New Insights into Literature and Catholicism in the 19th and 20th Centuries

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Paul Rowan and David Torevell

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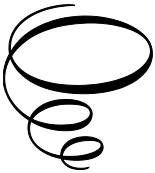

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editors and contributors involved in this book have a passion for great literature which deals imaginatively, originally and subtly with religious and metaphysical ideas and practices. The focus of the text is on Catholic Christianity and how this finds imaginative expression in memorable and acclaimed 19th and 20th century works. It follows on from an earlier publication on the same topic offering different writers to explore and new insights to ponder.

The editors are deeply grateful to all the American, Irish and British academics who have contributed to this book. We thank them for their time, efficiency, warmth and generosity of spirit as we compiled their writings during a global pandemic. We would also like to pay tribute to the following individuals who have sustained us both personally and professionally, over a number of years: Michael Ford, Michael Paul Gallagher, Stephanie Modak, Laura Rowan, Patrice Haynes, Mary Grey, Elizabeth Harris, Richard Hooper, Clive Palmer, David Phinnemore, Damian Norton, Simon Lee, Mike Thompson and Gordon Abbs.

Gratitude is also owed to our close families for their love and support. Finally, a nod of appreciation is extended to Adam Rummens and Jamie George at CSP for their professionalism and for keeping us on track and to Antonia Phinnemore for her efficient proof reading.

FOREWORD

In his 1887 publication *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche claimed that 'man's self-deprecation, his *will* to self-deprecation' has been unstoppably on the increase since Copernicus. 'Gone alas, is his faith in his dignity, uniqueness, irreplaceableness in the rank order of beings – he has become *animal*, literally, unqualifiedly and unreservedly an animal, a man who in his earlier faiths was almost God...'.[1] This death of 'man', accompanying the death, of God is one trajectory in the unfolding history of (post)modernity's thinking. It rests on a narrowly scientific and reductionist understanding of what human beings are and promotes the view that they are nothing more than reproductive units acting out of self- interest and pleasure. In turn, it is associated with a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' with regard to the motivations and aspirations of humankind. Related to this development, Harari notes that what he terms *dataism* is beginning to dominate current scientific thinking about humanity and that we should be cognisant that such dogmatism dictates that we are simply processing machines of information and 'that organisms are algorithms, and that giraffes, tomatoes, and human beings are just different methods of processing data ...'.[2]

On this reckoning we are merely artificially intelligent robots whose behaviour is driven by the algorithms we put into them, a theme Kazuo Ishiguru explores in his latest novel, *Klara and the Sun* (2021). *Au contraire,* some (post)modern thinking promotes the view that humanity is capable of reaching extraordinary Faustian heights, committing a Pelagian error that 'man is the measure of all things', a dangerous characteristic which Pope Francis has often referred to in his writings. Vatican Council II's *Gaudium et Spes* puts it like this: a person 'either sets himself up as the absolute measure of all things or debases himself to the point of despair'.[3] In this collection, Daniel Frampton's contribution exposes such distorted anthropological understandings in his examination of the fight against

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morality III, 25*. ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. Trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 115
[2] Yuval Harari, *Homo Deus* (London: Harvill Secker, 2016) 368
[3] Austin Flannery ed., Vatican Council II (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1992), 913

secular ways of thinking with reference to the writings of Roy Campbell. The essay by Michael Kirwan too, discusses the work of novelist Donna Tartt in this light. She held that 'the novel in its history and genesis is an emphatically secular art form; the product of a secular society, addressing primarily secular concerns', a stance she seeks to address. This issue is taken up in Michael Kirwan's second offering on Czesław Miłosz, a poet who wrestles with the importance of faith, since '*someone* had to do this', a position endorsed by David Torevell's examination of the contemplative poetry of the Trappist monk Thomas Merton.

Reductionist approaches to the richness of human nature and endeavour discount the imaginative capabilities of human beings and disregard their spiritual dimension. Sacks comments that '...our ability to conceptualise and imagine worlds that have not yet been, our capacity to communicate deeply with others ...'[4] constitutes what is unique about humanity. Literature influenced by Catholicism has the capacity to explore these facets of human life and is indelibly linked with beliefs about the sacred dignity of each person. Literature within a Christian paradigm invariably tells of universal experiences of joy and hope, grief and anguish and 'cherish[es] a feeling of deep solidarity with the human race and its history' since: 'Nothing that is genuinely human fails to find an echo' in Christians' hearts .[5] This book explores how some literature written in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries addresses the search for self-understanding and meaning amidst the vicissitudes of simply being alive and rests on the belief that human life is immensely valuable, needs to be celebrated and calls out for treatment with an inalienable respect. Terry Phillips's chapter focuses on the work of the Irish poet Thomas MacGreevy, and highlights how this pursuit of meaning is never an easy one, particularly in the face of war, besides outlining the poet's developmental theodicy over his lifetime.

Nicholas Boyle is right when he writes that literature is the employment of engaging language, free of instrumental purpose, which seeks to reveal an aspect of Truth. It captures the mysterious beauty of life and has an undeniable association with Being. It is revelatory. With regard to this position, David Deavel explores how the divine presence is encountered in the ordinary and extraordinary exigencies of the everyday by discussing Alice Thomas Ellis's Booker Prize-nominated third novel *The 27th Kingdom*. Terry Phillips takes up a similar endeavour as she investigates the

[4] Jonathan Sacks, *Morality. Restoring the Common Good in Divided Times* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2020),242
[5] (Flannery, Vatican Council II, 903)

poetic language of Thomas MacGreevy, which she claims seeks to move the listener or reader into the realm of the supernatural.

The truth communicated in literature flowing from a Catholic sensibility conveys the belief that life *matters very much.* This insight is allied to a sense of the enjoyment of creation whereby every single thing is precious – even the sparrows on the window ledge. It echoes a *Genesis* trope – 'God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good' (Gen. *1: 31*). Literature sustains this recognition by its memorable and innovative acts of representation of those things which reflect – and are of worth to – God. Whether comic or tragic, a Catholic approach to literature always communicates the worthwhileness of living, loving and dying. Brandon Schneeberger's analysis of Coventry Patmore's *The Unknown Eros* does just this as he explores how his ode compilation is infused with the Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of marriage. He writes: 'This particular compilation serves as Patmore's highest expression of the sacramentality of married love, that marriage ultimately points the soul to its future betrothal with God'. Literary representations are able to become acts of creation or more precisely *recreation,* since they encourage those who receive them to be reformed and re-energised in a shared response towards those things which are true and life-giving. There is an attractive intensity of life embedded in this literature which readers recognise in conjunction with their own lives, primarily through their shared humanity and the relationships they form; contrariwise, there is also the wasting of it.

