was a Hakka, a 'guest people' originating from central China who had emigrated to the South. They spoke a different dialect to other Chinese people and were often shunned and isolated.^[3] At the age of 22, Hong sought to pull himself and his family up from the bottom rung of the social ladder through the only method available to him: the civil service examination. Joining China's bureaucracy would grant Hong, his family, and his village wealth and prestige. Hong travelled to the city of Guangzhou under immense pressure, all his hopes and dreams rest-

ing on a single test—a predicament which many Wilson's students may be familiar with. Unfortunately for Hong (and perhaps China), he failed. Ever resilient, Hong attempted the test twice more. The stress of his third failure overtook him, and, upon returning to his village in 1837, Hong experienced a mental breakdown, falling into a coma.

It was during this so-called 'Night of Power' that Hong's feverish mind conjured visions which would shape history. He dreamt he was being attacked by hordes of demons, only to be rescued by two mysterious robed figures, which he would later identify as the Christian God and his son Jesus. This God charged him to cure China of a demonic infestation and Hong awoke a changed man with a new name: Hong Xiuquan, meaning 'Heavenly King'.^[3] Despite this presumptuous new title, Hong settled down to village life, having a child and becoming a teacher. He even made the journey to Guangzhou once again, to have another go at the civil-service exam. Although he inevitably failed, Hong did come away from the city with a pamphlet, 'Good Words for Exhorting the Age', handed to him by a missionary.

Europeans were exporting to China a substance far more intoxicating than opium: Christianity.

It was in 1843 that Hong read this pamphlet and his spiritual journey began. Hong came to the revelation that he was the second son of God and brother of Jesus Christ, a literal deity on Earth^[4]. He recruited and baptised his friend, Lian Afa, and began to spread the Good News. His new beliefs did not go unnoticed, and a year later Hong was fired from his teaching position for insulting Chinese philosopher Confucius, whose political and religious teachings formed the basis of Chinese government and social structure. Finding himself unemployed, Hong became a travelling preacher, taking with him his family and followers. Hong found much support among fellow Hakka and the 'prophet's' support grew and grew.^[4] His egalitarian teachings about equality and the end of property and class, were particularly appealing to the oppressed and impoverished, a group particularly numerous following the famines of the late 1840s.^[5,7] Hong found an enemy in the Qing dynasty and ethnic minority Manchus like them, who became the demons from his earlier vision.

To the alarm of imperial authorities, a large host of around 40,000 'God-Worshippers' had gathered at Thistle Mountain in Guangxi by 1847.^[3, 6] Among their number was a Hakka claiming to be Jesus Christ reincarnate and Hong's older brother, who anointed Hong ruler of Taiping, or the 'Heavenly Kingdom'. Emboldened, Hong and his followers began to arm themselves over the next few years, purchasing weaponry and gunpowder. This was unacceptable to the Qing government, who, in January 1851, attacked Thistle Mountain with seven battalions. The Qing were routed, and Hong's army descended on, and subsequently seized, the nearby city of Jintian. Over the next few months, Hong's army marched further north-east, joined along the way by Hakka, peasant, and tradesman alike. Soon, the 'Messiah' commanded over a million men and women. The army conquered cities across the South, massacring both

dissidents and prisoners of war, and burning alive ethnic Manchus.

The city of Nanjing was captured and made Hong's capital in 1853, establishing the Taiping dominance over Southern China, with the Qing too preoccupied with a war against France to mount any resistance. Following the Old Testament's teachings, Hong presided over a new Puritanical order, perhaps somewhat reminiscent of modern Afghanistan. Alcohol, music, drugs, and sexual intercourse were banned on pain of death.^[5] Hong himself, however, did not lead by example, living a lavish palace lifestyle and enjoying a harem of concubines. Whilst Hong kept himself busy, governance and administration were left to his second-in-command, 'King' Yang Xiuqing, who implemented a programme of almost communist reforms, including the elimination of private property, and increasing social equality—a template later followed by Mao.^[7] In 1855, Yang challenged Hong's rule, claiming that the 'Heavenly King' was a false prophet; Hong reacted quickly, and in the violence that followed, Hong violently purged all followers of Yang, murdering almost 30,000 civilians.^[7] Many Western observers were horrified by the brutality of Hong's regime, with German writer W.G. Sebald remarking:

"The bloody horror in China went beyond all imagining"^[5]

- W.G Sebald

Hong's misrule began following his encounter with European missionaries, and it would end with Western assistance too. The final straw came in 1860, after a failed Taiping attempt to seize Shanghai, a port important to British trade interests. British, French & American officers, including Charles 'Chinese' Gordon were sent to advise and aide the Qing in defeating the rebel

kingdom. Gordon, who led the well-drilled 'Ever-victorious' Qing army, was hugely successful, winning numerous victories against larger Taiping forces.^[8] The Qing quickly reconquered much of the South, though in their attempts to 'liberate', they burnt towns and cities and massacred civilians. Over their 2-year campaign, the Qing razed an estimated 600 towns, wiping them off the map. In May 1864, Nanjing was besieged by 80,000 Qing troops.^[2] As the residents of the city subsequently began to starve, Hong himself died, though there is debate over whether this was the result of food poisoning from being forced to eat weeds, or suicide. The army then attacked the city in July, which ended up being the bloodiest battle in human history—100,000 killed themselves or were put to death by the Qing liberators in only three days. Many other killed themselves by lighting themselves on fire or burying themselves alive in a final act of fervency, ending the Taiping Rebellion with the same carnage from which it had emerged.^[2,5] Hong's ashes were reportedly scattered through being fired from a canon—unlike his brother, he would not be resurrected in body.^[7]

However, Hong perhaps did return to China in spirit. A century after the Taiping Rebellion, another Hakka peasant by the name of Mao Zedong revolted against the Chinese government, with similar egalitarian aims of eliminating class and property ownership, this time glossed with a communist veneer.^[9] Where Hong's Heavenly Kingdom crumbled, Mao's People's Republic prevailed. Where Hong's puritanical reign of terror over Nanjing ended in bloodshed, Mao's brutal legacy continues to this day in Xingjiang. Hong's rebellion undeniably shaped the state of the world in which we live.

Whether he is remembered as a fanatical madman, prescient revolutionary, or genocidal dictator, he must first be remembered.

Can You Make Countries... Out of Ships?

Arko outlines the criteria required to make a country, whilst also providing a fascinating historic example of these criteria being applied.

ARKO MUKHERJEE Y11

The Cambridge dictionary defines a country as “an area of land that has its own government, army, and similar features.” However, Iceland does not have its own standing army, and is placed under the US defence umbrella. It is still considered a country by most, and in fact was the neutral host of the Reagan-Gorbachev summit that is considered to have led to the end of the Cold War.

