

Athenaeum Review

Issue 2 • Spring/Summer 2019

\$10.95

Journal of the SCHOOL OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES
and the EDITH O'DONNELL INSTITUTE OF ART HISTORY
at the UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS





Athenaeum Review
Issue 2
Spring/Summer 2019

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Athenaeum Review publishes essays, reviews, and interviews by leading scholars in the arts and humanities. Devoting serious critical attention to the arts in Dallas and Fort Worth, we also consider books and ideas of national and international significance.

Athenaeum Review is a publication of the School of Arts and Humanities and the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas.

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ISSN: 2578-5168 (Print)

E-ISSN: 2578-5176 (Online)

Front Cover: Carolyn Brown, *Vegetable Market at Chichicastenango, Guatemala*, 1995. Copyright © Carolyn Brown. Read our interview with Carolyn Brown online at athenaeumreview.org.

"To the Moon," "The Fisherman," "Blessed Yearning," and "In a Thousand Forms" appear in *The Golden Goblet: Selected Poems of Goethe*, translated by Zsuzsanna Ozsváth and Frederick Turner (Deep Vellum Publishing, 2019).

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Contributors

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Born on windswept grasslands of Colorado, **Carolyn Brown's** work is a document to some of the world's most beautiful scenery and sacred architecture. Her work has taken her throughout Central America, Mexico and the Southwestern United States as well as throughout the Middle East in search of the ancient. She has also documented great sites in Texas such as her beloved Fair Park, Caddo Lake and the Fort Worth Stockyards. "The experience of photography has transformed my life," said Brown. "These ancient sites are especially fascinating, because they are steeped in rich history and often reflect the patina of unbroken use through the centuries. The photographs of sweeping landscapes and small places of devotion—all portraying God's handiwork—are my attempt to depict, in the most beautiful way I know, those places belonging to historic lands."

Guy Chet was raised in Ness Ziona, Israel. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Haifa, and his MA and PhD at Yale University. He lives in Plano, Texas, and serves as Professor of History at the University of North Texas, teaching classes on early American and military history. His first book (*Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast*) is a study of English and American military culture. Addressing narratives of Americanization and Anglicization, it points to trends of cultural continuity between the Old World and the New. This theme of transatlantic cultural cohesion also informs his second book, on Atlantic piracy and illegal trade (*The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856*), and his latest book on the American Revolution (*The Colonists' American Revolution: Preserving English Liberty, 1607-1783*). Although a specialist in early-modern history, Chet's first love was and still is Roman history.

James Elkins teaches at the School of the Art Institute in Chicago. His writing focuses on the history and theory of images in art, science, and nature. Some of his books are exclusively on fine art (*What Painting Is, Why Are Our Pictures Puzzles?*). Others include scientific and non-art images, writing systems, and archaeology (*The Domain of Images, On Pictures and the Words That Fail Them*), and some are about natural history (*How to Use Your Eyes*). Recent books include *What Photography Is*, written against Roland Barthes's *Camera Lucida*; *Artists with PhDs*, second edition; and *Art Critiques: A Guide*, third edition. Beginning in 2015, impelled by the general lack of experimental writing in art history, he has been working on an experimental novel with images.

Brian Fagan is Distinguished Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He received his degrees at Cambridge University, then worked in Central and East Africa on early farming villages and became one of the pioneers of multidisciplinary African history. Since arriving in California in 1967, he has focused on communicating archaeology to general audiences. He is regarded as one of the world's leading archaeological writers and lectures about the past, especially ancient climate change, all over the world. Fagan's many books include seven university texts, also general books on the history of archaeology, ancient climate change, and, most recently, histories of water, ancient seafaring, rising sea levels, and the changing relationships between humans and animals. His latest book is *Fishing: How the Sea Fed Civilization* (Yale University Press, 2018). Brian is an enthusiastic bicyclist and cruising sailor, who has sailed thousands of miles in different parts of the world. He lives in Santa Barbara, California, with his wife Lesley, 6 to 24 rabbits, three cats, 7 turtles, and some goldfish.

David A. Gerber is a social historian with a longtime interest in American immigration law and policy and the experience of European immigration and resettlement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His recent works include *Authors of Their Lives: The Personal Correspondence of British Immigrants to North America in the Nineteenth Century* (2006) and *American Immigration: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), a CNN “Book of the Week” in June, 2018. With Alan M. Kraut, he is coeditor of *American Immigration and Ethnicity: A Reader* (2005) and *Ethnic Historians and the Mainstream: Shaping America’s Immigration Story* (2013). With Suzanne M. Sinke and Bruce S. Elliott, he coedited *Letters across Borders: The Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* (2006). He is Distinguished Professor of History Emeritus and Senior Fellow in History at the University of Buffalo (SUNY), where he continues to teach a seminar on the First Amendment. Active in a number of public history endeavors, he has served on the History Advisory Committee for the new Statute of Liberty Museum, which is scheduled to open in 2019.

Steven Grosby is Professor of Religion at Clemson University. His areas of scholarship are the Hebrew Bible, ancient Israel and the ancient Near East, nationality and religion, and social philosophy. He received his PhD from the Committee on Social Thought of The University of Chicago under the supervision of Edward Shils. He is the author, editor, or translator of eight books, including *Nationalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford) which has been translated into six different languages; and has published more than one hundred articles, book chapters, and review essays. He is currently finishing the manuscript *Hebraism in Religion, History, and Politics: The Third Culture*, under contract with Oxford University Press.

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Jesse Kauffman holds a BA in history from UCLA, and an MA and PhD from Stanford, and is currently associate professor of history at Eastern Michigan University. His area of research and teaching is modern European political, military, and cultural history. He is the author of a book on the German occupation of Poland in World War I, *Elusive Alliance*, published by Harvard in 2015, and is currently writing a broader survey history of the Eastern Front in World War I, which is under contract with Harvard and will be published in 2022.

Katy Kelleher is a writer, editor, and teacher who lives in the woods of Maine. For the past three years, she has been researching and writing about highly specific colors. She’s tracked the cultural history of various hues, from jonquil to Prussian blue, for *The Awl* (a now defunct website) and the *Paris Review* (online). She’s also written about color trends for the *New York Times* magazine. She currently writes a column for *Longreads* about the ugly history of beautiful things. So far, this series has focused on pearls, perfume, angora wool, and mirrors. She’s also currently working on a book about aesthetics and why we’re drawn to “unappealing” experiences, including horror movies and ugly design. When she’s not writing or reading, she can be found hiking in the mountains of New England, camping in Canada, or paddleboarding off the Atlantic coast.

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Zsuzsanna Oszváth is Professor of the Holocaust Studies Program as well as of the Literary Studies and History of Ideas Programs at The University of Texas at Dallas. She has published a number of books in addition to many articles, dealing with the aesthetic and ethical aspects of Holocaust Literature. Her new book, *My Journey Home*, will be published in 2019 by Academic Studies Press, and she has translated and published (with Fred Turner) the poetry of such Hungarian authors as Miklós Radnóti, Attila József, and many others. A volume of their new translations of 100 poems by J. W. von Goethe will be published this year.

John Pomara (b. 1952, Dallas, TX) lives and works in Dallas, TX. He received a MFA and a BFA from East Texas State University, Commerce, TX; he also attended the Empire State Studio Arts Program, New York, NY. The artist is represented by Horton Gallery and off_Key 1 is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery. His works are in the collections of American Airlines, Dallas, TX; The Barrett Collection, Dallas, TX; Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; Neiman Marcus, Dallas, TX; and Tyler Museum of Art, Tyler, TX. He has been featured in exhibitions at the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Meadows Museum, Dallas, TX; The Dallas Center for Contemporary Art, Dallas, TX; Tucson Museum of Art, Tucson, AZ; Youngeun Museum, Kyunggi-do, KR; Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX; The Smart Museum of Art, Chicago, IL; ArtPace, San Antonio, TX; McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas, TX; Blaffer Gallery, University of Houston, Houston, TX; and Nelson-Adkins Museum, Kansas City, MO.

Sarah Ruffing Robbins is the Lorraine Sherley Professor in TCU's English Department, where she teaches courses in American studies, gender studies, global American literature, popular culture, writing and authorship. A faculty affiliate in both Women and Gender Studies and Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies, she has published nine academic books. The most recent of these is *Learning Legacies: Archive to Action through Women's Cross-cultural Teaching*. She is also author of *The Cambridge Introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe* and of *Managing Literacy, Mothering America*, winner of a Choice Book Award from the American Library Association. With historian Ann Pullen, she co-edited the award-winning critical edition of *Nellie Arnott's Writings on Angola, 1905-1913: Missionary Narratives Linking Africa and America*. Other books are connected to her leadership of NEH-funded public humanities initiatives, such as the Making American Literatures and the Keeping and Creating American Communities programs, both of which involved

sustained collaboration with K-12 educators. Sarah's professional website (<https://sarahruffingrobbins.com>) includes blog postings where she links her academic study of American culture with questions about current events and social justice issues.

Andrew Robinson is the author of more than twenty-five books, including two books on Albert Einstein. *Einstein: A Hundred Years of Relativity*, was published in 2015 by Princeton University Press; the second book, *Einstein on the Run*, concerning Einstein's half-century relationship with Britain, will be published by Yale University Press in the fall of 2019. His other books range over science and the history of science; archaeology and scripts; and Indian history and culture. They include biographies of the polymath Thomas Young (*The Last Man Who Knew Everything*), the linguist and archaeologist Jean-François Champollion (*Cracking the Egyptian Code*), and the film director Satyajit Ray (*The Inner Eye*). He is also a regular contributor to newspapers and magazines, including *The Lancet*, *Nature and Science*, and was literary editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* in London from 1994-2006. He holds degrees from the University of Oxford (in chemistry) and the School of Oriental Studies in London (in area studies, South Asia), and has been a visiting fellow of Wolfson College at the University of Cambridge. <http://www.andrew-robinson.org>

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Mark Slobin is the Winslow-Kaplan Professor of Music Emeritus at Wesleyan University and the author or editor of books on Afghanistan and Central Asia, eastern European Jewish music, film music, and ethnomusicology theory, two of which have received the ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award: *Fiddler on the Move: Exploring the Klezmer World* and *Tenement Songs:*

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Allison V. Smith worked as a photojournalist for 7 newspapers over 15 years after graduating from SMU with a degree in journalism. In 2004, Allison left the *Dallas Morning News* to pursue freelance photography for editorial clients and fine art photography. Some of Allison's regular clients include the *New York Times*, Nasher Sculpture Center and *Texas Monthly*. Her fine art projects include exploring the landscape and personality of Marfa, Texas and Rockport, Maine using a medium format camera and Kodak color film to document it all with a journalistic style. Allison is in the permanent collection at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Dallas Museum of Art and Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. She is represented by the Barry Whistler Gallery in Dallas and Hiram Butler Gallery in Houston. In addition to photography, Allison and her mother published a book of Stanley Marcus's photography in 2008 called *Reflection of a Man*. www.allisonvsmith.com

Robert J. Stern is Professor of Geosciences and has been a UT Dallas faculty member since 1982. Most of his scientific career was spent studying modern and ancient plate tectonic processes and products, especially the active Mariana arc system in the Western Pacific and ancient (800-550 million-year-old) crust exposed in the Arabian-Nubian Shield of Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel. He has made important contributions to the geology of Iran, the Caribbean, and the Gulf of Mexico. Geodynamic contributions include ideas about how new subduction zones form and the evolution of Plate Tectonics. He and his co-authors have published more than 250 peer-reviewed scientific papers; more information can be found on his Google Scholar profile. He is director of the Global Magmatic and Tectonic Laboratory <https://www.utdallas.edu/gmtl> and Geoscience Studios <https://utdgs2016.wixsite.com/utdgs> and is co-director of the Micro-imaging Laboratory and of the Permian Basin Research Lab. He is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America and the American Geophysical Union and has been Editor-in-Chief of *International Geology Review* since 2013.

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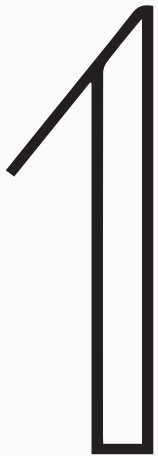
Warren Treadgold (AB Harvard 1970, PhD Harvard 1977) is National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Byzantine Studies and Professor of History at Saint Louis University. He has also taught at UCLA, Stanford University, UC Berkeley, Hillsdale College, and Florida International University. He has held fellowships from the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the National Endowment for the Humanities (twice), the Mellon Foundation, the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, and All Souls College, Oxford. He has written various books and articles on Byzantine history and literature and on American universities, including *The University We Need: Reforming American Higher Education* (Encounter Books, 2018), *The Middle Byzantine Historians* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), *A Concise History of Byzantium* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), *A History of the Byzantine State and Society* (Stanford, 1997), *Byzantium and Its Army, 284-1081* (Stanford, 1995), *The Byzantine Revival, 780-842* (Stanford, 1988), *The Byzantine State Finances in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries* (East European Monographs, 1982), and *The Nature of the Bibliotheca of Photius* (Dumbarton Oaks, 1980).

Liz Trospen is an artist, educator and curator living and working in Dallas. She has an MFA from UT Dallas and was a graduate resident at CentralTrak: The UT Dallas Artists' Residency from 2013 to 2015. Trospen's artwork is represented by Barry Whistler Gallery in Dallas, and her work has been shown in art spaces such as The Wilcox Space, Bernice Coulter Templeton Gallery at Texas Wesleyan University, CentralTrak, The Dallas Contemporary, Lawndale Art Center, Richland College, UT Dallas, Academic Gallery in New York and many other galleries and exhibition spaces. Trospen is fine art faculty at The Hockaday School focused on painting, digital imaging and video instruction.

Frederick Turner's science fiction epic poems led to his being a consultant for NASA's long-range futures group, through which he met Carl Sagan and other space scientists. He received Hungary's highest literary honor for his translations of Hungarian poetry with the distinguished scholar and Holocaust survivor Zsuzsanna Ozsváth, won *Poetry's* Levinson Prize, and has often been nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature. Born in England, raised in Africa by his anthropologist parents Victor and Edie Turner, and educated at Oxford University, he is also known as a Shakespearean scholar, a leading theorist of environmentalism, an authority on the philosophy of Time, and the poet laureate of traditional Karate. He is the author of about 40 books, ranging from literary monographs through cultural criticism and science commentary to poetry and translations. He has taught at UC Santa Barbara and Kenyon College, edited the *Kenyon Review*, and is presently Founders Professor of Arts and Humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas. Recent publications include *Light Within the Shade: 800 Years of Hungarian Poetry*, translated and edited by Frederick Turner and Zsuzsanna Ozsvath, Syracuse University Press, 2014; *Apocalypse: An Epic Poem*, Baen Books (ebook) and Ilium Press (hardback and paperback), 2016; and *More Light: Selected Poems, 2004-2016*, Mundus Artium Press, 2017.

David Weir is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the Cooper Union in New York City, where he taught literature, linguistics, and cinema. He has published books on Jean Vigo, James Joyce, William Blake, orientalism, and anarchism, as well as three books on decadence. Those books have had a major role in the development of decadence as an academic field of study, beginning with *Decadence and the Making of Modernism* (1995), *Decadent Culture in the United States* (2009), and, most recently, *Decadence: A Very Short Introduction* (2018). Together with his transatlantic colleague Jane Desmarais of Goldsmiths, University of London, he has edited the Cambridge Critical Concepts volume *Decadence and*

Literature (forthcoming, 2019). His current project, also with Desmarais, is another edited collection, *The Oxford Handbook of Decadence*. His own contributions to both the Cambridge and Oxford collections concern the relationship of cinema to the culture of decadence. He now lives in a Hudson Valley village in upstate New York, where he spends his time writing, fly fishing, and drinking wine.



CURRENT AFFAIRS

#MeToo Books

Entry Points for Men's Understanding a Women's Movement

Sarah Ruffing Robbins

Lorraine Sherley Professor of English
Texas Christian University

IN A FALL 2018 ESSAY ON THE *LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS* WEBSITE, Libby Lenkinski addressed a conundrum. She asked: “How can it be that prominent men have serially sexually harassed and assaulted women for years—and men are only ‘finding out’ when the story breaks in the press, while women all nod knowingly and explain that we’ve known forever?”

Lenkinski answered her own query by arguing that such women’s knowledge comes from gendered experiences and an associated tendency for women to accept stories based in other women’s trauma as reliable—even when those accounts don’t fit all the rules of traditional, formal judicial evidence-giving. Women can accept the truth drawn from victims’ and survivors’ personal tellings in part because they’ve likely had similar experiences themselves. Their own need for hyper-vigilance to protect themselves, Lenkinski posited, has honed their skill for noticing signs that they may be endangered—for “reading people” and “reading a room.”

As a literature teacher, I can attest that this “reading” ability carries over into many women’s sensitive and thoughtful responses to gendered codes in other women’s writings about sexual harassment, assault, and rape culture. Women in my classes will almost inevitably

catch veiled references to a character's having been victimized. Many men will often respond, when such an interpretation is offered by a female colleague in class, that she is "reading too much into" the text, imposing something that isn't really there. This gender gap in the ways women and men students analyze narratives portraying what we now call #MeToo experiences—this gap is what I hope the books described below, read through a lens of empathy, can address.

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Connecting to Others' Experiences

How you approach #MeToo narratives is crucial; your goal should involve more than just processing the words on the page (or screen). Enter these texts with a goal of building empathy. Follow the stories' plots and the characters' interactions from a standpoint accepting that many longstanding norms of storytelling—guidelines shaping what's acceptable to say or not say directly—can lead women writers to hold back the worst details and, sometimes, to suppress the most direct evidence. If you've ever studied Susan Glaspell's 1916 one-act play "Trifles" (or the 1917 story version, "A Jury of Her Peers"), you should try to do the "reading" of indirect signs of gendered violence that the women in that narrative achieve: while the official male investigators fail to see how the husband in the story abused his wife to the point where she felt her only recourse was to kill him, the women on the scene notice all the tell-tale markers of womanly suffering.¹

I'm asking you to learn to read these narratives, as a set, with an eye to discursive traits that scholar Lauren Berlant, in a 1988 essay for *Social Text*, dubbed "the female complaint." That is, doing your #MeToo textual analysis would mean stitching these narratives together to see how, as a group, they illustrate what Berlant said many women were looking for: a "space in which women might see, experience, live, and rebel against their oppression *en masse*, freed from the oppressors' forbidding or disapproving gaze."² (Berlant was writing long before Twitter and other current platforms were available, of course.

1 See my discussion of Glaspell's story in "Archiving Abuse Stories," Nov. 17, 2017, online at <https://sarahruffingrobbins.com/2017/11/17/archiving-abuse-stories>

2 Lauren Berlant, "The Female Complaint," *Social Text* 19/20 (Autumn 1988), 238.

But if social media have opened up a “space” where women have easy access to story-sharing, it’s hardly one “freed from the oppressors’ forbidding or disapproving gaze.”)

At the same time, I urge you to read these books as offering distinctly individual accounts of #MeToo experiences. When you give close attention to each book, on its own terms, you can recognize how Kimberlé Crenshaw’s concept of intersectionality should always be part of our reading picture. We should take into account how a particular identity involves more than just gender, so one girl’s or woman’s encounter(s) with sexual harassment and assault might well be exacerbated by aspects of her social class identity that put her at greater risk, as when a waitress has to think hard about whether she should call out a customer’s bad behavior.³ Similarly, reading through an intersectional lens helps alert us to the race-related constraints involved in an historical case like Rosa Parks’s 1944 NAACP-supported investigation of Recy Taylor’s rape.⁴

These, then, are #MeToo books I’d like men to read today, using literature to tap into a history of sexual oppression and to identify, potentially, with its victims while recognizing the social norms for American masculinity enabling its perpetrators.

Historicizing Rape in American Culture

For a sense of the long-standing history of young women’s sexual victimage in American culture, read Susanna Rowson’s slim 1791 novel, *Charlotte Temple: A Tale of Truth*. Isn’t it significant that one of the first American bestsellers depicts the seduction of a naïve young girl by a dashing British soldier, followed by her being duped into a journey across the Atlantic, her seemingly inevitable pregnancy, abandonment, and death? Students today, when reminded of didactic expectations for early novels, see why Rowson, writing near the dawn of the nineteenth century, had to pitch her book more as a warning blaming Charlotte for her downfall than as a precursor of Berlant’s “female complaint” or today’s righteous #MeToo indictments against seducers. But thousands of Rowson’s original readers—and most of my women students today—have identified with Charlotte, viewing the novel’s “truth” as a painful reminder of how easy it was, and is, for the kind of “cruel spoiler” referenced in Rowson’s headnote, to assault youthful “virtue.”

And who, in American history, has been less able to resist sexual assault than enslaved women? Newly organized Monticello historical displays and associated web-based re-visitations of the bond

3 Jillian Berman, “80 Percent of Female Restaurant Workers Say They’ve Been Harassed By Customers,” *Huffington Post*, Oct. 8, 2014. Web.

4 Ryan Mattimore, “Before the Bus, Rosa Parks Was a Sexual Assault Investigator,” *History.com*, Dec. 8, 2017. Web.

between Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings have shifted away from former visions of her as a “concubine” to forceful reminders of her position as an enslaved woman without choice in the matter of their relationship. And, fortunately, we also have powerful written narratives critiquing the recurring pattern of masters’ repeated assaults on female slaves. From the nineteenth century, we can study Harriet Jacobs’s 1861 memoir, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Jacobs understood that a too-direct portrayal of her master’s attempts to claim her youthful body, and of the agony behind her decision to hide away in a tiny attic space to escape him, would alienate many of the white middle-class readers she sought to bring to an anti-slavery stance. So she painted restrained verbal pictures. But women readers in her day could read her coded language. And we, too, should learn to unpack the reticence behind Jacobs’s veiled explanations; doing so helps us develop an attentive radar for picking up on silences and indirect communications from victims in our own time.

Twentieth-century narratives addressing sexual assault may have been more likely to name the act itself more explicitly than Jacobs could. Still, even when resisting lingering expectations for women’s writing to avoid violent language at all costs, full-throated treatment of the aftermath to trauma has sometimes been difficult for women writers to convey. (Perhaps that’s true, in part, because female victims of rape are so often re-victimized when their stories become known.) Joyce Carol Oates’s searing 1996 *We Were the Mulvaney*s, set in the 1970s, is a worthy exception to this taboo, since one of its core themes is post-rape trauma.

The *Mulvaney*s’ narrative is especially valuable for male readers (brothers, fathers, friends) to take up, since a key theme Oates explores is the idea that rape of a young girl can victimize her whole family. As the past-tense “were” of her title suggests, the entire *Mulvaney* clan loses its sense of itself, of its privileged place in society, when Marianne (the only daughter) is raped by a local boy whom the family would have previously identified as a friend. Using brother Judd as the primary viewpoint, Oates wrote a book that aches with pain stretching across multiple souls. And, coming to this vivid novel with knowledge of Marianne’s suffering from the beginning (a plot point I’d argue should not be withheld), I’ve found that male readers can build empathy more easily through recognizing that the idyllic aspects of family life as seen in the early chapters are fragile indeed. We are all potential victims of rape culture. And moving from victim to survivor cannot be achieved alone.

For a comparative study that could highlight elements of the feminist intersectionality concept without having to engage in the sometimes-dense formal scholarship on that theme, I hope male readers will take on Louise Erdrich’s 2012 *The Round House* as a follow-up to *We Were the Mulvaney*s. Like Oates’s novel, Erdrich’s

narrative explores how rape affects an entire family. Both books share a teenage male protagonist who deeply loves and suffers with the rape victim. In Erdrich's text, a National Book Award winner, the narrator is Joe, whose mother's brutal rape is complicated by having occurred in a specific space where legal jurisdiction is unclear. Symbolic of Native people's inability to seek their own path to justice through the American legal system, the convoluted jurisdictional map at issue also highlights how coming from a marginalized group can push the horrific experience of being raped into further suffering by entire communities.

Erdrich addressed this crucial theme herself in a *New York Times* interview about the book, noting that Joe's desire to seek revenge for his mother reflected the author's aim of addressing "jurisdictional issues on American Indian reservations." Erdrich explained: "Wrong or right, for many families this is the only option when justice is unobtainable. I wanted the reader to understand what taking on that burden is like.... Native people are ... by no means gun-toting vigilantes. Being forced into this corner is obviously an agonizing decision." By choosing Joe as the reader's viewpoint, Erdrich's novel offers an especially vital one for men seeking to understand the complexities of #MeToo, including factors that heighten its impact on marginalized communities.

From Bestselling Novel to Memoir

An author-focused study can provide another worthwhile pathway for studying #MeToo through literature. And, in our own time, no author has staked a stronger claim as a literary voice resisting rape culture than Laurie Halse Anderson. With millions of copies sold, the broad appeal of Anderson's 1999 Young Adult novel *Speak* has become a story in its own right. Like Oates's book, Anderson's emphasizes post-rape trauma more than the act itself, as protagonist Melinda is ostracized into silence from which she only gradually emerges as the narrative works its way across four marking periods in the high school year. A male reader coming to this text, so beloved by girl and women readers, should cultivate an appreciation of its first-person narrator's irony and social critique, like that female readers are regularly urged to marshal when encountering Mark Twain's Huck Finn and his witty diagnoses of society's failings. But the real energy of this novel comes from being let into Melinda's head—her feelings about herself and her damaged place in the world—far more deeply than we ever are allowed to go with Huck. More than any of the other books above, *Speak* enables a reader (female or male) to immerse in the experience of having been assaulted—and the traumatic aftermath. If such a reading could ever be termed an "opportunity," *Speak* presents its case by calling out to young readers in their own familiar language and through the daily adolescent challenges they can all recognize.

I've been both encouraged and discouraged by the continued high readership for *Speak*. Encouraged to track how many victims have followed Melinda's story toward becoming survivors themselves. Discouraged to think of how the book's still drawing so many new readers means that rape culture isn't going away. Yet, Anderson's 2019 memoir, *Shout*, has given me new hope. And I suspect that, even more than *Speak*, it has the potential to resonate with young male readers, given its affirmation of agency. *Shout* certainly trumpets a #MeToo affiliation. But that affiliation comes into the memoir in nuanced, if determined, ways.

Anderson weaves multiple narrative threads together. One revisits her own personal history of growing up in a family on the edge of poverty, with parents who loved her but struggled through their own challenges so much that they couldn't recognize her symptoms of post-rape trauma. Another strand opens up about her own rape and its aftermath, so that, reading this account in dialogue with *Speak*, we re-appreciate the artistry of that prior narrative's creating a storyline both similar to and different from her own case. *Shout's* recounting of multiple stages of grief, anger, disillusionment, fear, and self-questioning is riveting—and ultimately encouraging, as Anderson eventually works her way from community college to scholarship-supported study at Georgetown University, to tenuous but determined professional roles, to authorship. Tapping into the familiar genre of rags-to-riches individual growth, Anderson takes readers along through her “bootstraps” trajectory to where she is today, a remarkably successful author with virtually countless fans. But, in this case, that “American dream” trajectory includes navigating a nightmare: an honest and thought-provoking portrayal of herself as a rape victim who becomes a self-empowered survivor and advocate for others. Indeed, I suspect that, for many readers, the most compelling thread of *Shout* will be its examination of Anderson's post-*Speak* work to push audiences toward activism opposing rape culture. Her portrayals of herself engaging large audiences of school kids, for instance, movingly convey her increasing awareness of boy victims' suffering as well as her frustrated efforts to convince reluctant adult administrators to allow for open dialogue. She shows herself growing in knowledge and agency in ways I'd urge both male and female readers to draw upon as a model.

Looking Ahead

Taken all together, ranging from Rowson's novel from the early U.S. Republic to Erdrich's twenty-first-century text, these books demonstrate how sexual assault has always been a painful part of our national landscape. Nonetheless, through the power of their storytelling, they ask that we confront the challenge of rape culture,

that we each find some entry point for allying ourselves with #MeToo's most ambitious goals. In that vein, there's a letter at the front of Laurie Halse Anderson's new verse memoir, from Kendra Levin, associate editorial director for the book's publisher. "The moment to speak has passed," she declares. "Now it's time to SHOUT—and your voice matters." What better way to find that voice than through reading books like these revisited here? **A**

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The Conscience of an Immigrant American Conservative

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Reihan Salam, *Melting Pot or Civil War? A Son of Immigrants Makes the Case against Open Borders*. Sentinel, 224pp., \$27 cloth

The poor and politically oppressed peoples of the global South are on the move, largely unwanted by the developed societies of the global North that are their destination.

They are refugees from war and from ethnic and religious persecution, and they are voluntary economic migrants in search of the opportunity to live the kind of lives that Western Europeans and Americans, even Americans who struggle to make a living, have long taken for granted. The material situation of many is desperate enough to sharply qualify the term “voluntary.” While the numbers involved may not be unprecedented in the history of international mass migration (think of the great waves, which totaled 55 million people, who went from Europe to the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), the broad front of population

movements—simultaneously from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and the Hispanic Americas—certainly conjures up unprecedented visions of a massive, global tide of people. They challenge the integrity of national borders, impose cultural and racial heterogeneity on societies in which large numbers of citizens resist it, and strain social services where they come to reside. The issues they bring with them contribute significantly to the polarization of politics. Those issues are tearing apart the European Union and imperiling the survival of elected, moderate governments in Europe. Immigration helped greatly to put in office Donald Trump, whose successful campaign and much of his presidency only make sense in the context of the bitter divisions and nagging anxieties prompted by contemporary international migrations and the complex cultural diversities they create. Trump’s candidacy attained its remarkable, frightening traction running against immigrants, especially unauthorized ones, whom he managed, contrary to evidence, to tag as criminals.

Reihan Salam, the executive editor of *National Review*, a longtime bastion of American conservative opinion, has written a book that has enjoyed brisk sales, and is worthy of the attention of everyone, right, left, and center, who is concerned about immigration, whether legal or unauthorized. He doesn't succeed in making the case for the stark choice his eye-catching title lays before us: if we face the prospect of a civil war prompted by immigration, you don't finish this book imagining its imminence. There is ample reason, however, to create a new national approach to international migration to the United States. Immigration reform has been evaded for decades by one shamefully irresponsible Congress and Chief Executive after another, with both branches of the federal government ultimately content to let American business profit off authorized and unauthorized streams of low-wage immigrant labor, which has been mowing our lawns, caring for our aging parents and our babies, sowing our garments, cleaning our office buildings, packing our meat products, picking our fruit, and doing just about every sort of low-wage service or industrial job that makes our lives comfortable and many of our products and services cheap. The same folk pay state and local sales taxes that help support the social services that unauthorized immigrants themselves cannot access.

At election time, liberals and the left have been trading on sympathy for intimate narratives of desperate individuals seeking relief from persecution and poverty, and of worthy young people like the "Dreamers." Those toward the left of the political spectrum have evoked hopeful appeals to the "real America," which supposedly is tolerant, courts multicultural diversity, and is guided by the ideal of *E pluribus unum*. That appeal takes a great deal of American history for granted, as Trump's political

career has reminded us. The "real America" has hardly ever achieved a consensus on the benefits of immigration. From the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, through the Know Nothing movement of the 1850s, the Chinese (and subsequently other Asian peoples') exclusion movements, and the movement for the imposition of quotas on eastern, central, and southern European peoples to Donald Trump himself and wide sectors of the contemporary Republican party, there has been a substantial hostility to and fear of immigration, however much it has been allowed to continue to take place in the quest for cheap labor.

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To be sure, over time what came to exist as a result of economic calculation also came to be thought of as an object of pride. Those who have stood against the continuance of large-scale immigration might argue that, even if it no longer is beneficial, nevertheless it had once been, and still represents a proud history, worthy of respect if no longer of emulation. The ranks of critics, of course, have included large numbers of the children and grandchildren of immigrants who see their own ancestors as worthy, but current immigrants as poor neighbors and poor material for American citizenship. During the 1920s in Northern cities, the Ku Klux Klan had ample numbers of northern and western European Protestant ethnic members, who also conceived of themselves as the "real Americans," unlike Catholic,

Orthodox, and Jewish newcomers from eastern and southern Europe. In contrast to the eclectic, cosmopolitan civic nationalism advanced by those such as Barack Obama and Joe Biden, there remains a racial nationalism of the contemporary right, exclusivist and distrustful of difference, that ties blood and the deepest recesses of culture to being American. Both nationalisms have a long history in the United States.¹

avored the non-European world proved the most influential, and indeed has worked to produce the massive waves of legal entry, especially from but hardly limited to Asia, that we have been experiencing since the 1970s. The reform act did for the first time set maxima for immigration from the Western Hemisphere, and in doing so probably created one basis for the development of contemporary unauthorized immigration. Those now

Salam is most at home with the pro-opportunity conservatism of the late Jack Kemp.

The outstanding exception in our history to this profound ambivalence was the 1965 Immigration Reform Act, which ended the quotas on European peoples and relaxed some of the strictures on the entrance of non-Europeans. Guided by the peculiar combination of postwar optimism and prosperity and Cold War-inspired anxieties about America's international image in Europe and Asia especially, the 1965 act was mostly conceived to be reopening the gates to those Europeans—racialized peoples of that time such as southern Italians, Poles and Jews—who the quota system of the 1920s had largely shut out. By the mid-1960s, however, Europe was in recovery from the destruction caused by the World War, or its peoples were locked behind borders frozen by the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies. Europe—let alone prosperous, tolerant and social democratic Norway!—has needed no North American safety valve for its peoples in the last half-century, Trump's recent longing for Norwegian immigrants to the contrary. Instead, the balance of the reform act that

legal waves and the entry of unauthorized migrants across the southern border in response to the economic crisis of rural and small-town Mexico have been playthings in the hands of the emerging and aggressive political nationalist right, which has conjured up images hostile to the state of mind liberals and the left continue to claim is the “real America.”