Before the Enlightenment religion and literature were closely interwoven. In ancient Greece a tragedy was part of the festivities for the god Dionysius. Shakespeare included biblical teachings in almost all of his plays; the title of his 'problem play' *Measure for Measure* is a verse from Christ's Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's gospel (Matt. *7:2*). However, after the eighteenth century as science came to dominate epistemological methods of seeking truth, the relationship was severed and as Ghesquière notes, 'Literature turned into an autonomous entity' seeking to foster wisdom, spirituality and ethics outside metaphysical frameworks. [6]

The Catholic literary revival in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries attempts to counter this split through the writing of plays, novels and poetry that reflect unashamedly religious concerns and the quest for social justice

[6] Ghesquière, Rita 'Spirituality and Literature'. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Spirituality in Society and the Professions,* eds. Laszlo Zsolnai and Bernadette Flanagan (London: Routledge, 2020), 364

fueled by Catholic principles about the dignity of the human person often against a backdrop of dehumanizing industrial capitalism and totalitarianism. As Adam Schwartz notes in his discussion of Catholic thinking on the principle of subsidiarity in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries:

> Less noted has been a distinctly Roman Catholic subset ... which has posited orthodox Catholicism as a counterstatement to industrial capitalism and its ideological contemporaries, including the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century. This body of British Catholic social criticism emerged in the late nineteenth century and persisted through the twentieth. It reflected the spirit of subsidiarity in its distrust of concentrated power and its preference for a decentralized polity animated by traditional Christian norms. Examining the sociology of Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, the distributism originated by Hilaire Belloc and Chesterton, and the Christian corporatism of Christopher Dawson will reveal the most vivid representatives of this modern British Catholic alternative public doctrine.

One aspect of this revival attempted to do what Mark Carney in his role as the Governor of the Bank of England sought – to fix the malignant culture at the heart of financial capitalism and expose the damaging effects of the free market, which ended in a crisis in values. He wished to oversee an economy that works for all. His *Value(s): Building a Better World For All* (2021) recounts his invitation to join a group of academics, policy makers, economists, business people and charity workers in the Vatican[7] and relates how Pope Francis shared a lunch and the following parable with them:

> Our meal will be accompanied by wine. Now, wine is many things. It has a bouquet, colour and richness of taste that all complement the food. It has alcohol that can enliven the mind. Wine enriches all our senses. At the end of our feast, we will have grappa. Grappa is one thing: alcohol. Grappa is wine distilled. ... Humanity is many things – passionate, curious, rational, altruistic, creative, self-interested. ... But the market is humanity distilled. ... Your job is to turn the grappa back into wine, to turn the market back into humanity. ... This isn't theology. This is reality. This is the truth.[8]

By analogy, the chosen literary figures discussed in these pages attempt to do the same as those who act on the Pope's words – to turn the insipid taste of much of life pressed down by competitive individualism, dehumanization and oppressive market forces into a far richer offering. They question, aka Wilde's aphorism: how did our culture come to know 'the price of

[7] Mark Carney, *Value(s). Building a Better World for All* (London: William Collins, 2021), 2-4

[8] (Carney, *Value(s). Building a Better World For All*, 3)

everything and the value of nothing'?[9] Their writing tries to offer a vision of life that redirects this dismal, cultural trajectory towards something far more wholesome and meaningful. Literature with a Catholic foundation, by means of gripping narratives, memorable images and rhythms or by dramatic clashes of values, is able to lay bare prejudices and false preconceptions. It sets forth ways of seeing, creating and revealing a better world. Emerging from and promoting a Catholic sensibility it confronts the bewildering and shifting sands of time as it offers hope for now and for the future.

Joseph Pearce (2014) suggests that Catholicism, although no longer illegal as it was in Campion's and Southwell's Reformation days, is still considered 'illegitimate' and rarely referred to in public and academic discourse. We prefer to use the word 'marginalised' to describe what has happened, basing our judgement on those critics and readers who airbrush Catholicism's presence in some literary works. As Terry Eagleton claims, our present Western age regards religion, interiority and a stable self as nothing more than 'a clapped out metaphysics' while warning 'to eradicate them is to abolish God by rooting out the underground places where He has been concealing himself' .[10] More broadly, David Jasper argues that the dialogue between literature and theology must be renewed, for it introduces us to the deep traditions by which we have been formed. We forget, to our peril, the nature of theological understandings of human nature and 'the place of humanity within the span of its history and *sub specie aeternitatis*'. [11]

The creation of memorable characters is often associated with great literature and the persons encountered in the chosen texts in his book remind us of our human nature, sometimes when it reaches dizzying heights of moral and spiritual achievement, or conversely when it gives in to temptation, weakness and much in-between. Shakespeare is often regarded as the best writer of the complexities of character for he was not only skilled at representing 'imitations' of human conduct but managed to communicate with depth 'the blueprint, the language, and the responses that taught us how to be us'. [12]Literature has the potential, therefore, to draw us into issues

[9] Wilde, 1892, Act III. Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*. London: Methuen Drama. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002)
[10] Terry Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*. (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2015), 186-7
[11] David Jaspar, *Literature and Theology as a Grammar of Assent.* (London: Routledge, 2016), 10
[12] Marjorie Garber, *Character. The History of a Cultural Obsession.* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021), 17

about Being – who we are and how we behave. It is why Boyle when discussing the distinctiveness of Catholic influences on literature argues that it is '*our* truth' that is being told to us and 'we look each other in the eyes and know that our truth is everyone else's'.[13] This democratic range which such literature encapsulates reflects its universal dimension. Religious understandings of life set forth a humanity we all share and recognise. As Eagleton wryly insists, 'a God who concerned himself with only a particular section of the species, say Bosnians or people over five foot eight inches tall, would appear lacking in the impartial benevolence appropriate to a Supreme Being'.[14] Readers can happily agree with Coleridge's estimation of the Prince of Denmark, that 'I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so'.[15] Along with this claim goes an emphasis on the uniqueness of each person. No two characters are the same and from a Christian viewpoint this dimension reflects the creative work of God. All the chapters in this publication contribute to these dual aspects of universalism and uniqueness, pointing to an individual's common but variegated human nature.