The difficulties in defining a 'country'

The total number of countries is an estimate between the range of 189-196.^[1] This is because not all existing countries can agree on whether or not to recognise a country, and so the total count of countries is different depending on the different perspectives. A country in Russia's eyes may not be a country in the USA's books, and vice versa. According to CNBC, there are “no official international rules,” when forming a country.^[2] However, in the case of secession, some independence movements have been deemed illegal by the nation the movement is trying to break away from, such as the Catalan movement. As some simply put it,

“Declare your intentions to operate as any independent entity and hope that the international community will recognize your claim”^[3]

However, the Montevideo Conventions of 1933 state that countries should possess the following qualifications:

1. Make a claim and define your territory.

This can be done by conquering an area, and then defending it. However, this may lead to problems later on when the legitimacy of a country is later reviewed by the United Nations (UN). Another method is to claim unclaimed land, as attempted by Vit Jedlicka, the founder of Liberland. He attempted to exploit an area on the border of Serbia and Croatia unclaimed by both nations under the Terra Nullius (no man's land) doctrine. However, Serbia has admitted that it does not encroach upon its borders, yet deems it frivolous, and both nations have blocked access to the area for Vit Jedlicka. This has made it difficult for him to accomplish the next criteria:

2. Establish a permanent population.

Unfortunately, even the most uninhabitable places are now inhabited, fuelled by the ever-growing need for space as the world population increases. This can therefore cause new micro-nations to emerge in hostile places, such as the Republic of Tawil, which was located in the unclaimed land of Bir Tawil in the region of the Egypt-Sudan border. It is built on a barren desert without ease of access and isn't naturally capable of sustaining life for prolonged amounts of time, yet this hasn't stopped efforts for it to be established as a republic.

3. Establish a government.

In order to be recognised by other

countries, a nation must be able to enter into relations with and interact with other countries, and therefore a secretary of state (or equivalent) is necessary when forming a country.

The next two conditions are not included in Article 1 of the Montevideo Conventions, but will help to increase recognition and therefore legitimacy of a claim,^[4] even though the Montevideo Convention Article 3 states that “the political recognition of the state is independent of recognition by the other states”.

4. Establish a constitution (or equivalent).

A constitution would state the supreme law of the new nation and therefore indicate the doctrine of the country. This will allow other nations to better understand the new nation's position, and also avoid the most common barrier to micronations becoming recognised: not being taken seriously.

5. Join the UN.

Joining the UN will solidify any claims of sovereignty. The first step is to write a letter requesting membership to the UN Secretary General. If this is referred to the UN security council, a two-thirds majority of votes is needed to gain membership. This criterion is not mandatory to be an independent state, however, recognition by at least one UN recognised state is needed for a solid claim. For example, Liberland is recognised by other non-recognised micronations, such as Sealand and the Kingdom of Enclava, and has held talks with Somaliland for mutual recognition, but not any major countries.



Why are sovereign states hesitant to recognise new countries?

Sovereign states are unwilling to accept new states near their border as this may challenge their sovereignty over an area in the present, but also in the future, as conceding once may give other groups greater confidence, which may lead to claims further into the state's territory—the “slippery slope” argument. Nations may not want to sour relations with other nations by recognising microstates, or believe them to be frivolous jokes and do not wish to damage their international image by dealing with them.^[1, 11]

The Six Day War's eight year problem

During the 1967 Six Day War, after Israel had captured the Sinai Peninsula, Egypt barricaded the Suez Canal by scuttling ships and placing 750,000 mines to render the canal impassable, hoping to weaken Israel's economy and ability to wage war by attrition.^[6]

The canal's north and south passages connect at the Great Bitter Lake, where 14 ships were stranded. Even after the war had ended, there were several skirmishes between Israeli and Egyptian forces, and Egypt was reluctant to allow Israel to use the canal, especially since the war was considered an Israeli victory, having captured The Golan Heights, West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula. The ships had moored together to reduce size of crew needed to maintain the ships, rotated on a 3 month basis and interdependence between the ships had formed a community—the Great Bitter Lake Association—with the MS Invercargill hosting soccer tournaments for the crew, and the MS Nordwind holding Church services on Sundays. There was also a makeshift hospital and the MS Djakarta operated as a post office, with

the stamps created by the crews recognised by the Egyptian postal authority. The debris and mines were finally cleared in 1975, when the ships forming the flotilla were allowed to leave, with only the MS Nordwind and Münsterland being able to leave under their own power.^[6]

Recognition

As previously stated, the hand-crafted stamps of the crew were officially recognised by the Egyptian postal service, and the Great Bitter Lake association had created club ties and badges, and so had received some form of recognition as a unified body (until the separation of the flotilla in 1975).^[8] They had a permanent population of the sailors and officers stranded with their ships, and their territory could be seen as well-established due to the finite area of the flotilla, and were able to sustain themselves with minimal aid from the outside. They had some contact with the wider world, probably via radio, in order to have heard about the 1968 Mexico Olympics and have hosted their own *Bitter Lake Mini-Olympics* in response.^[6] The internal post office could have been modified to communicate externally (probably after conditions were calmer and less hostile on both sides of Great Bitter Lake) and the captains of the ships could have been seen as the heads of state. In fact, many captains are said to have met on MS Melaumpus to create the Great Bitter Lake Association due to fears that a lack of structure and purpose would lead to the crew slacking off, or mutiny.

Therefore, the Yellow Fleet seems to have met many of the criteria of the Montevideo Convention.

However, if the captains had decided to revolt against their employers and create their own micronation, they would have probably faced the same objection from the international community that Sealand, an offshore platform that is claimed by Major Patrick Roy Bates to be a sovereign state, faces: it is not “land”.^[11]

In 1978 a German Court declared that Sealand could not be considered a state as territory is needed to form a state, and “territory must consist in a natural segment of the Earth's surface. An artificial island, albeit connected to the earth's surface, did not satisfy this criterion”.^[9] Another aspect that is interesting to consider is equal opportunities. As the ships are isolated from mainland, they might not receive medical supplies as rapidly as a country connected by land or a country that develops its own medical products. Even though the flotilla did have a makeshift hospital, this contained basic materials more focused on providing first aid rather than treating long term diseases. This may put disabled people wanting to live on the flotilla at a disadvantage, which is contradictory to the Convention of the Right of Persons with Disability, which may deter recognition by UN members, however, it can also be argued that several disabled people live with a similar issue in less developed countries, which may still be recognised by UN members as countries.^[10]

So although the Yellow Fleet did meet many of the criteria under the Montevideo Conventions, there were many things holding it back from being recognised as a country, the biggest being its lack of land. However, the Yellow Fleet's failure has not deterred similar claims for nation status like Sealand or Liberland, which continue to this day. Perhaps one of them will become the newest country on planet Earth!