Salam's book should be welcomed. Agree or disagree, it is a basis for disciplined discussion. It is a thoughtful effort to approach immigration reform through integrated and multilevel policies that are concerned simultaneously with the welfare not only of Americans, but also the countries of the world that are hemorrhaging their people, and hence the possibilities for their national futures. It is doubtful that the political will now exists in the United States, not to mention internationally, to address the myriad problems international migrations are presenting, but it will never exist without a foundation in serious discussion, pushed by serious people.

Salam proposes a three-part framework for immigration reform: an amnesty for unauthorized immigrants combined with the creation of a strong enforcement regime against border jumping in the future;

¹ See Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, second edition (Princeton University Press, 2017).

a largely but not exclusively skills-based entrance standard for immigration; and efforts to combat passing on poverty to the next generation, especially among international migrants and their children and grandchildren. Toward these ends, he also favors abolishing birthright citizenship, which is deeply embedded in the Constitution through the Fourteenth Amendment, in the name of discouraging unauthorized immigrants from planting their American-born children in a position to share in American social benefits, and sharing in their parents' poverty. He would also revive the type of guest worker program that constituted the Bracero Program of the mid-twentieth century to provide access to those, especially lower skill workers, who wish to work in the United States, but who would not be eligible for social benefits.

It is noteworthy to remark that although he edits *National Review*, Salam is no traditional American conservative of the type that William F. Buckley had in mind when he began that magazine in 1955 to encourage the nascent postwar conservative movement to peel back the expanding New Deal-Fair Deal welfare state, to defend white Western Christianity, and to arm ourselves to the teeth to fight Communism across the globe, while exercising vigilance over its small number of domestic sympathizers. Indeed I would go out on a limb to predict that if Buckley were aware of the expanded, proactive social role for the state, and the social engineering, that Salam proposes in order to break our impasse on immigration and to combat childhood poverty, he would turn over in his grave.

Salam's vision of the state seems more reminiscent of the American Progressives of the turn of the last century and the social theorists who inspired some of Franklin Roosevelt's most innovative programs, such as the Works Progress Administration, for combating the effects of the Great

Depression. Nor is Salam a Trumpian nationalist of the type who is alternately fearful of, or condescending toward, or aggressively hostile to the world. The son of Muslim immigrant professionals from Bangladesh, Salam was born in Brooklyn, and grew up in New York City's multicultural neighborhoods in the 1980s and 1990s. He attended New York's accelerated academic program at Stuyvesant High school, before attending Cornell and Harvard. He seems completely at home with American diversity, and takes no cheap shots at the poor or at immigrants, with whom his book reveals great sympathy, if not necessarily great familiarity.

Salam is most at home with the pro-opportunity conservatism of the late Jack Kemp, who shared with postwar Republicans such as Nelson Rockefeller and Jacob Javits of the now defunct, liberal eastern wing of their party a vision of innovative government programs to encourage entrepreneurship and social mobility among the inner city poor and working classes. Kemp was a nine-term congressman, and then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development under President George H.W. Bush, before running for Vice President in 1996. He was a strong advocate of immigration, and while self-described as a "conservative," supported affirmative action, sought ways to encourage home ownership among public housing residents, and plausibly argued for generous, incentive-based social programs rather than traditional handouts. In this Kempian vein, with Ross Douthat, a *New York Times* columnist, Salam coauthored *Grand New Party: How Republicans Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream* (2008), which advanced the vision of a reinvigorated Republican Party, deeply rooted in the ethnically and racially diverse working classes, possessed of social vision, and espousing of all things a big, active, and

innovative state geared to meeting the needs of the traditional two-parent family, the traditional conservative's bedrock of social order. His new book is based on similar principles.

Salam did not invent either the logic or substance of the proposals he now advances, though he has fitted them to an American context. There are precedents all over the immigrant-receiving world for such measures. Canada and Australia have immigration systems partly but significantly based on skills. Australia, the United Kingdom, France, New Zealand, and tentatively Ireland have ended birthright citizenship to protect social welfare systems. The United States has a guest worker program of limited work visas, but tends to lose track of people who outstay their visas, and thus come to have illegal status, and who subsequently may also embed their own nuclear families in the United States. He spells out policy priorities in accessible, plainspoken detail with a vision that is at once American and global in its moral, as well as political and economic concerns. His is no fortress-America nationalist conception of the American future, longing for the world of the twentieth century in which the United States was secure within its ocean borders and dictated the terms of its global engagement from a position of unchallenged economic and eventually military might. He accepts the inevitability of globalization, and understands that retreating from engagement with the world may offer a temporary sense of security and various emotional satisfactions, but that humanity is destined increasingly for global interdependence and interaction. Mass misery in one corner of the world, say Syria or Libya or Central America, finds ways to quickly spread to the beaches and national frontiers of the Balkans and southern Italy or the border towns of the American Southwest.

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While the shift in immigration policy he advances—toward more high-skilled technical workers and professionals—is hardly without precedent in the developed world, in contrast American immigration policy has been framed historically by prioritizing low-skill, low-wage labor. The classic American immigration narrative is that of the European peasant, whose rapid transition from the plow in some backward part of the Old World to the assembly line at the Carnegie Steel Works in Pittsburgh, or the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn, made possible the American mass production industrial revolution of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There simply were not sufficient numbers of native stock Anglo-Americans to create the population of workers that produced the mighty engine of production that the American economy became in the twentieth century, and which was as responsible as the American military for the country prevailing in World War II, in which its survival was at stake. That immigration policy was itself always linked, in the case of European immigrants, to family and community reunification—in other words, to the chain migration which has been lately vilified by the Trump administration. One of the only questions these peasants were asked at Ellis Island was, “Where are you going?” The right answer was “To my sister and her family,” or to some other familiar connection, where the immigrant

was likely to be taken in, temporarily provided for, and soon shown the way to the hiring office of the factory or the mine or the construction site where his relatives and former Old World neighbors worked. Then (in this narrative), he would send for his wife and children in Europe, and the children eventually would embark on the same employment path as their immigrant father. Family reunification, the creation of chains linking points of embarkation of points of destination, has been governed by a bottom-line logic. It has been the moral equivalent of social work: while we make use of their hard-work, we let the newcomers take care of each other, and not be a burden on the rest of us. Both before the construction of the American welfare state and afterward, too, that logic has largely prevailed throughout our history. Now and in the past, immigrants have largely taken care of themselves and one another, and they have built ethnic communities that have offered them emotional and material support.

The year 1965, when our immigration laws were last broadly revised, was probably the last moment in our history when it was still possible to believe in the relevance of this classic narrative. The last half-century has seen another, high-tech industrial revolution in the developed world, as well as the globalization and automation of industrial production and an unprecedented integration of world markets. The way of life characterized by high-paying, union-protected assembly-line work is largely dead, as are the prosperous, supportive ethnic communities for the workers doing it—both victims of assimilation and suburbanization, as well as of the material decimation of the class of people who once did that work.

We all know this, but our immigration policy doesn't reflect it. We do have the H-1B visa program, which favors migrants with skills and knowledge that fit them for employment in Silicon Valley and other

high-tech corridors, but for decades, we have remained willing to appease employers' desire for low-wage and low-skill service workers, and for the factory labor that remains in settings such as meat-packing plants, carpet factories, and clothing industry sweatshops. Like the immigrants of an earlier era, international migrants continue to come in search of what is often badly degraded employment, because opportunities here are better than what they can expect for themselves and their children in contemporary Honduras and Guatemala, where life is not only threadbare for the majority, but dangerous because of the criminal gangs that have their own visions (e.g. drug trafficking and protection rackets) of how to create opportunity where it is otherwise largely absent for ordinary people.

It is not contemporary immigrants themselves, for whom Salam manifests sympathy, that cause his resistance to current immigration policy. It is, rather, what he fears is likely to become of their children that animates his proposals for immigration reform. Picking up an argument that some sociologists have been making for several decades now, he describes the social problems faced by the second and third generations of immigrant families. By the nature of the lives they embark upon, immigrants expect difficulties, possess a strong work ethic, and are conscious of the improvement that even a marginal life in America constitutes over what their possibilities were where they came from. Their children, by contrast, become American in their expectations. Salam expects a large proportion of them to experience what sociologists have called *segmented assimilation*. The victims of poverty, crime ridden neighborhoods, and inferior schools, they are inevitably unprepared for twenty-first century job markets. They are not white, in what

remains a race-conscious society. They will assimilate, not into the middle-class mainstream that Salam and Douthat want to strengthen, but into the inner-city minority poor. This condition is exacerbated by the parents' unauthorized status, which makes it that much more difficult for the children to access social services and opportunities that might ameliorate the social pathologies associated with inner-city poverty. These second and third generations, including the American-born children of unauthorized immigrants, are American citizens. Like the Dreamers (also brought here by unauthorized parents as young children), they are American in what they wish to become. The wealth of the country, the endless blandishments of the consumer economy, and the ideals of the "real America" routinely expressed by its political leaders alternately inspire and frustrate them in this rendering of the immigrant story.

This is a good part of the recipe for the civil war that Salam fears, but that apocalypse also depends on the pushback from the nativist political right, which seeks to mobilize the struggling white working class behind its visions of racial, ethnic, and religious homogeneity and to stick immigrants with the blame for the death of the old industrial working class, all evidence to the contrary. Automation and offshore investments have had much more to do with the loss of opportunities, depression of wages, and the disappearance of job benefits than has immigrant competition, which has had minor effects on the wages and opportunities of native-born Americans. Offshore production and automation, however, have laid waste to towns and neighborhoods, intimate communities and ways of life across the country, and hence have helped breed their own social pathologies, such as massive drug problems. The only growth industry in the old mill towns of central Pennsylvania, a former

student of mine who is a union organizer told me, is assisted living for the now-old people who never had the chance to leave. Then there is the underground economy in drugs that have helped to cause the psychological unraveling of individuals and their families. This crisis has largely gone unaddressed for decades, not the least by Hillary Clinton in 2016 when she neglected campaigning on the old industrial heartland.

There is indeed a lot of bitterness out there, not the least of it among those who feel that there is more sympathy shown by opinion leaders and liberal politicians for immigrants who got here illegally, while the rest of us are asked to obey the law, than for American workers who are without work or suffer badly degraded employment. The need for large-scale job retraining programs and massive public investment in distressed localities has been evident since the enormous layoffs that accompanied plant closings in the 1970s and 1980s. Instead, under the ideological promises of neoliberalism, under Reagan, Clinton, and both Bushes, our politics shifted toward believing that the "magic of the market" would resolve the problems that accompanied the death of American mass production industry. It didn't. Before voting for Trump, a number of those distressed communities showed healthy tallies for Bernie Sanders in primary elections. Both Sanders and Trump spoke to the split personality of much of the working class electorate: a social democratic heritage and a lot of present-day resentments. Will the vacuum be filled by neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan, committing vile acts of terrorism like the October 2018 assault on worshippers at a Pittsburgh synagogue in the name of the survival of the white race? Or are such people, as it now seems, mostly a law enforcement problem, destined to vex us and occasionally spill innocent blood without coming close to winning the future?

A peculiar aspect of *Melting Pot or Civil War* is how seldom real people, daily making both pragmatic or momentous choices over how they will live, such as whether to enroll in community college or join a drug gang, come to life.

On paper, we have a recipe for social conflict, well beyond the moral equivalent of communal violence we see in our highly polarized political opinion, our increasingly ideological and less pragmatic politics, and our hard-fought, narrowly won and contested elections. But the case is not made by Salam, neither from the American right nor from the alienated children and grandchildren of immigrants. We may want to change the nature of our priorities away from low-skilled international migrants toward those with advanced educations and skills in new technologies, because it is beneficial to the American economy in global competition and in building a strong and stable middle class, Salam's larger policy interest. But the scare-subtitle of this book doesn't gain credibility in his analysis.

A peculiar aspect of *Melting Pot or Civil War* is how seldom real people, daily making both pragmatic or momentous choices over how they will live, such as whether to enroll in community college or join a drug gang, come to life. In a book rhetorically sympathetic to contemporary immigrants, there are almost no immigrant lives present in the analysis. Nor do the ethnic groups to which they belong come alive or are the vast differences among them sufficiently analyzed.

The immigrants are almost always refracted through the lens of the analytical work of academic economists and sociologists using mass data. In fact, the only real immigrant or second-generation lives to which Salam pays attention are, on the one hand, he himself and his parents,

who represent the experience of intelligent adaptation to America by people with skills and education, and, on the other hand, Akayed Ullah, an immigrant electrician from Bangladesh sympathetic to the Islamic State who, proclaiming hatred for the United States and the Trump presidency, tried to set off a bomb in New York's crowded Port Authority Bus Terminal in December 2017. Ullah sustained serious burns from the poorly constructed bomb he strapped to his body, and a few bystanders walked away with minor injuries. He was convicted within months on five counts of terrorist activity. He does not seem to be in line to win our future either, and he, too, represents a law enforcement problem, not a threat to American democracy.

Thoughtful readers observing the immigrant and refugee world around them at present know from practical experience that these are hardly the only immigrant lives around us. There are also, for example, the small family enterprises—storefront businesses, corner stores, gas stations, office cleaning services, and home repair contractors—begun by immigrants, with the help of local banks, private social service agencies, and informal communal and family credit arrangements, and which utilize the labor of their children and grandchildren. There are, too, the children of immigrants getting low-tuition community college educations geared to workforce participation at costs that don't impose a lifetime of debt. Nor does race necessarily continue to create bright-line divisions in America, as if this were the

world of six decades ago. American apartheid has been unwinding, on the communal level as well as the legal, for generations.

The dubious case in this analysis for a polarized view of the future is further deepened by some conceptual confusion. The physical social separation in poorer neighborhoods, caused by low incomes and the desirable residential proximity of intimate communal networks, is conflated with forced segregation and loss of opportunity. The place of contemporary immigrants and refugees in redeeming distressed neighborhoods as well as urban central business districts, which has been recorded in rustbelt cities, is not noted. Nor is the sustaining role of ethnic identity and community, which Salam sees instead as provoking suspicion and apprehension by the majority population. There is also evidence among Americans of an appreciation of the role of the new ethnicities in adding to the quality of urban life and redeeming urban space. Multicultural diversity really is not a problem for many Americans, and for significant numbers of others, it is something they grudgingly get used to.

It is difficult in the United States today to take on the role of one who says, "Hey! Things aren't really that bad." There is little room in critical social analysis for the role of Pollyanna, and indeed, the United States has many serious problems. But the case for the imminence of civil war is not made here, and is rhetorically overdetermined, perhaps to scare the hell out of the reading public.

In contrast, the international social engineering proposed is visionary, though the prospect of realizing it in an age of growing nationalism and reactionary populism presents myriad political complications. Salam presents a sort of global Marshall Plan that is a gesture in the direction of caring about the fate not simply of contemporary migrants, but of the

long-term fate of the nations, threatened with depopulation and hence with the loss of development potential, from which they embark. It is right for developed nations to bear a moral responsibility for poorer nations, not simply a practical one dictated by the inconveniences mass migrations may be causing them. The five million Syrians in exile are victims of a civil war and the brutal Assad regime, but would that civil war have lasted as long as it has, with such lethal levels of violence, without foreign (and especially Russian) intervention? Would conditions in Central America that contributed to the rising of the caravan that walked through Mexico to the border of the United States have reached the calamitous situation of the present without large-scale American interference in the region in the name of anti-Communism during the 1980s? Are problems of nation-building in north and in sub-Saharan Africa not a consequence in the final analysis of legacies of European colonialism?

It is certainly not merely wishful thinking to believe that, faced with the choice between staying in your home or at least near it, or leaving to traverse great distance at significant danger for a future at best unpredictable and at worst a disaster, many contemporary refugees and voluntary migrants would elect the former. How then to offer potential migrants the opportunity to stay put, without such doubtful exercises of state power as the militarization of borders or political interference in the internal affairs of weaker, distressed, or in some cases failing states? One proposal, which the German foreign minister Günter Nooke recently suggested for Africa, is to create demonstration cities in sending societies that serve as alternative magnets to attract people whose lives cannot be sustained in the places in which they live. Such schemes, as distinct from creating refugee or detention camps that are

supposed to go away (but hardly ever do), would seek to bring together the United Nations, the World Bank, wealthy developed societies, and the states of the global South in a partnership to guarantee both opportunity and security, with the developed world paying the bills.

Salam doesn't use the term "voluntary colonialism" that the BBC employs, preferring instead the Chinese usage "special economic zone (SEZ)," but the former term suggests only one of the many political and economic difficulties present in such proposals, however much good will crafts the idea. Confidence in investment in creating such places could only be possible if they were not run by the states in which they resided. People in places like Honduras might well logically conclude that either foreign rich people or domestic ones will prosper off their labor in such places. As a model, Salam himself uses the Chinese city of Shenzhen, a former fishing port in south China that developed within the span of 40 years from 30,000 to ten million people, mostly employed in low-skilled assembly line work. Knowing what the world knows about the conditions of life and work in the SEZs, not to mention the reeducation and retraining centers for almost a million Uighur Muslims, in the People's Republic, which has perfected the arts of manipulative social engineering, it is difficult to have confidence in that model.

Perhaps even less confidence can exist, because of the possibilities of coercion on both ends of the exchange, in Salam's proposal to export America's service work to the global South. Migrants, the large

majority of whom are women, from throughout the Western Hemisphere, the argument runs, are currently taking care of elderly Americans in their homes and in nursing, rehabilitation, and assisted living facilities all over the United States, just as in Western Europe the elderly are cared for by the women from Africa, the Middle East, and the poorer post-Soviet, post-Warsaw Pact states of Eastern Europe, such as Moldova. Salam proposes that we save the caregivers the travail of migration by facilitating through tax and portable health insurance policies the voluntary removal of the American elderly to the warm climes of tropical South. Having joined the septuagenarian posse in recent years and possessing some sensitivity to the vulnerability of the aging, the author of this essay wonders exactly how this might work, and sees a lot of potential for coercion and abuse on the horizon. There are numerous American retirees residing by choice in Mexico and the famously benign environs of Costa Rica; they are people with the means and desire to do so. Without the means and desire, however, who might these resettled folk end up being?

Maybe such proposals do not inspire confidence, but we need people like Salam to quicken our thinking about alternatives to the endless playing out of the tragedies that all too frequently accompany contemporary refugee and voluntary immigration. Argue or agree with him as you may be directed to do, this articulate book is a useful contribution to finding answers to the most vexing human dilemma of the twenty-first century. **A**

Will Civilizations Clash?

Ross Terrill

IN HIS INFLUENTIAL 1996 BOOK *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel Huntington said that wars of the future will not be fought by nation against nation, but by cultures and religions from different civilizations, one against the other. Although Huntington was a terrific scholar, 23 years after his book, no Clash of Civilizations has appeared.

Isn't the West in a civilization clash with jihadism? No. The jihadists have only bombs. They rule no countries, large or small. They lack unified leadership. Their philosophy is a religious atavism, only alive, ironically, because of up-to-date weapons. Moreover, their victims are scattered across half a dozen civilizations, burdening them with endless targets, and giving Europe, Africa, America and others a shared, pathetic foe.

Like many large-scale theories, *The Clash of Civilizations*, when read today, overstates the coherence of its analytical units. Chinese civilization mixes Western free markets with its own top-down political traditions. Huntington wrote that East Asian culture produced the economic success of China and others, but a US-led security order helped. Muslim civilization

shows fractures not foreseen by Huntington: Two major Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia and Iran, oppose each other. Pakistan, Egypt and other Muslim governments battle jihadist protestors. Tens of millions of Muslim believers live in Europe and raise teenagers who seldom visit a mosque. Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, bears little resemblance to the Middle East.

Within the West, the E.U. and Trump's U.S. differ on tax policy, the death penalty, abortion, and other social issues. East European states, all once Communist and now EU members, have moved sharply to the right. Poland and Hungary are closer in philosophy, now, to Trump's U.S. than to France and Germany, and more democratic than Brussels permits some E.U. members to be. No wonder Huntington had trouble fitting Japan and Australia into his civilizational boxes.

Technology's leaps enable individuation, reducing the cohesion of civilizations. Niall Ferguson's new book *The Square and the Tower* attacks scattershot networking as a rising "disruption." The historian laments, "Hierarchy is at a discount, if not despised." He even offers the U.K.'s House of Lords as

an example of a lost but superior hierarchical order. But I think it's thrilling for individuals to "converse" on Facebook or WeChat (its Chinese counterpart) across racial and national borders, with equal partners never met in the flesh. It makes for a scrambling of civilizations, by linking different ways of life.

Parallel to technology's liberation, galloping international investment and military capability knit together regions once distant. China's checkbook diplomacy in the South Pacific and in Africa, the U.S.'s multiple thrusts into Latin America, France's role in West Africa, Russia's push to Europe's eastern edge—all of these cross civilizational divides. Even China's "Belt and Road Initiative," if successful, may further globalization.

The erosion of national sovereignty pleases some and scares others. But it softens the sharp corners of all civilizations. Internet gurus laugh at nations' borders and, step by step, chip away at monolithic cultures. National "boxes," in which civilizations have typically been contained, are breaking at the sides. China, especially, battles against the Internet's reach onto its home turf, but it cannot succeed for long.

Of course, clashes of ideology and territory can be damaging. But they are quicker to arise and more protean than clashes of civilizations. The U.S.S.R.-U.S. tension over four decades was about ideology and power. In fact, the U.S. has never experienced a civilizational face-off. China has endured multiple face-offs with non-Han peoples, including the Mongols, the Manchus, the British and others. From each of these, China learned intermingling, sharing, multiculturalism (without that label), and sometimes suffered dilution of its own culture.

Of the two main candidates for a fresh clash of civilizations in our time, China is a veteran while the U.S. is a virgin. This is one more reason that Beijing and Washington

will not clash civilizationally, as distinct from fighting over Taiwan or maritime transgressions.

Huntington wrote soon after the fall of the Soviet Union. Stable Moscow-Washington love-hate had bound the world together for decades since 1945. In 1991, without global Communism, and without the West's hostility to a Soviet bloc, cultures and religions stood naked around the globe, some of them newly activated by opportunity. Huntington's 20th century was violent, and perhaps "clash" was his natural expectation for the proud civilizations (Chinese, Islamic, West) that stood as Moscow fell. "We know who we are," the professor wrote, "only when we know who we are not and often only when we know who we are against."

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I find today's students more skeptical of Huntington's ideas than were their predecessors in the 1990s. Perhaps Harvard students learning Chinese and Japanese, and Shanghai youth seeking an MBA in Los Angeles or London are "crumblers" of civilizations, not standard-bearers for one civilization? "No paradigm is eternally valid," Huntington said of his own thesis.

Western ideas are so common within China's southern and eastern neighbors that Asians hardly recall they came from Europe and the U.S. This is true of Western law in Hong Kong, Spanish Catholicism in the Philippines, the U.K. parliamentary system in Australia, the Japanese love for

Shakespeare, and so on. Even within China itself, urban youth seek McDonald's, Michael Jordan, foreign games, and admission to Harvard or Stanford.

Today, it seems that a clash of civilizations is canceled by countervailing forces. Civilizational encounters during the first half of the 21st century are unlikely to be clear-cut. Fragmentation is persistent (for example, the breakup of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia; the issues of Catalonia in Spain and Scotland in the U.K.; the E.U.'s shaky unity; China's nervous grip on its vast Xinjiang province), and fragmentation induces sub-civilizational tension.

The balance of power, too, will be more influential than ideas in international tensions, just as it once adjudicated between China and the U.S., the Soviet Union and the U.S., and the U.K. and Germany.

Some expect a clash between China's Confucian authoritarianism and Western democratic individualism. It is possible. Yet over time, economic globalization and

technological universalism are freeing Chinese individuals to participate in the global village with increased independence from the state ideology of Beijing. If China falters, the cause will be economic crisis, political division, or territorial challenge. It will not be a clash of civilizations. If America falters, Huntington believed correctly, the reason will be loss of nerve in spearheading Western civilization.

As China and the U.S. engage yet also compete, we will enter an era of qualified globalism. Hundreds of millions of Chinese-Americans and American-Chinese (joined by others from various traditions) armed with ever-new technology, are forming local patterns inside the P.R.C. and U.S.A. Civilizations seem slow to change, but change they do. Taiwan, heavily a product of Chinese ways, seems headed for a nationhood of its own. Australia until 1901 was six entirely British colonies. They federated as Australia, which today is certainly not a British nation—and soon may look more Chinese than British. ♪

An Administrative Life

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Hanna Holborn Gray, *An Academic Life: A Memoir*. Princeton University Press, 352pp., \$30 cloth

Although I found Hanna Holborn Gray's *An Academic Life: A Memoir* frustrating to read, the book is generally well written, and her career is an instructive one. She was born in 1930 to a father who was a professor of German history at Heidelberg and then at Berlin and a mother who held a doctorate in classical philology. In 1933 her father had to leave his chair because it was funded by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, which the Nazis distrusted. Especially because his wife was Jewish by race (though Lutheran by religion), he decided to emigrate to America. With the aid of the Carnegie Endowment, he soon became a professor at Yale, which he chose over Harvard and Princeton. His daughter grew up in New Haven and Washington, where he was on leave during the war as a member of the OSS.

Gray entered Bryn Mawr at sixteen, and after graduating in 1950 went to Oxford as a

Fulbright scholar for a year. She then became a graduate student at Radcliffe, where she received her doctorate in Renaissance history in 1957 after marrying a Harvard graduate student in history, Charles Gray. She held appointments as an instructor and assistant professor at Harvard, then moved with her husband to the University of Chicago in 1961. After declining presidencies of some women's colleges, she became dean of the faculty of arts and sciences at Northwestern, provost and then acting president of Yale, and president of the University of Chicago from 1978 to 1993. Her many honors and board memberships include appointment to the Harvard and Yale corporations, President Reagan's Medal of Liberty, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and more than sixty honorary degrees.

Gray remarks in her preface, "I began my training for the academic profession at a time now wistfully (and somewhat mistakenly) called a golden age, and retired in what may eventually be deemed an age of bronze." Though this sentence suggests that her book will analyze the changes in universities between 1950 and 1993, it never

even explains whether she thinks universities really did decline during this period. The first passage I found disturbing in the book was Gray's quoting her mother, "shortly before her death and failing in memory," expressing disappointment that her daughter was President of the University of Chicago because "I thought you had a talent for Wissenschaft!" Gray seems to take this remark merely as evidence of her mother's dementia. She also seems to patronize her father-in-law, a professor at the University of Illinois, because he "generally took the view—prevalent of course in the academic world...—that administrators were failed academics unable to make it in the world that mattered," that of scholarship.

She observes of the emigrant European scholars among whom she grew up, "[A]s in the case of most scholars, however distinguished their work, their most enduring influence flowed through their role as educators and cultural role models, not only for their students, but also for others with whom they were in contact." Yet I doubt that these emigrants would themselves have been so dismissive of their many books and articles, which influenced a wide readership that never met their authors. In describing her graduate study, Gray says nothing about her dissertation, which is usually an important part of graduate work. Wondering about this, I consulted the reasonably comprehensive WorldCat.org. It shows that her dissertation was on Giovanni Pontano but never records it as published (usually a bad sign) and includes a single scholarly article by Gray before she received tenure at Chicago in 1964 (not having yet held an administrative post). In fact, WorldCat lists only one scholarly book by Gray, *Three Essays*, published in 1978 by the University of Chicago Press, 73 pages long, reprinting her lone article and two later contributions to

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Festschriften. This is quite a meager scholarly record for someone who received the rank of full professor of history at Chicago, Northwestern, and Yale, even during the boom in the academic job market of the sixties.

Gray writes, "It was [at Oxford] (and afterward at Harvard) that I first really experienced what discrimination toward women in academic life could mean." At both places, however, she mentions meeting many celebrated scholars—she is an enthusiastic name-dropper—who apparently treated her well. One reason for this seeming paradox may be that some of these scholars had such low expectations of female students that they were easily impressed when they found one as urbane and articulate as Gray. She seems to have been less impressed by her fellow students, including Henry Kissinger at Harvard, whom she gained "a minor reputation" for mimicking.

As she observes, "Concern over the relatively low count of women faculty" became increasingly common in the sixties. She says she was so surprised and grateful to be offered an assistant professorship along with her husband at Chicago that "I was ready to do anything I was ever asked," like "taking on innumerable committee assignments" and chairing a "College History Group" created for her.

She gained prominence as chair of a committee appointed, in response to student protests, to investigate the failure of a feminist faculty member to be reappointed. The committee's finding that the woman had been fairly treated seems to have been justified, and must have gratified the administration. Gray writes, "I liked chairing meetings" and performing other administrative duties. She became a member of the Yale Corporation in 1970, only a year after Yale began admitting women as undergraduates. Two years later she was dean of Arts and Sciences at Northwestern; two years after that she was provost of Yale; three years after that she was acting president of Yale; and a year later she was president of the University of Chicago. Two or three years are apparently ample time for an administrator to be judged successful.

Gray's chapter on her presidency at Chicago is rather short—about an eighth of the book—and somewhat evasive. One of her first duties was to decide whether to give tenure to Allan Bloom, future author of *The Closing of the American Mind*, after a tied committee vote on promoting him. He received tenure—apparently with her assent—though she depicts him as a crank who ranted about "the collapse of Western civilization." She mentions the problem of whether to admit fewer graduate students "in the face of a collapsing academic [job] market" without saying what her decision was (but see below). She speaks impatiently of a dean whose "view of the dean's role was confined exclusively to his main goal of recruiting the most promising scholars one could find and evaluating candidates for appointment, renewal, and tenure with the utmost rigor. Nothing else mattered; he was simply uninterested in the other aspects of decanal administration." She never identifies these other aspects, except to say that he rejected "subjects that in his opinion failed to meet his requirements of a

scientific grounding and precision of method," which appear to have included the "cultural, multicultural, ethnic, and women's studies" she mentions on the next page. Her summation of her educational philosophy is vapid: "The most important task—and this is surely the central task of all academic leadership—was to identify and to keep reviewing an appropriate balance between the university's traditions and committed values on the one hand, the challenges and opportunities of change on the other."

To determine what Gray actually did as president at Chicago, I turned to the chapter on her in Arthur Padilla's *Portraits in Leadership: Six Extraordinary University Presidents* (Westport, 2005). Padilla's panegyric has much to do with Gray's being a woman, though he mentions that she was in fact not the first but the second female president of a major university (after Lorene Rogers of the University of Texas). He takes for granted that Gray is a highly distinguished scholar. Among her main achievements he lists vigorous fund-raising, increasing Chicago's endowment from \$250 million to \$1.3 billion, erecting many new buildings, and reducing administrative expenses from about 40% to 25% of the budget. This last accomplishment was both laudable and unusual (though such percentages can be misleading). Fundraising, endowments, and building are much more conventional administrative concerns that can easily become counterproductive if pursued as ends in themselves, but can also be useful and even necessary. Among Gray's more dubious achievements were increasing the number of graduate students from about 2000 to over 3100 despite the job crisis, and shortening their course of study despite their desperate need for time to build up their résumés. Gray also admitted more undergraduates, reduced the size of the faculty, and increased the faculty's teaching

load, a combination likely to harm both teaching and research. While Chicago's renowned program of general education survived her presidency, it was seriously diluted just four years afterward.

Although I have never met Gray, or studied or taught at the University of Chicago, I believe she was actually among the best of a very bad lot of university administrators who have allowed and abetted the decline of American universities since the sixties. As for defending academic freedom and academic quality against leftist attacks, Chicago also has one of the very best records, though still an ambivalent one. Gray says many of the right things, especially in her conclusion. She endorses an admirable statement by a Chicago faculty committee in 1967 that a university must "encourage the widest diversity of views" and cannot "insist that all of its members favor a given view of social policy" because this would mean "censuring any minority who do not agree on the view adopted." Yet in the next paragraph she prevaricates about academic freedom just as most contemporary administrators do: "There are and can be no precise rules to invoke; there can only be a set of principles and precedents subject to differences of opinion and judgement to guide their application to individual cases as they arise."

It was Gray's generation of administrators and faculty who allowed an academic golden age to decline into bronze. When the academic job market contracted around 1970, they could have adopted much higher standards for admitting graduate students and hiring professors (as the dean at Chicago who annoyed Gray evidently wanted to do). Instead they admitted far more graduate students than the market could bear, and hired a few minority professors, more women, and even more white males who insisted that high

academic standards and dissenting opinions were an obstacle to social justice and to a postmodern understanding of the oppressiveness of American society. While many of the finest graduate students and recent doctorates were leaving academics in disgust or despair in the seventies and eighties, I never once heard a member of Gray's generation express distress at this loss to the profession; instead they talked about the need to hire more women and minorities and to foster "innovative" work "on the cutting edge" (that is, hackneyed reiterations of postmodernism). Some professors and deans who had reached top positions with unimpressive accomplishments took evident pleasure in rejecting their most accomplished applicants, whom they pronounced "overqualified" or "too traditional."

Having grown up among major scholars, Gray occasionally sees and acknowledges that something has gone terribly wrong. For example, "It seemed as if an entire generation of leadership had gone missing, as if the profession of the humanities had failed to develop scholars who cared for the work of tending to its health and welfare." Also: "It is disturbing to see so much disregard for freedom of expression on campuses (not only in the United States) and dismaying to observe the extent to which its meaning is not only misunderstood but even distorted to justify disruptive behavior or defend rules outlawing speech deemed offensive." Gray seems not quite to understand how all this happened. But if you hire professors and administrators who care only about their ideas of social justice, they will be indifferent to the humanities and hostile to dissent. And if you choose academic administrators who like chairing meetings, raising money, and building buildings more than they like scholarship, you will get the universities we have today. A

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**THE PAST
IS PRESENT**

From the Outside In

A Foreigner's Education in American History

Guy Chet

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WHEN I CAME TO THE UNITED STATES for graduate school, I assumed that my education abroad (in Israel) offered me a unique perspective on American history, compared to classmates and colleagues whose ideas were shaped by their education in American schools and colleges. If asked, I would doubtless have also thought that being a foreigner gave me greater objectivity and emotional detachment from the topic. In hindsight, however, my sense is that instruction on American history is fairly similar in the United States and abroad, since instructors and textbook authors abroad reflect the research of American historians on U.S. history. By the same token, pedagogy on France and Sweden in American schools reflects the research of French and Swedish historians on their national histories.