An underlying conviction in the book is that the literature discussed here is of immense worth, not because it provides neat answers to difficult questions, but because it prompts metaphysical reflections against the backdrop of an afterlife. As in the reading of sacred scripture, a hermeneutical task confronts the contributors and the reader as they negotiate their own interpretations of the literary texts. Equally, all the essayists keep a keen eye on the Catholic identity of their named writers illustrating how they convey Catholic themes and philosophies in creative but non-proselytizing ways. The discussions of literature here are not 'authoritative' in the sense of having been endorsed by the institutional church. Rather they demonstrate how light has been cast on the inalienable sacredness of human life and endeavour in all its complexity and variety.

The Catholic anthropology emerging in these texts gives central importance to freedom from which human dignity is never separate. Unlike the causal relationships under which science and technology operate, literature celebrates human choice and free will, the 'theo-drama' of existence, as the twentieth century Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar would say. This is what makes the works so thrilling and attractive. The denial of freedom and erasure of the open-endedness of human behaviour was a

[13] Nicholas Boyle, *Sacred and Secular Scriptures. A Catholic Approach to Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 130
[14] (Eagleton, *Hope without Optimism*, 188)
[15] quoted in (Garber, *Character. The History of a Cultural Obsession*, 18)

position Spinoza, Marx and Freud held, largely as a result of their empiricist, materialist philosophy. A certain dehumanization and joylessness of life then became more prevalent. Religious understandings counter this trajectory, claiming that moral choice and free will operate as pivotal aspects of human existence. The chosen authors highlight this sense of freedom and point to those decisions which make a person who s/he is and how they become caught up in a personal and cosmic drama where actions have inevitable moral consequences. Each person is faced with moral options in a world where the potential for totalitarianism and oppression can be unleashed at the click of a button, a world in which a value-neutral market rewards those who pay and where politics often fails to address the existential crises of the day. Michael Kirwan is all too aware of how Czesław Miłosz lived through the 'dark times' of National Socialism, Communist inhumanity and Stalinism, when such ideologies trampled unflinchingly on the deep spiritual currents which flow through the human heart of each person. Literature firmly rooted in a Catholic worldview offers an attack on this life-denying scenario.

Some of the writers discussed in this book were 'cradle' Catholics, others were converts. Certainly, autobiography features strongly in the portraits given, for many of the figures discussed drew deeply from their own spiritual experiences, which fueled their literary imaginations. Evans comments that what makes autobiography so appealing is the 'chance it offers to see how this man or that woman … has negotiated the problem of self-awareness and has broken the internalised code a culture supplies about how life should be experienced'[16]; it also gives readers an opportunity to stabilise the uncertainties of their own existence. These insights can be extended to those who write from their own personal Catholic sensibility and imagination. Daniel Frampton's piece focuses particularly on one Catholic convert Roy Campbell and demonstrates how his writings exhibited the paradox of the supernatural/otherworldly co-existing with the mundane/ordinary. Indeed, all the essayists reflect this dramatic and dynamic interplay of the temporal and the eternal. This sacramental emphasis pervades the entire book and records how the gift of life encourages glimpses into the sacral in each encounter, teaching us truths about ourselves, others and the world we inhabit. Paul Rowan writes in his summary of G.K. Chesterton's thinking and work:

[16] Mary Evans, 'The imagined self: The impossibility of auto/biography', In *Autobiography. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies,* ed. Trev Lynn Broughton London: Routledge, 2007), 17

> This love of the dramatic and the creative, the ability to see the world as a vivid image, the power of imagination, and the sheer inability to see the ordinary and the everyday as anything other than extraordinary, never left Chesterton. It was the beginning of the Catholic sense that creation is sacramental – always pointing to something or someone beyond, or behind, or underneath itself. The humdrum everyday was for Chesterton a theatre, an arena in which the encounter with God takes place in an infinite and wonderful variety of ways. The ordinary and the everyday is what is later referred to in *Orthodoxy* as Elfland, the place of magical fairy tales. For Chesterton this cosmos is the magical gift given to us all and, therefore, exploration of this gift offers any number of entry points at which we can join the pathway to the Giver of the gift, God.

All the literary works discussed here act as mirrors to reflect the complexity and beauty of the human condition and contribute in vivid and memorable ways to what seeing the world through a Catholic lens might actually mean. Aristotle claims that through *mimesis* literature offers glimpses of reality and truth, producing not only pleasure but also learning. Auerbach's illuminating work *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (2003) traces this dominant trajectory, but he omits the important spiritual and religious dimension in his discussion. However, great twentieth century novelists like James Joyce and Iris Murdoch – and all the literary figures written about in these pages – know that literature benefits from conveying an 'epiphany' (using Joyce's religious word) or revelation about life which might be hidden due to the cultural conditioning of the times. It is what T.S. Eliot (1986) referred to as a 'deeper' or 'unnamed' reality which tends to escape people's perceptions. As Ghesquière points out, literature allied to spiritual insight 'puts the searchlights on this hidden reality: the unanswered questions, the mystery, the tragedy as an essential part of human existence'.[17] Ingarden (1973) extends this notion by arguing that the skill of the novelist is to invite the reader to contemplate in a calm manner human living. Thomas Merton certainly wished to evoke a contemplative experience through his use of language, sound and rhythm – in his case associated with the apophatic weight of silence *between the words* so that readers might share that experience too. The gaps and the 'unsaid' promote this evocation, offering the felt presence of an impalpable reality. As David Torevell notes, Merton loved to find spaces of silence within his monastery walls and records in *The Sign of Jonas* that his 'chief joy is to escape to the attic of the garden house and the little broken window that looks out over the valley. There in the silence I love the green grass. The tortured gestures of the apple trees have become part of my prayer. …

[17] (Ghesquière, '*Spirituality and Literature'*, 364)

listen to the sweet songs of all the living things that are in our words and fields'.[18] His poems offer parallel experiences. Michael Kirwan re-emphasises this point in his examination of Czesław Miłosz's poetry which aims to 'raid the inarticulate' in a way no other genre can.

Our hope as editors and contributors is that you will enjoy and be enlivened by the rich and uplifting Catholic vision of life portrayed in some of the great literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries discussed in these pages.