PHILOSOPHY



Does altruism truly exist, or is it an illusion with which we have deceived ourselves?

Read Gabriel Gardiner's article to find out.

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Selflessness: What Is the Source of Servitude?

Are selflessness and selfishness just two sides of the same coin? To find out, Gabriel explores where the desire to help others originates.

GABRIEL GARDINER Y11

Nominated for best article



Selfishness. The antithesis of good will and benevolence, defined by its distinct nature of self-interest. Selfishness is usually viewed as a negative trait, according to popular conceptions of morality: actions with intentions based on self-interest are generally frowned upon in society.

The reason being that in many parts of the world, the concept of morality is imposed upon the younger generations. For various reasons, these teachings tend to encompass virtuous actions that serve to benefit others, rather than oneself. Such a thing becomes imprinted within a person, the community, and wider society overall.

However, in an intellectual debate held with a fellow Wilsonian over lunch, my friend came to challenge typical views about human morality, and more specifically, about servitude.

Human beings often perform actions that require important resources to achieve them, primarily time and money. The result is an act of servitude, which we can define as helping someone in some way, and ultimately bringing them happiness. These actions are seen by most to be selfless, as by sacrificing your own things for others' happiness, you work in the interest of other people. Or so you may think.

My friend proposed to me the idea that, if we trace each action that we view to be selfless back to its fundamental core—its intentions—then we come to find that every action is done out of selfishness. While this was surprising and counterintuitive to me at first, he reasoned his argument well.

When evaluating acts of servitude, we must take into consideration the receiver of such act, as well as evaluate the proponent in such scenarios. In the case of helping others with whom we share good relationships, these actions are carried out with the ultimate intention to make the receiver happy. By doing so, one can build a stronger rela-

tionship, or witness a person they love experience joy.

And why do we wish for these things? Happiness.

When doing things to make people we love happy, we are happy too, as we can revel in the joy we have produced. Seeing others' happiness can generate it within ourselves too, and so the seemingly selfless actions we do really have the end goal, whether knowingly or not, of making ourselves happy. The main derivation of happiness is the joy of other people we are affectionate of. So, by that logic, we are acting in our own self-interest, which is to experience elation for ourselves. Even if it benefits others, the origin of such an act is ultimately one stemming from, whether subconsciously or actively, thinking of oneself.

Actions done in service for complete strangers, as well as for the planet, are also fundamentally intended to have the same result. By holding the door open for someone or picking up litter from the ground, even if these acts of servitude go unnoticed or are done for people whom we have little affection for, some sort of pleasure can be derived from these actions. By doing things we deem 'good', our brain generates positive feeling within us, allowing us to feel good about doing certain things. The result is, we ultimately feel happy about doing so. This in effect leaves only one explanation of why we do things, being that we want to feel happy. Hence, the source of servitude is selfishness.

The conclusion that my friend had come to is that selfishness is the only motive behind every act of servitude. In other words, psychological egoism. Whether his view was intended to be a criticism and pessimistic outlook

on human nature, I am unsure. However, what I can take away from his idea is that we must re-evaluate the way in which we view selfishness. Rather than something that is viewed with scorn and distaste, we must instead embrace and accept it as a core part of humanity.

Despite that, this view is something society would much rather reject than change their belief on something we believe to be wrong. Changing societal views, or even trying to persuade a single person presents a challenge that often ends in failure. A major reason why persuasion can be very difficult is our human nature to stick together. We adhere to societal views, while resisting change, with anxiety and fear in combination, resulting in viewing change as an unnecessary risk. Especially when trying to change beliefs about things we view with the lens of right and wrong, to flip that on its head can be too unreasonable to do in a short amount of time. This inertia prevents the former idea of acceptance, and so I propose a different approach in our evaluation.

Instead of changing our perception of the connotations of selfishness from 'bad' to 'good', we leave them as they are, and, rather, re-define selfishness so that prior examples of servitude can no longer be based upon selfishness.

Taking on the pre-conceived notion of selfishness being often seen as acting for one's own benefit, and adding on further, the idea of it being at the expense of others. Going back to the earlier reasons I stated, the example in which one spends time and resources in order to make a loved one happy can no longer be defined as being selfish because the unconscious reasoning behind it is that it brings us joy, but isn't at the expense of others.

The truth of servitude is that its beginning and end is happiness.

The reason as to why it is all based on happiness is that humanity is valuable. We all have value to each other. To be able to derive pleasure from another's happiness is a clear indicator that we find the other person's life precious and find value within their joy.

We can apply this idea additionally onto things that aren't necessarily acts of servitude but are done in consideration of others. Take for example, the act of slowing down and being more careful while driving in a school zone near children. In this case, the act of slowing down doesn't necessarily constitute to servitude as it isn't directly helping them, but it is done so that they do not harm the children in a worst-case scenario. In situations like these, in which people do things not to benefit others, but to prevent them from being worse off, there is the clear motivation of ensuring happiness and safety. There may be a selfish motive, in this example, that they want to avoid paying repercussions if they end up harming someone accidentally, but the main purpose of doing this action is for other people's safety, happiness, and overall sake.

Therefore, the true source of selflessness, the driving force of servitude, is love and value of humanity. The fact we become happy through others isn't because we are selfish, but rather is ample evidence for love and the significance we place on others.

With that, I want to take it one step further than just defining the reason for why we help others, and make the argument that, the best way to achieve happiness within humanity is by living for the sake of others.

Our school motto is *'non sibi sed omnibus'*, not for oneself, but for all. In other words, living for the sake of others. What does that entail, you might ask?

Quite simply, living a life in which we consistently and constantly act in servitude of others. The result is that of unified happiness, in my opinion, but certain people may look upon this belief and think it is ludicrous: living for others means that we must use up a lot of our time and resources so we can assist with others' endeavours, which many view as a chore and something that won't make them happy, but rather quite unsatisfied. Therefore, I will evaluate two main philosophical beliefs to work out how much of our lives should be devoted to helping others:

Utilitarianism



Utilitarianism can be defined as the belief that the morally right action is the one that maximises pleasure and minimises suffering for all.

The idea of living for the sake of others may seem like it could have drawbacks due to constantly sacrificing things to help others, however the two do coincide. By helping others, we can bring joy to them, and in doing so we can also

bring joy to ourselves.

Another effect of helping others is that someone who receives help is often likely to want to give back to the helper, which will bring happiness to all involved. This creates a cycle of give and take, in which people constantly help each other, bringing one another happiness, over and over. In addition, the immediate sacrifice may seem painful or exhausting at first, but the result of happiness can often be enough to negate this.