Virtually everyone who approaches the study of American history—in the United States and abroad—already knows that Americans are different. They have their own sports, a quirky political culture and unique political institutions, a distinctive approach to criminal justice, an attachment to religion that stands out among Western nations, a materialist and consumerist ethos, and a pop culture that is easily identifiable as American (from rock ‘n roll, jazz, soul, hip hop, and country music to Hollywood blockbusters, westerns, comic books, talk radio, and daytime soaps). It is no surprise, therefore, that perhaps the most prominent theme that students all over the world learn in classes on early American history is the formation of American identity—how (and therefore when) did American society become distinctively American, featuring uniquely American manners, philosophical and political sensibilities, religiosity, and sociology.

Most historians hold that life in colonial America gradually reshaped English settlers' habits, mores, values, and beliefs. According to this view, Americans gradually formed their own cultural traits, as the colonies drifted away from English influence. The result of this process of Americanization was an American impulse to secede from the British Empire. Other scholars—mostly specialists on colonial America, myself included—see the settlers as conventional Englishmen. These historians argue that settlers retained their English identity, patriotism, customs, and sensibilities; their rebellion was not the product of gradual Americanization, and their uniquely American identity took form mostly after independence, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, rather than in the colonial era.

The framework of Americanization as the driver of the American Revolution is as prominent abroad as it is in the United States. First, students (both foreign and domestic) are introduced to colonial and Revolutionary America already pre-loaded with the knowledge that the United States is today a distinctive and idiosyncratic country, and one with a unique role in the world—a technological, cultural, economic, and military superpower. They are therefore encouraged to identify colonial antecedents to the distinctive path the United States would take as an independent nation.

Moreover, it makes intuitive anthropological sense that the American environment would reshape the culture of European settlers. After all, we expect peoples living in different environments—hot versus cold, mountainous versus flat, arid versus fertile—to differ from one another culturally. In 1782, a French settler in New York (Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur, naturalized as John Hector St. John) explained to European readers in his *Letters from an American Farmer* that Americans are Europeans who had been transformed by America itself: “Europeans submit insensibly to these great powers [of environment], and become, in the course of a few generations, not only Americans in general, but either Pennsylvanians, Virginians, or provincials under some other name. [...] The inhabitants of Canada, Massachusetts, the middle provinces, [and] the southern ones will be as different as their climates.”¹

Historians and other observers have provided variants of this explanation for the development of American identity ever since, examining not only the influence of America's geography, topography, climate, flora, and fauna, but also the transformative effects of America's social environment (for example, its racial, ethnic, and religious diversity, its cheap land and high wages, slavery, and the

¹ Adolf Hitler famously expressed a similar assessment of the cultural impact of America's physical environment. In explaining why the East is the proper site for German settlement, he stressed that only in Eastern Europe's cold climate can the German character persist unchanged: “Transplant a German to Kiev, and he remains a perfect German. But transplant him to Miami, and you make a degenerate of him—in other words, an American.”

absence of a legal aristocracy). Many scholars thus hold that American racial, religious, ethical, and political sensibilities were molded in America, reflecting the colonies' unique demographics and economics. By the same token, some hold that regional American accents formed in America over time, by the mixing of Anglos with other ethnicities—African, Dutch, German, Scottish, and Scotch-Irish—in different parts of America.²

While there is no denying that environment does shape culture, one should keep in mind also that culture shapes the environment.

I myself was armed with this historical framework of Americanization when I began my doctoral research on the colonies' military history. As I've grown more familiar with the colonists' habits and beliefs, however, I've become increasingly skeptical of the Americanization thesis. While there is no denying that environment does shape culture, one should keep in mind also that culture shapes the environment. The question is which force is more pervasive. In the American case, the evidence indicates that the English Empire facilitated the effective transplantation of English practices, technologies, ideas, culture, and institutions to America, alongside English people, animals, and plants. Colonial America was thus marked more by forces of Anglicization than Americanization. English settlers survived and thrived in America not because they were gradually transformed by America—Americanized—to fit into and to take advantage of their new and foreign environment. Rather, they prospered and multiplied because they gradually Anglicized America to become less foreign; to become a place that would sustain pre-existing English patterns of settlement, agriculture, manufacturing, trade, and social and civic organization.

Settlers transformed America through military conquest, farming, animal husbandry, logging, settlement, and civil engineering. Thus, as frontier demographics and economics gave way to more conventional patterns of English social organization, colonial settlements and culture became more recognizably English. This allowed Anglo-American settlers to retain their English identity, customs, values,

2 The opposing view is that Americans' regional accents came ready-made from Britain. According to this view, Americans' regional accents simply indicate from which parts of the British Isles American settlers had originated. This means that American accents are, in fact, regional British accents that were transported to America. This debate holds for French as well—some argue that American conditions changed the speech patterns of French settlers in America to produce the Quebec accent; others view Quebecois French as a linguistic time capsule that preserved the sound of French as it was spoken in seventeenth-century France.

and beliefs. When one considers family life, home furnishings, fashions, religious practices, civic and political life, agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce, the colonies were not drifting away from Britain's sphere of cultural influence. To the contrary, the Empire encompassed a truly transatlantic civilization. Indeed, the settlers eventually rebelled because they were British, not because they had taken on a new identity or political creed. Their complaints about arbitrary power and self-government reprised those of English rebels during the English Civil War (1642-51) and the Glorious Revolution (1688).

Over the past twenty years, the debate on Americanization has been the running theme in my career, in both my scholarship and my classrooms. I approached my first book—my doctoral dissertation—with the educated assumption that warfare in America forced English settlers to “unlearn” the European way of war and adopt an “American way of war” that was better suited to the uneven wooded environment and to Indians' open-ordered tactics.³ My original intent was to trace the colonists' military Americanization. The evidence, however, led elsewhere. It indicated that American colonists never did renounce the European way of war. Their military manuals, training, and actions in the field indicate that despite serious deficiencies, they remained committed to European military conventions. If Americans developed a uniquely American way of war, it happened in the nineteenth century, after independence, rather than in the colonial era.

Research on my second book also revealed transatlantic cultural cohesion between Britain and British America.⁴ It grew out of the traditional depiction of Atlantic piracy as a flourishing trade that Britain quickly and forcefully suppressed between the late-1690s and 1720s. My study was an attempt to understand how the Royal Navy met the tactical challenge posed by a vast ocean and small, swift pirate ships. I found that British command of American waters has been greatly overstated by piracy specialists, and that piracy continued to flourish in the North Atlantic. It dissipated—peacefully, due to shifts in global trade—only in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, as in the “golden age” of piracy, the greatest obstacle to Britain's piracy-suppression efforts was not the ocean itself, but British subjects. Coastal communities in America and Britain saw the imperial government's attempts to police maritime trade practices as a novel breach of both custom and law. Britons and Anglo-Americans remained wedded to pre-modern beliefs that upheld the legality and propriety of commerce-raiding, and they thwarted imperial efforts to target and stamp out this and other forms of illegal trade.

³ Guy Chet, *Conquering the American Wilderness: The Triumph of European Warfare in the Colonial Northeast* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

⁴ Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014).

Over the past two decades, my graduate and undergraduate classes reflected my growing familiarity with colonial culture and increasing skepticism of the Americanization thesis. My classroom experience led me to my third book project,⁵ a dissenting companion to traditional U.S. History textbooks that I and my colleagues regularly assign in our classes. Because U.S. History classes are designed as national histories, virtually all U.S. History textbooks (both K-12 and college) employ the narrative of Americanization to help students understand how American colonists formed their own ideas, beliefs, and practices, and why they separated themselves from their mother country. This approach makes use of hindsight to explain the country's founding, identifying for students colonial antecedents of the Revolution—Puritan separatism, the Mayflower Compact, the economic and cultural dynamics of the frontier, imperial restrictions on American trade and manufacturing, the rise of colonial assemblies, the development of American racial attitudes and practices, the Great Awakening, Albany Plan, Braddock's defeat, and the like. These textbooks thus tell a story of America's physical and social environment gradually transforming English settlers into Americans. It is this process of Americanization that differentiated and distanced the settlers from their mother country.

What is obscured in this conventional account is the colonists' *own* understanding of the origins, causes, and ends of their Revolution. My contention is that English settlers in America did not display or perceive a growing sense of alienation or distance from England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They referred to themselves as English (or British), they took patriotic pride in Britain's accomplishments on the world stage, and they saw themselves as integral components of British civilization. Moreover, even as they resisted Parliament's imperial policies in the 1760s and 1770s, settlers understood and explained their resistance as conventionally English—they understood themselves not as agents of change, but as upholding traditional English practices and liberties. Their struggle was the same as that of those venerated English leaders who had launched the English Civil War (1642) and Glorious Revolution (1688). Indeed, the settlers' beliefs regarding self-government, arbitrary power, law, law enforcement, and criminal justice were mainstream beliefs not only in the colonies, but also in Britain.

As the settlers understood it, their political resistance and subsequent rebellion were products of their English inheritance, not of uniquely American sensibilities that they had acquired by living in America. They were trying to preserve the old established order, rather

⁵ Guy Chet, *The Colonists' American Revolution: Preserving English Liberty, 1607-1783* (Wiley, forthcoming 2019).

than create a new order or a new system of government. Only during and after the war did Americans develop their own national identity, including a new system of government.

The purpose of my forthcoming book is not merely to introduce students to an idea that challenges the orthodoxy they know. It aims to make history interesting and relevant to them by making the classroom a venue for debate between two competing narratives, rather than for memorizing a single unchallenged narrative. It illustrates to students that the authors of their traditional history textbook are not simply relaying a series of facts about the past; they are advancing a particular interpretation of the past—the Americanization thesis. In presenting a dissenting interpretation of America’s founding, my book invites students to evaluate both narratives on the strength of evidence.

The Americanization debate raises the question of whether people from the past are reliable witnesses to their own motivations and beliefs.

The Americanization debate is significant for anyone interested in American history. It determines whether the ideas we associate with the American Revolution were created in America or transported to America; whether America Americanized English settlers or was Anglicized by them; whether centrifugal forces drew the colonies away from Britain, or were the colonies increasingly integrated into a transatlantic British civilization; whether Revolutionists were trying to create a new political system or preserve an old one; and whether the Revolutionary era is a story about change or a story about resistance to change. More generally, the Americanization debate raises the question of whether people from the past are reliable witnesses to their own motivations and beliefs. If they are, then historians should investigate past societies through the eyes of contemporaries, channeling how they themselves understood their actions. If they are unreliable witnesses, however, then historians must use hindsight, comparative models, and integrated data to identify forces (such as Americanization) that were hidden from contemporaries but nevertheless shaped their ideas and actions. Awareness of what is gained and lost in each historiographical method reveals to students that history is a more contentious and active endeavor than a simple chronicling of historical facts.

Heated public debates on Civil War monuments, guns, healthcare policy, church and state, education, criminal justice, and a Constitution written over 200 years ago point to the role historical interpretation plays in our private and public lives. When I immigrated to the United States, it was these debates that clarified to me that I did not understand American culture, American values, and Americans as well as I had previously believed. Many native-born Americans are in the same boat—they are equally perplexed by their fellow-Americans and by the political culture that surrounds them. There is no doubt that this is partly due to the fact that Americans have insulated themselves from their fellow-citizens by living, working, and socializing only with those who share their sociological profile (educational attainment, family structure, wealth, and political sensibilities). But there is good reason to lay some blame at the feet of those responsible for Americans' understanding of their history. After all, American history is the vehicle through which people absorb their civics lessons about American society, institutions, and political culture.

Foreigners and Americans alike would doubtless understand America better by getting to know more Americans; especially Americans from other parts of the country and other walks of life. But they can also make better sense of American society today by seeking out histories that challenge basic assumptions and beliefs they hold about America's past. At the very least, this can reveal that others understand the present differently not because they are ignorant or deranged, but because they understand the past differently. It could even lead one to consider the possibility that one's own understanding of the past might be incomplete, flawed, or erroneous.

Reading histories habituates the mind to the notion that "the past is a foreign country; they do things differently there."⁶ It helps us recognize that practices and beliefs that we deem funny, bizarre, foolish, or cruel seemed utterly normal and sensible to reasonable, intelligent, and honorable people at the time. Like foreign travel, history can teach us to understand and tolerate—perhaps even respect—other societies' divergent mores, sensibilities, and beliefs. It can even help us extend the same intellectual courtesy to members of our own society—our perplexing acquaintances, co-workers, neighbors, and relatives. **A**

6 Historians like to use this phrase, lifted from L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (1953), to remind audiences to approach past societies as anthropologists—studying them on their own terms, rather than assessing how they fail to conform to the reader's own culture.

Scholarship, Truth, and Islam

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Alexander Bevilacqua, *The Republic of Arabic Letters: Islam and the European Enlightenment*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 360pp., \$35 cloth.

DO WE HAVE REASONS TO AGREE with Alexander Bevilacqua that “a foreign religion [or people or culture] can be studied in rich careful detail, without anger or partiality, and without explicitly rejecting [the] established faiths or institutions [of a scholar]”? Can Christians be committed to their religion, and at the same time pursue a fair-minded, accurate understanding of Islam? At stake in these seemingly straightforward questions is whether objectivity—the establishment of facts in the pursuit of truth—is not only possible but also an ideal to which the conduct of a scholar should conform when undertaking research.

That there are difficulties in achieving an accurate understanding of a foreign religion or culture is acknowledged. After all, new facts emerge, forcing a modification of an investigator’s research so as to account for them. In addition, the circumstances in which the investigator finds himself or herself are always changing, so that new questions or new ways of looking at already established facts arise. Thus, the pursuit of truth never comes to an end; rather, that

pursuit is better understood as being asymptotic. Compounding these difficulties, no investigator of an alien religion or people—past or present—can fully extricate himself or herself from the influences of his or her own culture and time. In order to pursue the goal of an impartial, accurate understanding of that religion or people, one lessens the consequences of the influences of one’s own culture on one’s thought and judgment by feeling one’s way into that alien environment—immersing oneself in its language, history, and artistic achievements. This latter methodological requirement of arduous training and self-discipline so as to understand as impartially as possible the alien culture is known by the German term *Verstehen*.

Difficulties in achieving scholarly objectivity also exist for the native-born when they seek to analyze their own society and culture, as the influences of the latter obviously have a bearing on their judgment. In this case, native-born analysts may view their society in a more impartial manner by knowing the history of other societies, thereby examining their society in reference to others through comparative analyses. In doing so, especially useful for the pursuit of scholarly objectivity is the investigator’s recourse to trans-cultural and even trans-historical analytical categories, for example, “state,” “empire,” or “monotheism.” The use of these and other categories is not to gainsay their abstract character, which must be qualified in light of always numerous, historical details that complicate that use.

While acknowledging these difficulties, they ought never to serve as excuses for dismissing the very idea of scholarly objectivity in the pursuit of truth within the historical or cultural sciences. Too often today, one finds that dismissal as an example of the devolution of intellectual life, where scholarship is wrongly understood to serve, often with varying degrees of thuggery,

political partisanship. It is, thus, intellectually refreshing, even ennobling, that in this fine book on the history of the early European scholarship, from approximately 1650 to 1750, of Islam, Arabic history, and Islamic civilization, Alexander Bevilacqua has answered this question about the possibility of scholarly objectivity with a resounding *yes*: we do have reasons to think it is possible to study a foreign religion and culture without anger or partiality. It was done in the past by those early European, Christian scholars of Islamic religion and culture examined by Bevilacqua, and by implication should continue to be done.

for example, debates over the possibility of different types of revelation (as argued by al-Suyūṭī); arguments for the existence of independent reasoning (*ijtihād*) and differences over what might be meant by it; from al-Qushayrī's *tafsīr*, *Subtle Allusions*, a distinction between the elect and ordinary people, and the bearing of that distinction on esoteric and exoteric interpretations of the Qur'an, as argued by al-Kāshānī's *tafsīr*. Thus, the Qur'an itself was in the early Islamic tradition a text openly explored for numerous possibilities of wide-ranging interpretation. Even recognition of abrogation, that is, the extent to which one,

Through studying those commentaries, the *ḥadīth*, and those treatises, they came to the realization that the Islamic tradition was in no way uniform.

What Bevilacqua describes as “the Republic of Arabic letters” was the emergence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of a number of European scholars who, although Christian, championed Islam as a worthwhile subject of investigation. Characteristic of those scholars was that they learned Arabic so that they could immerse themselves into the Islamic tradition by reading its primary sources. Those sources not surprisingly began with the Qur'an. However, in order to achieve a better understanding of the Qur'an, those scholars not only read it in Arabic but also studied the *tafsīrs*, the commentaries on it, for example those by al-Bayḍāwī and al-Suyūṭī. They also read al-Bukhārī's collection of the *ḥadīth* (reports of the deeds and sayings of Muhammad), and theological and philosophical treatises, for example those by Avicenna and al-Ghazālī.

Through studying those commentaries, the *ḥadīth*, and those treatises, they came to the realization that the Islamic tradition was in no way uniform. They discovered,

later Qur'anic verse may render null and void an earlier verse when those verses appear to be in conflict with one another, was openly entertained. These possibilities were only reinforced when these early European scholars read other works, especially by the Mu'tazilites (the so-called Islamic rationalists) and Sufis (the so-called Islamic mystics), that offered arguments for allegorical and metaphorical interpretations of the Qur'an. Finally, some of these scholars of the Qur'an recognized what remains underappreciated even today: that some Muslim beliefs and rituals, and even sections of the Qur'an, had their origin in Jewish beliefs and practices. These were conveyed not only in the stream of Jewish traditions known as “Israelitica,” but also in the Talmud and rabbinic midrash, for example, the possible or even likely dependence of the laws of Sura 17: 22-36 on the seven laws derived by the rabbis, as described in the Talmud's Tractate Sanhedrin 56, from the covenant with Noah in Genesis 9.

While these Christian scholars studied the Qur'an and the diverse Islamic traditions of interpreting it, their curiosity was by no means confined to religion. They also became familiar with various histories, for example, al-Ṭabari's *History of the Prophets and Kings* and al-Athīr's *The Complete History*. In addition to learning Arabic, some of these scholars learned Persian and Turkish so as to read these and other works, including poetry. Bevilacqua concludes his study of these remarkable scholars by characterizing his own book as having made a distinction "between the creation of knowledge, on the one hand, and normative evaluation, on the other." But the merit of his distinction is precisely because it was one made by the majority of the scholars whom he has examined, and by those who followed them, for example, in the twentieth century, Franz Rosenthal, translator into English of al-Ṭabari's *History* and Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah, An Introduction to History*.

Of the numerous individuals who make up Bevilacqua's Republic of Arabic letters, some of the key figures dealt with by him are as follows. The first was the Englishman Edward Pococke (1604-1691), who earlier in his life had lived in Aleppo and Constantinople. He was first holder of the professorship of Arabic at Oxford, and author of *Specimen Historiae Arabum (A Sample of the History of the Arabs, 1650)* which Pococke dedicated to his patron, the great Christian Hebraist and historian of English law, John Selden. The Italian Lodovico Marracci (1612-1700), having contributed to the editing of the Bible in Arabic (1671), translated the Qur'an into Latin (1698). Marracci was a Catholic priest of the Clerici regolari a Mater Dei, and beginning in 1656 holder of the chair of Arabic at the Collegio della Sapienza in Rome. George Sale (1696-1736), an English solicitor by profession, was the first translator of the Qur'an into English (1734). Adrian Reland

(1676-1718), Professor of Oriental Languages at the University of Utrecht, was author of *De Religione Mohammedica libri duo (Two Books about the Mohammedan Religion, second revised edition 1717)*. Noteworthy about Reland, as Bevilacqua observes, is that he used Islamic texts from Southeast Asia, for example, translations of the Qur'an into Malay and Javanese, to correct mistranslations of the Qur'an and, hence, attendant misunderstandings of Islamic beliefs. The Frenchman Barthélemy d'Herbelot (1625-1695) is particularly important, having produced, with his assistant Antoine Galland (1646-1715), the *Bibliothèque Orientale (Oriental Library, 1697)*. With its 8,158 alphabetically arranged articles on a wide range of topics that drew upon numerous sources in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, d'Herbelot's *Bibliothèque Orientale* provided "the most ambitious single overview of [Islamic literary and intellectual culture] until the publication of the first edition of *The Encyclopedia of Islam* (1913-1936)." Galland, who had lived in Istanbul, merits further mention as the translator into French of *The Thousand and One Nights*, and holder of the chair of Arabic in the Collège de France. The Englishman Simon Ockley (1679-1720), following the example of Pococke's *Specimen*, emphasized the importance of knowing Islamic history for Europeans with his authorship of two books, *The Conquest of Syria, Persia, and Egypt by the Saracens* (1708) and *The History of the Saracens* (1718).

For the most part, the works of these and other scholars on Islam and Islamic history exhibited a fair-minded impartiality that Bevilacqua describes in detail. Many of these works were free from confessional concerns. Their authors sought to establish facts so that accurate understandings could be achieved. When a view was incorrect, these scholars did not hesitate to correct it, even if doing so meant criticizing the proponent

of the mistake, no matter who he may have been. So, for example, Pococke, concluding that the stories about Muhammed having been inspired by a dove (as recounted by Shakespeare in *Henry VI* at the end of Act I, Scene II), or having trained a dove to feed from his ear, or having tricked his followers into believing that the dove represented the Holy Spirit had no Arabic or Muslim source, criticized those like Hugo Grotius who repeated such fictions, the sole purpose of which was to serve Christian polemic. Similarly, the Frenchman Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron, author of *Législation orientale* (1778), dismissed Montesquieu's exaggerated view of oriental despotism in *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748) by noting that the laws of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal states protected private property and its use. Lest one get the wrong impression, the commitment to a fair-minded exploration of facts did not prevent these and other representatives of the Republic of Arabic letters from critically evaluating Islamic beliefs, such as the ideas about the sensual pleasures that await one in Paradise. The lodestar for the scholars of Bevilacqua's Republic was truth, not apologetics.

There were, of course, occasional exceptions to this scholarly objectivity, for example, Marracci, whose commentary accompanying his translation of the Qur'an was overtly polemical. But what is quite remarkable about the impartiality of the majority of these scholars is that their pursuit of a truthful and often appreciative understanding of Islam and its history occurred at the same time as, and thus despite, the imperial expansion of the Ottomans who were at the gates of Vienna in 1529 and 1683. Moreover, and to return to the question that began this review, most of the scholars of Islam and Islamic civilization discussed in this book were Christians. Thus, their open, impartial investigations

were not dependent upon the so-called Enlightenment's deprecation of religious commitment. In fact, Bevilacqua observes that these Christian scholars were usually far more enlightened in their examination of Islam than were the representatives of the Enlightenment.

If there is a shortcoming to this good book it is that Bevilacqua leaves the reader with the impression, surely unintended, that this Republic of Arabic letters arose as if out of thin air, as if it did not owe its existence to previous scholars of other intellectual pursuits. The tradition of scholarly objectivity found in Bevilacqua's Republic had previously been laid by, for example, the critical reception of Roman Law; the use of philological arguments by Lorenzo Valla in determining that the *Donatio Constantini* was a forgery; Erasmus' critical editions of the New Testament in Latin and Greek; and the Hebraists of the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, who, although Christian, sought an impartial understanding of the Old Testament, the history of ancient Israel, and the rabbinic tradition, including the Mishnah and Talmud. Pococke, it will be remembered, was a protégé of the Hebraist John Selden whose motto, adopted by him in the face of persecution for his pursuit of historical truth, was "liberty above all things."

What are we justified to expect from intellectuals, and, when they are financially supported by the public, to demand from them? It is not to develop public policy, or to be engaged in politics. They are, of course, free to do so as citizens. But as intellectuals we are right to expect that they deal with facts as they pursue truth. They are not to deceive by propagating half-truths; and they are not to lie. We are in Bevilacqua's debt that he has given us in *The Republic of Arabic Letters* an example of intellectuals who largely fulfilled this expectation of what intellectuals should be and what they should do. a

The Best Books on the American Revolution

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Henry Lee. *Memoirs of the War in the Southern Department of the United States*. Philadelphia: Bradford and Inskeep, 1812. Revised version, Washington: P. Force, 1827; New edition, with a life of the author by Robert E. Lee, New York: University Publishing Company, 1869.

“Lighthorse Harry” Lee commanded an irregular group—Lee’s Legion—in New York and Pennsylvania, before Washington sent him to help Nathanael Greene wrest South Carolina and Georgia back from the British. A skilled military tactician, Lee also has a keen eye for detail and an ear for phrase (his 1799 eulogium on Washington, “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen” lives on). Entering politics after Yorktown, Lee landed in jail for debt in 1808, and wrote this book to recoup his finances. He failed at that, but his memoir is considered one of the finest works of military history ever written. Though called a memoir, Lee is not its main character. He gives judicious attention to the points of view of other participants, friend and foe. One contemporary reviewer criticized the over-attention to detail—such

as the Falstaffian story of Dr. Skinner, whose horse got stuck when Skinner tried to turn it around in a ravine to avoid a battle at the other end. The rest of the cavalry had to dismount, pick up Skinner’s horse, and turn it around so they and the Doctor could go their separate ways. The reviewer regretted the story. We are fortunate that Lee, and not he, wrote the book. Lee visited Baltimore in 1812 to see about its publication, he and the printer Alexander Hanson were attacked by a mob angry about Hanson’s criticism of the Madison administration. Lee never fully recovered from the mob’s savage beating. Ten years after Lee’s death, his son Henry published an expanded edition. The younger Lee included letters from Thomas Jefferson justifying his conduct as Governor of Virginia when Benedict Arnold burnt and sacked Richmond. After the Civil War another son, Robert E. Lee, published a new edition, with a biographical sketch of the father he barely knew.

Sir George Otto Trevelyan, *The American Revolution*, 14 volumes, Longmans, Green, 1880-1914, volumes 1 and 2 republished as *The Early History of Charles James Fox*, 1 volume, Harper, 1880, volumes 5-10 republished as *The American Revolution*, 4 volumes, Longmans, Green, 1899-1912, volumes 13-14 republished as *George the Third and Charles Fox, the Concluding Part of the American Revolution*, 2 volumes, Longmans, Green, 1912, 1914.

Trevelyan was a Member of Parliament for thirty-two years, so it is not surprising that this monumental work focuses on Parliament’s role in the American Revolution. In fact, Trevelyan wrote the first three volumes on the Revolution because he was most interested in writing the last two, on the relationship between George III and Whig statesman Charles James Fox, and thought the latter could not be understood

without the former. The view is from London, from the perspective of English Whigs of the 1770s and 1780s, sympathetic to the Americans' struggle for liberty. There are worse perspectives to have. Horace Walpole's acerbic commentary and the political disputes between Lord North and the British opposition are all here in a well-written and engaging narrative. Here we have King George III, as he picks up a new dress for Queen Charlotte, trying to tell the tailor how not to vote in the next Parliamentary election, "No Keppel! No Keppel!" As with other of the King's actions, it did not work, and the Windsor borough re-elected the Whig Admiral Augustus Keppel.

Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America*. New York: Viking, 2005.

This is not the sanitized Revolution of men in powdered wigs. Nash, one of the great social historians, gives the story from the bottom up—beginning with a Newark jail-break. Nash has written other books on the social origins of the Revolution, using tax records, wills, and court reports, to bring to life the forgotten and marginalized. He has also written about the relationship between slavery and the Revolution, and recovered the roles of African-Americans in the struggle. In this great narrative history he brings together the work of social historians since the 1960s to retell the story, giving a Revolution as complicated and messy as it was, and as American democracy is. Nash's achievement is not merely to show the "underside" or "history from the bottom up," but to show how the ideas of the Revolution motivated men and women across the economic spectrum, and to bring to life in vivid detail the previously unknown characters who created a complicated nation.

David Hackett Fischer, *Washington's Crossing*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Fischer takes one of the Revolution's best-known mythical representations—Emanuel Leutze's 1851 painting of Washington crossing the Delaware—and shows us how rooted in history that December night image is. In the process, we learn about how the war had gone since the British evacuated Boston, about the character of the two armies facing each other across the Delaware, and about the small contingencies that went into the American victory. Fischer is a master of prose, and of historical research—his appendices will provide material for articles, books, and dissertations for generations of scholars. His earlier book *Paul Revere's Ride* takes Longfellow's poem and uses it to tell the story of Revere and his connections to the various revolutionary groups in Boston. In this book Washington and his army are the central characters, though there are others, such as the beautiful young widow at Mount Holly, New Jersey, who entertained Colonel Carl von Donop over Christmas, and kept his men from returning to Trenton in time to help turn the battle toward the Hessians favor. It is tantalizing to think this beautiful young widow might have been Elizabeth ("Betsy") Ross, a talented seamstress. Two vivid scenes contrast each commander's council of war the night before the fateful second battle of Trenton and the battle of Princeton. Cornwallis's officers addressed him deferentially as "M'Lord," while each American officer told Washington why his plans would not work, and from this discussion he formed a plan that might not fail. "Victory or Death" was the code for the Delaware crossing, and Washington's favorite line was, "We cannot guarantee victory, but we can deserve it."

Bernard Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967.

For two centuries a set of pamphlets published in the 1760s had reposed unread in Harvard's libraries. Bernard Bailyn read through them and was surprised at the intellectual and ideological world they revealed. Liberty and power were the two obsessions of the Revolutionary generation. Bailyn wrote an introduction to a proposed multi-volume series of Pamphlets of the Revolution, but only one volume appeared. The introduction was then published separately, as this book, which received the Bancroft Prize, the Pulitzer Prize, and recast the way we thought about the Revolution. The writers drew inspiration from an earlier generation of English writers—such as John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, authors of *Cato's Letters* and publishers of *The Independent Whig*, and political theorist James Harrington—who were somewhat marginal to British political thought. In America, though, these ideas formed a baseline to understand power, and how to control it and constrain those who exercised it. Fear of centralized power and distrust of government motivated the Revolutionaries, which makes their real achievement not winning independence, but forming governments and a Constitution that would not crush human aspirations. This recasting of the Revolution makes it ever relevant to the world as it continues to change, a phenomenon the American Revolutionaries would have understood all too well. a

The Greatest Judge in American History?

Allen Mendenhall

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Richard Brookhiser. *John Marshall: The Man Who Made the Supreme Court*. Basic Books, 324pp., \$30 cloth

One might infer from his subjects—George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and Abraham Lincoln—that Richard Brookhiser, a longtime editor at *The National Review*, favors a particular form of government: large, centralized, powerful, nationalistic, and anti-Jeffersonian. His latest biography, *John Marshall: The Man Who Made the Supreme Court*, supports that impression, celebrating Marshall while glossing his many flaws. “John Marshall is the greatest judge in American history,” Brookhiser declares in a grand opening line that sets the lionizing tone for the rest of the book. But by which and whose standards?

Those of the long-lost Federalist Party, apparently. Marshall favored the federal government over the states, defending the United States Constitution—the terms of which had been quietly orchestrated by a secret convention of elite men—from Antifederalist and, later, Republican attacks and saving the national bank from constitutional challenge. His policies were “those of Washington and his most trusted aide, Alexander Hamilton.” Washington was Marshall’s “idol” whose “example would inspire and guide him for the rest of his life.” Marshall’s reverence for Washington was “personal, powerful, and enduring,” in both war and peace. Washington convinced Marshall to run for U.S. Congress, a position he held before becoming U.S. Secretary of State and the fourth Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court; Marshall, in turn, became Washington’s first biographer.

The Supreme Court was Marshall’s vehicle for instituting the Federalist vision of government even after the Federalist Party had perished. Marshall strengthened the Supreme Court, which previously had the appearance of triviality. He discouraged seriatim opinions—the practice of each justice offering his own opinion—prompting his colleagues to speak as one voice and authoring numerous opinions himself. He increased the number of cases that the Supreme Court considered per term and established the principle of judicial review in *Marbury v. Madison* (1803), holding that the judiciary may strike down legislation that contravenes the Constitution. He masterminded consensus among the justices even though the Supreme Court was populated by presidential appointees from rivaling political parties. His decisions in *Fletcher v. Peck* (1810), *Trustees of Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), and *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824) gave muscle to the growing federal government, weakening the position of the states.

The Supreme Court was Marshall's vehicle for instituting the Federalist vision of government even after the Federalist Party had perished.

“Washington died, Hamilton died, the Federalist Party died. But for thirty-four years,” Brookhiser intones, “Marshall held his ground on the Supreme Court.” Were it not for Marshall, the Supreme Court would not enjoy its outsized influence and prestige today. We may, however, be entering into an era in which the Supreme Court loses some of the esteem that Marshall carefully cultivated for it. Conservative politicians have for decades objected to the powers exercised by the Supreme Court. In the wake of the confirmation hearings of Justice Brett Kavanaugh, however, partisans of the left have begun to fear the possibility that the Supreme Court will move in a different direction, one that effectively undermines the work of administrative agencies, restrains the courts, and restores power to the states. With few admirers on the Left or the Right, can the Supreme Court maintain its legitimacy as the arbiter of high-profile disputes with long-term ramifications on the lives and institutions that touch upon the everyday experiences of millions of Americans?

Brookhiser is a master storyteller with novelistic flair, deftly rendering here the colorful personalities of such American giants as John Randolph of Roanoke, Aaron Burr, Luther Martin, Francis Scott Key, James Kent, George Wythe, John C. Calhoun, Patrick Henry, Samuel Chase, Aaron Burr, Roger B. Taney, and Andrew Jackson. Who would have thought the story of “the Simpleton Triumphant”—Brookhiser’s moniker for Marshall, who “never lost his country tastes and habits”—could be so gripping? That each of these diverse

characters figures prominently in Marshall’s biography demonstrates the sheer longevity and importance of his storied career.