[18] Thomas Merton, *The Sign Of Jonas* (London: Hollis and Carter, 1953), 47

SMALL IS BRITISH: SUBSIDIARITY AND MODERN BRITISH CATHOLIC SOCIAL CRITICS

ADAM SCHWARTZ

Discussing the growth of industrialism in Britain, G. K. Chesterton once commented that 'every great Englishman with the gift of expression whom the world recognizes as specially English, and as speaking for many Englishmen, was either in unconscious contradiction to that trend or (more often) in furious revolt against it.' Several scholars have shown the essential validity of Chesterton's insight by elucidating a steady undercurrent in British thought premised on censure of modern industrial society, one that has run through the work of thinkers as diverse as the Romantic poets, Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, William Morris, G. D. H. Cole, C. S. Lewis, E. P. Thompson, and eco-activists.[1] Less noted has been a distinctly Roman Catholic subset of this heritage, which has posited orthodox Catholicism as a counterstatement to industrial capitalism and its ideological contemporaries, including the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century. This body of British Catholic social criticism emerged in the late nineteenth century and persisted through the twentieth. It reflected the spirit of subsidiarity in its distrust of concentrated power and its preference for a decentralized polity animated by traditional Christian norms.[2] Examining the sociology of Henry Edward Cardinal Manning, the distributism originated by Hilaire Belloc and Chesterton, and the Christian corporatism of Christopher Dawson will reveal the most vivid representatives of this modern British Catholic alternative public doctrine.

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[1] See Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (New York: Columbia UP, 1983); Martin Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (Cambridge: UP, 1981); Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb, and the Greening of Britain* (Cambridge: UP, 1994).

[2] David Martin defines subsidiarity cogently as 'a rich concept involving mutual aid…[and] devolution downwards to the lowest viable level of governance.' ("Some academic distinctions," *TLS,* 24 & 31 December 2004, 29.)

Manning (1807-1892) had a lifelong antipathy to liberal capitalism, and, after his elevation to Archbishop of Westminster in 1865, he was the first British Catholic prelate to take a sustained interest in 'the social question'. He postulated several pathbreaking principles. Styling himself a 'Mosaic Radical', Manning sought to translate the imperatives of biblical justice into the idiom of the machine age. One of his central avowals subverted laissez-faire doctrine by arguing that labour is a form of property, and hence deserves the rights and protections that the Church had traditionally recognized in private property. Calling labour 'Live Capital', Manning avouched that 'labour and skill are capital as much as gold and silver'[3] because 'there is no personal property so strictly one's own' as one's labour power: 'It is altogether and entirely personal. The strength and skill that are in a man are as much his own as his life-blood.'[4] Manning thus reasoned that workers should have broad (though not unlimited) freedom to dispose of this intimate property as they see fit. Not only may a man not be compelled to work, but he also must be able to combine with fellow labourers in unions to safeguard their shared natural property and withhold it from unjust employers through strikes. Moreover, Manning demanded that the state secure these rights of labour as vigorously as it did any other type of property. In short, because 'the principle of free trade is not applicable to everything', Manning felt, labour as 'true property' has a 'primary right to freedom, a right to protect itself, and a claim upon the law of the land to protect it.'[5]

From this central premise, Manning adduced additional conclusions. Again challenging liberal notions of labour, he maintained that labour is 'a social function and not a commodity'. [6] Its value, as expressed in wages, should therefore be determined not by market dynamics but by the significance of its purpose in serving the common good. Furthermore, Manning held that any socio-economic regime must be judged principally by its effect on the traditional family. In his outlook, 'the domestic life of the people [is] vital above all…sacred, far beyond anything that can be sold in the market', and thus any system that erodes this primal institution fails an elementary test of justice.[7] Manning found his era's industrial capitalism to be so flawed, as it 'put labour and wages first, and human or

[3] Manning quoted in Jay Corrin, *Catholic Intellectuals and the Challenge of Democracy* (Notre Dame: UP, 2002), 50, 53.
[4] Manning quoted in V. Alan McClelland, "Manning's Work for Social Justice," *The Chesterton Review* 18 (November 1992): 531.
[5] Henry Edward Manning, 'The Dignity and Rights of Labour' (1874); reprinted in *The Chesterton Review* 18 (November 1992): 626, 628.
[6] Manning quoted in Corrin, *Democracy*, 57
[7] Manning, 'Dignity and Rights of Labour', 626

domestic life second', thereby inverting the divine and natural order and degrading society's core unit.[8] He hence enjoined Britons to instead 'put labour and the profits of labour second – the moral state and the domestic life of the whole working population first'.[9] To that end, he endorsed a host of legislative measures, such as a living wage, limits on working hours for men, and restrictions on female and child labour.

Manning's convictions were seconded by many of his successors and became integral elements of modern Catholic social teaching. Yet, as Dermot Quinn notes, strict subsidiarists might be disturbed by his frequent calls for state intervention in economic life.[10] Much of Manning's oeuvre, however, demonstrates an overall acceptance of the principle of subsidiarity. Defending the right to unionize, for instance, he argued in 1874 that 'what a man can do for himself, the State shall not do for him';[11] promoting another proposed act in 1886, he stressed that 'the efforts of individuals and of societies are unequal to this task, and I *therefore* hold that the State should aid the aims' of its sponsors.[12] He also opposed compulsory state education on subsidiarist grounds, claiming that the government was usurping the rights of parents and churches to train children.[13] More generally, Manning charged that the 'worst danger in politics' is 'exaggerated centralization',[14] and concluded in 1873 that 'the natural antagonist of Caesarism is the Christian Church'.[15] Manning harmonized these latter two beliefs ultimately, contending that in his day the common people had remained more faithful to Christianity than the social elite had and therefore that a decentralized democracy was more likely to yield policies shaped by orthodoxy and hence hostile to despotism. To him, 'the tendency of political society is everywhere to the people. Of this we have no fear," for "the instincts of the masses are Christian'.[16]

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[8] Manning quoted in Dermot Quinn, 'Manning, Chesterton, and Social Catholicism', *The Chesterton Review* 18 (November 1992): 508.
[9] Manning, "Dignity and Rights of Labour," 627
[10] Quinn, ''Social Catholicism', 509-11
[11] Manning quoted in Corrin, *Democracy*, 50.
[12] Manning quoted in McClelland, 'Social Justice', 533. Emphasis added.
[13] Jeffrey Paul von Arx, 'Catholics and Politics', in *From Without the Flaminian Gate*, ed. V. A. McClelland and M. Hodgetts (London: Darnton, Longman & Todd, 1999), 256-57.
[14] Manning quoted in Corrin, *Democracy*, 52.
[15] Manning quoted in V. A. McClelland, 'The Formative Years, 1850-92', in *Flaminian*, 10.
[16] Manning quoted in von Arx, 'Politics', 255.