Unlike acting purely for one's own benefit, in which we can achieve instant gratification that lasts only for a short time, living for the sake of others creates a lasting and fulfilling cycle of happiness. Therefore, if possible, one should consistently try to frequently give their time to helping others to generate happiness.

Hedonism



Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure and self-indulgence.

Often associated with selfishness and concern purely for one's own happiness, many would argue that hedonists derive pleasure from instant gratification and working for their own sole benefit. But this doesn't have to be the case. If hedonism is about maximising one's own pleasure, then I see no reason why living for the sake of others cannot work alongside it. As explained

previously, living for the sake of others is a continuous generator of happiness done in a good and moral way, so our own pleasure is produced alongside the happiness of others. Thus, the two beliefs can complement each other and work together well. A hedonist seeking pleasure should devote much of their time to helping others, while keeping in mind that the happiness achieved may be gradual but more fulfilling than many other actions.

Having explored two popular philosophies of pleasure, ranging from sole concern over the collective to sole concern over the individual, I can now conclude that living for the sake of others is a principle which can work in tandem with both. That is because humans are simple creatures: we can be happy from seeing others happy, and when we create happiness without sacrificing others to achieve it, we find the most moral and pure sort of happiness we can find. One which doesn't require the suffering of others.

Now this isn't to say you should only ever think of others and never yourself. It is okay to partake in that sweet chocolate occasionally or treat yourself to a nice dinner. Helping others doesn't need to be the sole focus of your life. But if we were able to unconsciously strive to be Samaritans, then that would make all the difference.

If everyone were to live their life by this principle, and even better if we were to live this way without having to deliberately think of doing these actions, then the constant actions of helping others ultimately produces a unified world of pleasure and happiness, without suffering. Even if it is hard, if we try with an open mind to always help others, we can make a happier world.

Identity

Looking inwards whilst looking outwards, Reyansh explores personal identity through the clarity of artistic self-expression.

REYANSH SHARMA Y11



Is Nihilism a Justified Perspective to Life?

Edwin evaluates nihilism, considering how we can draw something from, quite literally, nothing.

EDWIN JOYAS JOHN Y11

Nihilism is the philosophy that all values are baseless and nothing can be known or communicated, derived from the Latin *nihil* or nothing.^[1] For a true nihilist, this includes rejecting all morals and purpose through accepting that ultimately we cannot be certain about anything we believe or experience.

At first, this perspective seems like it would only lead to a miserable and depressing life. Why work if it does not matter? Why love if it does not matter? Why believe in God if it could amount to nothing? Fundamentally, this is the truth: we might perish tomorrow and our values and achievements would amount to nothing.

In spite of this, I do not believe nihilism is a justified perspective to life: how could society function if we all thought this way? Law and order would collapse with the whole world rejecting governments and human rights—an undesirable reality with much suffering.

Society depends on our actions having meaning and on a mutual understanding of morality or it would descend into chaos.

I think the continuation of society is far more important, by acknowledging that what we do in this life may have value. In addition, as intelligent beings, we have to account for the chance that there is an afterlife that is affected by our choices in the present.

With intelligence, humans are able to think rationally and logically and consider a multitude of scenarios. Consequently, as humans, we should see nihilism as the unintelligent route to approaching

life; this is because if our lives end regardless of whether or not they have meaning afterwards then we should take the chance that our efforts have meaning rather than risk wasting our lives when we had the potential to make use of our lives to benefit us after we die.

What would the religious response be?

The vast majority of people are religious: the world contains 2.38 billion Christians, 1.91 billion Muslims, 1.16 billion Hindus, and only 1.2 billion Atheists.^[2]

The goal of a religious believer is to reach God in paradise (or Enlightenment in the case of Buddhists). They see God as a source of morality, which is justified because God is omnipotent and hence able to establish an objective moral order, with some key principles, such as love. Therefore, religion disagrees with nihilism as religion provides purpose for a person to show love towards others and worship a supreme deity.

However, a nihilist counter-argument would be that we cannot be sure of Enlightenment or God as we have no concrete proof of either existing. As mentioned before, there is a possibility of them being real but are we willing to live our lives based on chance? In theory, a nihilist would not care if they are right or wrong in taking this chance as it means nothing to them.

However, I firmly believe that the nihilist would be wrong in both ways as distinguishing between right and wrong

is essential for maintaining order, and ignoring the possibility that our actions amount to something would be a wrong decision as this would lead us to wrongdoing and ignoring our impact on others.

The irony of nihilism

One positive application of nihilism is common in fictional works, where a protagonist will explain why life is valuable to an antagonist who disregards human life. The explanation is usually something similar to:

"Death's stamp gives value to the coin of life, making it possible to buy with life what is truly precious"

- Rabindranath Tagore

I agree with this and believe it to be true. If we were all immortal and perfect beings, life would not be valued. As we know we are imperfect beings, we are always striving to improve ourselves, for example, medical science has improved vastly over time to challenge and extend our mortal limits.

This is **existential nihilism**, a variation of nihilism that agrees that there is no inherent meaning in our lives but allows for us to create meaning and values that primarily depend on us to sustain them.

I also want to emphasise the impact this has on our peers. Our achievements not only bring us happiness but also help others too. If Buddhist monks had not thought of drinking snake venom to de-



velop immunity to snake bites, perhaps vaccinology would not exist to protect society against diseases today.^[3] Thus, ironically, nihilism, has the potential to improve both our physical and mental well-being with the correct approach.

Combating anxiety with existential nihilism



Anxiety is a mental disorder which, in 2013, affected 8.2 million people, in the UK.^[4] It is a feeling of unease, which can be mild or severe, often hindering one's decision-making ability in fear of the ensuing consequences. As a result, one may struggle to achieve their goals and become frustrated that they cannot do so.

If anything, nihilism seems to be the exact opposite of what a person struggling with anxiety needs. But as we have

seen before, existential nihilism can help us flourish. By applying this concept to the decision-making process, we can accept that any adverse consequence of our choices do not matter as one day we will die—any grudges held against us will be lost to time. So why hold back?

This will encourage us to live, fulfilling the values we hold close to our hearts, fearlessly.

But do we not loop back to pessimism with this thinking? If our decisions do not matter, does that apply to our achievements as well? Over time, people will also forget the good consequences of our actions, so why try in the first place? Surely then, this will not help with combating anxiety.

I think we should simply do as we wish to uphold our values. It would be selfish to want to be remembered forever. We should not live for others, we should live for what we care about, though that may involve others.