Divided chronologically into four sections, each focusing on different periods of Marshall’s life, *John Marshall* is also organized thematically, with formative cases determining the theme: The chapter titled “Bankrupts,” for instance, is principally about two cases—*Sturges v. Crowninshield* (1819) and *Ogden v. Saunders* (1827)—while the chapter titled “Bankers and Embezzlers” examines *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819).

Cringeworthy lines do, unfortunately, find their way into the book. “It is an almost universal human experience,” Brookhiser states, “to seek surrogates to correct the errors or supply the lacks of one’s parents.” Is that so? He claims that a letter “describing a ball in Williamsburg . . . might have been written by one of Jane Austen’s young women.” “A good lawyer,” he quips, “goes where the business is and makes the best case he can.” Such sweeping and superfluous assertions detract from the otherwise delightful prose.

Brookhiser seizes on the confusion and fluidity of the legal system in early America, adding needed clarity and context regarding the state of the common law—if that term applies—at that time and place. Too often lawyers, judges, and law professors parrot the phrase “at common law” before pronouncing some rule or principle. The phrase “at common law,” however, should ring alarm bells: “at common law *when?*” should always be the resounding reply. The common law, after all, contained

different rules in different eras and remains in flux; it is a deliberative process, not a fixed body of immutable rules. To say that *the* rule “at common law” was this or that is to betray an ahistorical understanding of the Anglo-American legal tradition. Brookhiser proves he’s an historian by avoiding that error.

His conception of originalism, on the other hand, is crude. He claims that Marshall’s opinion in *Dartmouth* “went beyond originalism to the text,” implying a rejection of originalism, which, in his view, involves the recovery of the intent of the framers. “The framers had their intentions,” he says, “but the words in which they expressed them might give rise to new, different intentions. The originalism of the Constitution’s history and the originalism of its words could diverge.” But the “original intent” approach to originalism has long been discredited. Justice Antonin Scalia popularized an originalism that interpreted the original public meaning of the text itself, rejecting the fallacy that the framers or a legislature possessed a unified intent; the words as written in the Constitution or a statute are instead the result of political compromise and must be construed reasonably according to their ordinary meaning at the time of their adoption. This hermeneutic ensures that present legislators may pass laws without concern that the judiciary will later alter the meaning of those laws. Brookhiser is therefore wrong to treat “literalism” and “originalism” as mutually exclusive: “Marshall’s opening flourish paid little heed to the intentions of the framers—it was literalism that he was expounding, not originalism.” On the contrary, literalism is fundamental to originalism.

Brookhiser’s most serious omission is Marshall’s odious attachment to slavery. Paul Finkelman recently took Marshall to task in his book *Supreme Injustice*, decrying

the jurist’s “considerable commitment to owning other human beings.” Finkelman targeted scholarship on Marshall that was, in Finkelman’s words, “universally admiring.” Brookhiser, however, is another admirer, making no effort to rehabilitate Marshall on issues of race or human bondage—perhaps because he can’t. Marshall was plainly racist and owned hundreds of slaves, a fact on which Brookhiser does not dwell. Marshall “bought slaves to serve him in town and to work on the farms he would soon acquire,” Brookhiser briefly acknowledges, adding elsewhere that Marshall “was a considerable slave owner, who owned about a dozen house slaves in Richmond, plus over 130 more slaves on plantations in Fauquier and Henrico Counties”—numbers far shy of Finkelman’s estimate. An ardent nationalist who dedicated his career to erecting and preserving the supremacy of the federal government, Marshall nevertheless compromised his principles when it came to slavery, deferring to state laws if doing so meant that slaves remained the property of their masters. He didn’t free his slaves in his will, as had his hero, Washington. His extensive biography of Washington, moreover, didn’t mention that Washington had freed his slaves.

“The morality of slavery did not concern [Marshall] in any practical way,” Brookhiser submits without elaboration. “Marshall let the institution live and thrive.” That is the extent of Brookhiser’s criticism, which improperly suggests that Marshall passively observed the institution of slavery rather than actively participating in it. Brookhiser gives Marshall a pass, in other words, withholding analysis of Marshall’s personal investment in human bondage.

Marshall “hated” the author of the Declaration of Independence, who had inherited slaves whereas Marshall had purchased them. Finkelman notes that, as chief justice, Marshall “wrote almost every

decision on slavery” for the Supreme Court, “shaping a jurisprudence that was hostile to free blacks and surprisingly lenient to people who violated the federal laws banning the African slave trade.” Marshall’s rulings regarding indigenous tribes were problematic as well. He had not only “ruled that Indians could not make their own contracts with private persons,” but also opined, notoriously, that Indians were “domestic dependent nations,” thereby delimiting the scope of tribal sovereignty in relation to the federal government and the several states. Jefferson’s thinking about slaves and natives has undergone generations of scrutiny that Marshall has somehow escaped.

Marshall does not come across as a loving or affectionate family man. Four of his children died; only six grew to adulthood. His wife Mary Polly suffered depression. Meanwhile, Marshall was out and about attending parties, working long hours, drinking liberally, and spending lavishly. He traveled to France shortly after the death of two of his children—abandoning Mary Polly while she was pregnant with yet another child. He wrote Mary Polly from France, where, Brookhiser speculates, he may have developed romantic feelings for the Marquise de Villette, a recently widowed French noblewoman. His son John Jr. became a drunk who was “kicked out of Harvard for ‘immoral and dissolute conduct.’” Brookhiser suggests that John Jr. “imitated his father’s conviviality too

literally.” Justice Story lost a daughter to scarlet fever. He had no idea when he related this news to Marshall that Marshall, his friend and colleague, had lost four children. Marshall must not have spoken much about his family. When he sought to console Story, he couldn’t remember in which order his children had died, nor the age of his daughter at the time of her death.

The line from Hamilton and Marshall to Story, Clay, and Lincoln that once enamored Progressives is embraced by the leading historian at conservatism’s flagship magazine. Brookhiser takes up the mantle of Albert J. Beveridge, who glorified Marshall and Lincoln for their expansion of federal power (Beveridge authored multivolume biographies of Marshall and Lincoln). Perhaps there’s a larger story to tell about this book if it represents the appropriation of a past figure for present purposes. In the age of President Donald Trump, Brookhiser feels the need to insist that “Marshall, Jefferson, and Lincoln were not only populists” insofar as they shared philosophical allegiances, namely the belief in “rights, grounded in nature.” One wonders, given his call to “look for other men to address” our “perplexities” and “challenges,” what Brookhiser has in mind. Marshall has no clear parallel in current politics. Whether that’s good or bad depends upon perspective, but Marshall must undergo more rigorous critique before he is presented as a model for improvement. ㊦

Did Robert E. Lee Commit Treason?

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We, the undersigned prisoners of War, belonging to the Army of Northern Virginia, having been this day surrendered by General Robert E. Lee, C.S.A., Commanding said Army, to Lieut. Genl. U.S. Grant, Commanding Armies of the United States, do hereby give our solemn parole of honor that we will not hereafter serve in the armies of the Confederate States, or in any military capacity whatever, against the United States of America, or render aid to the enemies of the latter, until properly exchanged, in such manner as shall be mutually approved by the respective authorities.

Done at Appomattox Court House, VA, this 9th day of April, 1865.¹

THERE ARE SIX SIGNATORIES OF this Appomattox parole, beginning at the top of the list with Robert E. Lee himself, and including his longtime staff officers Walter Taylor, Charles Venable, and Charles Marshall; and it was formally counter-signed by Federal Assistant Provost-Marshal George H. Sharpe with the comment: “The above-named officers will not be disturbed by United States authorities as long as they observe their parole and the

laws in force where they may reside.”²

That promise of non-disturbance was at the core of what Lee wanted at Appomattox Court House. However much he and the rest of the Confederacy might have insisted that their break for independence was the constitutionally-justifiable action of sovereign states, Abraham Lincoln and his administration had never regarded the Confederacy legally as anything except an

¹ “Parole of Honor – Gen. Lee,” in RG 94, File E501R&P 520058, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

² Adam Badeau, *Grant in Peace: From Appomattox to Mount McGregor: A Personal Memoir* (Hartford, CT: S.S. Scranton, 1887), 19; Peter G. Tsouras, *Major General George H. Sharpe and the Creation of American Military Intelligence in the Civil War* (Philadelphia: Casemate, 2018), 495-99

insurrection. Nobody needed to tell Robert E. Lee that such an understanding covered him and all of his dwindling band of scarecrow Confederates with the odium of treason. He would be surrendering, not the army of an independent nation, but of an illegal assembly which had raised its hand against the authority of its own flag and government, and for that, no other term was fitting except traitor. Traitors found with weapons in their hands could be shot out-of-hand, for when (said Kentucky senator George Bibb in 1833), they “appear in arms against the military of the Federal government, they are to be treated as enemies and shot down.”³ And for those tried and found guilty, “by the common law, the punishment of high treason was accompanied by all the refinements in cruelty which were oftentimes literally and studiously executed.”⁴

Given Ulysses Grant’s reputation for demanding surrender without the offer of any mitigating conditions, Lee had every reason to worry that a surrender demand from Grant would be the prelude to a bloody purge which would make the Jacobins look spineless. Lee had plainly dreaded the possibility that Grant “would demand unconditional surrender; and sooner than that,” he warned, “I am resolved to die. Indeed we must all determine to die at our posts.”⁵ Great was the relief on all Confederate hands when Grant’s terms turned out to be surprisingly mild: “the officers and men surrendered to be

paroled and disqualified from taking up arms again until properly exchanged, and all arms, ammunition and supplies to be delivered up as captured property.” This was not because Grant was suffering from a burst of irrational generosity. Although Lee could not have known this, Grant’s headlong pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia from Petersburg had run out to the end of its supply tether, and if Grant could not convince Lee to surrender then, Lee might have easily taken the advice of his nephew, Fitzhugh Lee, and resumed the Confederate flight to Lynchburg and thus forced Grant to break off pursuit. “I was in a position of extreme difficulty,” Grant admitted, “I was marching away from my supplies, while Lee was falling back on his supplies. If Lee had continued his flight another day I should have had to abandon the pursuit, fall back to Danville, build the railroad, and feed my army. So far as supplies were concerned, I was almost at my last gasp when the surrender took place.”⁶

Grant also had to bear in mind Lincoln’s anxiety about the political impact of a prolonged war. Although Lincoln had once referred in passing to Lee (along with John C. Breckenridge, Joseph E. Johnston, and Simon B. Buckner) as “well known to be traitors then as now,” he was, in 1865, more interested in seeing traitors flee into exile than end up in courts where they could, like John Brown, make martyrs of themselves.⁷ Besides, “if Lee had escaped and joined Johnston in North Carolina, or reached the mountains,” Grant admitted, “it would have imposed upon us continued armament and expense” and Lincoln had specifically warned him that “the country would break down financially under the terrible strain

3 “The Collection Bill” (January 30, 1833), in *Register of Debates in Congress* (Washington: Games & Seaton), 9:268. Up until 1814, British law still provided for traitors to be drawn and quartered, after hanging. See “High Treason,” in *Sir William Blackstone, Commentaries on the Laws of England*, ed. Archer Ryland (London: S. Sweet, 1836), 4:92.

4 “Treason Against the United States,” *New York Times* (January 25, 1861).

5 Frank R. Cauble, *The Surrender Proceedings: April 9, 1865, Appomattox Court House* (Lynchburg, VA: 1987), 9-10; James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1896), 627.

6 John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News Co.), 2: 460.

7 Lincoln, “To Erastus Corning and Others” (June 12, 1863), in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. R.P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 6:265

on its resources.” They might not have been the ideal terms, but they were, in Grant’s estimate, “the best and only terms.”⁸ There would be no death-march to prisoner-of-war camps, no Roman triumphs, and above all, no treason trials—at least for Lee’s men.

Or that, at least, was how it seemed until the night of April 14th, when Lincoln was assassinated in his box at Ford’s Theatre. Denunciations of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee as traitors, and fit subjects for treason proceedings, then ascended like shell-bursts. “What has General Robert Lee done to deserve mercy or forbearance from the people and the authorities of the North?” the *Boston Daily Advertiser* shrilly demanded. “If any man in the United States—that is, any rebel or traitor—should suffer the severest punishment, Robert E. Lee should be the man.”⁹ Chief among those baying for blood was John Curtiss Underwood, who had been appointed a federal district judge for the Eastern District of Virginia in March, 1863, and who would become Robert E. Lee’s particular *bête noire*. Underwood was New York-born (in 1808) and New York-educated (at Hamilton College). But he had married a Virginian—in fact, Maria Underwood was a first cousin of “Stonewall” Jackson—and set up a law practice in Clarke county, sandwiched between the eastern wall of the Shenandoah Valley and Loudoun county.¹⁰

8 Young, *Around the World with General Grant*, 2: 301, 456, 627.

9 “General Lee,” *Boston Daily Advertiser* (June 15, 1865). Butler to Johnson (April 25, 1865), in *The Papers of Andrew Johnson: 1864-1865*, ed. LeRoy P. Graf (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986), 7:636; Charles Bracelen Flood, *Lee: The Last Years* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 58.

10 Edward Bates to John C. Underwood (March 28, 1863), John C. Underwood Papers, 1856-1898 (MMC-2220), Library of Congress; Patricia Hickin, “John C. Underwood and the Antislavery Movement in Virginia, 1847-60,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 73 (April

His move to Virginia had abated none of his Northern suspicions of slavery; to the contrary, he joined the Liberty Party in 1840, the Free Soil Party in 1848, and sat in the first Republican national convention in 1856 that nominated John C. Fremont, where he declared that slavery “has blighted what was naturally one of the fairest and loveliest portions of our country.”¹¹

None of this made Underwood particularly popular in Virginia, and within a few months, Underwood was “exiled from the State for my opinions in favor of human equality.”¹² With Lincoln’s election, Underwood was briefly mentioned as a possible cabinet appointment, was offered a consular appointment in Peru in 1861 (which he declined), and tried to interest Lincoln in a commission to raise a regiment of Unionist Virginia volunteers. He was rewarded with a patronage appointment in 1862 as Fifth Auditor in the Treasury Department, and finally appointed as the federal District judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, which Congress then reorganized as the Federal District of Virginia in June, 1864.¹³

Underwood’s court briefly met in Alexandria (where Underwood took up residence) until Union control over Norfolk

1965), 159, 161-2, 164; Robert Icenhauer-Ramirez, *Treason on Trial: The United States v. Jefferson Davis* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2019), 107-114.

11 Underwood to Henry Carey (November 6, 1860), Edward Cary Gardner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Underwood to William Henry Seward (March 24, 1856 and February 2, 1858), in John C. Underwood Correspondence, Rare Books & Special Collections, Rush Rees Library, University of Rochester.

12 “Proscription in Virginia. Letter from John C. Underwood,” *New York Times* (January 6, 1857).

13 Underwood’s initial appointment was a recess appointment; he was confirmed by Congress in 1864. In 1863, there were 54 district courts and ten circuit courts, with Virginia included as part of the 4th Circuit. See Erwin C. Surrency, “A History of Federal Courts,” *Missouri Law Review* 28 (Spring 1963), 215-216, and Peter Charles Hoffer, William James Hull Hoffer, N.E.H. Hull, *The Federal Courts: An Essential History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 159.

allowed the return of the district court there in 1864. From that perch, he looked forward to a day of retribution against his tormentors. “With the extinction of slavery,” Underwood promised, “will come the confiscation, sale, and subdivision of the old rebel plantations into farms, owned and cultivated by soldiers and other loyal men... who have stood by the country in its hour of peril.” But there would also be “a signal display of retributive justice which shall make hell and tyrants howl and tremble.”¹⁴ As he explained to Lincoln’s newly inaugurated successor, Andrew Johnson, in April, 1865:

*We know that we cannot go home in safety while traitors, whose hands are still dripping with the warm blood of our martyred brothers, remain defiant and unpunished. It is folly to give sugar plums to tigers and hyenas. It is more than folly to talk of clemency and mercy to these worse than Catalines, for clemency and mercy to them is cruelty and murder to the innocent and unborn. ...If the guilty leaders of this rebellion shall be properly punished our children's children will not be compelled to look upon another like it for generations.*¹⁵

Applying this to Robert E. Lee, however, might be more difficult than it seemed, since there was now the matter of the Appomattox paroles to consider. But on April 26, 1865, Johnson’s Attorney General, James Speed, gave the paroles a very different twist than Lee and his soldiers might have at first thought. “We must consider in what capacity General Grant was speaking,” Speed wrote in reply to a query from Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. “It must be presumed that he had

¹⁴ Speech of John C. Underwood at Alexandria, July 4, 1863 (Washington: McGill & Witherow, 1863), 6, 10.

¹⁵ Underwood, in Savage, *The Life and Public Services of Andrew Johnson: Including His State Papers, Speeches and Addresses* (New York: Derby and Miller, 1866), 267.

no authority from the President, except such as the commander-in-chief could give to a military officer.” Presidents, only, grant pardons; hence, Grant’s paroles could not have drawn a blanket of immunity over the rebel surrender. That was all the encouragement John Underwood needed. Virginia was a “lions den of reconstructed traitors.” So, if there was any question “whether the terms of parole agreed upon with Gen. Lee were any protection to those taking the parole, the answer is, that was a mere military arrangement and can have no influence upon civil rights or the status of the persons interested.” As the “highest judicial officer in the Eastern District of Virginia,” and the sole functioning federal District judge operating anywhere in Virginia, bringing the penalties of treason down on the head of Robert E. Lee would belong to Underwood’s jurisdiction, and Underwood was convinced that Lee had committed exactly what the Constitution described as treason in Article 3, section three: *Treason against the United States, shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort.*¹⁶

The principal hitch in any such proceeding, however, would be the co-operation of Andrew Johnson. Underwood had carefully cultivated Johnson, spending mornings “about President Johnson’s rooms from 10 to 11 A.M.” in the weeks after Lincoln’s assassination, and Johnson had assured Underwood that he was “very decidedly...in favor of prosecution.” Meeting

¹⁶ Speed, “Surrender of the Rebel Army of Northern Virginia” (April 22, 1865), in *Official Opinions of the Attorneys General of the United States*, ed. J. Hubley Ashton (Washington: W.H. & O.H. Morrison, 1869), 206; “Judge Underwood and General Lee,” *Norfolk Post* (June 22, 1865); Underwood to William D. Kelley (January 24, 1866), Dreer Collection of American Lawyers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania; William A. Blair, *With Malice Toward Some: Treason and Loyalty in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 236-7.

at the end of April with Johnson and Johnson's advisor Preston King, Underwood was assured that he could treat "the late civil war" as "a rebellion, and that those who were engaged in it were, not only enemies to the United States, but were also guilty of treason" and "ought to be indicted." But just as Underwood was delivering a charge to a specially-constituted grand jury, "summoned from different parts of the Commonwealth," in the Norfolk city hall, Johnson looked for a moment as though he might be inclined to withhold such co-operation. On May 29, 1865, one day before Underwood's grand jury assembled, Johnson issued an amnesty proclamation, backed-up by a lengthy opinion from Attorney-General Speed, granting "to all persons who have, directly or indirectly, participated in the existing rebellion...amnesty and pardon, with restoration of all rights of property, except as to slaves." Underwood postponed the grand jury's proceedings "to afford an opportunity to those arrested to peruse and study its import."¹⁷

Underwood need not have worried. Andrew Johnson was as much an embittered Southern Unionist as Underwood himself, and the May 29th amnesty "excepted from the benefits of this Proclamation...all who shall have been military or naval officers of

said pretended confederate government above the rank of colonel in the army or lieutenant in the navy," and especially "all military and naval officers in the rebel service, who were educated by the government in the Military Academy at West Point or the United States Naval Academy," all of which seemed tailored to fit Robert E. Lee. Johnson actually called on Underwood "to wait upon him at the executive mansion in Washington" for a "consultation" that made clear Johnson's desire for "the prompt initiation of legal proceedings against the leaders of the civil war." Johnson was eager to see a treason trial of Lee go forward.¹⁸

On Friday, June 2nd, Underwood resumed his proceedings with the grand jury in Norfolk, and after the weekend break, the grand jury returned an indictment of Lee, and of thirty-six other high-ranking Confederates who, presumably, were also not intended to be covered by the Johnson amnesty.¹⁹ The indictment was then forwarded to Attorney-General Speed, and Underwood announced his "intention to proceed vigorously" in prosecuting Lee, and "asks for the co-operation of the Attorney-General in making up the cases."²⁰

Lee had some whiff of what was afoot "soon after his return to Richmond," when "a gentleman was requested by the Federal commander in the city to communicate to General Lee the fact that he was about to be indicted in the United

17 Underwood testimony (May 25, 1867), in "Impeachment of the President," *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Fortieth Congress, 1867* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1868), 578; "Case of Jefferson Davis – Statement of the Case," in Bradley T. Johnson, *Reports of Cases decided by Chief Justice Chase in the Circuit Court of the United States for the Fourth Circuit* (New York: Diossy & Co., 1876), 6; John Reeves, *The Lost Indictment of Robert E. Lee: The Forgotten Case Against an American Icon* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2918), 56; Underwood to George C. Wedderburn (April 28, 1865), in *Papers of John C. Underwood, 1865-1870*, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA; "By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation" (May 29, 1865), in *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*, ed. G.P. Sanger (Boston: Little, Brown, 1866), 13:758-9; "Opinion of Attorney General Speed," *Washington Daily National Republican* (May 30, 1865).

18 Grant to Henry W. Halleck (May 6, 1865), in O.R., series two, 8:535-6; "Case No. 3621a. Case of Davis," in *The Federal Cases: Comprising Cases Argued and Determined in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States* (St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co., 1894), 7:64-65.

19 "Names of Those Indicted for Treason at Norfolk," *New York Times* (June 19, 1865); for the text of the indictment, see Reeves, *The Lost Indictment of Robert E. Lee*, 65-66.

20 "Indictment of Gen. Lee and Others," *Alexandria Gazette* (June 19, 1865).

States courts for treason.”²¹ But Lee may also have had suspicions from the first that Grant’s generosity would be challenged, since he had determined to keep as low a political profile as he could and “procure some humble home for my family until I can devise some means of providing it with subsistence.” With that in view, Lee rode off to the Pamunkey river estate of his cousin, Col. Thomas Carter, looking for real estate possibilities.²²

“In my opinion the officers and men paroled at Appomattox C.H...cannot be tried for treason so long as they observe the terms of their parole.” For Grant, this was as much a personal as a legal issue. “Good faith as well as true policy dictates that we should observe the conditions of that convention.” But neither Stanton nor Johnson were moved, and so Grant confronted Johnson directly in a Cabinet meeting. “Mr. Johnson spoke of Lee and wanted to know why any

Lee had every reason to worry that a surrender demand from Grant would be the prelude to a bloody purge which would make the Jacobins look spineless.

News of the indictment reached the fifty-eight-year-old Lee when he returned to his family’s borrowed quarters in Richmond. He squared-off at once to fight back, and appealed to Grant “through Mr. Reverdy Johnson.” On June 13th, he wrote to Grant, demanding to know on what grounds he could “be indicted for treason by the grand jury at Norfolk,” since “the officers and men of the Army of Northern Virginia were, by the terms of their surrender, protected by the United States government from molestation so long as they conformed to its condition.”²³

Grant, who had just returned from a tumultuous appearance at a “mass meeting” at Cooper Institute, immediately forwarded Lee’s letter to Secretary of War Stanton with his own endorsement, confirming that

military commander had a right to protect an arch-traitor from the laws.” Grant, who “was angry at this,” heatedly explained to Johnson that he, as president, “might do as he pleased about civil rights, confiscation of property and so on...but a general commanding troops has certain responsibilities and duties and power, which are supreme.” That included a parole carrying immunity from prosecution. Besides, if he had not given such a parole, “Lee would never have surrendered, and we should have lost many lives in destroying him.” And then the stinger: “I should have resigned the command of the army rather than have carried out any order directing me to arrest Lee or any of his commanders who obeyed the laws.”²⁴

Grant wrote back to Lee on June 20th, assuring him that he had put Lee’s case before Stanton and Johnson with his recommendation to “quash all indictments

21 John Esten Cooke, *A Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee* (New York: Appleton, 1883), 489.

22 Lee to William Cabell (May 24, 1865), in R.E. Lee Collection, Leyburn Library, Washington & Lee University.

23 “Indictments for Treason,” *Alexandria Gazette* (June 10, 1865); Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1935), 4:198-201; Lee to Grant (June 13, 1865), in *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee*, 179-180.

24 “Our President. A Meeting Last Night at Cooper Institute,” *New York Herald* (June 8, 1865); Lee to Grant (June 20, 1865) and “Interview” (July 6, 1878), in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, ed. John Y. Simon (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), 15:210-211 and 28:421; John Russell Young, *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News Co.), 2:460-61.

found against paroled prisoners of war, and to desist from the further prosecution of them.” He added, hopefully, that “this opinion... is substantially the same as that entertained by the Government.”²⁵ Still, Grant remembered that the only member of the cabinet who agreed with him was William Henry Seward. Lee, who was never an instinctive optimist, was not an optimist now. He told Walter Taylor that he had “made up my mind to let the authorities take their course. I have no wish to avoid any trial the government may order.” To his brother, Charles Carter Lee, he wrote resignedly “all about the indictments” on June 21st:

*The papers are arguing the Subject pro & Con, & I presume the Gov't will decide in favour of the stronger party. I am here to answer any accusations against me & Cannot flee. I have rec'd offers of professional Services from several Gentn: Reverdy Johnson, Tazewell Taylor, Mr [William H.] Macfarland, &c, in the event of being tried, & shall take advantage of them if necessary.*²⁶

And yet, whether General Lee and Judge Underwood realized it, there were serious constitutional, legal and practical obstacles in the path of a conviction—or even a trial—for treason of the Confederacy’s most famous soldier.

25 Grant to Lee (June 20, 1865), in O.R., series one, 46 (pt 3):1287. Grant would continue to insist that “the paroles given to the surrendered armies lately in rebellion against the Government should be held inviolate, unless in cases where all rules of civilized warfare have been violated.” See Grant to Johnson (December 21, 1865), in O.R., series two, 8:815

26 Lee to Taylor (June 17, 1865) in Taylor, *General Lee: His Campaigns in Virginia, 1861-1865 with Personal Reminiscences* (Norfolk, VA: Nusbaum Books, 1906), 298; Lee to Charles Carter Lee (July 21, 1865), in Papers of the Lee Family, Box 4, M2012.003, Jessie Ball duPont Library, Stratford Hall.

1. *The Constitution’s definition of treason is a very narrow one*, and is based on English treason laws dating back to the 1350s which limited treason to seven grounds, including attacks on the king’s person or household, levying war against the king, or giving the king’s enemies aid and comfort. Restoration-era judges, eager to put nooses around the necks of as many of the Puritan revolutionaries of the 1640s as possible, gradually opened-up the definition of treason to include notions of “constructive treason,” in which something as simple as the mere airing of an opinion at variance with the king could be deemed treason.²⁷

But the Constitution sharply reined-in applications of “constructive treason.” It defined treason in just two specific ways—*levying war*, which suggested involvement in internal insurrections, and giving *aid and comfort*, which more nearly described assistance lent to an external war being waged by a sovereign belligerent. If anything, the Constitutional provision (and its statutory companion, the Crimes Act of 1790) made it nearly impossible to obtain convictions for treason, something that was dramatically exposed in the celebrated trial of Aaron Burr. By the time of the Civil War, only five convictions for treason had ever emerged from the federal courts, and all of those had occurred in the administrations of Washington and John Adams—both of whom then pardoned the convicted.²⁸

The Civil War triggered renewed invocations of the law of treason. A Conspiracies Act, on July 31, 1861, and the Crimes Act of August 6, 1861 defined any conspiracy “to levy war against the United

27 Bradley Chapin, *The American Law of Treason: Revolutionary and Early National Origins* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), 3-4, 55-57, 84.

28 James Willard Hurst, *The Law of Treason in the United States: Collected Essays* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Pubs., 1971), 145, 150, 187; Charles Warren, “What Is Giving Aid and Comfort to the Enemy?” *Yale Law Journal* 27 (January 1918), 333; Blair, *Malice Toward Some*, 15, 31-32, 52.

States” as a “high crime” and labeled Confederate recruitment “a high misdemeanor,” while the Second Confiscation Act applied the penalties of treason specifically to “any person” who should “set on foot, assist, or engage in any rebellion or insurrection against the authority of the United States.”²⁹

But Senator Garrett Davis of Kentucky was quick to argue that treason, strictly speaking, was a crime involving “adherence to a foreign enemy with which the United States are at war...and that adherence to a domestic enemy was not an adherence to an enemy within the meaning of the Constitution.” It only confused matters more that the Confederacy had been accorded belligerent rights “in exchanges of prisoners and other acts,” and that concession could imply that Confederate officers had been the servants, not of treason, but of a separate, sovereign nation.³⁰

2. *Lee would have to be tried in the jurisdiction where the treason occurred.*

The Constitution prefaces the section on treason with a requirement that “the Trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment, shall be by Jury; and such Trial shall be held in the State where the said Crimes shall have been committed,” and the Sixth Amendment adds that such a trial would have to take place in the “district wherein the crime shall have been committed.” That meant, at the least, that a trial of Lee would probably take place in Virginia. And while it had not been difficult to create a co-operative

29 “An Act to define and punish certain Conspiracies” (July 31, 1861) and “An Act to punish certain Crimes Against the United States” (August 6, 1861), in *Statutes at Large, Treaties and Proclamations of the United States of America*, ed. George P. Sanger (Boston: Little, Brown, 1863) 12:284, 317.

30 William Blair, “Friend or Foe: Treason and the Second Confiscation Act,” in *Wars Within a War: Controversy and Conflict Over the American Civil War*, eds. Joan Waugh & Gary W. Gallagher, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 48.

grand jury in Norfolk, the wording of the Sixth Amendment seemed to require that such a trial take place in Richmond. It would be a much more monumental task to find a civilian petit jury in Virginia which would vote to convict Robert E. Lee.

Judge Underwood certainly understood that this would be one of his most formidable obstacles. When he was quizzed six months later whether he found “it practicable to get a jury of loyal men in your court,” he glumly replied, “Not unless it is what might be called a packed jury.” Without such packing, Underwood was unsure whether a jury would vote to convict Lee of treason. “It would be perfectly idle to think of such a thing. ...Ten or eleven out of the twelve on any jury, I think, would say that Lee was almost equal to Washington, and was the noblest man in the State.”³¹

3. *The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Salmon P. Chase, would not co-operate.*

Abraham Lincoln had installed Salmon Chase as Chief Justice after the death of Roger Taney in October, 1864, partly to kick the ambitious Chase upstairs and remove him as a rival for the presidency, and partly to ensure that the administration’s emancipation policies during the war would get a friendly hearing from a devout anti-slavery man like Chase if challenges erupted after the war ended. Chase, however, had agendas of his own; if he could not usurp Lincoln as President, he could certainly magnify his office as Chief Justice. Ever since Roger Taney’s unavailing effort to bind Lincoln’s war policies in *ex parte Merryman*, the Supreme Court and the federal judiciary as a whole had played a muted role in the conduct of the war. But as soon as the shooting was stopped, Chase and the High

31 Examination of Judge John C. Underwood (January 31, 1866), in *Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction*, 7; J.M. Humphries to Underwood (May 15, 1866), *Underwood Papers*, Library of Congress.

Court once again moved to re-assert themselves over against the executive and legislative branches of the government.

In particular, Chase refused to participate in his auxiliary role as a Circuit judge so long as military tribunals were operating anywhere within a given District. “While military authority was supreme in the South,” Chase explained, “no Justice of the Supreme Court could properly hold a Court there.” As Chase explained to Horace Greeley, military tribunals regularly interfered with civil proceedings, and “instances are not wanting where their acts have been nullified by military orders.” Without Chase’s participation in a capital case, Judge Underwood would have to try Lee’s treason case by himself, and that would produce a verdict of something less than unchallenged authority. As it was, Chase did not have a particularly high opinion of Underwood’s competence as a judge. “The ‘Anxious’ man,” Chase remarked drily, “can have a trial before Judge Underwood” any time he wants. But “the Court will be a quasi-military court,” and Chase would have nothing to do with it.³²

4. *Lee’s own self-defense.* Two weeks after Judge Underwood’s grand jury indicted him, Lee shrugged off his pessimism and began asserting a more defiant tone. To his cousin, Martha “Markie” Williams, Lee declared that he was “aware of having done nothing wrong.” That sense of “nothing wrong” grew out of a theory of citizenship which, in turn, was based in a fundamental ambiguity in the federal Constitution. Nowhere in the Constitution, as it was written in 1787, is the concept of citizenship

actually defined. In the five places where the Constitution refers to citizenship, it speaks of citizens of the states, and citizens of the United States. But the Constitution made no effort to sort out the relationship between the two, leaving the strange sense that Americans possessed a kind of dual citizenship, in their “native State” (as Lee called it) and in the Union. This played directly into the larger pre-war argument that the Constitution had neatly divided sovereignty between the states and the federal Union. Beginning, then, with the premise that “all that the South has ever desired was that the Union, as established by our forefathers, should be preserved; and that the government, as originally organized, should be administered in purity and truth,” Lee had no trouble in arguing that Virginia and the other rebel states “were merely using the reserved right” of state sovereignty when they seceded.