As clear as this record is in retrospect, Quinn is nevertheless correct to see ambiguities in Manning's worldview, for he was not as rigorous a thinker as some subsequent Catholic social critics. But while his immediate descendants, Belloc and Chesterton, clarified and elaborated Manning's ideas, they acknowledged a debt to him.[17] From general Catholic countermodern notions the three men shared, Belloc and Chesterton fashioned the more precise and comprehensive plan of socio-political reformation known as distributism. Even sober scholars have usually dismissed this politique.[18] Recently, however, it has garnered greater respect, as in Jay Corrin's 2002 judgment that, in the early twentieth century, distributism was 'the single most influential Catholic socio-political movement in the English-speaking world'. In addition, critics have discerned increasingly an affinity between distributism and subsidiarity, epitomized by Joseph Pearce's declaration that 'what Chesterton calls "distributism" the Catholic Church calls "subsidiarity."'[19]

In brief, the distributist desideratum was a decentralized polity and the widespread, small-scale ownership of productive property by individuals and free families. Belloc argued (most famously in *The Servile State* [1912]) that societies based on traditional Catholicism had come closest to realizing this ideal, and that contemporary Britain must consequently recover that religious foundation if it was to secure the broad ownership of property and the liberty he thought was safeguarded by proprietorship. To him, solely in a 'universal Catholic society' could there emerge 'from the very sanctity in which it held property, a society in which the mass of citizens would own property'.[20] The alternative to such a Catholic commonweal, Belloc warned, was a new form of slavery in which the property-less proletariat would be compelled to work for the propertied elite, albeit in circumstances of greater economic stability and security than obtained under laissez-faire capitalism. He worried that early-twentieth-century Britain was approaching this servile condition quickly; he hence felt the state had a licit role to play in fostering the restoration of property through policies, like favourable tax and interest rates for smallholders, which reversed what he considered the predominant legal bias toward concentrated ownership. But he insisted that these steps would be insufficient without a fundamental ethical and religious *metanoia*:

[17] Race Matthews, 'The Seedbed', *The Chesterton Review* 38 (Spring & Summer 2012): 97-124

[18] See, e.g., Edward Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England* (Oxford: UP, 1985), 120.

[19] Corrin, *Democracy*, 155; and Joseph Pearce, *C. S. Lewis and the Catholic Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003), 80

[20] Hilaire Belloc, *Times*, 22 September 1909, 8c.

'religion is the formative element in any human society…The conversion of society cannot be a rapid process…But it is the right process….Begin by swinging society round into the Catholic course, and you will transmute Industrial Capitalism into something other…But you must begin at the beginning.' Although it is unclear to what extent his views were molded directly by Catholic social teaching, Belloc recognized a kinship in his vision and the Church's, commending *Rerum Novarum* as 'a document of great force'.[21]

Chesterton provided an even richer articulation of distributist convictions. He used the doctrine of original sin to condemn liberal capitalism's first principles, especially in *Orthodoxy* (1908). He posited that theorists like Adam Smith presupposed people to be naturally sympathetic, and thus inclined to use their talents for the common good. The best path to public prosperity, then, was to eliminate restraints on private action, as all self-interest is enlightened; *amour de soi* does not decay into *amour propre*. Chesterton felt orthodox Christianity contravened this mindset at its anthropological core. If people are naturally subject to cupidity, capitalism is one great contradiction, for it holds that public virtue arises from private vice: 'God would overrule everything for good, if only men could succeed in being sufficiently bad'.[22] Far from producing general affluence, Chesterton admonished, removing restrictions on self-seeking persons would unleash a ruthless struggle for limited resources, ending with power concentrated in monopolies that exploit the poor's cheap labour to maximize their owners' wealth; *amour propre* will out if left unchecked. In sum, 'the whole case for Christianity is that a man who is dependent upon the luxuries of this life is a corrupt man, spiritually corrupt, politically corrupt, financially corrupt…to be rich is to be in peculiar danger of moral wreck'.[23] Chesterton found socialism to be similarly grounded in a naive, chiliastic anthropology, one that ultimately drowns ideas of personal property and liberty 'in a sea of impersonal materialism and fatalism'.[24] The doctrine of original sin also gave theological substantiation to Chesterton's lifelong preference for smallness. He sensed that the more power was centralized in large units, the more corrupt its wielders grew, as the innate tendency to selfishness is exacerbated by the tainting effects of acquisition. He thus deduced that small is not just beautiful, but necessary, for men can be trusted with only limited power

[21] Hilaire Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic* (1931; reprint, Rockford: Tan, 1992), 225-27.
[22] G. K. Chesterton, *The Common Man* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1950), 8
[23] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (1908; reprint, New York: Image, 1959), 118
[24] G. K. Chesterton, *Illustrated London News*, 24 February 1923

over nature and their fellows. These perceptions are the metaphysical and theological underpinnings of distributism.

In *What's Wrong With the World* (1910), Chesterton's distributism showed additional affinities with orthodox Catholicism, especially in its emphasis on the family. Indeed, he asserted that his initial motive in forging an alternative to industrial capitalism and socialism was a desire to 're-establish the family, freed from the filthy cynicism and cruelty of the commercial epoch'. He held that capitalism threatened the family mortally by displacing male workers from the home, encouraging female wage-labour, and setting up the employer and state as rival authorities to parents; he feared socialism would further centralize power and diminish the autonomy of spouses and parents by blurring the lines between public and private affairs even more than capitalism had.[25]

Chesterton thus felt that families must gain independence from oligopolies and the state. He hence advocated redistributing wealth (rather than income) by breaking up concentrations of assets, so as to allow each family to own enough productive property to be free both of the need to sell its members' labour power, and of state-supported sustenance with what he deemed its concomitant controls. Chesterton recognized this idea's radical implications:

> The thing to be done is nothing more nor less than the distribution of the great fortunes and the great estates. We can now only avoid Socialism by a change as vast as Socialism. If we are to save property, we must distribute property, almost as sternly and sweepingly as did the French Revolution. If we are to preserve the family we must revolutionize the nation.[26]

He nevertheless believed that only such a social transformation would relieve many of the burdens that the poor especially bore under industrialism. Becoming self-sufficient economically would in turn make

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[25] *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 4, *What's Wrong With the World* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 149. See also Ibid., 209, 224; and *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 3, *The Well and the Shallows* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 443

[26] Chesterton, *What's Wrong*, 213. In keeping with his commitment to the sanctity of private property, though, Chesterton explicitly rejected coercive confiscations as the proper means to this end, proposing instead gradual buyouts of large landlords (Ibid., 224). *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 4, *What's Wrong With the World* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 149. See also Ibid., 209, 224; and *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 3, *The Well and the Shallows* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 443

the common people self-governing politically, enabling them to conserve their traditions and to train their children in them.