An example of this could be deciding on your career. Your parents may want you to pursue medicine and practise it as a doctor. However, you may be passionate about photography and want to develop this hobby into employment as a freelancer. Whilst becoming a doctor may please your parents, ultimately it may cause you to resent them for not taking your feelings into account. On the other hand, pursuing your interests

as a photographer would displease your parents but make you content—and you are more likely to be successful in a field you enjoy and your parents would take pride in this success.

Thus, living for yourself is more beneficial for everyone's happiness whereas living for others would sacrifice your own happiness. However, this does not mean that one should strictly look out for themselves selfishly, oblivious to everyone around them. It may make *you* happy to look out for others, where possible, without completely letting go of your own desires and wishes.

Therefore, nihilism can help anxiety where one fears making wrong decisions as putting our values first will lead to making the best decisions possible. Yet I do not think this means nihilism is a justified perspective in this sense as such a way of thinking would encourage reckless decisions that risk harming yourself and others around you.

Is there a place for nihilism?

To conclude, I do not think nihilism is a justified perspective to life because it condones wrongdoing by questionably arguing it does not mean anything.

Though a nihilist would argue that it is a fundamental truth of life that we must accept, I would disagree because nihilism is not the truth. It is unknown to us whether our actions matter or do not matter so we cannot assume that they do not.

Hence, it is important to continue upholding what feels right according to our intuition—that is, society—as what we *feel* is right, is the only thing we can trust in. Our rationality points us towards maintaining an ordered society as it has sustained us for millennia and so seems more logical than descending into chaos through a nihilistic perspective to life.

Ergo, it is inconceivable that nihilism is a justified perspective on life.

EDITED BY NICHOLAS JAMES



Are The Simpsons a Good Moral Template for the Modern Family?

With the help of Aristotle and Kant, Nicholas explores the characters of this famous family and answers the question we have all pondered.

NICHOLAS JAMES Y13



The Simpsons have been TV's most iconic animated family for over three decades: Homer, a lazy, disgruntled middle-income father who has an insatiable appetite for doughnuts, Marge, a patient, hardworking housewife who keeps the family together, Bart, the mischievous ten year old—obsessed with playing pranks—Lisa, the studious and fiercely intelligent eight year old, and finally the baby Maggie. This family has become a satire of the modern family in the Western world, and something millions of people watch and enjoy. Yet you may be wondering—what has the Simpsons got to do with philosophy?

Typically, philosophy explores and tests ideas about some of life's biggest questions through the use of arguments and thought experiments. TV shows (animated ones in particular) offer rich worlds and varied characters that make it the perfect place to test some of our philosophical ideas.

In an ever-changing world, where the moral values of society appear to be in constant flux, it can often be difficult to know what is right and what is wrong. This is something the modern family continues to grapple with, and, as a satire of modern life, the Simp-

sons questions in great depth too. In this article, I will be exploring whether three members of the Simpsons can offer a good moral template (according to famous philosophers) for the Modern Family. I will look at whether Aristotle would consider Homer virtuous; how Marge reconciles faith and morality; and finally explore Lisa's dutiful following of Kantian ethics.

Homer

Homer certainly isn't a moral template for the modern family: he is lazy, greedy, careless, an alcoholic and is rarely a good father. Yet anyone who



whilst singing:

*I am so smart, I am so smart,
I am so smart, I am so smart,
S-M-R-T, I mean*

S-M-A-R-T'

- Homer Simpson

All the while he is unaware that the fire he started is spreading to the rest of the house.

Though Homer does act virtuously on some occasions, such as when he works two jobs to afford a pony for Lisa (even though the sleep deprivation almost kills him) in S3 E7 “Lisa’s Pony”, this isn’t nearly enough to make Homer a virtuous person. So if it isn’t any virtues that cause Homer to be so likeable, then what is it? Marge sums it up best in the episode “Scenes from the Class Struggle in Springfield” (S7 E14), when she says her love of Homer comes from his ‘in-your-face humanity’. It is Homer’s love of life and child-like wonder that makes the viewer fall in love with him. His blissful ignorance of the monotony of his work and the horrors happening in the world leave him optimistic and upbeat—and that feeling about life is often infectious. So—while Homer certainly isn’t the moral template of the modern family—his character can still teach us the value of optimism and the importance of living life to the fullest.

Marge

Marge is a woman of faith. She is clearly a religious Christian who goes to Church each Sunday and preaches the Bible’s core messages of peace and forgiveness. Yet, like many modern families today, Marge is unwilling to take the Bible simply at its word—and unlike her neighbour, Ned Flanders, her morality is not based on Divine Command Theory (simply following the teachings of the Bible). Instead,

Marge takes a more Aristotelian approach: using reason and logic to practise virtues, which in turn brings her closer to Eudaimonia (Aristotle’s term, often translated as happiness, but more similar to human flourishing—our ultimate end in life).

Throughout the episodes of *The Simpsons*, Marge has shown countless virtues. She is incredibly generous, donating her money to help the church and sacrificing a promising career to help look after Homer and her children. Staying married to Homer means Marge requires temperance and she is always seen as courageous when it comes to protecting her family.

However, Marge doesn’t practise these virtues because of the Bible. She has also been shown to have a moral conscience, such as when she parts with Springfield Church’s protest of Michelangelo’s nude statue of David and instead defends the work of art. Therefore, it is clear that Marge practises these virtues, not by instruction of the church, but as Aristotle sets out: in order to reach Eudaimonia. Being honest, brave, modest and generous does not lead Marge to a life of fame, wealth or even much excitement—yet Marge remains happy. By living such a virtuous life, Marge is able to flourish as a human being, and reach a happiness that Homer is unable to grasp. Perhaps then, it is Marge’s virtuous life that should be the moral template for the modern family as it helps lead us to Eudaimonia.

Lisa

However, I disagree that it is Marge who is the moral template. Though Marge certainly lives a virtuous (and thus content) life, this does not make it a strictly moral one. One of the biggest flaws of Aristotle’s virtue ethics is that the lack of any external criteria makes it incredibly difficult to determine what ‘virtue’ actually is—and thus incredibly difficult to follow as a template for the modern family. For me, it is Lisa who offers far more promise.

watches the Simpsons can’t help but find Homer endearing; so what is the character trait that causes the audience to fall in love with Homer, despite all his flaws?

Aristotle’s virtue ethics take an agent-centred view of morality. This means morality is based on someone who has virtuous character traits. These virtues are often between two vices, and humans must use their rational abilities to choose the right actions. As we practise our virtues, they become habit and form our moral character.