In “my view,” Lee reasoned, that meant that “the action of the State, in withdrawing itself from the government of the United States,” required its citizens to act with it. “The act of Virginia, in withdrawing herself from the United States, carried me along as a citizen of Virginia” because “her laws and her acts were binding on me.” In the event, the Civil War had exploded that theory by sheer force. “The war,” he explained to his nephew, Edward Childe, “originated from a doubtful question of Construction of the Constitution, about which our forefathers differed at the time of framing it” and it had now been settled “by the arbitrament of arms.” But neither Lee nor any other individual Confederate could be called a traitor for having done so; “the State was responsible for the act, not the individual.”³³

32 “Judge Underwood’s Decision,” *New York Times* (April 16, 1866); Chase to Horace Greeley (June 1, 1866 and June 5, 1866), Chase to Underwood (November 19, 1868 and January 14, 1869), and Chase to Thomas Conway (September 19, 1870), in *The Salmon P. Chase Papers: Correspondence, 1865-1873*, ed. John Niven (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press), 5:100-101, 107-7, 183, 285-6, 292.

33 Lee to Williams (June 20, 1865), in “*To Markie*”: *The Letters of Robert E. Lee to Martha Custis Williams*, ed. Avery Craven (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 62-3; Lee to Chauncey Burr (January 5, 1866), *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee*, 189; Examination

By that point, other factors had intervened to render Lee's treason indictment a nearly-dead letter. For one thing, Grant's threat to resign if the Appomattox paroles were set aside was nothing for Andrew Johnson to trifle with. Johnson seemed to Henry Winter Davis "anxious to conciliate rather than resolved to command" Grant, and on June 11, 1865, Judge Underwood was called to Washington for a full week's-worth of consultations with Attorney-General Speed which effectively sent the Lee indictment to the back-burner until the next term of the Circuit court in Norfolk in October. "When Judge Underwood of Virginia was here a few days ago," smirked the *Alexandria Gazette*, "he did not succeed in getting an order for the arrest of Gen. Lee, and that distinguished officer is to be left unmolested." Finally, in June, 1866, Speed instructed Underwood's district attorney to suspend any proceedings against Lee and the others. "I am instructed by the President to direct you not to have warrants of arrest taken out against them, or any of them, until further orders."³⁴

For another, Underwood and Johnson had a bigger fish to fry in the person of Jefferson Davis, who had been imprisoned in Fortress Monroe since May of 1865 and whom Underwood's grand jury indicted for treason on May 8, 1866. On June 23rd, the *Norfolk Post* announced that "all speculations concerning the trial of General Lee for treason in consequence of his indictment at Norfolk may as well be

abandoned at once," and a month later, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* quietly announced that "it is understood here that...when the treason indictments against Gen. Lee and other noted rebels will be called up...the President will direct nolle pros. [*nolle prosequi*, or 'no longer prosecute'] to be entered, and dispose of each defendant, as he proposes to dispose of other leading rebels who have been active participants in the war, namely, by putting them on long probation, and then as a condition, precedent to pardon, imposing such penalties and restrictions as may be justified by the circumstances."³⁵

Just as in the Lee indictment, Davis's prosecution went aground repeatedly on Chief Justice Chase's refusal to participate until the grip of military rule in the defeated Confederacy had been released. Trial dates were set, but postponed again and again as both the Chief Justice and the president became embroiled in Andrew Johnson's impeachment trial. Johnson barely survived his impeachment, and in a gesture of contempt for the Radical Republicans who had nearly destroyed him, Johnson issued "a full pardon and amnesty for the offense of treason" to "all and to every person who directly or indirectly participated in the late insurrection or rebellion" on Christmas Day, 1868. The sword dangling over the heads of Davis, Lee and the others was now withdrawn, and February 11, 1869, the indictments of Lee and the others whom Underwood had named were dismissed.

Nevertheless, Underwood's indictment remained only nearly-dead for three years, and Lee anxiously eyed any moment when

of Robert E. Lee (February 17, 1866), in *Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction*, 133; Lee to Edward Lee Childe (January 16, 1866), in *Lee Family Digital Archive* (<http://leefamilyarchive.org>), Stratford Hall.

³⁴ Brooks Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 101; *Alexandria Gazette* (July 18, 1865); Speed to Lucius H. Chandler (June 20, 1866), in "Impeachment of the President," *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives for the First Session of the Fortieth Congress*, 512.

³⁵ "Extra Session of the Virginia Legislature—Circular from the Attorney General," *Daily Cleveland Herald* (June 13, 1865); "The Indictments Against General Lee and Others," *Baltimore Sun* (June 19, 1865); "The Indictment Against Gen. Lee," *Boston Post* (June 19, 1865). See also *Alexandria Gazette* (June 12 and June 21, 1865) and *Norfolk Post* (June 23, 1865).

it seemed it might bark back into life. Lee was actually subpoenaed to appear at the opening of Davis's trial in November, 1867, but Chase declined to join Underwood on the bench in Richmond, and the trial was postponed. "I am considered such a reprobate," Lee half-joked, that "I hesitate to darken the doors of those whom I regard; lest I should bring upon them some disaster."³⁶

Ironically, the treason indictment only made Robert E. Lee more obdurate and more defiant. Publicly, he soothingly urged reconciliation and submission, and undertook the presidency of Washington College, in Lexington, Virginia, as a means of encouraging "all our young men is to adhere to their states & friends, & aid both in restoration of the country." Every Southerner, he wrote to former governor and now Lexington neighbor John A. Letcher, "should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the greivous effects of war, & to restore the blessings of peace...promote harmony & good feeling, qualify themselves to work; & the healing of all dissensions."³⁷

But the war had changed Lee from a mild Unionist Whig who barely ever mentioned politics and had "never taken part in the discussion of political questions" into a touchy protector of secession orthodoxy. Privately, Lee expressed mounting bitterness at the outcome of the war and the direction of Reconstruction. "All that the South has ever desired was that the Union, as established by our forefathers, should be preserved, and that the government as originally organized should be administered in purity and truth." In the "justice of that

cause" he was unashamedly confident. He complained in January, 1866, to Reverdy Johnson that the Radical Republicans were intent on "a policy which will continue the prostration of one-half the country, alienate the affections of its inhabitants from the government, and which must eventually result in injury to the country and the American people." The Union was turning into exactly what the secession fire-eaters and Northern Copperheads had prophesied it would become, "one vast Government, sure to become aggressive abroad & despotic at home; & I fear will follow that road, which history tell us, all such Republics have trod, Might is believed to be right, & the popular Clamor, the voice of God." The further Reconstruction drove matters along, the more Lee suspected that another civil war could easily take place. "The several states...must unite, not only for their protection, but for the destruction of this grand scheme of centralization of power in the hands of one branch of the government to the ruin of all others, and the annihilation of the Constitution, the liberty of the people and of the country." By the end of his life, he had almost lost faith entirely in democracy. "Although Republican forms of Govt...still have my preference over all others," he had now come to believe that a republic "requires a virtuous people...& the world has not yet I fear reached the proper standard of morality & integrity to live under the rule of religion & reason." He added, "Spain I think showed her wisdom in adopting a constitutional monarchy."³⁸

36 Lee to Mrs. Julie G. Chouteau (March 21, 1866), Papers of the Lee Family, Box 4, M2009.341, Jessie Ball duPont Library, Stratford Hall; Icenhauer-Ramirez, *Treason on Trial*, 255-56, 292.

37 Lee to Philip Slaughter (August 31, 1865) and Lee to John A. Letcher (August 28, 1865), in Lee Family Digital Archive (<http://leefamilyarchive.org>), Stratford Hall.

38 Lee to "dear Sir" (July 9, 1866), in Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Reading the Man: A Portrait of Robert E. Lee through His Private Letters* (New York: Viking, 2007), 443; Lee to Edward Lee Childe (January 5 and January 22, 1867, and February 16, 1869), Papers of the Lee Family, Box 4, M.2009.345, Jessie Ball duPont Library, Stratford Hall; Lee to Chauncey Burr (January 5, 1866), in Robert Lee jnr., *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday, 1924), 225; Lee to Reverdy Johnson (January 27, 1866), Lee to Charles W. Law (September 27, 1866) and

The attrition of Lee's postwar confidence in democratic government adds a fresh layer of difficulty to answering the original question: did Robert E. Lee commit treason? For years after his death in 1870, unreconciled Northerners continued to denounce Lee as the arch-traitor of the rebellion. Frederick Douglass complained, after wading through newspaper obituaries for Lee, that "we can scarcely take up a newspaper...that is not filled with nauseating flatteries of the late Robert E. Lee" and his "bad cause." "I think it safe to say," declared Vermont's U.S. senator George F. Edmunds, that no one "has committed the crime of treason against more light, against better opportunities of knowing he was committing it" than Lee.³⁹

But in the end, everything dangled on Lee's own carefully-honed distinction: until the Civil War settled matters, there was a plausible vagueness in the Constitution about the loyalty owed by citizens of states and the Union, and so long as it could be argued that Lee was simply functioning within the latitude of that vagueness by following his Virginia citizenship, it would be extraordinarily difficult to persuade a civilian jury that he had knowingly committed treason. True: as Edmunds argued, "instead of being the child of Virginia and wedded to the institutions of his State, and sharing her destinies with a passionate enthusiasm, he was the child of the people; he was the ward of the nation."⁴⁰ True again: no one seemed, in simple terms, more to conform to the Constitutional definition of treason against the United

States—*levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort*—than Robert E. Lee. But treason, in Anglo-American jurisprudence, knows no accessories. "Where war has been levied," all who aid in its prosecution by performing any part in furtherance of the common object, however minute, or however remote from the scene of the action. In other words, everyone who is involved in treason is a principal, and that would have compelled the federal courts to conduct treason trials in wholesale, not to say politically repugnant, numbers. Even Wendell Phillips acknowledged, "We cannot hang men in regiments" or "cover the continent with gibbets. We cannot sicken the nineteenth century with such a sight." The best that Phillips could hope for was to "banish Lee with the rest."⁴¹

In the end, one has to say, purely on the merits, that Lee did indeed commit treason, as defined by the Constitution. But the plausibility of his defense introduces hesitations and mitigations which no jury in 1865—even Underwood's "packed jury"—could brush by easily. That, combined with the reluctance of Ulysses Grant and Salmon Chase to countenance a treason trial for Lee, makes it extremely unlikely that a guilty verdict would ever have been reached. But the jury which might have tried him was never called into being, and without a trial by a jury of his peers, not even the most acute of historical observers is really free to pass judgment on the crime of Robert E. Lee. Yet the question remains far from academic. In the cosmopolitan atmosphere of global communications and cultural fluidity, the notion of treason has acquired an antique feel, not unlike medieval notions of honor or feudal loyalty. To the extent that global communications,

Lee to D.H. Maury (May 28, 1867), in *Personal Reminiscences of General Robert E. Lee*, 190, 199, 206; Lee to Annette Carter (March 28, 1868), in *Duty Most Sublime*, 145.

39 Douglass, in David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 229; Edmunds, in "Mrs. R.E. Lee," *Congressional Globe*, 41st Congress, 3rd Session (December 13, 1870), 74.

40 Edmunds, in "Mrs. R.E. Lee," 74.

41 Phillips, "Abraham Lincoln" (April 23, 1865), in *Speeches, Lectures, and Letters* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1905), 450-1.

mass migration, and instant universal commerce render national boundaries more and more meaningless, can modern individuals be held to the standard of absolute loyalty to a single political entity? “Citizenship does not free a man from the burdens of moral reasoning,” writes legal philosopher A. John Simmons. “The citizen’s job” is not to absorb obligations to the nation-state and “to blithely discharge it in his haste to avoid the responsibility of weighing it against competing moral claims on his action. For surely a nation composed of such ‘dutiful citizens’ would be the cruellest sort of trap for the poor, the oppressed, and the alienated.” Moreover, the assertion of the existence of international standards of human rights runs in direct conflict with how states regard, and are allowed to regard, the disloyal behavior of their nationals. Nor is this merely an exercise of left-internationalism; for many libertarians, treason loses the taint of moral betrayal and becomes a mechanism by which an all-powerful State prevents “dangers to its *own* contentment.”⁴² As it is, the Constitutional definition itself is so narrow that convictions for what

might be considered treasonable offenses are prosecuted instead under the 1917 Espionage Act. But to deny that treason can occur, or that citizens can be held culpable for it, is to deny that communities can suffer betrayal to the point where their very existence is jeopardized.

Perhaps it is a token of an instinct, running back to the Constitutional Convention, to err on the side of absorbing society’s defaulters which underscores our willingness to leave an Aaron Burr or a Robert E. Lee unmolested. Walt Whitman thought that “this has been paralleled nowhere in the world – in any other country on the globe the whole batch of the Confederate leaders would have had their heads cut off.” It was a uniqueness of which Whitman was proud. In that way, Herman Melville wrote,

*The captain who fierce armies led
Becomes a quiet seminary’s head—
Poor as his privates, earns his bread.*⁴³

Mercy—or at least, a *nolle prosequi*—turned out to be the most appropriate punishment, after all. a

42 Simmons, *Moral Principles and Political Obligations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 200; Murray Rothbard, *The Anatomy of the State* (Auburn, AL: Ludwig von Mises Institute, 2009), 45-46.

43 Walt Whitman’s *Civil War*, ed. Walter Lowenfels (New York: Knopf, 1961), 251; Melville, “Lee in the Capitol,” in *Battle-pieces And Aspects Of The War: Civil War Poems*, ed. L.R. Rust (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), 229, 237.

The Best Books on the Impact of World War I

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Margaret Macmillan, *Paris 1919: Six Months that Changed the World*. New York: Random House, 2002.

In January 1919, the leaders of the First World War's victorious powers gathered in Paris. The original purpose of this meeting was to decide on the final terms of the peace treaties to be signed with the vanquished. However, as Margaret MacMillan brilliantly illustrates in this book, the conference was soon became an enormous repository for the hopes, shared all over the globe, that the awful slaughter would be followed by the creation of an entirely new world, organized and run on principles more humane and just than the one that had produced the war. "Votes for women," MacMillan notes, "rights for blacks, a charter for labour, freedom for Ireland,

[and] disarmament" were just a few of the radical results that the "petitioners" who arrived in Paris "from all corners of the world" asked the assembled powers to bring into being. MacMillan is a sure guide through the maze of conflicting pressures and often obscure interests that competed for the attention and sympathy of the assembled dignitaries, and her narrative is enlivened by well-chosen quotes, vivid character sketches, and telling details (such as her wry observation that the Greek delegation—which was soon to press for a vast expansion of Greek territory— reserved a suite of rooms suitable for a delegation several times its actual size). In addition, MacMillan accomplishes the difficult feat of writing about her subjects critically but sympathetically. She observes, for example, that most of the key players at the conference shared in the generally racist world view of the era, and were condescending towards, and dismissive of, the claims and aspirations of non-European peoples. At the same time, she persuasively argues that the conference has unfairly been blamed for all the horrors that followed some twenty years later with the outbreak of the Second World War. MacMillan notes—correctly—that Adolf Hitler initiated that war to create a racial empire based on genocide, not to undo the terms of the peace treaty signed by the Germans in June 1919, which has entered history as the Treaty of Versailles and has become its most enduringly famous result. MacMillan ultimately shows that the statesmen of Paris were faced with the impossible task of sorting through the unprecedented political wreckage of the war and fashioning something new from it. Far from being resolved in 1919, it is a process that continues to this day, not least in the Middle East, with profound consequences for the entire world. Those who wish to understand how and why this came to be should start by reading this book.

James J. Sheehan, *Where Have All the Soldiers Gone? The Transformation of Modern Europe*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008.

While this book is not exclusively about the Great War or its impact, it is still indispensable for an understanding of the broader significance of both. *Where Have all the Soldiers Gone* is a brilliant illumination of the role that war and military institutions have played in the broader sweep of European history. In just over 200 beautifully written pages, Sheehan—Dickason Professor Emeritus in the Humanities, Emeritus, at Stanford University and a past president of the American Historical Association—shows how the rise of powerful militaries in nineteenth century Europe fundamentally altered the nature of states as well as their citizens' relationship with them. He then illustrates how these military institutions wreaked unprecedented destruction on Europe between 1914 and 1945, before arguing that the trauma of these years continues to exercise a profound influence on European politics, culture, and society to the present day. With regard to the First World War, Sheehan first surveys the mood of naive innocence that greeted its outbreak before portraying the shattering effect that resulted from the collision of this innocence with the horrors of mass industrialized killing. He then shows the complicated and varying impact the war had, ranging from new modes of mass commemoration of the dead, to the surge in pacifist movements, to the creation of political movements—such as Russian Bolshevism and German and Italian Fascism—that were products of the war. Both Fascism and Bolshevism, Sheehan shows, not only thrived in within the broader context of collapse, crisis, and instability the war ushered in, but sought to bring the war home by militarizing domestic politics. Sheehan has an unusual knack for making complicated ideas accessible, and his clear, jargon-free writing is enlivened by

well-chosen quotes and devastating details, as when he notes, for example, that a staggering 27,000 French soldiers were killed on August 22, 1914, or that “around 300,000 of France’s 1.3 million war dead [of 1914-1918] could not be identified,” a result of the devastating impact of modern military technology upon the human body. Ultimately, Sheehan’s book is a piercing explanation of why Americans and Europeans today have such different views about the nature and purpose of war, with important effects for European-American relations. If someone were to read just one book on twentieth century European history, I would recommend that this be it.

David Fromkin, *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt, 1989.

In a 2016 article for *The New Yorker*, journalist Robin Wright noted that the extremist movement known here in the United States as ISIS, glorying in its conquests in Syria and Iraq, announced that its ambition was to “hit the last nail in the coffin of the Sykes-Picot conspiracy.” The movement’s leadership was referring to the agreement made by France and Britain during the First World War to carve up the Ottoman Empire’s Arab territories into spheres of colonial influence. The appearance of Sykes-Picot in the propaganda statements of a modern-day political movement is a powerful reminder of the role that the First World War played in the shaping of the modern Middle East, and consequently, of the bitter reactions against that order. David Fromkin’s *A Peace to End All Peace* is the indispensable guide to how and why this came to pass. Centering his analysis on Great Britain, Fromkin illustrates how European diplomatic and political wrangling during and after the war for influence in the Middle East was largely

responsible for creating the state system which, precariously, exists to this day; the origins of modern-day Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Iraq can all be traced back to the Great War and its political fallout, fallout that the Europeans tried mightily to guide to their advantage. This book is high political history of the sort that has largely fallen out of favor in academic circles, focusing on powerful men, backroom deals and diplomatic sparring at international conferences. It is also exceptionally well done and a reminder of why such history matters, since the decisions made by these men profoundly affected both their world and ours. Those looking to supplement it with a book on how ordinary people in the Middle East experienced the war may want to pair Fromkin with Leila Fawaz' *A Land of Aching Hearts* (Harvard, 2014).

Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished: Why the First World War Failed to End*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

Perhaps one of the greatest popular misconceptions about the First World War is that it ended neatly on November 11, 1918. It's true that the fighting on the western front stopped that day, but as Robert Gerwarth shows in this powerful book, the violence elsewhere not only continued past that date, but in many places actually escalated. The collapse in 1918 of the Russian, Austrian, and Ottoman empires plunged central and southern Europe into a series of wars fought to determine what would replace the collapsed imperial order. The result was an overlapping and often baffling mix of foreign and civil wars in which national hatreds, social resentments, and revolutionary fervor combined in various ways, with devastating results for the millions caught up in it. Gerwarth is a sure and steady guide to this brutal mayhem, disentangling the various interlocking pressures and forces at work without,

however, ever losing sight of the human face of the conflicts. Among the important points Gerwarth makes is that, as the violence of the so-called postwar era spread, killing civilians became a widely accepted practice; and, while no one was safe, the Jews were most vulnerable of all, as they seem to have been suspected and hated by virtually every warring party. In addition, once the post-World War I volatility and instability of the region is understood, it becomes easier to see why contemporaries failed to grasp the significance of what the Nazis embarked on in September 1939, when they attacked Poland and began the Second World War. What we now know to be the first shots in a war of racial annihilation would have appeared as merely the latest eruption of a series of post-1918 border wars that had never really ended. In addition, present-day tensions along Russia's western border, particularly with Ukraine and the Baltic states, cannot be understood outside of the context of the story that Gerwarth tells so well.

Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth*. New York: Penguin, 2005.

No list of books on the impact of the First World War would be complete without at least one memoir to humanize and personalize the vast historical forces at work. Several excellent candidates suggest themselves (Robert Graves' *Good-bye to All That* is justly regarded as a classic), but Vera Brittain's is one of the best-known for a reason. Brittain was the daughter of a prosperous, provincial English industrialist who grew up on comfortable surroundings and enrolled at Oxford in 1914. Once war broke out and her male family and friends signed up to fight, Brittain felt that she too should do her part, and so left university to sign up as a military nurse. Her training and service took her to London, Malta, and

France, where she saw firsthand the murderous horror of the war. This alone is suggestive of the profoundly disruptive forces unleashed by the conflict, as a greater distance from her comfortable and sheltered prewar life is hard to imagine. But the war made itself felt in Brittain's life in another, more terrible way: her beloved brother, Edward; her fiancé, Roland Leighton; and her two best friends, Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow, were all killed in the fighting, a horrific reminder of the devastation inflicted on a generation of young men as well as of what all of those deaths meant for loved ones back home. Brittain never really recovered from her

grief, and her book also details her postwar life, when she became a well-known political activist. Brittain campaigned tirelessly for causes that included women's rights and—above all—pacifism. In this, she is emblematic of all those who felt that the appalling sacrifices of the war had to be followed by the creation of a better, more just and peaceful world. Her deeply held pacifism, rooted in intense personal grief and sorrow, is also important for those seeking an answer to why, as storm clouds gathered again in Europe in the 1930s, so many tried desperately to convince themselves that nearly any solution to the continent's ills was preferable to war. A

3

**SCIENCES
AND ARTS**

Nowhere at Home

Albert Einstein, the 'Gypsy' Who Became a Citizen of the World

Andrew Robinson

IN LATE JULY 1933, SIX MONTHS AFTER THE NAZI REGIME came to power in Germany and forced many distinguished German Jews to leave their native land, Albert Einstein paid his one and only visit to the House of Commons in Britain. Having anticipated the Jewish exodus from Germany and gone into voluntary exile in Belgium with his wife in late March, he now found himself in London, looking down from the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery of the House and listening to a dramatic speech in support of Jewish refugees under the ten-minutes rule of the British Parliament. It proposed the motion: "That leave be given to bring in a bill to promote and extend opportunities of citizenship for Jews resident outside the British Empire."

The speaker was a dashing, upper-class, Conservative Member of Parliament, Commander Oliver Locker-Lampson, who was personally—if not closely—known to Einstein. A few days before the speech, Locker-Lampson had arranged a private meeting between Einstein and Winston Churchill at Churchill's country house, where the scientist and the politician had agreed on the seriousness of the new Nazi threat to world peace. And shortly after this meeting, Locker-Lampson had introduced Einstein to a former British prime minister, David Lloyd George. In Lloyd George's house, the MP witnessed Einstein sign the visitors' book, after pausing for a moment at the 'Address' column and then writing "*Ohne*"—German for "Without".

At the beginning of his speech, Locker-Lampson noted that he himself was neither Jewish nor anti-German. Indeed, after the end of the world war in 1918—in which the commander had fought on the Russian front in support of the Tsarists and against the Communists,

with the backing of Churchill—he noted that he had pleaded in the House of Commons for fair play for Germany, on the grounds that the German people had been misled by their leaders in 1914. Now, however, the current German leaders seemed to be repeating the earlier misdirection of their countrymen, by driving out their Jewish fellow-citizens. Then Locker-Lampson made reference to the House’s current distinguished visitor, as follows:

[Germany] has even turned upon her most glorious citizen—Einstein. It is impertinent for me to praise a man of that eminence. The most eminent men in the world admit that he is the most eminent. But there was something beyond mere eminence in the case of Professor Einstein. He was beyond any achievements in the realm of science. He stood out as the supreme example of the selfless intellectual. And today Einstein is without a home. He had to write his name in a visitors’ book in England, and when he came to write his address, he put ‘Without any’. The Huns have stolen his savings. The road-hog and racketeer of Europe have plundered his place. They have even taken away his violin. A man who more than any other approximated to a citizen of the world without a house! How proud we must be that we have afforded him a shelter temporarily at Oxford to work, and long may the tides of tyranny beat in vain against these shores.¹

1 ‘House of Commons Debates’, 26 July 1933, *Hansard*, 280, 2604–2606.

The House of Commons voted to support Locker-Lampson’s bill on its first reading. Afterwards, as Einstein stood with Locker-Lampson in the lobby of the House, “Members eagerly came forward to be introduced to the greatest scientist of the age”, wrote the *Jewish Chronicle*. “As the professor walked out of the lobby, it was clear that his appearance in the House had intensified the Members’ appreciation of the grim reality of the plight of the Jews of Germany.”² Certainly the Nazi newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, took note in its report headlined “Einsteinish Jewish Theatre in British Parliament”, which accused Locker-Lampson of having staged the performance for the purposes of self-publicity in the foreign press.³ The combative references in his speech to the predatory “Hun” naturally provoked a bitter Nazi denunciation of the British MP. (Later in the 1930s, the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler personally called Locker-Lampson “a Jew and a Communist.”)⁴

2 *Jewish Chronicle*, 28 July 1933.

3 *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 31 July 1933.

4 Obituary of Oliver Locker-Lampson in *New York Times*, 9 October 1954.

Two months after the speech, Locker-Lampson took the leading role in organizing a public meeting so that Einstein might speak and raise charitable donations for academic refugees from Germany. The audience, more than ten thousand strong, filled the Albert Hall in London in early October 1933. Einstein, as the star attraction among the many distinguished British speakers chaired by the physicist Ernest Rutherford, spoke on “Science and civilisation” in his hesitant, peculiar and touching English, to massive applause. Afterwards, on the steps of the hall, he told a British newspaper reporter:

I could not believe that it was possible that such spontaneous affection could be extended to one who is a wanderer on the face of the earth. The kindness of your people has touched my heart so deeply that I cannot find words to express in English what I feel. I shall leave England for America at the end of the week, but no matter how long I live I shall never forget the kindness which I have received from the people of England.⁵

5 *Eastern Daily Press*, [Norwich], 4 October 1933.

“A wanderer on the face of the earth.” In 1950, after living in the United States since 1933, Einstein went even further than this self-description. In a letter from his American home in Princeton to a friend in Switzerland whom he had known as a student in Zurich half a century before, Suzanne Markwalder, he wrote that he had now lived in America for 17 years—without having adopted anything of the country’s mentality. “One has to guard against becoming superficial in thought and feeling; it lies in the air here. You have never changed your human surroundings and can hardly realise what it is to be an old gypsy. It is not so bad.”⁶ Even when he formally became an American citizen in 1940, Einstein retained his Swiss citizenship. As was recently noted in the *New York Review of Books* by the influential English-born physicist, Freeman Dyson, who knew Einstein at Princeton in 1948 and later settled in the United States: “He had gone through the ritual of naturalization, but he remained an alien spirit in America.”⁷

6 23 December 1950, in Carl Seelig, *Albert Einstein: A Documentary Biography*, (London, Staples Press, 1956), 40.

7 Freeman Dyson, ‘Einstein as a Jew and a philosopher’, *New York Review of Books*, 7 May 2015, 14.

By 1950, Einstein the gypsy had wandered far indeed from his country of birth and truly become a citizen of the world. Born in southern Germany in 1879, he abandoned it in 1894. After a period living with his parents in Italy, he received the remainder of his education in Switzerland, where he married a Serbian fellow-student of physics and settled (before creating his special theory of relativity and his revolutionary quantum theory in 1905). Having relinquished his German citizenship in 1896, he was stateless until 1901, when he became a Swiss citizen. In 1911, he and his young family moved from Switzerland to Prague, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but returned to Zurich in 1912. Then, in 1914, some months before the outbreak of war, he settled in Berlin and again acquired German citizenship, while keeping his Swiss citizenship. As he humorously remarked in an article in the *London Times*, published in 1919 during the bitter aftermath of war, “Today in Germany I am called a German man of science, and in England I am represented as a ‘Swiss Jew.’ If I come to be regarded as a *bête noire*, the descriptions will be reversed, and I shall become a Swiss Jew for the Germans and a German man of science for the English!”⁸ Nevertheless, he remained based in Germany—while travelling extensively in the 1920s and early 1930s to the United States, Britain, various European countries, the Far East (notably Japan), Palestine and South America—until 1933. Then, with the arrival of the Nazi regime, he moved to Belgium and after that Britain, before eventually settling in the United States, in Princeton.

8 *The Times*, 28 November 1919.

He never returned to Europe, such was his unrelenting distrust of the Germans—or to Palestine, despite his committed sympathy for Jewish causes. (He willed his massive archives to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.) In fact, Einstein never left the shores of the United States between 1933 and his death in 1955.

Towards each and every one of these countries in which he lived or travelled, he felt an ambivalence. With the possible exception of Switzerland, Einstein felt nowhere at home throughout his life. Unlike his almost equally distinguished physicist contemporaries, Max Planck and Niels Bohr—friends of Einstein who felt at home only in Germany and Denmark, respectively—Einstein did not fully identify himself with any country or nation. “If I had to characterise Einstein by one single word I would choose *apartness*,” wrote Einstein’s (and Bohr’s) biographer, Abraham Pais, a physicist who had known Einstein and Bohr personally.⁹

This solitariness was evident from Einstein’s childhood. He was a quiet baby, so quiet that his parents became seriously concerned and consulted a doctor about his not learning to talk. But when a daughter, Maja, was born in November 1881, Albert apparently asked promptly: Where are the wheels of my new toy? It turned out that his ambition was to speak in complete sentences: First he would try out a sentence in his head, while moving his lips, and only then repeat it aloud. The habit lasted until his seventh year or even later. The family maidservant dubbed him “stupid”.

At school, he was good, yet by no means a prodigy. However, Einstein showed hardly any affection for his schooling and in later life excoriated the system of formal education current in Germany. He referred to his teachers as “sergeants” and “lieutenants,” disliked physical training and competitive games—even intellectual games such as chess—and detested anything that smacked of the military discipline typical of the Prussian ethos of northern Germany.¹⁰ “Constraint has always been his personal enemy. His whole youth was a battle against it”, wrote a friend and Einstein biographer, Antonina Vallentin, in 1954. “When he uttered the German word for it, an abrupt word, with a particular sinister sound, *Zwang*, everything tolerant, humorous or resigned in his expression vanished.”¹¹ In 1920, he even told a Berlin interviewer that the school matriculation exam should be abolished. “Let us return to Nature, which upholds the principle of getting the maximum amount of effect from the minimum of effort, whereas the matriculation test does exactly the opposite.”¹² As he astutely remarked in 1930 after had become world famous: “To punish me for my contempt of authority, Fate has made me an authority myself.”¹³

Part of Einstein’s problem lay in the heavy emphasis in the German Gymnasiums on the humanities; that is, on classical studies and to a lesser extent German history and literature, to the detriment of modern foreign languages, such as French and English. Science and

9 Abraham Pais, *Einstein Lived Here* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), 39.

10 Alexander Moszkowski, *Conversations with Einstein* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1972), 223.

11 Antonina Vallentin, *Einstein: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1954), 20.

12 Moszkowski, *Conversations*, 66.

13 Banesh Hoffmann and Helen Dukas, *Albert Einstein: Creator and Rebel* (New York, Viking, 1972), 24.

mathematics were regarded as the subjects with the lowest status. But the main problem with school was probably that Albert was a confirmed autodidact, who preferred his own company to that of his teachers and fellow students. “Private study” is a phrase frequent in his early letters and adult writings on education. It was clearly his chief means of becoming educated. His sister Maja recalled that even in noisy company her brother could “withdraw to the sofa, take pen and paper in hand, set the inkstand precariously on the armrest, and lose himself so completely in a problem that the conversation of many voices stimulated rather than disturbed him.”¹⁴

14 Albert Einstein, *Collected Papers of Albert Einstein*, volume 1 (English translation supplement), (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1987), xxii.

15 Albrecht Fölsing, *Albert Einstein: A Biography* (London, Penguin, 1998), 27.

Things came to a head in 1894. A new class teacher informed Einstein that “he would never get anywhere in life”. When Einstein replied that surely he “had not committed any offence,” he was told: “Your mere presence here undermines the class’s respect for me.”¹⁵ For the rest of his life, Einstein would be known for a mocking (and self-mocking) way with words that was sometimes biting and always at odds with his later gentle image. When as an adult in the 1920s he chanced upon a German psychiatrist’s book, *Physique and Character* by Ernest Kretschmer, he was shaken by it and wrote down the following words in his diary, which he apparently thought applied to himself: “Hypersensitivity transformed into indifference. During adolescence, inwardly inhibited and unworldly. Glass pane between subject and other people. Unmotivated mistrust. Substitute paper world. Ascetic impulses.”¹⁶

16 Albert Einstein, *The Travel Diaries of Albert Einstein: The Far East, Palestine & Spain, 1922–1923*, Ze’ev Rosenkranz ed., (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2018), 89.

Even in Switzerland, these youthful personal characteristics tended to isolate him. His relationship with his physics professors at the Swiss Polytechnic in Zurich in 1896-1900 was distinctly awkward, because the largely self-taught Einstein regarded them as behind the times, scientifically speaking, and unable to cope with his student challenges to their authority. As he recalled of a student friend, the mathematically gifted Marcel Grossmann (who would later aid Einstein crucially with the mathematics of general relativity), “He was a model student; I untidy and a daydreamer. He on excellent terms with the teachers and grasping everything easily; I aloof and discontented, not very popular.”¹⁷ When, after four years of study at the Polytechnic, Einstein graduated with a diploma entitling him to teach mathematics in Swiss schools, his aim was to become an assistant to a professor at the Polytechnic, write a doctoral thesis and enter the academic world. But he received no support from his professors. In 1902, his desperate economic circumstances compelled him to take a job as a clerk in the Patent Office in Bern, with the help of Grossmann’s father. Luckily for Einstein, this stable, practical employment proved to be an ideal setting for spare-time research on theoretical physics.