Chesterton reiterated these contentions for the rest of his career. They animated *G.K.'s Weekly* (founded 1925) and the Distributist League (founded 1926), the formation of which goaded him to delineate the distributist programme in greater theoretical depth in *The Outline of Sanity* (1926). Chesterton suggests in that volume that distributism is 'natural', asserting that whereas monopolist and socialist ideals have never been (and perhaps never can be) realized, his own has occurred repeatedly: 'There cannot be a nation of millionaires, and there has never yet been a nation of Utopian comrades; but there have been any number of nations of tolerably contented peasants'. He argues additionally that this peasant ideal is 'the motive and the goal' of distributism because a peasant keeps 'a sort of balance in his life like the balance of sanity in the soul'. Chesterton observes that because peasants produce primarily for personal use rather than for market exchange, each individual perforce participates in creating and consuming a wide range of goods, and that such a commonwealth also eschews the relentless pursuit of wealth and emphasis on innovation that he felt characterized industrialism in both its capitalist and socialist forms. While the division of labour and growth will have their place in a distributist economy, Chesterton thinks, its guiding norms will be integration and autarky.[27] The distributist state is not an acquisitive society.

Yet, further accenting the idea of balance, Chesterton deemed it 'absurd' that a distributist or peasant state be one in which all people are distributists or peasants.[28] Rather, such designations mean that this sort of society 'had the general character of a peasant state; that the land was largely held in that fashion and the law generally directed in that spirit; that any other institutions stood up as recognizable exceptions'.[29] Distributism is the framework for community goals and policies, but room is allowed for non-distributist components; Chesterton considered this diversity the key to social sanity. For him, a distributist society preserves the equilibrium between its various facets instead of trying to homogenize them, as he thought capitalist and socialist orders do.[30] Because it

[27] *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 5, *The Outline of Sanity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 192, 98, 166, 170, 61, 134-40.
[28] 'Do We Agree?' *G. K.'s Weekly*, 5 November 1927.
[29] Chesterton, *Outline of Sanity*, 80-81.
[30] Chesterton, *Outline of Sanity*, 53; *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton,* vol. 21*, Sidelights on New London and Newer York* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press,

accommodates life's complexity, it can use safely things like technology that more rigid regimes have abused: a 'Distributive State in being, with all its balance of different things' would be 'a sane society that could balance property and control machinery'.[31]

Chesterton envisioned that the balanced mixture marking this state would be true too of its religious inspiration. He had converted to Roman Catholicism in 1922 and he avowed in 1926 that 'there is a doctrine behind the whole of our political position'; yet he acknowledged that 'it is not necessarily the doctrine of the religious authority which I myself receive'.[32] If non-Catholics were welcome in a distributist polity, though, Chesterton nonetheless saw Roman Catholicism as the sole intellectual system faithful enough to Being's variety to sustain a social mythos permitting that multiplicity: 'the first Distributists in the modern English group if not necessarily Catholics, were men with that sort of common sense which is actually produced by the complexity of Catholicism'.[33] Moreover, he maintained that 'the Catholic Church differed from all this new mentality' behind industrialism because the Church averred that 'ordinary men were clothed with powers and privileges and a kind of authority'. Distributism was this norm's current incarnation to him, for 'we alone, perhaps, are likely to insist in the full sense that the average respectable citizen ought to have something to rule'.[34] He therefore considered Roman Catholicism the solitary worldview that could substantiate distributism's ethos collectively, even if particular people could discover its tenets independently: 'most of the corporate traditional support in any tug of war for Distributism will be Catholic. No other *body* tends to it: though individuals so tend'.[35]

In Chesterton's mind, then, non-Catholic roads to the distributist state would complement Catholic ones, thereby shaping a religious network mirroring the diverse interaction of peasant and non-peasant elements. Catholicism would set the society's tone, but non-Catholic approaches would be embraced so long as they affirmed distributism's first principles of decentralization and proprietorship. In fact, Chesterton first met

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1990), 482; and G. K. Chesterton, 'The Distributist', *The Commonweal* 12 (8 October 1930): 569.

[31] Chesterton, *Outline of Sanity*, 92-93.

[32] Chesterton, *Outline of Sanity*, 207.

[33] Chesterton, 'The Distributist', 569.

[34] Chesterton, *Outline of Sanity*, 207-9.

[35] Chesterton to Gregory Macdonald, 3 July 1933, G. K. Chesterton Archives, Manuscripts Department, The British Library. Emphasis in original.

distributist-style ideas among early 1900s Anglican Christian Socialists,[36] and he recounted that he 'took no notice at the time' when *Rerum Novarum* was issued, even as he was conceiving cognate concepts contemporaneously.[37] However, by 1931 *G.K.'s Weekly* was editorializing that *Rerum Novarum* 'presents so clear an outline of that social philosophy we call Distributism' that 'Distributists of any creed' would profit from reading 'a book so bound up with their aims'.[38] While never establishing a strict identity between distributism and Roman Catholicism, then, Chesterton did come to claim that Catholicism was the best corporate religious basis for distributism and that a distributist society should hence be governed by a Roman Catholic spirit.

The intellectual cousinage of distributism and Catholic social teaching extended to a subsidiarist suspicion of early-twentieth-century interventionist ideologies. Although Belloc and Chesterton admitted that the law could and should regulate some aspects of social and economic life, their regard for autonomy made them wary (as Manning was) of measures like compulsory state education. They were also leading adversaries of their era's incipient welfare state, particularly the 1911 National Insurance Act, which both men regarded as a pivotal turn on the path to the servile state.[39] Besides reproving this 'New Liberalism', each literatus recognized presciently the emergence of totalitarianism, a regime that Belloc called 'more absolute than any Pagan state of the past ever was…because it claims unquestioned authority in all things', an arrogation that means 'the Catholic Church must inevitably come into conflict' with it.[40]

Chesterton fused these concerns. He finally deemed distributism the lone sentinel of liberty in his day and saw all other modern political systems as potentially or actually totalitarian. As 'all the strong as well as the weak voices of our time are for the moment, in no unnatural despair, crying out only for Order', he judged in 1933, distributists must uphold 'those real rights of the real family and the real individual; which every sweeping

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[36] Sheridan Gilley, 'Chesterton's Politics', *The Chesterton Review* 21 (February & May 1995): 36; and Corrin, *Democracy*, 88-92, 411, n. 37

[37] *The Collected Works of G. K. Chesterton*, vol. 3, *The Catholic Church and Conversion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 114

[38] 'Forty Years On', *G.K.'s Weekly*, 23 May 1931, 161

[39] See, e.g., Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic*, 57, 177, 179; Chesterton, *What's Wrong*, 153-99; Robert Speaight, *The Life of Hilaire Belloc* (London: Hollis & Carter, 1957), 314; Chesterton to A. G. Gardiner, n.d., 1911, Gardiner Papers 1/6 A, British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics.