However, there are few virtues that Homer practises on a regular basis. Homer certainly doesn’t practise the virtue of temperance, and he loses patience with his son, Bart, very quickly. He also neglects the virtue of modesty: often belching, being rude to others and inflating his ego. For example, one of my favourite scenes from the Simpsons is from S5 E3 “Homer Goes to College” where Homer receives an admissions letter to Springfield University (only after Burns exerts some personal influence) to retrain as a nuclear safety inspector. When he receives the letter, Homer is elated, and decides to burn his high school college diploma (thinking he won’t need it anymore)



Lisa is a prime example of a follower of Kantian ethics. Immanuel Kant argued that we all have a moral duty we have to follow: there are some things which are just never permitted. For example, we must never use someone as a means to an end, they must always be an end in themselves. Yet, most importantly in Kantian ethics, we must act only out of duty; there must be no other motive in our moral actions like the pursuit of fame, happiness or wealth.

Though Kant paints quite a bleak picture of the way humans should live their lives, there are certainly upsides to it. Kant attempts to build a moral framework to protect human free will and autonomy: as long as our actions don't limit the free will of others, we ourselves are free to do and pursue whatever we like in life.

The freeing nature of Kantian ethics is definitely something Lisa embodies. Lisa is by far the most inquisitive character on the Simpsons, who reads and explores pretty much everything: from maths, science, philosophy, classic English literature or even German—all at the age of eight!

Despite Lisa's bold intellectual pursuits, she takes advantage of the free nature of Kantian ethics and spends her time doing childish things too, such as watching 'Itchy and Scratchy' cartoons with her brother.

However, when Lisa arrives at a moral dilemma, her response is unique compared to the rest of the Simpsons. Lisa determines her moral judgements from inner reflection rather than relying on external social conventions or authoritative religious teachings, something even Marge is guilty of doing at times. Lisa follows what she considers to be her duty, not in a societal or religious sense, but simply carrying out what she believes to be morally right.

There are two very clear examples of this. The first is in the S2 E13 episode "Homer vs. Lisa and the 8th Commandment", where Homer steals cable TV in order to watch a hugely anticipated boxing match—so big that the whole of Springfield comes round to Homer's house to watch it. Inspired by her day in Church, Lisa holds the duty that stealing is wrong and confronts her father about it. Homer (along with much of Springfield) argues that there is nothing wrong with stealing cable, yet Lisa refuses to bow down to societal expectations. Instead, she carries out her duty and boycotts the fight by sitting outside in the front lawn. Lisa is so resolute in fulfilling her duty that she is willing to be cast as an outsider, freeze in the night and miss the pleasure of watching the match. It is her dutiful boycott that causes Homer to cut the cable (but only after accidentally disconnecting the entire street's power).

The second example is in the S7 E5 episode "Lisa the Vegetarian". After visiting a petting zoo and seeing a loveable little lamb, Lisa feels it is her duty not to eat meat anymore – for she cannot bear the pain and suffering the animals go through just for her to enjoy the taste of meat. Much like the previous example, this realisation comes at a very bad time, as Homer is planning on throwing a barbeque for the whole town. Again, Lisa is willing to risk friends, the pleasure of eating meat and her relationship with her

father, all in the name of duty and not bowing down to societal expectations to eat meat.

Why does Lisa acting purely out of duty make her a good moral template for the modern family though? Surely, by the fact that Lisa is ostracised by the rest of society, acting out of duty even when it goes against conventions cannot be a practical way to live. Yet Lisa has something the other Simpsons do not: freedom. By following her own sense of duty, Lisa does not need approval from anyone else in society, and her moral worth comes from within—which can allow her to be truly happy.

Too often in society, we seek approval from others, whether that is success, fame, wealth or looks—and this is something that is becoming particularly rampant with the increase in use of social media. The result is that we are beginning to lose our identity, we start acting simply because that is what others expect of us, or what is deemed 'valuable' in society, but not because that is who we are, or what we think is right or wrong.

Lisa simply looks to follow her own duty, even if that is unpopular. Yet as a result, she stays true to her identity and remains free—allowing her to live without the approval of other members of society like the other Simpsons do. As I outlined in the introduction, the moral values of society change far too often for it to be a reliable source of what is right and wrong, and it should never be the case that we just follow the herd without thinking for ourselves if our actions are moral. Instead, we must follow our own moral values dutifully, in order to reconcile the moral complexities of the modern world. In following this principle, Lisa therefore represents the best moral template for modern society.

POLITICS



For many, abolishing student fees for university sounds like a great idea. But are there hidden costs that make free tuition less rosy? Read Daniel Song's article to find out.

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Free College Isn't as Great as It Seems – Here's Why

It sounds too good to be true, perhaps because it is...

N.B: The use of the word 'college' in this article refers to university as well.

DANIEL SONG Y12

Free college. When something is free, what's there to lose? Shouldn't this be especially true for expensive services like college education? Populist policies like free college may seem like simple no-brainers at first sight, but this is almost certainly never the case. As a student, you might have heard a classmate jokingly ask the teacher if the topic you were learning would ever be useful in the real world: things like writing poems, tectonics, trigonometry, the list goes on. Although your teacher might have brushed this question aside, it is something that we ought to seriously consider. Not only is free college unnecessary, but it will also end up

creating more problems, particularly for those that it aims to benefit.

The benefit of college

Already from what I've said, you might be automatically thinking of the many typically known benefits that studying at a college may bring. For example, it could be that it helps to increase your employability in the labour market and get you better pay. I actually agree, but we need to look at why this is true. Employers don't care about what you have learnt at college, but instead, use the qualification obtained from it to infer things such as how hard-working you

are and whether you can manage your time well. This is educational signalling. As the economist Kenneth Arrow puts it,

"Higher education serves as a screening device, in that it sorts out individuals of differing abilities, thereby conveying information to the purchasers of labour". [1]

- Kenneth Arrow

However, we can acknowledge that the inferred qualities are developed by further

education. Arrow also clearly accepts this, where he says “Clearly professional schools impart real skills valued in the market...”^[1] In addition, I can also accept that, to an indeterminate extent, the actual content studied at college does form some kind of foundation for employment in the related industry. This, of course, is more true for apprenticeships and other vocational studies. Before I move on to the negative impacts of free college, I'll highlight that yes, it is a suitable path for those wanting high-quality jobs—it is obvious that employers want to see this on your CVs. What I want to point out is first, the unnecessary nature of it and second, how it can harm society and the economy.

Credential inflation

One issue caused by free college is undoubtedly credential inflation. A term commonly used by the economist Bryan Caplan, this refers to the rapidly growing number of qualifications that are generally obtained from higher education. If we were to provide everyone access to free college, this would accelerate the process. Jobs like academic tutors and directorial positions in governments that used to require a bachelor's degree now require a master's degree (for example, directorial positions in the Canadian federal government began requiring a master's degree in the early 2000s). Jobs like junior scientific researchers or sessional lecturers that used to require a master's degree now commonly require a PhD.