17 Hoffmann with Dukas, *Albert Einstein*, 36.

Moreover, many of his friends in Zurich and Bern—including his fiancée, Mileva Marić—were not fully Swiss. Grossmann, though a member of an old Swiss family, was born in Hungary. Michele Besso,

the only helper acknowledged by name in Einstein's first published paper on special relativity, though born in Switzerland, was a Jew from an Italian family. Maurice Solovine, one of the three members of an academic discussion club formed with Einstein (which they jokingly called the Olympia Academy), was born in Romania. Only the third member of the club, Conrad Habicht, a mathematician who also helped Einstein to develop relativity, belonged entirely to Switzerland.

Although Einstein eventually left the Patent Office and became a professor of theoretical physics at the university in Zurich in 1909, this move came about, ironically, thanks to German—not Swiss—support. German physicists, led by Planck, had recognized the importance of special relativity and of other papers published in Germany by Einstein from 1905. And it was they who eventually lured him back to his abandoned country in April 1914 by offering him a plum position at the Prussian Academy of Sciences in Berlin.

There, in 1915-16, working furiously and virtually alone, Einstein created the most important work of his scientific life: general relativity. At the same time, his marriage collapsed, and the First World War divided him from his German colleagues, including Planck.

As a Swiss citizen, he was not required for military service. On the other hand, he was expected to support the patriotic effort. In October 1914, two months after the outbreak of war, 93 leading Germans from the world of the arts, humanities and sciences enthusiastically signed a "Manifesto to the cultured world," which was translated into ten languages, arguing that Germany had not started the war and that its cultural legacy—Goethe, Beethoven, and Kant were mentioned by name—and its current militarism were as one. Einstein, instead, signed a "Manifesto to the Europeans," arguing for European unity, rather than war, which attracted only four signatures and had to be printed in Zurich, not Berlin. When, in 1915, he was asked by the officers of the Berlin Goethe League for a contribution to *The Country of Goethe 1914-1916: A Patriotic Album*, he argued that: "The best minds from all epochs are agreed that war is one of the worst enemies of human development, that everything should be done to prevent it." This comment was permitted. But when he further remarked that: "The state, to which I belong as a citizen, plays not the slightest role in my emotional life; I regard a person's relations with the state as a business matter, rather like one's relations with a life assurance company", the League refused to publish this.¹⁸ Germany's national self-delusion was perfectly encapsulated in a vignette from Einstein reported to a Swiss colleague, the Nobel prize-winning writer Romain Rolland, in 1915. After every meeting of the Berlin University Senate, said Einstein, laughing aloud, all the professors would meet in a restaurant and "invariably" the conversation would begin with the question: "Why are we hated in the world?" Then there would be a discussion in which everyone would supply his own answer while "most carefully steering clear of the truth."¹⁹

18 Albrecht Fölsing, *Albert Einstein*, 367-368.

19 Ibid., 366.

After the war, Einstein's attitude to Germany became even more ambivalent. General relativity made him suddenly world famous in late 1919, when his 1915-16 theory was proved by British astronomical observations of a solar eclipse, led by Arthur Eddington. The British connection—combined with Eddington's Quaker support for pacifism—made Einstein increasingly suspect in the eyes of German patriots, who in 1920 launched an anti-relativity movement in Germany, claiming that the theory was scientifically bogus. Einstein's subsequent support for a Jewish national home in Palestine from 1921, and for pacifism, intensified this German opposition, which combined anti-relativity with anti-Semitism and militarism. In mid-1922, right-wing extremists assassinated in Berlin the foreign minister of the Weimar Republic, Walther Rathenau, a Jew who was friendly with Einstein. Soon after, Einstein, fearing for his own life, left Germany for a long lecture tour abroad. While he was in Japan, the trial of the would-be assassins of Rathenau took place in Berlin. One of the witnesses, a German-Jewish journalist, testified in court that: "The great scholar Albert Einstein is now in Japan because he does not feel safe in Germany."²⁰ This comment was picked up from a news agency report by the *Japan Advertiser*, causing embarrassment to the German ambassador to Japan. He requested Einstein by cable to allow him to deny the story publicly. But as Einstein conveyed to the ambassador in a letter, the true situation was somewhat more complicated than it appeared. Before the murder of Rathenau, "A yearning for the Far East led me, in large part, to accept the invitation to Japan". After the murder, "I was certainly very relieved to have an opportunity for a long absence from Germany, taking me away from the temporarily heightened danger without my having to do anything that could have been unpleasant for my German friends and colleagues."²¹

20 Note 170 in Einstein, *Travel Diaries*, 305.

21 20 December 1922, in Einstein, *Travel Diaries*, 253.

Thus, during the first half of the 1920s, Einstein found himself in a disturbing position. He was promoted and hailed as an important cultural ambassador for Weimar Germany when he travelled and lectured in many countries: the United States and Britain in 1921, Japan in 1922, Palestine in 1923 and South America in 1925. Yet he was also fiercely attacked by many Germans, at home and abroad. In Argentina, for example, the German ambassador reported to his masters in Berlin on Einstein's visit: "For the first time, a world-famous German scholar came here, and his naïve, kindly, perhaps somewhat unworldly manner had an extraordinary appeal for the local population. One could not find a better man to counter the hostile propaganda of lies, and to destroy the fable of German barbarism."²² And yet, the ambassador admitted, the local German community in Argentina had boycotted all Einstein-related events because its members objected to his pacifism. "A funny lot, these Germans", wrote Einstein in his Argentina diary. "To them I am a stinking flower, and yet they keep putting me in their buttonhole."²³ At several times in this period,

22 Josef Eisinger, *Einstein on the Road* (New York, Prometheus, 2011), 83.

23 17 Apr. 1925, in Fölsing, *Albert Einstein*, 549.

Einstein seriously contemplated leaving his home in Germany for good. Such personal tribulations gave him advance warning—ahead of most other Germans—of what to expect from the Nazi party a decade later.

When Einstein moved to the United States in 1933, his 1920s predicament in Germany in a sense recurred in his new setting. Relativity might now have been largely accepted by scientists (other than Nazi sympathizers), but right-wing American forces were suspicious of Einstein's public opposition to the Nazis and supposed sympathy for Communism. Even in Princeton, as late as November 1939, after the outbreak of war in Europe, the university's freshmen chose Hitler, for the second year running, as "the greatest living person" in the annual poll of their class conducted by the *Daily Princetonian!* (The German leader received 93 votes in the poll; Einstein 27 votes; and Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister, 15 votes.)²⁴ In the early 1940s, soon after he became an American citizen, Einstein was nevertheless excluded by the military authorities from access to plans to build an atomic bomb, despite the fact that he had first proposed its construction in a famous letter to President Franklin Roosevelt as early as August 1939 (such was Einstein's fear that German physicists would beat physicists in the United States). During the cold war, post-1945, right-wing American suspicions intensified. After Einstein announced his opposition to the hydrogen bomb in a nationwide television broadcast in 1950, J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, launched a top-secret FBI investigation with the aim of having Einstein deported from the United States as a Communist agent. It continued until Einstein's death, despite a lack of any convincing evidence.

24 *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1939.

More effective was Einstein's opposition to Senator Joseph McCarthy and his 1950s Red Scare. Einstein helped to turn the tide against the climate of fear and precipitate the decline of McCarthyism. In this period he made a number of public statements and supported several individuals threatened with dismissal from their jobs for having Communist sympathies. But the one that really stirred public controversy was Einstein's letter to a New York teacher of English, William Frauenglass, in May 1953. Frauenglass had refused to testify before a congressional committee about his political affiliations and now faced dismissal from his school. He asked for advice from Einstein, who wrote to him (no doubt thinking of his experience of German intellectuals in the first world war and under Nazism):

The reactionary politicians have managed to instil suspicion of all intellectual efforts into the public by dangling before their eyes a danger from without. ... What ought the minority of intellectuals to do against this evil? Frankly, I can only see the revolutionary way of non-cooperation in the sense of Gandhi's. Every intellectual who is called before one of the committees ought to refuse to testify, i.e., he must be prepared for jail

and economic ruin, in short, for the sacrifice of his personal welfare in the interest of the cultural welfare of his country. ... If enough people are ready to take this grave step they will be successful. If not, then the intellectuals of this country deserve nothing better than the slavery which is intended for them.²⁵

25 Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions*, Carl Seelig ed., (New York, Three Rivers Press, 1982), 33-34.

After this advice was published in the *New York Times* with Einstein's permission, he feared that, at the age of 74 and in poor health, he might have to go to jail. Immediately, McCarthy told the *New York Times* that "anyone who gives advice like Einstein's to Frauenglass is himself an enemy of America. ... That's the same advice given by every Communist lawyer that has ever appeared before our committee." (A week later, he modified "enemy of America" to "a disloyal American.")²⁶ The *New York Times*, in an editorial, agreed with McCarthy's criticism of Einstein's advice.

26 Pais, *Einstein Lived Here*, 238.

Perhaps, if Einstein had been younger and healthier in the 1950s, he might have emigrated from the United States to Israel. Yet such a move seems unlikely on the evidence. During the 1930s and 1940s, he repeatedly refused to accept a professorship from the Hebrew University, or even to revisit Palestine from Princeton. He certainly supported some Jewish organizations, and assiduously helped numerous individual Jews—in both the humanities and the sciences—to escape doom at the hands of the Nazis, but he evinced no sympathy for Zionist nationalism. When he turned down the presidency of Israel in 1952, Einstein remarked that his relationship with the Jewish people had become his "strongest human bond."²⁷ However, he clearly valued the pleasures of solitary thinking about physics more highly than human bonds, whether in Jerusalem, Berlin, Oxford, Princeton or anywhere else in the world. "Remoteness, a relative absence of intimate personal relationships, is ... a genuine ingredient of certain types of genius," noted the Oxford philosopher Isaiah Berlin long after Einstein's death. "It is certainly true of Einstein, who was himself aware of his absence of contact with human beings; although in his case this certainly did not take the form of a desire for power or glory."²⁸ Home, for Einstein, was always his own mind. A

27 Ze'ev Rosenkranz, *Einstein before Israel: Zionist Icon or Iconoclast?* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011), 273.

28 Letter to Anthony Storr, 29 September 1978, in Isaiah Berlin, *Affirming: Letters 1975-1997*, Henry Hardy and Mark Pottle eds, (London, Chatto & Windus, 2015), 84.

Geology of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex

A Primer

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THE YEAR IS 2041 AND UT DALLAS ENGINEERING has invented a time machine. You are the best history student at The University of Texas at Dallas and have been selected to take the first trip back in time. The University president asks you, “Where do you want to go? Back to talk with Lincoln at Gettysburg? Jesus at the Last Supper? Galileo at the Papal Inquisition?” You answer, “No ma’am, I want to go back to November 1841 and talk with John Neely Bryan, the founder of Dallas.” The president gives you a quizzical look, says, “Wait a minute,” whispers to her robotic assistant who whirls and leaves the room. The robot returns soon with a paper bag that he gives to the President, who pulls out a bottle of whiskey and hands it to you, saying, “You’re going to need this.” A team of engineering students turns a few dials and everything goes fuzzy for a few moments while you go back 200 years in time.

The next thing you know, you are standing on a small wooded knoll overlooking a small river. It is the Trinity River, and you are standing about where Dealey Plaza is in downtown Dallas today. It is late afternoon in November 1841. In the distance you can see a herd of buffalo, heading south for the winter, with a band of Native Americans following on horseback; overhead a sky full of geese flies in the same direction. One hundred yards away a man in a covered wagon is cajoling a team of horses across the river. It is John Neely Bryan.

Bryan, the horses, and wagon reach the riverbank and slowly come up to where you stand. He gives you a suspicious look until he spies the bottle of whiskey in your hand and smiles. After you help him

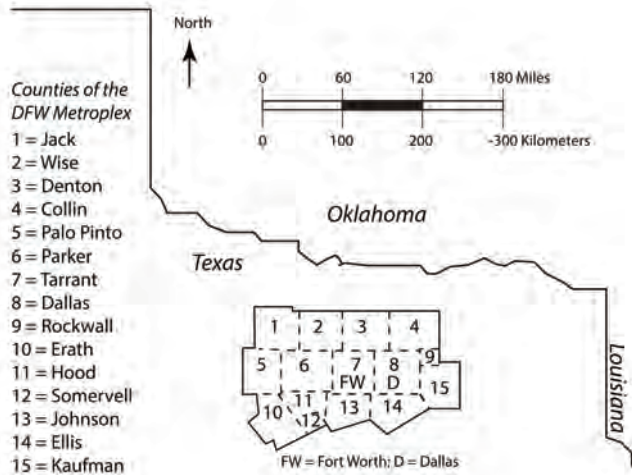


Figure 1 The 15 counties of the Metroplex, divided into three tiers: Northern tier: Jack, Wise, Denton, and Collin Counties; Central tier: Palo Pinto, Parker, Tarrant, Dallas, Rockwall and Kaufman Counties; Southern Tier: Erath, Hood, Somervell, Johnson, and Ellis Counties. D = Dallas, FW = Fort Worth. This is my definition of the DFW Metroplex, a bit different from the Census Bureau's Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan area. This area is about the same as the state of Maryland. Note that this definition of the DFW Metroplex is almost the same as the 16 counties that belong to the North Central Texas Council of Governments (<https://www.nctcog.org>). The area that is usefully described as the DFW Metroplex is likely to increase in the future. Figure by R. J. Stern.

set up camp and share some beans and bacon for dinner, you open the bottle, share it with him, and talk. He asks you where you are from and you tell him “200 years in the future.” He raises a suspicious eyebrow but says nothing. You try to convince him, telling him about the war with Mexico, the Civil War, and how Texas joined the United States, then left, then joined again. You tell him the slaves are free and equal citizens and women have the same rights as men. You tell him about automobiles, airplanes, two World Wars, the atomic bomb, television, credit cards, and the internet. He asks a few questions but is mostly dumbfounded, only breaking his silence to ask for the whiskey bottle. Finally, you stretch his credulity to the breaking point by telling him about the city of Dallas—“How did you know I was going to name the town that I hope grows here that?” he blurts—but you continue. You tell him that what he is starting here will in two centuries be the third largest concentration of people in the USA after the greater New York and Los Angeles areas. You tell him that the great concentration of people will spread out over an area about the size of Maryland and be home to ten million people, and one in three Texans. Bryan grows alarmed and gets up, saying, “I knew you was crazy but now I know you’re mad-dog dangerous!” as he points his rifle at you. You press the panic button and are digitally evacuated from the mid-nineteenth century back to UT Dallas just in time to escape with your life.

This little fantasy captures the miracle that is the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. We can't know how many people will live here in two decades, but given its size today and its growth rate, ten million in 2041 is not a bad guess. According to US Census Bureau estimates for 2017, 7,400,000 people call the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington metropolitan area "home."¹ The DFW Metroplex is the fourth largest and the fastest growing metropolitan area in the nation (Fig. 1).

There are many stories that could be told about the surprising rise to prominence of the DFW Metroplex; about entrepreneurs, civic leaders, and politics, but these are not of interest here. Instead, the physical setting of the Metroplex is emphasized, especially the subtle natural advantages that the Metroplex has. Most large US cities are older and are located where there were natural harbors for ships like New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles. Others nucleated at key points on the Great Lakes, like Chicago and Detroit. Still others were established at key points on a great river, like St. Louis, New Orleans, or Pittsburgh. Only a few younger urban areas grew up around inland railroad junctions; these include Denver, Atlanta, and the DFW Metroplex. The natural advantages for population centers on ocean, lake, or river are obvious, but what about the inland centers? Their natural advantages may be less obvious, but that doesn't mean they don't exist. We should know about these so we can celebrate and protect them.

This essay outlines the geology of the Metroplex and the natural advantages that this has bestowed on our region. What made the land where the Metroplex is situated? Today the Metroplex is increasingly a "built environment," but the growing skin of asphalt and concrete is thin, and what lies beneath is easy to find in creek beds, roadcuts, and construction sites. It is worth thinking about the ground beneath our feet, not only because it affects our house foundations and fecundity of our gardens, but also so we can better understand our place in the world. To get your juices flowing on this topic, please take six minutes to watch a new video, *The story behind the rocks of Dallas/Fort Worth*, made by UTD's Geoscience Studios.²

A common complaint is that the metroplex has no mountains or beaches or even a great river (no offence intended to the Trinity River, about which I'll say more complimentary things later) but in fact mountains and ocean beaches were once here. The mountains were here 300 million years ago, a broad white sand beach was here 110 million years ago, and the great river was here 100 million years ago. These beautiful scenes all existed where we are today; we just arrived too late to enjoy them. But it's not too late to see evidence that these beautiful scenes once existed where we live today. Figure 2 shows the geology that lies beneath the DFW Metroplex.

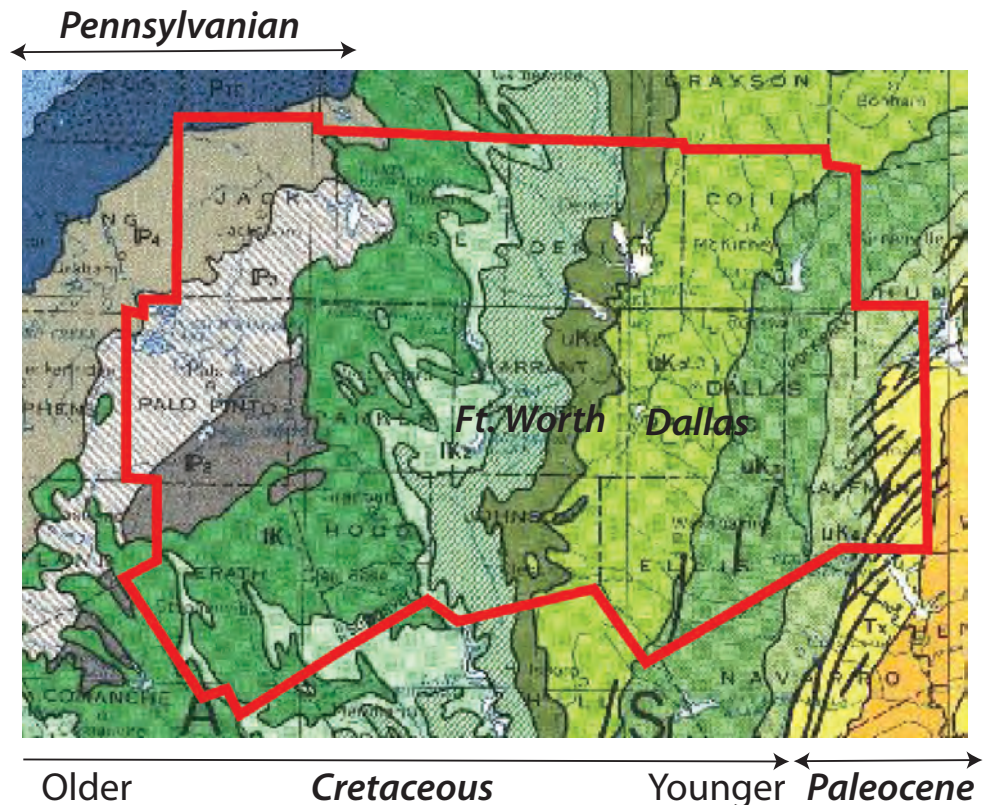


Figure 2 Outline of the DFW Metroplex and age of underlying sediments. Note that sediments from the Pennsylvanian (grey; 383 to 299 million years ago, or Ma), Cretaceous (green; 145 to 66 Ma) and Paleocene epoch (yellow; 66 to 56 Ma). Because Cretaceous and Paleocene sedimentary rocks dip gently east, they are oldest in the west and youngest in the east. A veneer of Quaternary sediments (2.588 Ma to today) is found along river valleys but is not shown. Figure by R. J. Stern.

Dallas didn't exist when the Texas Republic began in 1836, and it barely existed when Texas joined the United States ten years later. Dallas was founded at the best crossing of the Trinity River, where the river cuts southeast across the firm Austin chalk. In 1841, John Neely Bryan set his ferry and trading post on a low hill of the chalk on the north side of the river and Dallas germinated there. A few years later, in 1849, the U.S. Army built a fort overlooking the junction of the West Fork and Clear Fork of the Trinity River. The fort was abandoned almost as quickly as it was built, with the crude structure becoming the nucleus for the great city of Fort Worth.

Rainfall and soil dictated different economies for the regions around Dallas and those around Fort Worth. Dallas and the eastern half of the Metroplex receive an average of 37 inches of rain per year, while Fort Worth and the western half receive a little less. Just as important as the rainfall itself are the rocks that this rain has fallen on

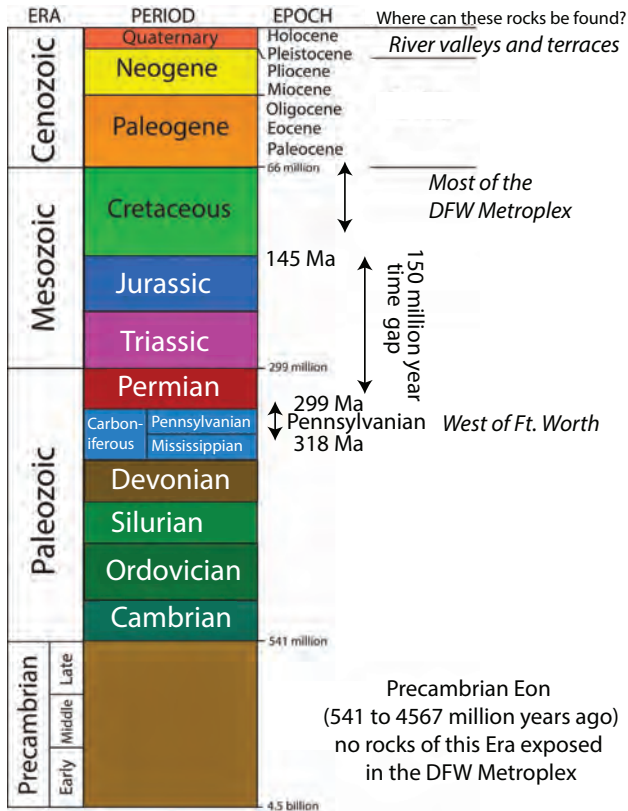


Figure 3 The Phanerozoic time scale, vertical axis is in millions of years before present (mega annum, Ma). Sedimentary rocks exposed in the DFW Metroplex include Pennsylvanian units in the far west, Paleocene units in the far SE, and a vast expanse of Cretaceous sediments in between. A time gap of about 150 million years between the Pennsylvanian and the Cretaceous is when our region was a mountainous uplift, subject to erosion. In fact, the oldest Cretaceous sediments are ~110 Ma, the gap encompasses almost 200 million years of Earth history. Figure by R. J. Stern.

over the last several millions of years. The eastern Metroplex is mostly underlain by shales—which easily break down into thick soils—but the western Metroplex is mostly underlain by limestones, which form poor soils. As a result, the post-Civil War economy around Dallas was founded on cotton, which grew well on the thick soils in the east. In contrast, the drier land around Fort Worth favored cattle drives and ranching. These economic realities of the last half of the 19th century are reflected in the saying that “The East stops at Dallas; the West starts at Fort Worth.”

The solid Earth has three great compositional layers: the core, the mantle, and the crust. The crust is by far the smallest part, making up about 0.5% of Earth’s mass, and is divided into thinner oceanic crust and thicker continental crust. The lightness and thickness of continental crust means that its upper surface is mostly above sea level, and this encouraged an incredible variety of plants and

air-breathing creatures to evolve on its surface, Texans included. The continental crust beneath southern Oklahoma and north central Texas is composed of Precambrian (about 1.4 billion year old) igneous and metamorphic rocks. These rocks are everywhere buried beneath sedimentary rocks in the Metroplex but can be seen in the Llano area west of Austin, for example in the granitic monolith of Enchanted Rock. Thick Paleozoic (541 to 252 million year old) sedimentary rocks lie on top of the crust, including the Mississippian (about 330 million year old) shales of the gas-rich Barnett Shale. Paleozoic sedimentary rocks are mostly buried beneath younger sediments in the Metroplex, but Pennsylvanian sedimentary rocks (about 300 million years old; Fig. 3) are exposed in the far northwest (Fig. 2). Thick sequences of Pennsylvanian sediments were shed from the east, where collision between the ancient continents of Laurussia and Gondwana made the super continent Pangea (“All Earth”), with a now-eroded mountain range marking where the collision occurred (although remnants of the Pennsylvanian mountain range are still exposed in the Ouachitas of SE Oklahoma and SW Arkansas). Places where Pennsylvanian sedimentary rocks can be enjoyed include Mineral Wells State Park, where some folks enjoy climbing cliffs of Pennsylvanian conglomerate. These conglomerates were shed westward from the mountains that used to rise where Dallas is today. Another fun destination is Mineral Wells Fossil Park, where you can hunt for Pennsylvanian marine fossils.³ At this time, the ocean lay to the west. The economy of Fort Worth was transformed in 1917 when oil was discovered in Pennsylvanian sedimentary rocks near Ranger, about 90 miles to the west.⁴

Paleozoic sedimentary rocks of the Metroplex tilt gently west, so they get younger in that direction. Some of the youngest Paleozoic sedimentary rocks have thick layers of salt and the rivers that flow over these deposits can become quite salty and unpalatable, even nonpotable. One reason that population and economic activity in north central Texas focused on the Metroplex is because the Trinity River is short and does not flow over the salt deposits to the west. In contrast, longer rivers to the north (the Red River) and south (Brazos River) reached farther west and flowed over these salt deposits, making the water of these rivers too salty to use. The saltiness of the Red River is reflected in the fact that Striped Bass, a fish that normally lives in the ocean, thrives in Lake Texoma. (The largest was caught in 1984 by Terry Harber; it was 39 inches long and weighed 35 pounds.)⁵ Thus, partly because of water quality, the regional economy—transportation, banking, et cetera—increasingly focused at communities built on the shorter Trinity River. The superior quality of Trinity River water—a gift of the river’s shorter length—thus stimulated the growth of Dallas and Fort Worth over settlements on the longer Brazos and Red Rivers. Maintaining Trinity River water quality and quantity, increasingly supplemented by water from rivers to the east, is also a key for the

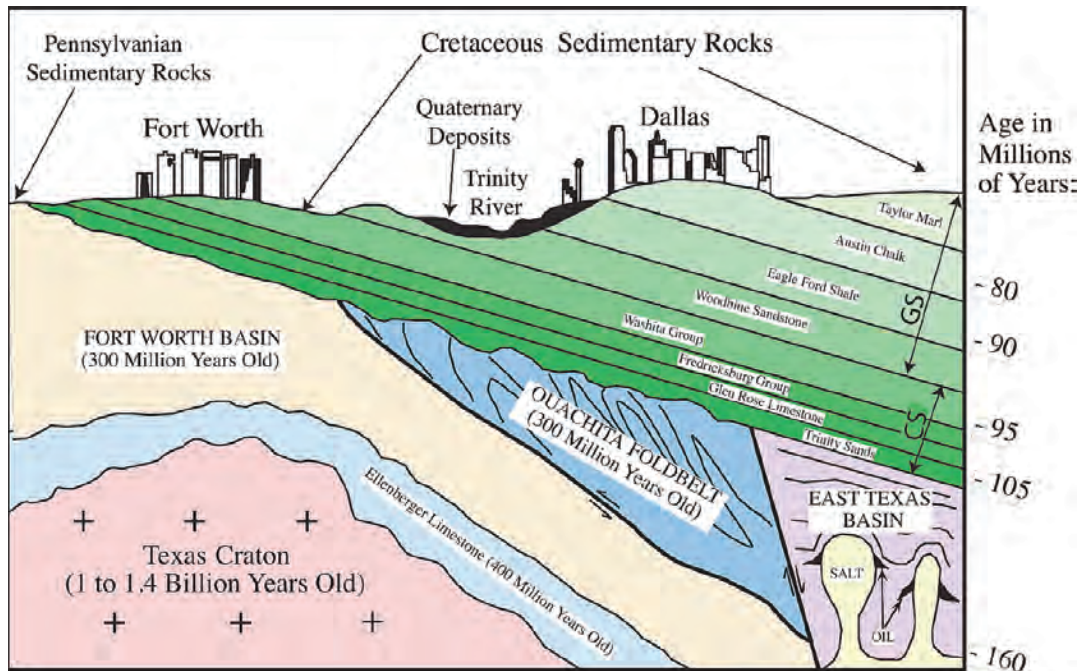


Figure 4 Simplified and exaggerated section across the DFW Metroplex. All that is exposed at the surface is Quaternary river terraces and Cretaceous and Pennsylvanian sedimentary rocks; older rocks are buried and only known from drilling. Note that about 200 million years of erosion separates Pennsylvanian and Cretaceous sediments. The Pennsylvanian sea retreated towards the Pacific, but the Cretaceous sea retreated to the SE. The Ouachita foldbelt is remnant of the mountains that once rose where Dallas is today. The Cretaceous is a gently (~1°) eastward dipping series of beach and river sands, limestones, shale, and chalk; CS = Early Cretaceous Comanche Series; GS = mostly Late Cretaceous Gulf Series. Note that the Cretaceous sediments overlie much older Pennsylvanian sediments above a major unconformity. Figure by R. J. Stern.

future of the region. The unpredictable effects of global climate change on rainfall in and around the Metroplex complicate planning for continued population growth.

The importance of Dallas and Fort Worth as regional centers was cemented when the railroads arrived after the Civil War. The north-south railroad arrived in Dallas 1873 with the Houston and Texas Central. A memory of this railroad is preserved in the name of Central Expressway, which follows the old tracks. The east-west Texas and Pacific Railway arrived the same year and established Dallas and Fort Worth as regional transportation hubs. The north-south freeways (IH-35E and 35W, and IH-45) and east-west freeways (IH-20 and 30) followed similar routes to and through the Metroplex.

Most of the Metroplex is underlain by Cretaceous sedimentary rocks. These sediments were deposited as sea level rose through the 79 million years of this time period, reaching the Metroplex about 110 million years ago. The sea expanded from the Gulf

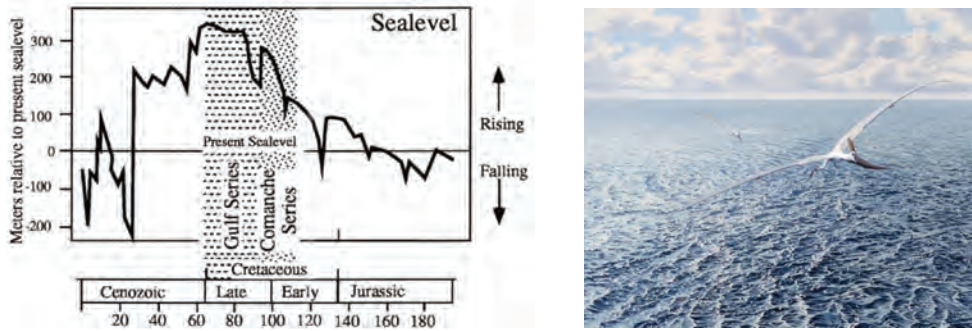


Figure 5 The great Cretaceous transgression and the Cretaceous interior seaway.

Left Sea level rose throughout Cretaceous time, eventually reaching the region now occupied by the DFW Metroplex towards the end of Early Cretaceous time, about 110 Ma. Sea level continued to rise, depositing the Early Cretaceous sediments of the Comanche Series (now exposed in the western Metroplex) followed by Late Cretaceous sediments of the Gulf Series (now exposed in the eastern Metroplex). Figure by R. J. Stern.

Right Artistic depiction of what the DFW Metroplex looked like during Late Cretaceous sealevel highstand ~80 Ma. © Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

of Mexico, a small ocean basin that formed when Pangea broke up about 165 million years ago. As sea level rose, the ocean flooded the land, which had been eroding for about 200 million years since the collision to form Pangea ended. The first deposits in the Metroplex were clean beach sands and shallow water limestones, now exposed west and south of Fort Worth. Dinosaurs cavorted in this shoreline environment. You can see their footprints at Dinosaur Valley State Park, near Glen Rose.⁶ Sea level continued to rise slowly, depositing shallow marine limestones, which are well exposed in Tarrant County. This basal sand overlain by younger limestones makes up the Comanche Series (CS in Figure 4).

This shallow warm marine environment was interrupted about 100 million years ago, when crustal uplift to the northeast in what is now southeast Oklahoma and southwest Arkansas shed tremendous volumes of sediments to the south. These sediments outcrop in the mid-cities area, from Arlington north to Grapevine and beyond. One or more great rivers flowed south into the Metroplex region, forming a great delta with vast swamps. Dinosaurs returned to the area; their footprints are known from rock exposures near Lake Grapevine. Oak trees thrive on this sandy soil and in John Neely Bryan's time a forest of these defined the north-south strip known as the "Cross Timbers," separating the limestone scrub to the west from the blackland prairie to the east. You can get your hands dirty in the Woodbine, helping other volunteers dig for Cretaceous swamp creatures such as crocodiles and turtles at the Arlington Archosaur Site.⁷



Figure 6 The Austin Chalk. This Late Cretaceous marine sediment is made up of untold billions of Coccolithophorae, which are unicellular eukaryotic phytoplankton.

A Coccoisphaera showing arrangement of calcite (CaCO_3) plates coccoliths in life position. This organism is 50-100 μm in diameter. B Loose coccolith plates deposited on seafloor. Compression turned this loose agglomeration of microfossil fragments into chalk. C, D Outcrops of Austin Chalk exposed by erosion on an outside bend of White Rock Creek, at Anderson-Bonner Park in North Dallas. Figures by R. J. Stern.

Tectonic movements to the north waned, the region subsided, and the great Woodbine river died. The sea invaded again, but this time it was a stagnant sea, with no oxygen below the shallow wind-mixed region, so that any animal that swam or sank into the oxygen-starved waters died instantly and was preserved in the black shales deposited on the seafloor, known as the Eagle Ford Shale. A slightly different variety of Eagle Ford Shale is a prolific producer of oil in south Texas. The Eagle Ford Shale in the Metroplex makes a poor soil and its swelling clays sometimes causes problems for construction.