[40] Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic*, 56-57

social reform of every type and color and excuse, is now only too likely to disregard…let us stand up under the derision of the whole earth and demand to be free'.[41] Yet, feeling that 'the idea of liberty has ultimately a religious root', Chesterton concluded in 1935 that a totalitarian order could be averted in Britain only if orthodox Roman Catholicism stayed vital against secularist pressures: 'Catholicism created English liberty; the freedom has remained exactly in so far as the faith has remained; and where it is true that all our Faith has gone, all our freedom is going'.[42] Tom Buchanan thus claims correctly that distributism 'did much' to make opposition to statism 'the most distinctive feature of social Catholic thought' in early-twentieth-century Britain.[43]

Since distributism emphasized freedom, it is unsurprising that it was not a monolithic movement. Distributists battled, often bitterly, about a wide range of issues, and these fissures vitiated the cause as an active force in British politics, especially after Chesterton's 1936 death.[44] But distributism's bedrock tenets were echoed throughout the century by most members of the Catholic literary revival, most prominently E. F. Schumacher, whose best-selling *Small is Beautiful* (1973) grew from an essay originally entitled 'Chestertonian Economics'.[45] A less famous, yet equally trenchant, exponent and expander of distributist-type ideas was Christopher Dawson. Dawson frequently used the phrase 'servile state', wrote for *G.K.'s Weekly*, and restated the substance of the distributist critique of industrialism, as when he proclaimed in 1931 that 'the spirit of modern capitalist industrialism is profoundly alien from that of Catholicism'.[46] More particularly, Dawson upbraided 'the new economic

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[41] G. K. Chesterton, 'Remember Liberty', *G.K.'s Weekly*, 1 June 1933.

[42] G. K. Chesterton, *A Miscellany of Men* (London: Methuen, 1912), 51; and Chesterton, *The Listener*, 19 June 1935.

[43] Tom Buchanan, 'Great Britain', in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, ed. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 259.

[44] See, e.g., Dermot Quinn, 'The Historical Foundations of Modern Distributism', *The Chesterton Review* 21 (November 1995): 451-71; Michael Thorn, 'Towards a History and Interpretation of the Distributist League', *The Chesterton Review* 23 (August 1997): 305-27; Corrin, *Democracy*, passim.

[45] Aidan Mackey, 'The Wisdom of G. K. Chesterton', *The Canadian C. S. Lewis Journal*, no. 90 (Fall 1996): 39. For other like-minded figures, see Veldman, *Fantasy*; Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts* (London: HarperCollins, 1999); and Adam Schwartz, 'Swords of Honor: The Revival of Orthodox Christianity in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Logos* 4 (Winter 2001): 11-33.

[46] Christopher Dawson, Introduction to *The Necessity of Politics*, by Carl Schmitt (London: Sheed & Ward, 1931), 24

Dawson also saluted the 'social leadership' of Manning (English Catholicism and Victorian Liberalism, *The Tablet*, 1950; reprinted in *The Dawson Newsletter*,

order which now threatens to destroy the family.'[47] He echoed Chesterton in claiming that this 'new urban-industrial civilization' focused on group-work in mines and factories, leading to 'the disintegration of the family into a number of independent wage earners and the degeneration of the home into a workers' dormitory'.[48] Dawson lamented that under these conditions the family 'ceases to be the bearer of social traditions and the tradition of culture is also lost or degraded',[49] a development he deemed 'the most important' social change wrought by industrialism.[50] Dawson also seconded Chesterton's suspicion of the socialist remedy for industrial ills, regarding it instead as a variant strain of the same materialist malady: 'socialism and industrial capitalism both share the same economic fallacy and the same urbanist and mechanical ideals: both alike lead to the disintegration of the social organism'.[51] He thus prescribed 'an extension of the rights of property to every citizen', which he found 'inconsistent with the individualistic society in which a small number of very rich men control the lives of the great masses of their fellow citizens; but it is also inconsistent with the communist society in which the economic life of the individual is even more completely controlled by the machinery of an all-powerful state'.[52]

Dawson further aped Belloc and Chesterton in foreseeing totalitarianism, but he analyzed it more acutely and thoroughly than any of his Christian predecessors or peers did. Dawson maintained that, unlike past dictatorships, totalitarianism demanded power not only over men's behaviour but over their thoughts and feelings as well. He thus deduced that this new type of tyranny had only become possible with the modern advent of methods for measuring and controlling public opinion and of psychological procedures for mass-conditioning the emotions. He concluded that this marriage of psychological discoveries and invasive technology allowed regimes the hitherto unknown opportunity to forge a normative political teleology, and to make its presence in the polity pervasive. Dawson postulated that such efforts to create 'an artificially

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Fall 1993: 8), casting him as the principal galvanizing Catholic voice on his age's public questions ('Christianity and Modern Civilization' [1958], Dawson Manuscripts, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN).

[47] Christopher Dawson, *Christianity and Sex* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1930), 25

[48] Christopher Dawson, 'The World Crisis and the English Tradition', in *Dynamics of World History*, ed. John J. Mulloy (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958), 219

[49] Christopher Dawson, *Tradition and Inheritance* (1949; reprint, St. Paul: Wanderer Press, 1970), 8

[50] Dawson, *Christianity and Sex*, 7

[51] Dawson, 'World Crisis',223

[52] Christopher Dawson, *The Modern Dilemma* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), 57-58 See also Dawson, *Dynamics*, 196-99

conditioned collective consciousness as the sole driving force of the social organism'[53] bred "a new principle of political authority.…It demands complete obedience and unlimited devotion from its members'.[54] He feared that this unmatched pursuit of undivided dominance over their citizens would prompt totalitarians to not merely persecute Christianity, for which there was ample precedent, but, uniquely, to attempt to extirpate it and the Western culture he thought it had built. To Dawson, then, traditional absolutism and modern totalitarianism were as dissimilar as gunpowder and the atomic bomb.[55]