Credential inflation is happening all over the world. For example in 2002, the total number of STEM first university degrees awarded in China was almost half a mil-

lion. By 2010, this figure had risen to 2.6 million.^[2] Elsewhere in the U.S, the percentage of 25-29 year-olds with a BA rose from 24.7% in 1995 to 33.6% in 2013.^[3] This phenomenon has taken the world by storm and has resulted in a growing number of over-qualified students entering the labour market and fighting for a much smaller number of jobs that they find desirable. This makes jobs that aren't as desirable take longer to fill, leading to shortages in industries such as transportation and social work.

A waste of time

A second issue that free college exacerbates is the amount of time wasted for students, who could instead join the workforce earlier. Implementing it will only strengthen the demand from students and employers for more college qualifications, creating a society that fails to understand how much time you'll waste studying irrelevant modules that does little to benefit the economy. Referring back to Arrow,

“Higher education, in this model, contributes in no way to superior economic performance: it increases neither cognition nor socialization”.^[4]

- Kenneth Arrow

This is clearly true. Bryan Caplan points out that “today's college students are less willing than those of previous generations to do the bare minimum of showing up for class and temporarily learning whatever's on the test”.^[4] In

addition to this, it is almost guaranteed that you will forget most of what you have learned over time, as it simply isn't necessary information required for the jobs you take on. In 2003, a study by the NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) gave around 18,000 Americans the National Assessment of Adult Literacy. Caplan shows that it found that “fewer than a third of college graduates received a composite score of ‘proficient’ and about a fifth were at the ‘basic’ or ‘below basic’ level”.^[4] If colleges can't even turn out graduates with basic literacy skills, how can we expect those graduates to be able to recall the useless content learnt on top of that?

Remember, this is assuming that students are completing their chosen courses. In the U.S, the overall dropout rate for undergraduate college students is a shocking 40%. 30% of that comes from college first years dropping out before their second year.^[4] Providing everyone with free college will also result in an overall less motivated group of students that could increase the dropout rate. With all of this taken into account, most of the students within a system of free college won't even gain a reputable qualification, and for those that do, the fact remains that they'll have wasted a substantial amount of time and money.

An estimate for Biden's free college tuition plan in America is \$750 billion.^[5] Large spending plans have a history of turning out to be much more expensive than they are estimated to be. As the first country of its size to make plans for free college, the socioeconomic damage it could cause is immeasurable. College is considered useful and necessary, but those who call it that are unknowingly doing so for all of the wrong reasons. Yes, it will help a small percentage of top students to gain good jobs, but the same cannot be said for everyone else. Free college is an idea born out of well-meaning intentions but brings with it some unwelcome effects. We don't need a workforce with an increasing number of college degrees—we just need the former.





The Consequences of AUKUS

Following the highly contentious pact's signature in September, Sarin looks at the possible effects it has already had and will have across the world.

SARIN KULATILEKA Y12

Geopolitical tensions are arguably always on the rise, no more so than in recent decades. Lately, however, they seem to be reaching a point of no return, a feeling rife in the Indo-Pacific area. Aggressive Chinese foreign policy, reckless North Korean antics and a 'nosey' United States have made these already unpredictable seas, even more dangerous. So why has AUKUS, widely seen as a pact formed in response to these issues, between three allied nations as far apart as can be, led to a surge in tensions all around the world?

AUKUS, a security pact between the US, UK, and Australia will see Australia become the 7th nation in the world (2nd outside of the UN Security Council) to acquire twelve new nuclear-powered submarines to replace its ageing diesel-run Collins class. The pact, announced on 15th September 2021, will also enhance

US-UK-Australian cybertechnology and intelligence sharing. It replaces a previous A\$90 billion submarine deal between the Australia and France signed in 2017.^[1] A French government-owned company, Naval Group, was supposed to provide twelve diesel Attack class submarines for the Royal Australian Navy, but missed deadlines, suffered rising costs, and the ultimate supremacy of nuclear-powered submarines led to its last-minute cancellation. The repercussions of this were felt throughout the political world.

What some might argue was poor planning and treatment of an ally, and others, the harsh reality of international relations culminated in a furious French government that went as far as withdrawing its ambassadors from Washington and Canberra—yet not from London. This move only high-

lights how the French National Assembly felt betrayed, comparing the situation to "a stab in the back" as their foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian put it, by the US and Australia, and not the UK.^[2]

"It's really a stab in the back. We had established a relationship of trust with Australia, this trust has been betrayed."

- Jean-Yves Le Drian

It would seemingly take more to worsen already deteriorating Anglo-French relations, something Boris Johnson picked up on as he told the French to "donnez-moi un break [give me a break]" and "prenez un grip [get a grip]".^[3] Post Brexit fishing rights in the channel, which led

to the UK dispatching two navy vessels to Jersey, and a lack of political cooperation over recent migrant tragedies, as 27 people died attempting to cross the channel, are possible examples of Macron's response to politics at home.^[4] The French presidential election is mere months away and whilst hard right leader Marine Le Pen's popularity dipped (according to polls), Macron is far from being in a comfortable situation.^[5]

Consequences will however have been felt back in Canberra and Washington, where a damaged relationship with a very close ally could only harm Joe Biden's already fragile trifecta across the government.

And this is far from Biden's only problem. Following Trump's tumultuous term in office and the botched US evacuation of Afghanistan, the States have earned a notorious reputation among allies that could take the form of greater hesitancy when it comes to future cooperation with D.C. An undesirable division in the West, and a reputation only reaffirmed by their recent treatment of the French. Domestically, Biden faces low approval ratings and a wakeup call after Democrat losses in the Commonwealth and only a narrow victory in New Jersey's gubernatorial race—tension is already building up for the 2022 midterm elections.^[6]

More importantly, though, is the pact's effect on activities in the Indo-Pacific. Covering 24 nations including the world's most populous state, largest democracy, 6 of the 10 largest standing armies in the world and 60% of maritime trade, primary influence over the Indo-Pacific has been a source of rising conflict particularly between the US and China.^[7]