Sealevel continued to rise and the stagnant Eagle Ford ocean was replaced by much more oxygenated waters (Fig. 5). The sea about 90 million years ago was deep enough to submerge all but the tallest skyscrapers in downtown Dallas.⁸ In this clear, warm sea, far removed from muddy shorelines, single-celled phytoplankton called coccolithophorae thrived. These creatures were armored with hubcap-shaped calcite plates that sank to the seafloor when the coccoliths died,

accumulating on the seafloor as a gentle “snow” over millions of years to ultimately produce the 400-foot-thick Austin Chalk (Fig. 6). The Austin Chalk is the bedrock that Dallas is built on, from east of US-75 (Central Expressway) to west of the North Dallas Tollway. Austin Chalk outcrops generally stand a little above the more easily eroded Eagle Ford Shale to the west and the Taylor and Navarro shales to the east, which tend to form muddy river valleys (e.g. the Elm Fork and East Fork of the Trinity River). The north-south trending Austin Chalk outcrop belt makes a well-drained, modestly vegetated, high-standing ridge that can make an excellent route for animals and people to move from San Antonio through Austin to Dallas. It was this firm substrate for overland travel and favorable river crossings that was followed by buffalo, Native Americans, John Neely Bryan, railroads, and IH-35.

The economy of Dallas was transformed when the gigantic East Texas oil field, a subterranean pool 42 miles long and 8 miles wide, was discovered 120 miles to the east in 1930.⁹ This pool was found where the Woodbine sandstone was slightly tilted; the oil was cooked out of the organic-rich Eagle Ford Shale and sealed into place by a cap of Austin Chalk.

The youngest Cretaceous sediments underlie the easternmost Metroplex (Fig. 2), and farther east only Cenozoic sedimentary rocks, deposited in the last 66 million years, are exposed. The boundary between the youngest Cretaceous and oldest Cenozoic sedimentary rocks (Paleocene; Fig. 2,3) elsewhere preserves evidence of the large meteorite that struck Earth on what is now the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, disrupting climate and leading to the demise of the dinosaurs and other Cenozoic life. Such evidence has not yet been reported from this horizon in the Metroplex.

The final geologic time period represented in the Metroplex is the Quaternary, essentially the most recent two and a half million years of Earth history. This was a time known as the Ice Age. The great continental ice sheet that covered much of North America never reached south of Kansas and Missouri, but its effects on climate and especially rainfall were felt in the Metroplex region. The Trinity River and its tributaries received much more water and were much more vigorous streams than they are today. Coarse gravels were deposited and broad river terraces were cut by these bigger rivers. Giant mammals like mammoths dominated the animal life of the Metroplex. Occasional glimpses of these majestic beasts are sometimes seen when someone finds a buried tusk or tooth. A spectacular mass grave of these beasts can be seen at Waco Mammoth National Monument.¹⁰

I hope you enjoyed this brief overview of the rocks beneath the DFW Metroplex. Keep this history in mind when encounter some of the many rock exposures in roadcuts, construction sites, and along streams in the Metroplex. Pause and think about the environments in which these sediments were deposited. The rocks can be visited easily

enough on your own, or you can join one of the many fossil-collecting field trips offered by organizations like the Dallas Paleontological Society.¹¹ If you want to learn more about the geology of our region, take a look at Stern and Pujana (2016) .¹²

Our region enjoys significant natural advantages including buildable land extending in all directions and good water resources. Even some former disadvantages are no longer such: Not being near the seashore or on a great river means that the DFW Metroplex is protected from increasingly powerful storms and floods resulting from climate change. From Nature's hand, we only have to worry about flooding, droughts, tornadoes, and maybe earthquakes. Will we and our children and the many new people who will move to the Metroplex be wise enough to make the best use of and protect these advantages? ▸

Endnotes

- 1 <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkmk>
- 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axtGS7KSAzo>
- 3 <https://www.mineralwellsfossilpark.com>
- 4 <http://fortworthtexas.gov/about/history>
- 5 <https://danbarnett.com/lake-texoma-fishing-records>
- 6 <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/dinosaur-valley>
- 7 <https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/Fossilized-Dinosaur-Tracks-Discovered-at-Lake-Grapevine-321509491.html>
- 8 <https://www.smu.edu/Dedman/Academics/InstitutesCenters/ISEM/OceanDallas> (includes a nice downloadable guide to the units and fossils in Dallas County)
- 9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Texas_Oil_Field
- 10 <https://www.nps.gov/waco>
- 11 <https://dallaspaleo.org>
- 12 Robert J. Stern and Ignacio Pujana, "Stratigraphy of the Dallas Fort Worth Metroplex," in George Maxey and Roger Farish, eds. *Guide to Fossil Collecting*, Ivy Press (Dallas, 2016), 4-1 to 4-17. The *Guide to Fossil Collecting* by the Dallas Paleontological Society is best obtained at www.DallasPaleo.org; click on 'store'.

Dispatches from the Emotional Rollercoaster

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“**Y**OU CAN’T MEASURE LOVE,” I said. The consternation among the assembled psychologists, eating lunch in the garden of a Swiss chateau outside Geneva, was palpable. I had, unwittingly, uttered an unorthodox phrase; a heresy that, if it were taken seriously, would make many of the assembled company redundant. The scale of the chasm between us became clear. We were at the International Summer School of the Affective Sciences seemingly with a common purpose: to talk about emotions and emotion research. But it is apparent that when it comes to “emotions,” scientists in different disciplines are scarcely talking about the same things at all.

Of course you can measure love. “Imagine, you see two people, standing in a field on a sunny day, gazing into each other’s eyes, holding hands,” said a bewildered lunchmate. “You can say with confidence that they are in love. And of course you can measure what’s going on in that moment.” Heart rate, blood pressure, all manner of hormone levels, but especially the “love hormone,” oxytocin, and brain activity: emotion scientists can measure all this, and study what’s going on in our bodies and in our heads in real time. My interlocutor was in earnest, and had on his side the methodological inertia of a century

of physiological and psychological research methods that have promised to bring the inside out. Since we all know what love is when we see it, and since we can assess it qualitatively just like that—the two lovers in a field—why not also subject it to functional magnetic resonance imaging and see what is “really” going on in the brain?

The problem, and the sticking point I was trying to articulate when I had brazenly claimed that you can’t measure love, is that whatever measurements come out of this scenario, even the most simplistic reading of the observer of two lovers in a field, are only good for that particular context, and for that particular time. The very image in question is highly specific. It is, implicitly, modern, western, and romantic. In the vast majority of public spaces in the world, it is also implicitly heteronormative. Where the people in question are imagined to be of the same sex, the image is confined to places characterized by specific liberal progressive value systems. And the more tightly we focus on such configurations, the more we see the implicit whiteness of the loving couple in the field. In how many places in the world is this scene imaginable? And where such public displays, heterosexual or otherwise, are not permitted or tolerated, what then for our easy recognition of what love is, what it feels like, how it is practiced?

If this is a problem along the axis of space or culture, then it is compounded along the axis of time. My historicist alarm immediately sounded on hearing this bundle of common sense and accepted truths, as if this were an image of love for the ages. If the casual ethnocentrism weren't troubling enough, the apparent naivete concerning the history of "love" heightened my sense of unease. Gestures—holding hands, for example—are historically specific and subject to historical research. There's no way to know, without contextual information, what the holding of hands means. The same might be said of the gaze. And, of course, romantic love also has a history.¹ People haven't always "fallen" into it. It emerged at a specific historical and cultural juncture, and its prescribed "rules" have changed over time. Looking more broadly at love over time, we find that it is political, social, filial, strategic. If we include other languages in our survey we find that, more often than not, "love" isn't actually love at all. Love is *amor* and *caritas* in Latin. Love is *philia*, *storge*, *agape*, and *eros* (among others) in Greek. C. Stephen Jaeger famously documented the medieval history of "ennobling love," now lost; Nicole Eustace wrote the story of "love" in pre-revolutionary America, when the self was conceived of socially, not individually, and where "matches" were made according to status politics, with affection being a consequence, not a precondition, of marriage. I have tried to chart the history of the "tender emotion(s)," or *tendre*, under which love was subsumed, for at least two centuries of European history.² It would be

1 William Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, Asia, and Japan, 900-1200 CE* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

2 C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of A Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Nicole Eustace, *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Rob Boddice, *A History of Feelings* (London: Reaktion, 2019), 97-105.

crude and simplistic to say that, at the end of the day, it's all the "love" that we—a word that is already a bundle of assumptions—already know. What I really mean, therefore, by "you can't measure love," is that any measurements you may make of whatever love you identify will be good for that love and that methodology in that time and space. As a science, that sounds a bit limited. Such was my point. Having lunch among the vineyards, under the Alps, the point was missed.

What was a historian doing among so many psychologists in the first place? In recent years I've had these kinds of conversations with neuroscientists, psychiatrists and psychologists. My aim is to break the history of emotions out of its disciplinary fetters and confront the wider world of emotion science or emotion research with its particular knowledge claims. Two decades of concentrated empirical research into the history of emotions has armed historians with broad knowledge claims about what emotions are, how they work, and upon what they are contingent. After many years of going unheeded by the emotion-science world, something has changed. The door to the humanities stands open. The promise is of a truly interdisciplinary sphere of knowledge on human feelings, but in order to fulfil it, first there must be disruption. It is already messy.

In order to understand the current sense of disorder and disquiet among emotion scientists, first we have to understand what has been at stake. Since the 1970s, a small group of scholars—American psychologists and evolutionary biologists, principally—have carved out a theory of emotions that has dominated western thinking on the affective lives of humans. The core claims of these theories, usually presented as

inflexible facts, are as follows: emotions in humans are universal; they are limited in number (the canonical number of “basic” emotions is six, but claims have ranged between three and ten); they are accounted for by the “deep” brain, that is, the structures of the human mind that evolved tens, if not hundreds of thousands of years ago; they are *automatic* psychological and somatic responses to situations; they are represented on the face by expressions that are also automatic and universal across humanity. Often, within this set of axioms, a bone is thrown to cultural influence on emotional coloring or expression. On the whole, however, culture has been presented as nothing more than a gloss or veneer, sitting atop, and not fundamentally altering, biological constants that lie beneath. The better-known names associated with all this are Paul Ekman, Carrol Izard, Sylvan Tomkins, and Antonio Damasio, but the influence of this line of thinking has been profound, both within and beyond the world of science.

Ekman, for example, sought to dominate not only the academic understanding of emotions, but also the policy implications of such an understanding and the public reception of emotion knowledge. His theory of universal affect, as witnessed on the universal human face, allowed him to pioneer and market facial profiling as an important component of security screening in the United States. He made a successful business out of his methodology. Moreover, he was the inspiration for (and consultant behind) the Fox television show *Lie to Me*, starring Tim Roth, whose character Cal Lightman was a dramatic rendering of Ekman himself. Even more influentially, Ekman consulted on the Pixar/Disney film *Inside Out*, which was predicated on the existence of basic emotions (this time only five—“surprise” was left out). At the US box office, it grossed in excess of \$356 million.

It’s the kind of public impact for scholarly work about which most academics wouldn’t even dare to dream. Basic emotions, universality, and automaticity became, in an all-encompassing sense, orthodox. Anthropological research ran in parallel with the rise of emotion science, gainsaying many of its central claims by direct observation and hard-won experience, but to no avail.

Enter Lisa Feldman Barrett. Her work, as a psychologist, radically upset the prevailing paradigm, and caught the attention of historians and anthropologists who finally saw an opening for their influence. Feldman Barrett has seen through Ekman’s methodological holes and, in her own research, summed up in her best-selling book, *How Emotions Are Made*, found no evidence of universality or of basic emotions at all.³ Instead, Feldman Barrett posits a theory of biocultural construction, providing empirical data in support of her claims. The plastic, developing brain learns how to feel in the worldly context in which it is situated. Brain, body, and world are dynamically interrelated, such that the color palette of emotion is as varied as cultural contexts are richly distinct from one another. Moreover, she rejects the notion that discrete emotions are “located” in discrete parts of the brain, pointing to whole-brain engagement in affective experiences. The only law, in Feldman Barrett’s estimation, is the law of infinite variation. The essence of this law jives substantially with the findings of historians and anthropologists. It is a chance to square the disciplinary circle. Feldman Barrett goes so far as to say that “emotion” itself, as a category of analysis, might be rejected, since it implies that there is an objectively

3 Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions Are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

real thing called *emotion* that only has to be found and studied. Her emphasis on construction totally changes how we might go about understanding how we feel. The assumption that emotion simply exists somewhere in the brain looks increasingly like an obstacle to understanding. Historical research has reached the same position. Far from being a master category with which to understand the affective lives of humans (and other animals), the casual employment of the category “emotion” seems to risk misdirection and anachronism. Unless we are prepared to start our research by challenging our assumptions about what emotions are, we shall likely only confirm those assumptions.

As the incoming president of the Association for Psychological Science, and as one of the founders, in 2009, of the journal *Emotion Review*, Feldman Barrett wields considerable power over the discipline of psychology. Combining influential academic publication with a slick presence in the popular press and social media, her Interdisciplinary Affective Science Laboratory has radically upset the orthodoxy. Ekman, along with Dacher Keltner, Professor of Psychology at Berkeley, has indicated, via an official response of the Paul Ekman Group to Feldman Barrett’s work, that Feldman Barrett is misleading the public, getting the science wrong, missing the point, and ignoring important data.⁴ Bearing in mind that the Paul Ekman Group is a private company selling training tools and workshops to individuals and businesses, selling Ekman’s science as an *application*, readily accessible to all, we should take his denunciation of Feldman Barrett’s challenges as the perception of a serious threat.

4 Paul Ekman and Dacher Keltner. “Darwin’s Claim of Universals in Facial Expression Not Challenged.” Paul Ekman Group, March 2014. <https://www.paulekman.com/tag/lisa-feldman-barrett>

June 2018 saw the inaugural conference of the North American Chapter of the History of Emotions (NACHE) at George Mason University, Virginia. It was the brainchild of Peter Stearns, who has more claim to the title of father of the history of emotions than any other living scholar. Since the mid-1980s, Stearns has created an impressive body of work, with a particular focus on the history of modern American emotions, and he is responsible for one of the field’s defining theoretical tools: “emotionology.” In a seminal piece in the *American Historical Review* in 1985, written together with Carol Z. Stearns, emotionology was introduced as a way of understanding the situational contingency of emotional style.⁵ People emote according to sets of feeling rules that limit the possibilities for what kind of things can be expressed and in what manner. This was developed by William Reddy, who postulated that such prescriptions do not merely limit what can be expressed. They must be in a dynamic relationship with feeling itself, such that inward feeling and outward expression are both tied to a cultural context of possibilities.⁶

At that meeting I launched my book, *The History of Emotions*, on an interdisciplinary panel chaired by Stearns.⁷ I witnessed first-hand the implications of the schism in the emotion-science community. Commenting on my book were Reddy and the Georgetown psychologist and neuroscientist Abigail Marsh. Reddy, for his part, dwelt at length on the recent work of Ruth Leys, whose book *The Ascent of Affect*

5 Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns. “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *American Historical Review* 90 (1985): 813-36.

6 William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 104-11.

7 Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

had been published only a couple of months before mine. It is a searing critical demolition of the emotion-science orthodoxy of Ekman, Tomkins, et al, pointing out the enormous magnitude of methodological flaws, and the tremendous damage done to emotion enquiry by limiting the scope of emotion research to that which was assumed to be hard-wired, built in, basic, automatic. Given that my own work sympathizes with all of this, Marsh doubtless felt somewhat embattled, especially by our trumpeting of Feldman Barrett's research and by my claim that historians' knowledge claims have just as much merit as science as anything coming out of psychological laboratory work.

What Marsh presented, then, was the bald claim that science is a neutral recorder of objective data. Scientists do not forge knowledge claims, but report findings. Emotion knowledge is *found*, not *made*. What I was doing, according to the charge, was attempting to persuade via *charisma*. All of this took me by surprise. Decades of work in science and technology studies (STS) has thoroughly exposed the culture of scientific work, its political dynamics and the situationality of its guiding assumptions. *Scientist*, coined by William Whewell in 1834, is literally someone who *makes* (the suffix *-ist*) *knowledge (scientia)*, just like an artist makes art. Practices of objectivity, cultivated in earnest from the late nineteenth century, served to distance the person who made science from the activity of its making, and from its accompanying affects. All of this was brilliantly historicized and analyzed by Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison in their 2007 book *Objectivity*.⁸ There is no such thing as "neutral" knowledge. Among historians, this claim is hardly radical; it is lore.

Marsh's own work on fear, altruism and psychopathy hinges, in part, on facial affect methodology and, in part, on neuroscience that locates emotions, especially fear, in certain parts of the brain.⁹ It depends, therefore, upon the prevailing orthodoxy. Being flanked by a couple of Feldman Barrett boosters probably felt like a stitch up. But if our collective attempt to wed science to culture, to put emotions in the world, as it were, was discountenanced, then more specific ire was reserved for some perceived implications of Feldman Barrett's work.

One of Feldman Barrett's central claims is that the language we use to conceptualize emotions is, in turn, formative of the experience of those emotions. Feeling and experience are directly connected to conceptual understandings of what feeling and experience are. This conceit, which Feldman Barrett explores via neuroscientific data and imaging, appeals to historians and anthropologists because it allows us to imagine affective worlds that are completely different from our own, in a time or a place where "emotions" do not exist. If Feldman Barrett is right, then the possibilities for exploring the cultural variability of lived experience opens up. Where people have conceived of their affective lives through *pathos*, *passion*, *affectus*, *sentiment*, *Gefühl*, and so on, they must, ipso facto, have experienced their affective lives in accord with these concepts. It would be reductive and misleading to apply an objective and universal standard of "emotion" to all of this.

Critics, Marsh among them, have pointed out one of the insidious consequences of taking this view too far. If language—the conceptual framework of affective life—is so important, then non-human animals

8 Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, *Objectivity* (New York: Zone Books, 2007).

9 Abigail Marsh, *The Fear Factor: How One Emotion Connects Altruists, Psychopaths, and Everyone In-Between* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

must have no emotions at all, since they have no emotion words. Comparative psychologists reel at the thought of the rise of such neo-Cartesian thinking, and the looming spectre of the animal machine. This was thrown into the mix at the NACHE conference, willy-nilly, as a sort of death blow to the kind of emotion science being pedalled by Feldman Barrett et al., and touted by the likes of Reddy and me. The charge is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. Only a fool would argue that animals don't have an affective life. But the gap between humans who use linguistic conceptual constructions that we can access and understand, and animals that do not, represents a serious ontological and epistemological problem. If I am reluctant to talk of "emotions" among humans in times and in languages where the category "emotion" did not exist, then imagine my scepticism about talking of "emotions" in animals. That a dog, for example, has affective experiences is obvious to me. That I cannot make sense of a dog's affective experiences through modern concepts in the English language seems to me to be equally obvious. I have a clue that something is happening, from the dog's point of view, but what I can say about a dog's "fear," "jealousy," "love," or "rage" will actually say more about my own experience of those things than the dog's, just as it did for Charles Darwin and his erstwhile disciple, George John Romanes, who were among the first to take such things seriously. The dog's subjective experience eludes me, which is not the same as to say it has no subjective experience. For comparative psychologists, this throws up an intractable problem: how to get at the experience of animals without anthropomorphic projection? It is a problem as old as comparative psychology itself. It rattles nerves because the alternative, apart from Descartes' automaton, has been behaviorism,

now consigned to the dustbin of errant philosophies. Disturbing the orthodox paradigm of emotion research therefore has massive implications for an enormous number of scholars, who, quite understandably, are unlikely to go quietly back to the theoretical and methodological drawing board.

Back in June 2017, at a conference of the Finnish Network for the History of Emotions, I had a hard time selling the idea of rapprochement with the social neurosciences. The psychologists, I was told, don't care about our research, and we don't need them to justify or validate our research in order for it to be important. We're so far apart. There is too much to sacrifice, and all of it on the side of the historians, for us to come together. These sentiments came from Ute Frevert, a major European figure in the history of emotions, and founding Director of the Center for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. I spent five years under that roof. I know where she is coming from. It is simply true that the institutionalization of the history of emotions at that site has actually mitigated against understanding and collaboration. Sharing a roof with scores of psychologists of various stripes has led, in the course of a decade, to no fruitful collaboration. It might be thought of as an opportunity missed, but it is perhaps better seen as evidence of the impenetrability of disciplinary walls and the lack of a shared epistemology. A psychologist colleague in the Netherlands recently told me that, since historians tend to write books, and since the articles they do write tend to appear in general, rather than specialist, journals, our work is as good as invisible to psychologists. The latter, so he told me, think of books as summaries of previously published research,

not as peer-reviewed research in its own right. Our scholarly procedures are alien to each other. And where academic structures are profoundly hierarchical, as in Germany, making interdisciplinary headway is all the more difficult. But is not like this everywhere.

At the Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, McGill University, Montreal, for example, a new seminar series on Culture, Mind and Brain aims to bring together a whole array of disciplines engaging critically with the cultural turn in the neurosciences. Here, psychiatrists look left and right, to history and anthropology, and to various stripes of psychology and neuroimaging, to build a critical approach to the brains they encounter in the clinic. Likewise, Columbia University's Affect Studies seminar series in New York (active since 2015) invites people from all across the intellectual map, on the understanding that "interdisciplinary exchange on the question of affect is vital for understanding the many valences of affect studies' vocabulary and concerns."¹⁰ The word "vital" is key, but it demands that we understand what is really at stake for emotion researchers. As emotional manipulation has become an explicit strategic device for politicians and governments throughout the world, it has in turn become more important than ever that people have access to knowledge about their emotions, where they come from, and who or what they serve. While psychologists remain torn between evolutionary transcendentalism and biocultural constructivism, politicians in various parts of the world have expressed great confidence in the potential of constructing emotional regimes or contexts of emotional conformity, in which strains of happiness, anger, and

fear hitherto unknown are becoming the definitive motifs of our age.

It all has an Orwellian ring to it. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, the Ministry of Happiness was established in 2016 to substantially make "happiness" a formal part of the government's agenda. It forms part of a political landscape that has seen everything from the Venezuelan Ministry of Supreme Social Happiness (created 2013), and widely mocked in western mainstream media, to David Cameron's "happiness agenda," launched in 2010 with a mind to measuring wellbeing instead of GDP. All of it, regardless of the political culture of the time and place, is directed not at the free expression of subjective happiness, whatever that is, but at creating conditions of willing conformity to an ideological program. In the UAE, that means training "Happiness and Positivity Officers" at private western consultancy firms that sell strategies for increasing wellbeing, defined along capitalistic lines of innovation, meaningful productivity, and self-worth in the creation of value. As Eva Illouz has noted, psychologists were invited into the corporate realm of management precisely to "find solutions to the problem of discipline and productivity."¹¹ On the ground in the UAE this means "happiness meters" in offices, government-led policies of "positivity," and "happiness patrols" that reward good drivers instead of punishing bad ones. It is surveillance governmentality with a positive spin, which rewards conformity. For those who cannot or do not want to conform, misery abounds. As of June 2017, the UAE remains on Amnesty International's radar as a participant in torture campaigns, domestically and in Yemen. The US State

¹⁰ "Affect Studies," Columbia University, <http://universityseminars.columbia.edu/seminars/affect-studies>, accessed November, 2018.

¹¹ Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 12.

Department Report on Human Rights Practices for 2016 noted the inability of UAE citizens to access free and fair elections, the limitations on their civil liberties (freedom of speech, press, assembly, association), as well as government practices of “arrest without charge, incommunicado detentions, lengthy pretrial detentions, and mistreatment during detention,” combined with evidence of “police and prison guard brutality; government interference with privacy rights, including arrests and detentions for internet postings or commentary; and a lack of judicial independence.”¹² In short, be happy, or else.

This is not to single out the UAE in particular. Wherever an emotion is politicized and directed, be it the mobilization of populist anger in the US or of populist fear in the UK’s Brexit debacle, it is ordinary people who are being emotionally corralled. The context of possibilities for feeling and expressing is carefully constructed and delimited, on the understanding that feelings are mutable and malleable, and that emotional intention is the new political capital.

Historians and anthropologists, as one might expect, are alive to this phenomenon and are well placed to analyze it. The new direction of emotion science, toward an understanding of culture’s entanglement with biology, is primed to help give substance to critique. But, as my ride on the emotional rollercoaster has shown, the science of emotion is far from a settled business. The question, “How do you feel?” has become intellectually and politically charged. Never has it been more important, short of a meaningful consensus across the disciplines, for substantial interdisciplinary collaboration to take place. The object of study in emotion research is up for grabs. A

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¹² Quoted in Boddice, *History of Feelings*, 180.

The Problem with Happiness

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A NEW SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS has blossomed. Observing that wealth has not made people happier, some economists have proposed that Western nations should focus on happiness rather than growth. Psychologists, too, have offered formulas for well-being. Jonathan Haidt's ideas about the sources of happiness, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of 'flow' and Richard Easterlin's famous paradox (that even though at a given point of time greater income correlates with greater happiness, it does not follow that over time as a society gets richer its people get happier), have offered real insights. More often, we get truisms presented as great scientific discoveries. How can we separate the hype from the wisdom?

Skepticism is evidently in order when *Forbes* magazine runs an article entitled "The Secret of Happiness Revealed by Harvard Study" (May 27, 2015) and *The New York Times* declares that social scientists have at last arrived at "a few simple rules" to make ourselves and others happy ("A Formula for Happiness," December 14, 2013). Do we really understand what happiness is? Should we assume that life is about attaining as much happiness as possible?

Some social scientists have proposed that instead of GDP, we should calculate a country's Gross National Happiness (GNH). Sure enough, since 2012, the United Nations World Happiness Report has ranked countries' happiness mathematically. It is nice to know that someone can scientifically determine how happy a person (or nation) is. In the 2018 UN report, Finland scores highest with a score of 7.632. I like that third decimal point.

To assign numbers as the UN does, one must assume that happiness is a single thing measurable by a single gauge. Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, took it for granted that "utility"—his preferred term—was all of a piece. "By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness (all this in the present case comes to the same thing)." Whatever you call it, you can measure it—Bentham suggested a "felicific calculus"—and compare it with similar measurements taken elsewhere.

The UN report lists five factors contributing to a country's happiness, including "perceptions of corruption" and "social support." Why not "*perceptions of social support*"? As demagogues know, it is a lot easier to create perceptions than reality. Not surprisingly, the European countries ranking worst on "perceptions of corruption" were all former Soviet republics or satellites. Compare Belgium's 0.24 with Russia's 0.025. That makes Russia 10 times as corrupt as Belgium, which sounds like an underestimate. Sometimes data on happiness is gathered by *asking* people to rate their happiness on a numerical scale, so perhaps perceptions of Russian corruption were evaluated this way? Such inquiries raise a nice question: can one trust self-reported data about corruption? Wouldn't one first need an "honesty in reporting index" and adjust all self-reporting accordingly?

Is it really true that everybody's goal in life is to be as happy as possible? To many that seems obvious: what else could we want? If we desire something, it must be because we think it will make us happier. To this assumption, Nietzsche replied, "Man does not strive for happiness. Only the Englishman does." Darwinian theory suggests that human beings must have evolved so that their strongest pull is not to happiness, but to passing on their genes, even if that makes them miserable. Perhaps liberal Western theorists have mistaken their own values for the only possible ones? Can one not imagine a devout Jew, Christian, or Muslim reacting with disgust to the notion that life is about happiness, rather than, let us say, piety? A commonplace of European intellectual history holds that during the Enlightenment many Europeans started asking not "how can I be good?" or "how can I be saved?" but "how can I be happy?" If so, then happiness as the goal of life is a fact of Western modernity, not of human nature.

Even many modern Europeans have placed the highest value not on happiness but on science and art. In her classic memoir *Hope Against Hope*, Nadezhda Mandelstam recalled that when she complained about the Soviet regime's horrible persecutions, her husband Osip—one of Russia's greatest poets—replied: What made you think life is about being happy? Much more valuable than happiness, in his view, is poetry. What sort of people, Russian thinkers often ask, believe that all that matters is individual contentment? They wonder: Isn't it clear that only shallow people can profess such values? And what happens to a society that believes the only goal of life is individual satisfaction?

As the philosopher John Rawls pointed out, a society of happiness-seekers would have no reason not to borrow heavily and leave the debt to future generations. If there

is nothing larger than us now, why not? *Après nous, la faillite* (After us, bankruptcy.) What's more: if the only reason to have children is to make oneself happier, rather than to fulfill a social or moral duty, a lot fewer people will have children. Mounting national debt and a birthrate well below replacement level: that describes Western Europe today rather well.

Even if one's goal is the best life for the individual, the search for happiness may be a false path. In Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych*, the hero has lived his life entirely for his own satisfaction. Like everyone around him, he can imagine no other way to live. Then he falls ill, begins to waste away, and discovers that everything that gave him pleasure and contentment has become distasteful. Delicious food leaves, literally as well as figuratively, a bad taste in his mouth. The closer death comes, the more he begins to grasp that in living for contentment rather than meaningfulness, he has wasted the only life he has.

As the end draws nearer, the more horrible it seems to Ivan Ilych that he has lived each moment for gratification in the present, leaving no meaningful residue. It is as if his life had been lived by someone else, or by no one in particular. To live for pleasure entails sacrificing one's unique soul. At last Ivan Ilych recognizes that his suffering testifies to the pointlessness of life lived as if nothing higher than personal contentment exists. In his very last instants, he overcomes his former way of looking at things and discovers a way to live, however briefly, for something larger than himself. Only then does he find meaning.

Untroubled by the need for meaningfulness, some happiness theorists respond by simply including it among the criteria for personal happiness. But this response misses the point. If one performs unselfish actions for selfish gain, they are not unselfish actions. Genuinely unselfish

actions may (or may not) result in happiness, but to be unselfish in the first place, personal happiness cannot be their purpose. In much the same way, if one aims for meaningfulness as a source of pleasure, one is aiming for pleasure, not meaningfulness. *There are some things one cannot get by striving for them.*

Tolstoy was not the only great writer to have confronted the idea that life is about happiness, an idea that in ancient philosophy was called Epicureanism and that, in some form, is always with us. Great writers have offered at least three objections to this view of life. First, when it comes right down to it, even the most ardent defenders of Epicureanism do not really believe it. There are circumstances in which one would choose something else over happiness. Recall Nathan Hale's last words (quoted from Addison): "I only regret that I have but one life to give for my country." Hale wasn't *happy* to be hanged. Indeed, sometimes people sacrifice themselves for others and then—oddly enough—rationalize it by telling themselves they were only being selfish, as their theory demands!

Second, happiness itself is much more mysterious than Epicureans, hedonists, utilitarians, or psychologists of happiness usually allow. Finally, life has presented extreme situations that test the philosophy of happiness, and it usually fails the test. What happens when an Epicurean finds himself in the Gulag?

Tolstoy and other Russian writers often elaborated on Voltaire's philosophical parables. In Voltaire's "The Story of the Good Brahmin," a wealthy Brahmin has everything one could wish for, including great intelligence and vast learning, but is miserable. Outside his palace lives an old woman, who is poor, stupid, ignorant—and happy. The Brahmin asks himself whether he would change places with her: would he agree to become stupid if that would make him happy? He realizes he would not, but

cannot say why. After all, if the goal of life is happiness, he should be willing to make the trade without a moment's hesitation. Could it be that other goods are not mere means to happiness, and that one might choose them over happiness?

If one aims for meaningfulness as a source of pleasure, one is aiming for pleasure, not meaningfulness. There are some things one cannot get by striving for them.

The story's narrator reports that he has posed the Brahmin's question to many intelligent people but has discovered no one "willing to accept the bargain to become an imbecile in order to be content." "After having reflected on the matter," the narrator tells us, "it appears to me that to prefer reason to happiness is sheer madness. How can this contradiction be explained?" Like so many other deep questions, he concludes, this is one we cannot answer.

Dostoevsky sharpened Voltaire's insight. He asked: imagine you were offered the opportunity to live in a palace where your every wish would be instantly granted. There is only one catch: you can never leave. Gratifying your every wish: that would be your whole life from now on. Would you take the offer?

A modern philosopher, Robert Nozick, has reformulated Dostoevsky's parable in neurophysiological terms. Suppose that "super-duper neurophysiologists could stimulate your brain" so that you would think you were having experiences while you were actually just "floating in a tank, with

electrodes attached to your brain.” This “experience machine,” as Nozick calls it, would insure you would experience supreme happiness for the rest of your life. Like Dostoevsky, Nozick asks: “Would you plug it in? *What else can matter to us, other than how our lives feel from the inside?*”

If you would not plug it in, then why not? Nozick offers a few interesting answers, which, again, recall some of Dostoevsky’s. “First, we want to *do* certain things, and not just have the experience of doing them. . . it is only because first we want to do the actions that we want the experiences of doing them or thinking we’ve done them.” Second, we want to *be* a certain sort of person, but someone floating in a tank is an “indeterminate blob. There is no answer to the question of what [such] a person is like... Is he courageous, kind, intelligent, witty, loving? It’s not merely that it’s difficult to tell; there’s no way [that] he *is*.” Third, such a machine limits us to a man-made reality, “to a world no deeper or more important than that which people can construct. There is no *actual* contact with any deeper reality... Many persons desire to leave themselves open to such contact and to a plumbing of deeper significance.” Sum it all up, and you see that “what is most disturbing about [these machines] is their living of our lives for us. . . Perhaps what we desire is to live (an active verb) ourselves, in contact with reality. (And this, machines cannot do *for* us.)”

Dostoevsky adds a few more answers. In one sketch, he imagines that some devils have created a socialist paradise, so that, as in the palace of perpetual pleasure, complete prosperity always reigned. Material wealth, inventions, scientific knowledge— all of these would come gratuitously. There would be no obstacles to overcome, no sacrifices to make. Of course, humanity would at first be ecstatic, Dostoevsky opines. But within a generation, the ecstasy would turn to bitterness.