Dawson felt that industrialism had fuelled totalitarianism's rise. For him, 'perhaps the most important factor' in facilitating the state's increased control over individuals was its enlarged economic remit, which he ascribed in part to the requirements of a 'highly organized industrial society'.[56] He therefore dreaded that this new despotism would exacerbate its precursor's cardinal sin, as allying industrialism's socio-economic peril to the family with growing state power would create 'one vast unit which controls the whole life of the individual citizen from the cradle to the grave'[57]; his age's 'chief problem' was thus the preservation of the 'minimum of social autonomy' needed for the family's survival in a collectivist culture.[58] Dawson apprehended that the family's possible fate was only the gravest index of totalitarianism's threat to all such intermediate institutions, and hence to the subsidiarist veneration of the private sphere. Dawson saw that zone of personal liberty where citizens could exercise their religious and cultural rights shrinking steadily in modern polities to the point where, ubiquitously, 'social control extends to the whole of life and consciousness'.[59]

As Chesterton did, then, Dawson regarded totalitarianism as not just a phenomenon to be noted in the Soviet Union, Nazi Germany, and Fascist Italy; it was also a vital danger in Britain and the West. He asseverated that

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[53] Christopher Dawson, 'Religious Liberty and the New Political Forces', *The Month* 183 (January 1947): 42
[54] Christopher Dawson, 'Religion and the Totalitarian State', *The Criterion* 14 (October 1934): 4
[55] Dawson, 'Religious Liberty and the New Political Forces', 42. See also Dawson, *The Judgment of the Nations* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1942), 10-11; 'Civilization in Crisis', *The Catholic World* 182 (January 1956): 248-49
[56] Dawson, 'Religion and the Totalitarian State', 2
[57] Dawson, *Christianity and Sex*, 8-9
[58] Christopher Dawson, *Medieval Essays* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1953), 75
[59] Christopher Dawson, 'Christianity and Culture', *The Dublin Review* 208 (April 1941): 147

> all modern states are totalitarian in so far as they seek to embrace the spheres of economics and culture, as well as politics in the strict sense of the word.…They have taken on responsibility for all the different forms of communal activity which were formerly left to the individual or to independent social organizations such as the churches, and they watch over the welfare of their citizens from the cradle to the grave.[60]

Like Manning and the distributists, Dawson perceived that one such duty those states usurped was education. In fact, he judged the introduction of universal compulsory education the 'most important step' in fostering totalitarianism, for it enabled secular ideologues to consolidate their expropriation of the family's and the churches' customary role:[61] with univocal state control of schooling, 'the power which the State has thus obtained over the mind of the community must inevitably bring about the triumph of a totalitarian order'.[62] Dawson's warnings about education reflected his broader disquiet with the modern state's assumption of responsibility for its citizens' well-being, one that spurred him to intensify Belloc's and Chesterton's alarm about the welfare state and thereby made him a forceful dissenter from the postwar British 'consensus' in favour of it.[63] In contrast, he asserted in 1947, only a regime rooted in Catholic social teaching could avoid the extremes of liberalism and totalitarianism. Unlike laissez-faire capitalists, he enounced, Catholics permit state intervention to protect workers' rights and to secure a well-balanced order of trade and industry; but unlike statists, they consider the rights of the government limited by countervailing individual, family, civic, and religious rights.[64]

Dawson voiced a practical vision of these Catholic convictions in his advocacy of Christian corporatism. He referred to the 'all-pervading pressure of a collectivist civilization' in his epoch that had arisen from the

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[60] Christopher Dawson, *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 40

[61] Dawson, 'Religion and the Totalitarian State', 2

[62] Christopher Dawson, *Beyond Politics* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1939), 28

[63] See, e.g., Dawson, 'Religious Liberty and the New Political Forces', 44; 'The Outlook for Christian Culture Today', *Cross-Currents* 5 (Spring 1955): 132; 'Education and Christian Culture', *The Commonweal* 59 (4 December 1953): 220; *America and the Secularization of Modern Culture* (Houston: U of St. Thomas, 1960), 12-13; Dawson to John J. Mulloy, 30-31 December 1956; reprinted in *The Dawson Newsletter* 11 (Spring 1993): 15. Peter Coman's research suggests that such Catholics were a minority even among their co-religionists, as a majority of British Catholics seems to have given the welfare state qualified approval (*Catholics and the Welfare State* [London: Longman, 1977], 62-69).

[64] Dawson to the *Glasgow Observer*, 8 August 1947, Dawson Correspondence, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN.

effects of the industrial and totalitarian revolutions. The choice in such an age, he felt, is not between individualistic humanism and some kind of collectivism, but between 'a collectivism which is purely mechanistic and one which is spiritual'. Flowing from a core belief that religion is the basis of culture, and hence recalling his forebears' insistence that sustained social change depends on spiritual transformation, Dawson thus urged 'a return to spiritual solidarity…[and] to an organic spiritual order.'[65] To him, this 'restoration of a corporative social order' would yield 'a civilization and an economic system that shall be really Christian.'[66]

More specifically, he posited that this new society would subordinate politics and economics to a 'principle of spiritual order which is the source alike of political authority and social function'. With orthodox Roman Catholicism as its nuclear principle, Dawson contended, this polity would embody the subsidiarist stress on decentralization and the consequent protection of the private sphere.[67] Furthermore, he resembled Manning in making functionalism one of this ideal's central elements. For Dawson, 'the Catholic conception of society is not that of a machine for the production of wealth, but of a spiritual organism in which every class and every individual has its own function to fulfill and its own rights and duties in relation to the whole'.[68] In a Catholic corporatist community, then, 'a man's position will be determined by his function rather than by his possessions, and wealth will be subordinate and instrumental to work.'[69] In Dawson's mind, this emphasis on the primacy of service rendered to society in a discrete role was a particular application of Catholic social teaching: 'Catholic social philosophy maintains that a man's rights depend not on his wealth but on his social function.'[70] Indeed, he saw a corporatist civilization as the pragmatic avatar of his church's social doctrines. Dawson argued in 1942 that the corporative state owed much to Catholic social teaching; and he upheld this view even when he

[65] Christopher Dawson, 'The End of an Age', *The Criterion* 9 (April 1930): 399-400
[66] Christopher Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1935), 135, 102
[67] Christopher Dawson, *Enquiries: into Religion and Culture* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1934), 18, 56-57; and 'Civilization in Crisis', 252
[68] Dawson to the *Cambridge Review*, 17 February 1933; reprinted in *The Chesterton Review* 23 (November 1997): 530-31
[69] Dawson, *Enquiries*, 54
[70] Dawson, *Religion and the Modern State*, 135