China's unmatched growth in recent decades suggests that it is on track to become the world's largest economy by 2028—its only major hindrance being the US for now. Various Chinese attempts to sidestep Washington's power across the world suggest that their rise is far from over. The Belt and Road Initiative, pride of President Xi Jinping's foreign policy, also known as the '21st-

century silk road' is a \$5 trillion project involving 139 countries across the globe with the obvious aim of easing trade and a hidden benefit of luring smaller nations into debt traps. Sri Lanka, due to its inability to repay loans used to construct Hambantota Port, has leased it to the Chinese for the next 99 years, something that really should not have come as a surprise.^[8] A more malicious project innocently referred to as their 'String of Pearls' will see India surrounded by a series of military bases giving Beijing more control over oil shipping lanes and several strategic straits across the Indian Ocean. Territorial issues concerning the South China Sea, which Beijing claims almost complete control over despite a ruling against it by the International Court of Justice, have prompted a reaction from East Asian nations. The QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), an alliance between the Philippines, US, Australia, and India, seeks a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP), based on the Japanese strategy put forward in 2016.^[9]

The most polarising issue facing the region is the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s desire to absorb Taiwan and place it under CCP rule. Frequent breaches of the Taiwan Air Defense Identification Zone by Chinese planes only add to the current uncomfortable feeling, with Taipei warning that China will be able to mount a full-scale invasion soon—"by 2025... they will have the complete capability".^[10] Taiwanese President Tsai-ing Wen has taken a defiant tone against this threat, as seen in a speech, delivered on Taiwan's national anniversary, in which she said:

"This not only places Indo-Pacific nations, but also the rest of the free world, in a difficult situation to say the least. There should be absolutely no illusion that the Taiwanese people will bow to pressure" ^[11]

- President Tsai-ing Wen

And finally, North Korea's disregard for international boundaries and neighboring nations has set it at odds with Japan, South Korea, and the West as it continues to test weapons of varying levels of destruction. US intelligence reported another North Korea missile launch following one in October in which they tested an SLBM (submarine-launched ballistic missile).^[12]

As of now, Australia's motives for joining AUKUS are seemingly clear as they continue to stand up to Chinese coercion. China has, for decades, been Australia's largest trading partner when it comes to coal and iron ore, with great sway in Australian politics. Chinese objection to Australia's joining of the QUAD led to their departure under PM Rudd in 2007 only to rejoin it in 2017 and a coal ban on any Australian coal, despite widespread energy shortages in China, are representative of CCP discontent.^[13] AUKUS marks a point of no return as Australia turns its back on its former largest economic partner as it seeks to bolster its security, for now by introducing world class nuclear submarines to their military to most likely act as a deterrent. Whilst its aim may be to better equip Australia with the resources needed for peace, it may only fan the flames and lead to further provocation.

AUKUS has most definitely caught much unwanted attention, with China calling on the US and UK to 'abandon their Cold War mentality'.^[14] For now, what's undeniable is the fact that AUKUS has created a fracture within the West, but its current effect on the rest of the world is yet to be seen. To the Indo-Pacific region, plagued with its own problems, it is just another pact and to certain governments, a message. The true effect of AUKUS can only be realised once what it promises is delivered. In the meantime, it is an acknowledgement of changing relations and perhaps a powerful message signaling future intervention.

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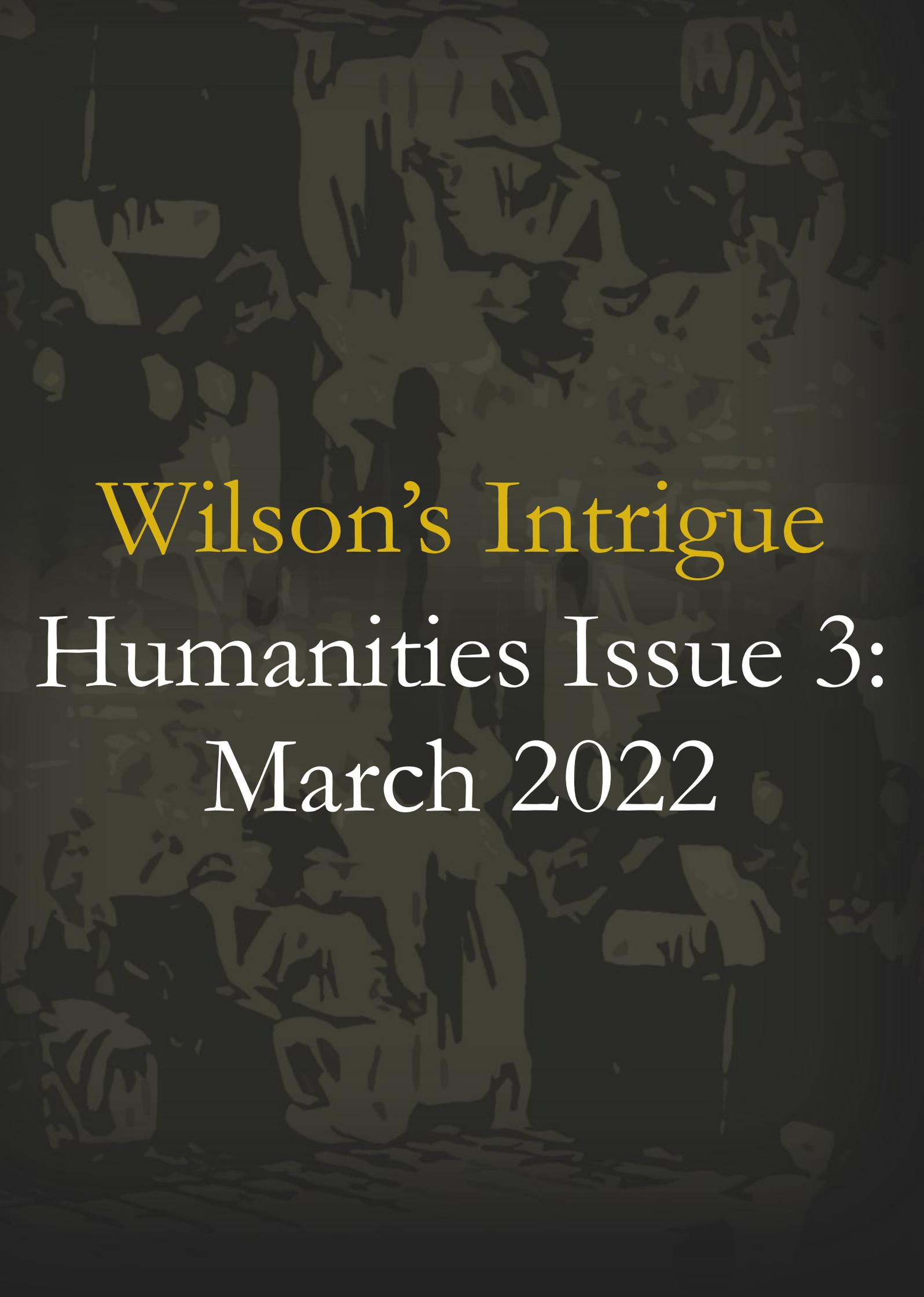
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