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## Where to Begin: Thoughts on a Publication Going Forward

CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

My goals as Editor-in-Chief of the Alexander Hamilton Institute's student-run publication *Enquiry* are to nurture student authors and to publish exceptional writing on political, economic, and cultural issues from differing voices. I want staff writers and guest writers from "paleo to progressive" to describe the world from a perspective that is uncommon, significant, well reasoned, and profound. Their power will come from their ability

to look at important issues cogently and dispassionately, relying not only on current modes of thinking, but also on their unique views. At *Enquiry*, as our mission statement attests, "you will find no shouting matches, no sloganeering. The goal is to elevate the discussion, not to end it. Here, no debates are over and settled, and no ideas are safe from criticism." We take all who want to enter the realm of ideas and conversation as welcome guests.

I have been a staff writer and Associate Editor with *Enquiry* since I was a sophomore. In that time I have not written on politics or economics; that was left to other, more able and knowledgeable writers. Politics and economics have a significant place and space in our pages. But so do articles on culture.

Over the last two years, I have written extensively on culture, and people have asked me why. Politics and economics are, of course, always

compelling topics. Human excellence, artistry, conduct, and even a society's survival depend on a relatively well-functioning political and economic order. But culture is not so dependent on that order as to readily conform to its demands. Culture can speak louder than the contradictions, conflicts, corrosive elements, and the many irreconcilable differences which occur in politics and economics. That is precisely why I wrote and will continue to write often on culture.

In writing on Thomas Merton, Michel de Montaigne, Flannery O'Connor, Giuseppe Verdi, Clara Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Sophocles, Walt Whitman, Marcus Aurelius, Alexander Hamilton, and Simone Weil these last two years, I humbly attempted to glean fundamental truths from their lives and works which speak to the human condition regardless of the political or economic climate.

Of course, there is much to bemoan in modern culture: aggressive materialism, massive digital intrusion, inauthentic action, and a frantic pace of life. But culture, then and now, is also a channel that can convey joy, spiritual renewal, and individual freedom. Artist and writers have a different way of telling the truth and asking the most fundamental questions. Through them, culture can serve an invaluable purpose. It can be a bulwark, or a salvage operation, against political coercion, groupthink, technology's

## Historic Preservation in Cuba

ANDREW JUCHNO  
MANAGING EDITOR

When Americans think of Cuba, they often think of a land frozen in time. Indeed, a quick Google search for "Cuba" brings forward images of vintage cars parked in front of historic, if run-down, looking buildings. Palm trees and statues stand side-by-side in what is undoubtedly a historic island. Given such a reputation, one might assume that Cuba has a robust national agenda for historic preservation. But this is not the case. Due to the lessening of tensions between Cuba and the United States that began under the Obama administration, tourism in the country has continued to increase. Tourism and preservation efforts are not usually forces that work in tandem. Accordingly, those of us who are history-minded should pay close attention to the ongoing state of preservation practice in Cuba.

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Unlike the United States, Cuba lacks national policies that encourage historic preservation. Perhaps most indicative of this is the absence of articles on governmental policies promoting preservation. Most of the few available accounts of the topic in Cuba link the country's seeming timelessness to sociopolitical factors. Journalists reporting on preservation in Cuba often attribute the country's visually static city landscapes to the Cuban Revolution, which halted building and development projects across the country. But contrary

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outsized influence, spiritual malaise, economic fracture, and the existential abyss. Culture can function as memory, in an age of forgetfulness. Art, artists, composers, writers, poets, art historians, and cultural critics have a special autonomous place, apart from politics and economics. Their power comes from their ability to see

through the prejudices and passions of the age and not be bound by them. Culture, through artists and writers, is a divining rod – ready to explore the depths of the human mind and heart.

So whether you prefer to write about politics or economics, or follow me in writing about culture, please consider joining the *Enquiry* staff on

a permanent basis or as an occasional guest writer. Our weekly meetings are lively and fun. We publish three articles every Wednesday in the week's edition, which is both online and printed for distribution at Hamilton. There are only two requirements to join: a willingness to grow as a writer and a desire for good-natured discourse.

If you are interested in writing for *Enquiry* as a staff writer or as a contributor, please come to our meeting on **Monday, September 10th at 8:30 pm in CJ 222**. Any questions or comments? Please contact Editor-in-Chief Claire Anastasia Kitz at [ckitz@hamilton.edu](mailto:ckitz@hamilton.edu) or Managing Editor Andrew Juchno at [ajuchno@hamilton.edu](mailto:ajuchno@hamilton.edu)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION cont.

to this typical narrative of passive, even unintentional preservation stands Havana, Cuba's capital.

As it is with historic conservation efforts in the United States, funding is a substantial concern. Lacking a strong national preservation initiative, Cubans have found two reliable sources for such funds: international support and a self-sustaining model of taxation. As described by journalist Antonio Pacheco, the former preservation funding in Havana has come most recently from Italy. Although the United States does not rely on international funding for preservation, it does provide funds for preservation in other countries through the U.S. Ambassadors

Fund for Cultural Preservation, under the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The taxation for historic buildings is a distinctly Havana contribution. The innovative strategy was introduced by Dr. Eusebio Leal Spengler in the 1990s. As the official historian for the city, and lacking funds from Fidel Castro, Leal created a system of taxation whereby the hotels, museums, stores, and restaurants in Old Havana (the most historic part) paid a 1 percent tax, 60 percent of which goes to preservation efforts. As he put it in an interview in the *International Journal of Cuban Studies*, "the creation of the Old Havana preservation project ought to be achieved through

the creation of an autonomous and sustainable management model." The ability of a local government to do this speaks to the essentially local nature of Cuban preservation; most of the power to preserve exists at the city level of government. In contrast, the United States favors tax breaks for preservation, mainly through the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program.

Because businesses frequented by tourists provide preservation funds in Havana, there might be some hope that the continued influx of tourists to the city (and to Cuba as a whole) will not threaten the landscape treasured by preservationists. If the spirit of preservation remains alive and well, and landmarks are not sacrificed in the name of development, Havana might be able to maintain its picturesque image while promoting local business.

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## CONTINUE CONVERSATION™

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