People would suddenly see that they had no more life left, that they had no freedom of spirit, no will, no personality, that someone had stolen all this from them.... People would realize that there is no happiness in inactivity, that the mind which does not labor will wither, that it is not possible to love one’s neighbor without sacrificing something to him of one’s own labor, that it is vile to live at the expense of another, and that happiness lies not in happiness but only in the attempt to achieve it.

But isn’t that a paradox? How could you even strive for something unless you believed that getting it would make you happy? Should you instead strive for the striving? But then the same question arises at one remove: striving for the striving for what?

The modern genre of the dystopia—including works like Eugene Zamiatin’s *We* and Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*—grew directly, and explicitly, from passages like this in Dostoevsky’s fiction. In Huxley’s novel, the hero escapes from paradise in order to live in a world of risk where choice and effort make a difference. He seeks a world where suffering is an intrinsic part of life. Why?

Dostoevsky argues that life, to be meaningful, must take place in a special kind of *time*. Our efforts must matter, which means that we must live into an *uncertain* future. Effort can make a difference only if the desired outcome is possible but not guaranteed. We value something only if we choose it and work for it. For lives to be meaningful, time must be open: more than one outcome must be possible. Meaning exists in a world with *suspense*.

For Dostoevsky, this fact about human nature explains why capital punishment is so horrible. “Murder by legal sentence is immeasurably more terrible than murder by brigands,” observes Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot*.

Anyone murdered by brigands, whose throat is cut in a wood... must surely hope to escape till the very last minute. There have been instances when a man has still hoped to escape, running or begging for mercy after his throat was cut! But in the other case all that last hope, which makes dying ten times as easy is taken away for certain. There is the sentence, and the whole awful torture lies in the fact that there is certainly no escape, and there is no torture in the world more terrible.

For Dostoevsky, this is what socialists fail to understand. Intended as a blessing, socialism offers us a world of absolute security, and so takes away our humanness. In principle, its goal is that experience machine. The UN calculators of happiness also presume that the more security, the better. The less insecurity, the more happiness points a society is awarded.

Not only do we have goals other than happiness, but happiness itself is anything but simple. It is not just immensely complex, but also fundamentally mysterious, and the deeper we probe, the more mysterious it turns out to be. In his story "Happiness," Chekhov, like Voltaire, Dostoevsky, and Nozick, offers a parable on the mysterious nature of happiness and the human quest for it. An old shepherd and a young shepherd converse with an estate overseer about a great fortune that, legend has it, is buried somewhere nearby. In Russian, the words for "fortune" and for "happiness" are the same, so everything said about one applies to the other.

The old man's family has been seeking this fortune for generations, but it is protected by a charm. Without a special talisman, one could be standing right next to it and not see it. "There is fortune," he explains, "but what is the good of it if it is buried in the earth? It is just riches wasted with no profit to anyone, like chaff or sheep's dung, and yet there *are* riches there, lad, fortune enough for all the country round and no one sees it." The overseer agrees: "Yes, your

elbow is near, but you can't bite it." We reflect: if happiness is so close, perhaps it is not hidden in the distance, but hidden in plain view. We need to discern what is right before our eyes.

But that is not the conclusion the old man draws: "Yes," he reflects, "so one dies without knowing what happiness is like." At this point, Chekhov pauses to describe the vegetation and wildlife in the desolate surroundings: "No meaning was to be seen in the boundless expanse of the steppe." Perhaps nature is not just indifferent, but positively spiteful, leading people to seek a happiness that does not exist.

When the overseer leaves, the young shepherd asks: "What will you do with the treasure when you find it?" Strangely enough, this question has never even occurred to the old man. "Judging from the expression on his face, indifferent and uncritical, it did not seem to him important and deserving of consideration." The young peasant puzzles over a mystery: why do old people search for hidden treasure, "and what was the use of earthly happiness to people who might die any day of old age?" We leave the two of them, each pondering to himself, the old man on the treasure's whereabouts and the young one on yet another mystery: "What interested him was not the fortune itself, which he did not want and could not imagine, but the fantastic, fairy-tale character of human happiness."

The Soviet period sharpened these mysteries. The greatest Russian writers realized that totalitarian conditions made the idea that life is about happiness look absurd. Put to the test of extreme conditions, utilitarianism failed. Conditions were certainly extreme. The network of concentration camps known as the Gulag archipelago; the deliberate starvation of millions of peasants during the collectivization of agriculture; the routine

use of torture during investigations: all these extreme situations served as tests for philosophies of life. How did different philosophies measure up?

The plot of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's novel *In the First Circle* turns on the actions of a professed Epicurean. When Innokenty Volodin, a Bolshevik diplomat, and his wife Dotmara were married, "their outlook on life was identical. No obstacles, no inhibitions must come between wish and fulfillment. 'We are people who behave naturally,' Dotmara used to say. . . Whatever we want we go all out for it." Volodin's friends call him an Epicurean, and his life turns into a test of Epicurean doctrines.

It might seem odd that a Bolshevik should be an Epicurean, but the novel makes clear that these two forms of materialism share a common tenet: there are no values beyond the material world of here and now. Epicureanism applies this insight to the individual, so that the sole standard of good and evil is the individual's pleasure and pain. Bolshevism applies the same idea collectively. In Bolshevik ethics, as in Epicurean, all other standards but getting what one wants—for Bolsheviks, that meant what the Communist Party wants—are illusions.

It is not quite right to say that this doctrine allows the Party, when necessary, to use mass murder, torture, or anything else that works. To phrase the point that way—"when necessary"—is to suggest that before using such measures one must determine whether some more humane method would work as well. But if there are no other sources of value, then there is no need to do so. Compassion, justice, kindness, the sanctity of human life: in Bolshevik philosophy, all these values could only come from religion or its close relative, philosophical idealism. To display compassion, then, was to prove one was not a true materialist and therefore not a proper

Bolshevik. If he knew what was good for him, every Bolshevik tried to show he had no compassion at all. The most brutal methods were *preferred*, and no matter how many people Stalin ordered killed, his secret police asked to kill more.

By the same token, it is obvious to Volodin that for an individual, the only standard for judging an action is whether it achieves personal satisfaction. So it comes as a surprise to him when, six years after his marriage, pleasures begin to disgust him. Volodin stumbles on his mother's letters from before the Revolution and begins to follow her unfamiliar way of thinking. She speaks of staying out all night from love of art, as if art were a value in itself! "Goodness shows itself first in pity," she writes, a doctrine that contradicts Volodin's Bolshevik morals: "Pity? A shameful feeling . . . so he had learned in school and in life." Equally shameful is compassion. "Even the words in which his mother and her women friends expressed themselves were outdated. In all seriousness, they began certain words with capital letters—Truth, Goodness, Beauty, Good and Evil, the Ethical Imperative." Strangest of all, Volodin's mother valued tolerance of other's beliefs. "If I have a correct worldview," her son asks himself, "can I really respect those who disagree with me?"

When Volodin reads about crimes the regime has concealed, his worldview totters. "The great truth for Innokenty used to be that one was given only one life. Now, with the feeling that had ripened in him, he became aware of another law: that we are given one conscience, too." He seeks out his Uncle Avenir, who, he discovers, lives in a remote place. Despite his education in philosophy, Avenir does manual work because "When I empty the slops, it's with a clear conscience. . . But if you've got a position to hold down . . . you have to be dishonest."

At last Volodin himself is arrested. How does the philosophy of maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain stand the test of Bolshevik tortures? Epicurus had said: "You should not fear physical suffering. Prolonged suffering is always insignificant; significant suffering is of short duration." But what if you are deprived for days of sleep in a box without air? What about ten years of solitary confinement in a cell where you cannot stretch your legs? Is that significant or insignificant?

Volodin thinks of Epicurus's words—"Our inner feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are the highest criteria of good and evil"—and only now does he truly understand them. "Now it was clear: Whatever gives me pleasure is good; what displeases me is bad. Stalin, for instance, enjoyed killing people—so that, for him, was 'good'?" How wise such philosophy seems to a free person! But for Innokenty, good and evil are now distinct entities. "His struggle and suffering had raised him to a height from which the great materialist's wisdom seemed like the prattle of a child." The philosophy of pleasure can be believed only by those sheltered from life.

Solzhenitsyn's history of the Soviet forced labor camp system, *The Gulag Archipelago*, describes conditions so extreme that often the only way to survive was at the expense of someone else. Steal his food, kill him for his shoes. Sooner or later, Solzhenitsyn writes, every Gulag prisoner faced a choice. Should you take a vow "to survive at any price"?

This is the great fork of camp life. From this point the roads go to the right and to the left.... If you go to the right—you lose your life, and if you go the left—you lose your conscience.

If you believe the Bolshevik credo, that only the material result counts, you go to the left. "But that is a lie!" Solzhenitsyn declares. "It is not the result, *but the spirit.*" As a prisoner, Solzhenitsyn discovered that choosing spirit transforms your whole life. "Your soul... now ripens from suffering." You learn for the first time to understand genuine friendship. And you recognize "the meaning of earthly existence lies not, as we have grown used to thinking, in prospering, but... in the development of the soul." Solzhenitsyn explains: prison taught me "how a human being becomes evil and how good." Suffering gave me a meaningful life that the mere pursuit of happiness never could. He concludes: "Bless you prison, for having been in my life!"

If we are to make our lives meaningful, we must live for values beyond happiness, values that may conflict with happiness. Sometimes suffering can be beneficial, not because it may make us capable of greater pleasures, but because it may deepen the soul. We must live, and we must love, not just on this scrap of earth, not just in the here and now, and not just for our pitiful selves, but for the world of good and evil, of truth and falsehood, and of the great values espoused in Russian literature. A

4

FOLIO

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Translated from the German by
Zsuzsanna Ozsváth & Frederick Turner

Blessed Yearning

Do not tell the mocking nation,
Secrets only for the wise:
Life that longs for consummation
In the flames—that's what I'd praise.

In the night of love still cooling,
Where what made you, you were making,
You are wrought by a strange feeling
In the candlelight's soft shaking.

Now no more the darkness keeps you
Clasped in shadows meditating:
And a new desire now sweeps you
Upward to a higher mating.

Space can't clog your spellbound yearning,
You come flying just the same,
And at last, drawn to the burning,
You're the moth come to the flame.

You would be Earth's sullen guest
In the darkness glooming,
If you'd never felt this quest:
Die into becoming!

1814-15

The Fisherman

The water whispered, swelled, and flowed,
An angler sat embarked;
He gazed and gazed upon his rod,
And peace was in his heart:
But as he sits and listens there,
The rustling flow divides,
And from the river, wet and bare,
A woman upward glides.

She sang, she spoke: Why do you snare
With human tricks and lies
My finny brood into the glare
Of your hot deadly skies?
Ah, would you knew how fit a home
My fishes find their bed,
Then as you are, you'd yield and come
There, where you're healed and fed.

Do not our own dear moon and sun
Bathe themselves in the sea?
—And having breathed the waves, return
With doubled brilliancy?
Does not deep heaven lure you in,
That wet transcending blue—
Your own reflected face within
Its clear eternal dew?

The water whispered, swelled, and flowed,
Drenched his bare foot with bliss;
His heart yearned with its heavy load,
As with a lover's kiss.
She spoke, she sang, so cunningly,
It was the angler's bane:
Half drawn by her, half sinking, he
Was never seen again.

In a Thousand Forms

Though in a thousand forms you may conceal you,
Yet, All-belovèd, soon I know it's you;
Whatever veils of magic-weaving seal you,
All-presence, still I know it's you.

In the young cypresses, their pure limbs glowing,
All-shapeliest, I know at once it's you;
In the canal's pure life-wave softly flowing,
You All-caressing, well I know it's you.

When the tall fountain climbs in its unfolding,
All-playful, I rejoice that it is you;
When the clouds change, all molding and unmolding,
All-manifold, I find that it is you.

In the embroidered veil of meadow flowers
All-tint-bestarred in beauty, it is you;
And thousand-armed the clinging ivy bowers
All-clasping, tell me always that it's you.

And when the sunrise kindles in the ridges,
I greet the dawn, All-halcyon, as you;
And then pure heaven with its arching bridges
All-heart-enlarging, breathes the breath of you.

What I with outward sense and inward knowing
Perceive, All-teacher, that I do through you;
And naming Allah's hundred names onflowing,
Each one is echoed by a name for you.

1814-15



Allison V. Smith, *Roots*. 2016. Rockport, Maine. 2017.
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Overleaf

Carolyn Brown, *Mihrab at Al Aqsa Mosque, Old City of Jerusalem*, 1989.
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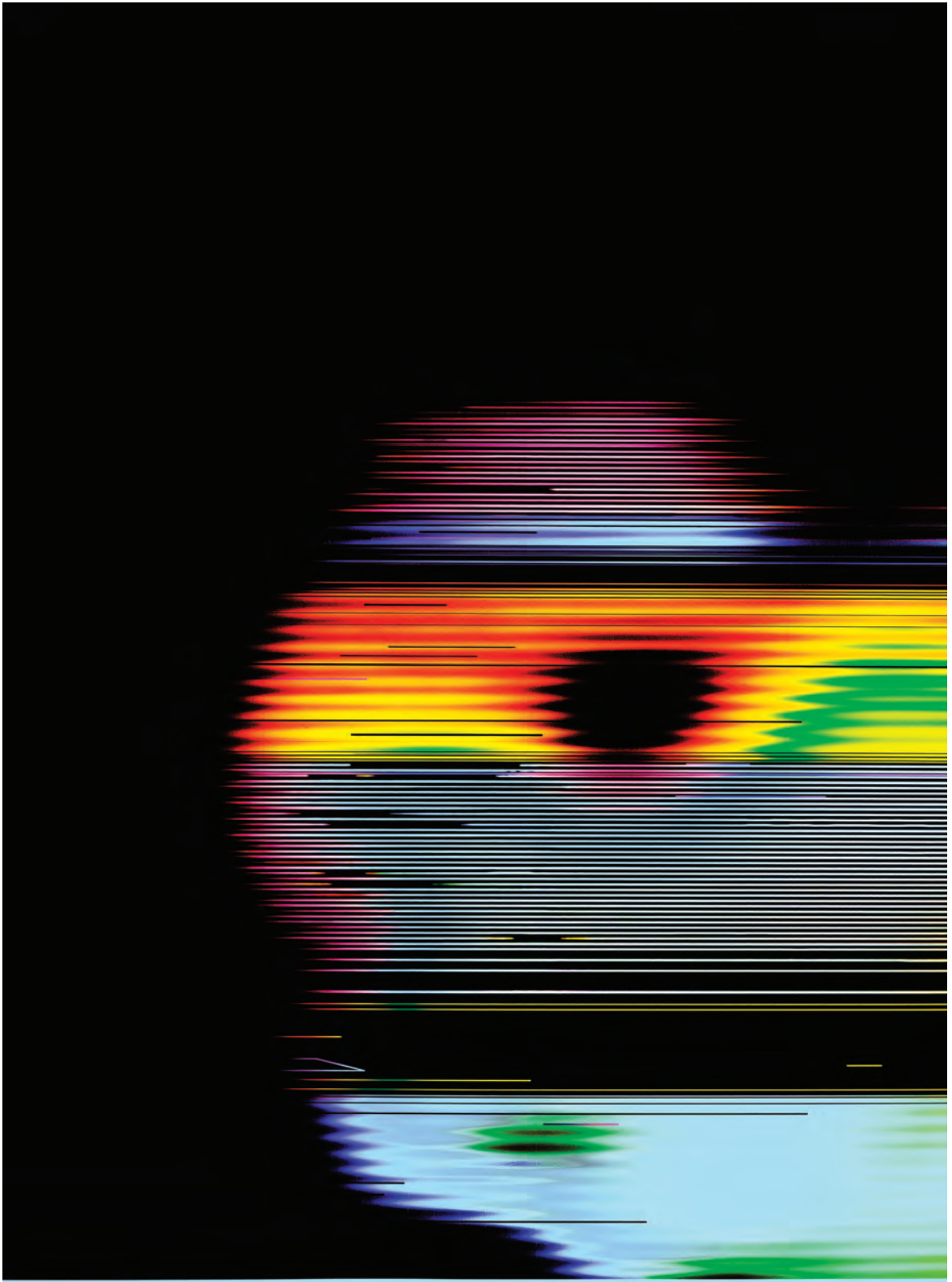
Find our interview with Carolyn Brown at athenaeumreview.org.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَبِذَلِكَ نَتَمِيزُكُمْ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ
وَنُفِخُ فِي الصُّورِ وَنُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ
وَالْحَيَاةُ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْحَيَاةُ
الْأُولَى وَالْحَيَاةُ الْآخِرَةُ
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الْأُولَى وَالْحَيَاةُ الْآخِرَةُ
وَالْحَيَاةُ الْأُولَى





John Pomara, *Facial-disruption 1*, 2019. Unique UV pigment on canvas, 96 x 70 in. Copyright © John Pomara.

Find our interview with John Pomara online at athenaeumreview.org.



Ludwig Schwarz, *Untitled (LBC2)*, 2015. Oil on canvas, 60 × 48 × 1 1/2 inches (1 m 52.4 cm × 121.92 cm × 3.81 cm). Dallas Museum of Art, Charron and Peter Denker Contemporary Texas Art Fund and gifts of Charles Dee Mitchell, Claire Dewar, and Joan Davidow. 2018.26.7 Photography by Kevin Todora. Copyright © Ludwig Schwarz.

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A large, stylized outline of the number 5, rendered in a simple, clean line-art style. The number is positioned on the left side of the page.

**LITERARY
LIVES**

The Man Who Insulted Shakespeare

Paul Strohm

Anna S. Garbedian Professor Emeritus of the Humanities
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SHAKESPEARE'S ARTISTIC PREEMINENCE now seems so evident that we have trouble imagining anybody feeling any other way. But many of his contemporaries would have disagreed. The reigning London literati met his first poems and plays with derision and scorn. Most vehement of all was their acknowledged dean, Robert Greene, known by his scribbling peers as "head of the company." In an ironic reversal, Greene—the most successful commercial writer of his day—is now remembered less for his own accomplishments than for his insulting sally against his younger competitor.

Greene and his fractious but close-knit cadre of fellow writers had come up the hard way themselves, and they were fiercely proud of their accomplishments: their university degrees, their grounding in classical Latin, their anti-bourgeois independence, their strenuously curated personal styles. Cambridge had been the crucible of their ambition, instilling habits of competition and revelry, together with enduring friendships and equally enduring animosities. They were, for the most part, "new men," first in their families to attend universities and working their way through with scholarships and special bursaries. Not for them were the traditional careers awaiting university graduates; they disdained the minor posts awaiting them as vicars or schoolmasters or as secretaries within governmental bureaucracies. Regarding themselves as humanist-intellectuals, they set out to create a new kind of literary career, and London was their magnet.

In London, their lofty aspirations collided with marketplace realities. The old system of aristocratic literary patronage was on the wane; Greene and his friends still sought patronage by attaching fulsome dedications to their works, but with slender or no results. This was a society that wanted enlivened prose and hungered for theatrical diversion, but with minimum financial outlay. Greene and his friends responded by re-creating themselves as pens for hire,

issuing torrents of pamphlet prose, popular romances, and, of course, plays for the new and burgeoning theatrical scene. One of their leaders, Thomas Nashe, would put it baldly: “I prostitute my pen in hope of gain.” Down and out in poor wards like Dowgate or slummy suburbs like Shoreditch, exploiting their friendships and each other, they would write anything for a few pounds, or, failing in that, a few groats. Only an insanely high rate of productivity enabled them to carry on. At its best, this was a borderline life, a life that put its practitioners on or near the street, with all its temptations, dangers, and tawdry allure.

The literary scene over which Greene presided was a cauldron of burning ambitions and unfulfilled aspirations. Its ranks include Thomas Nashe, a fellow Cambridge man who wrote the first picaresque novel in English, championed Greene after his death, and expressed his own disdain for literary newcomers who didn’t know enough Latin to save themselves from hanging by reciting a “neck-verse.” The stuffy and reserved Gabriel Harvey (otherwise known as “Pedantius”) lived hand-to-mouth but paraded himself as a man of fashion, garbed in black velvet and deriding his fellows as “piperly make-plays.” The great Christopher “Kit” Marlowe, pioneer of Shakespeare’s blank verse and now only a year or two away from the “great reckoning” of his own death in a sordid tavern brawl, was among them, together with the witty George Peele who wrote warmhearted comedies while whoring and drinking himself to death. Fascinating bit players like Henry Chettle, who authored parts of 55 plays but never earned more than five shillings a throw, came “sweating and blowing, by reason of his fatness,” onto the scene. Greene’s literary and social milieu also embraced a host of notorious non-literary figures from London’s demi-monde, the odd madcaps with whom Greene mingled, including his girlfriend Em Ball (at whose house the actor Richard Tarlton, portrayer of clowns and rustics and composer of doggerel verse, had recently died). She was not only mother of Greene’s unpropitiously-named son Infortunatus, but sister of the notorious Cutting Ball, menacing knife-wielder and arch-thief of London.

At the unstill center of it all was Greene himself, whose traits and accomplishments would command interest even if he had never picked a quarrel in his life. He was a flamboyant literary intellectual, his own era’s equivalent of a medieval Goliard, a French *poète maudit*, a beatnik of the past American century, or a raffish but talented hanger-on at Warhol’s Factory late in our previous century. His signature attribute was a spectacular red beard, described by his friend Thomas Nashe as a spire-like “red peak, that he cherished continually without cutting, on which a man might hang a jewel, it was so sharp and pendant.” He perambulated London in a “fair cloak with sleeves of a grave goose turd green.” He was a neuromancer of revels, never without “a spell in his purse to conjure up a good cup of wine.” According to a friend “he pissed as much against the walls in one year”



Woodcut depicting Robert Greene, still scribbling in his burial shroud, from the title page of John Dickenson, *Greene in Conceit* (London, 1598). Public domain.

as his whole band of detractors in three. Other estimates were, naturally, mixed. Fellow playwright Chettle described him as an eccentric longhair but, nevertheless, “the only comedian of a vulgar writer in this country”—that is, as the most entertaining writer in the English tongue. His printer Cuthbert Burbie regretted his lascivious life but pled on his behalf that “the purest glass is most brittle” and “the highest oak most subject to the wind.” Of course, anybody as flamboyant as Greene would have his detractors too. His most resolute adversary, Harvey, railed at “his impudent pamphleting, fantastical interluding, and desperate libeling, his keeping of a sorry ragged queen [prostitute] of whom he had his base son Infortunatus Greene, his forsaking of his own wife, “too honest for such a husband,” and much more. “Particulars,” Harvey wailed, “are infinite.”

He was a flamboyant literary intellectual, his own era's equivalent of a medieval Goliard, a French *poète maudit*, a beatnik of the past American century, or a raffish but talented hanger-on at Warhol's Factory late in our previous century.

Mad with language and a desire to write, they were all looking for a “way in,” a way to gain prominence (or at least make a living) by their pens. They were all knocking on different doors, hoping one would open. How appropriate that the literary forms available to these writers also sat at the borders of traditional literature: new, louche, unsanctioned, experimental through and through. Greene first wrote prose romances, then scurrilous and “true crime” pamphlets, and finally plays. Nashe wrote pornography, religious tracts, an interlude, various tirades, and the first rogue adventure in English. As older and more genteel systems of literary patronage and cultivated amateurship imploded, they continued to explore new possibilities of writing for personal profit: penning pamphlets, tracts, and romances for the burgeoning London book trade, and (most lucrative of all) writing for players' companies seeking new theatrical material. The young writers made the best of it with a fragile new network of fly-by-night printers, stationers' shops, and emerging theaters. Their writings seethed with energy, but harbored resentments they could not conceal. They cultivated their new audience, but scorned and insulted it too. They flailed about in a culture of insult not only aimed at interlopers like the young Shakespeare but each other as well. They stole unreservedly from each other, trafficking in women and goods but also in plots and lines of verse. Most of them—Greene, Nashe, Marlowe, Peele—were dead in their 20s or 30s. Only a handful, like Thomas Lodge (who collaborated on a play with Greene but then pulled out and become a physician) enjoyed normal spans of life. For all their anger and resentment, their writings pulsated with verbal energy and expressed the joy of unrestrained experimentation.

Their privileged milieu was the pamphlet. About half the residents of England had become literate, and demand for inexpensive and easily accessible reading matter had burgeoned. The printshops in and around Paternoster Row and St. Paul's were doing a land-office business straight over the counter, and were dealing directly with writers eager to sell their wares. Quarto sized (a paper-maker's standard page folded twice over) and unbound, a pamphlet could be had for the price of a theater ticket or an ordinary meal. “My dirty day labor,” Nashe called

them, and he paid tribute to Greene as the prince of scribblers, the man who could “yark you up a pamphlet” overnight if need arose. Nashe was not lying about Green’s productivity. In the frenetic last year of his life, impoverished and ill, he yarked up a dozen dozen different pamphlets, including the *Groatsworth of Wit* (which contains his attack on Shakespeare), and a half-dozen of his popular pamphlets on “cony-catching.” In these racy pamphlets he turns his own street-wise life-experiences to account, vigorously deploring, but also tacitly admiring and celebrating, the activities of “cony” or “rabbit” catchers (swindlers who live by their wits, taking advantage of trusting innocents) as well as “foists” (pickpockets), “cross-biters” (who live by entrapment), and others.

Marked by slangy invective and disdain for marks and fools as well as literary rivals, these pamphlets were always on the attack.¹ In *Pierce Penniless* Nashe calls Harvey “a shame-swollen toad.” Harvey assails Greene’s honored predecessor John Lyly over “the carrion of thy unsavory and stinking pamphlet,” and calls Nashe a “sluttish pamphleteer.” Nashe hurls a taunt at Harvey’s “dung-voiding mouth,” and dares him (or anybody else) to bring it on: “write of what thou wilt, in what language thou wilt, and I will confute it and answer it.” Greene mocks Harvey as a low-born ropemaker’s son, and Harvey crows over Greene’s death “from a surfeit of pickled herring and rhenish wine.” Right in the thick of this insult-blizzard was the crucial one, the dying Greene’s *Groatsworth of Wit*.

If the pamphlet was the vehicle of Greene’s attack, another genre—the emergent Elizabethan professional stage—was the cause of his quarrel with Shakespeare. The professional theater provided the most attractive opportunities for freelance writers of the day. A motivated playwright with a spark of wit could earn close to a living wage: instead of £2-£4 for a pamphlet or the uncertainties of writing a poem for an inconsistent patron, sole authorship of a play for a robust company might yield as much as £20 for several weeks of work, equivalent to twenty or thirty times that amount today. This opportunity was seized by Greene himself, together with his friends Lyly, Peele, Nashe, and Lodge, as well as the mercurial and slightly sinister Christopher “Kit” Marlowe. Marlowe had shown them the way with his *Tamburlaine*, and within months Greene had composed his own highly imitative flop, *Alphonsus*. He was a rapid learner, and soon hit his stride with several plays, including the historical *James IV* and the madcap *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, almost as good as Marlowe’s.

Agitated, Greene and his friends found themselves able, in this promising new circumstance, to collaborate on projects. Greene and Peele probably had a hand in early renderings of what would (in an ironic twist) evolve into Shakespeare’s own *Henry VI* plays. Generous sharers among themselves, Greene and his fellow playwrights were unready to tolerate competition from a new and unexpected quarter,

1 The language of their pamphlet wars became so intemperate that the Archbishop of Canterbury banned those of Nashe and Harvey from print and ordered existing copies destroyed.

and especially not from the unlikely ranks of the mere actors and entertainers for whom they wrote their plays. No wonder that Shakespeare's emergence was a painful annoyance to them. Winning their position by ingenuity, perseverance, and economic sacrifice, they were not about to make way for an uncredentialed and barely educated stranger from the provinces who was, worse still, a mere actor and dabbler besides. *They* were the wordsmiths and authors; actors were expected to memorize and parrot lines, and to season them with low buffoonery, rather than compose them on their own behalf.

And so, ill and near death, Robert Greene scribbled his *Groatsworth*, a pamphlet in which his personal frustrations and competitive animosity toward his younger competitor got the upper hand. There he lets fly in the intemperate language for which he is best remembered today—the language of the man who insulted Shakespeare.² Greene warms to his subject by expressing his general scorn for actors, whom he characterizes as mere puppets, parroting the lines with which the playwrights (with their superior educations) have provided them: “those puppets . . . that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colours.” They are, he says, mere “antics”: clownish vaudevillians, with no worthy sentiments of their own, reliant on words loaned or borrowed rather than entitled or securely possessed. Then he proceeds to the more personal insult. “There is,” he says,

. . . an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that with his *tyger's head, wrapt in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well about to bombast out a blank verse, as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the only *Shake-scene* in a country.

This actor—an inappropriate and unwelcome aspirant—has not only clad himself in borrowed feathers or scripted words, but has presumed to strive beyond his own meager qualifications by composing blank verse (of a particularly bombastic or overwrought nature) on his own behalf. Greene next maliciously paraphrases a line from one of Shakespeare's early efforts—a line from *Henry VI*, part 3, to which the young poet had contributed as co-author—with the doomed duke of York, in this case, accusing his adversary Margaret of possessing a “tiger's heart wrapp'd in a woman's hide” (I, iv, 137). Greene then proceeds to attack Shakespeare as a mere “Johannes Factotum” or Jack-of-all-trades, and concludes by labeling him “the only Shake-scene in the country,” a term coined to cast his rival as a lowly actor and player in dramatic scenes, as well as an overly-strident composer of them.³

Aware today of Shakespeare's utter preeminence, we wonder at Greene's presumption in supposing himself a possible rival. Had Greene lived on to witness his competitor's full emergence, how galling would have been the realization that—by the example of his own career and by bolstering the literary theatrical institutions on which his

2 Greene's celebrated insult has, in recent years, even served as the basis for a British comedy/costume drama entitled *Upstart Crow*, featured for multiple seasons on BBC2 and Netflix—fully furnished with laugh track and slightly suggestive East Enders' humor.

3 In their scorn for Shakespeare as an uncredentialed and undereducated striver, Greene and his friends shared common ground with modern Shakespeare-deniers, who doubt that great poetry could have issued from a mere tradesman's son and seek among the ranks of educated nobility for a more palatable alternative.

rival would depend—he had unwittingly been setting Shakespeare’s table all along. After all, he knew Shakespeare only from his earliest days of trial and error, as author of amatory poetry and as contributor to what would have seemed unexceptional historical drama. For Shakespeare, following Greene some half dozen years later, had his own days of trial and error, variously trying his hand as an unheralded contributor to the *Henry VI* plays and, concurrently, as a dabbler in culturally elite poetry for select patrons and a coterie audience.⁴

Doubts about Shakespeare’s seriousness and staying-power abounded in his early days. A trilogy of academic dramas enacted at Cambridge at the turn of the seventeenth century depicts two young university graduates trying to make their way in the literary world of the day. These are the three “Parnassus” plays, so named for the ambition of the main characters to ascend Parnassus by pursuing the ideals of high art. They doggedly (and ultimately unsuccessfully) seek literary careers that will enable them to enact their ideals, without sinking to pamphleteering, playwrighting, or other kinds of bottom-feeding pursuits.⁵

In the course of these plays, the young university performers are free with their topical opinions, expressing a good many literary judgments for both good and ill. Their characters are, in turn, revealed by the quality of their own literary opinions. One of them, the brash and ranting Gullio, reveals his shallowness by preferring the young Shakespeare to established greats like Chaucer and Spenser:

Let this duncified world esteem of Spenser and Chaucer,
I’ll worship sweet Mr Shakespeare, and to honor him will
lay his Venus and Adonis under my pillow, as we read of
one (I do not well remember his name, but I am sure he
was a king) slept with Homer under his bed’s head.

Meanwhile, more thoughtful characters are critical in their evaluations, giving the young Shakespeare cautious or even negative reviews. Here, for instance, is the comment of an admired character, Judicio, on the young Shakespeare:

Who loves not Adons love, or Lucrece rape?
His sweeter verse contains heart-robbing lines.
Could but a graver subject him content,
Without love’s foolish lazy languishment . . .

He concedes the merit of “Venus and Adonis,” and “Lucrece,” as poems of what he calls love’s “languishment” . . . but also wishes Shakespeare a graver subject, something more worthy of his talent.

Other critics, like Ben Jonson, took the line of Sir Philip Sidney in his *Apology for Poetry*, critiquing Shakespeare for violations of the classical unities of time and place in his dramas, switching from locale to locale, allowing people to age onstage, and the like. This was not, of course, the position of Greene, who wrote for the popular

4 Orderly-minded literary historians argue that Shakespeare turned to poems during the brief period in 1592-3 when the theaters were closed. More likely, though, he was doing what everybody did: experimenting with multiple options and aiming at varied audiences and publics, trying to figure out what worked best.

5 In the third play of the series, *Return from Parnassus*, the foiled heroes are reduced to soliciting theatrical entrepreneurs Burbage and Kempe for employment as playwrights. Burbage and Kempe, actors themselves as well as theatrical tastemakers, consider them over-classicized for employment; as Kempe says, “Few of the university pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphoses, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter.” Their “fellow” Shakespeare is their favorite—“Why here’s our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down”—a man of their own trade untrammelled by Classical models and university airs.

theatre himself. But Greene did feel in familiar company—the company, that is, of university-educated literati—in believing that his rival was out of his depth, out of place, lacking in seriousness, and, certainly, quite uncredentialed for the writing tasks he was taking in hand.

Even though they now look dogged and rather foolish, Shakespeare's early detractors were not foolish men. Pioneers in their own right, England's first professional writers, they opened a possibility and—without exactly meaning to—pointed the way to Shakespeare's own subsequent triumphs. Not simply his adversaries, they were also his paradoxical enablers. They invented the blank verse in which he wrote, bolstered theatrical institutions, and expanded the audience that would fund and support his efforts. They created the possibility of a writerly and theatrical vocation considered marginal and lowbrow in its own time, but in which their unwelcome rival would produce the greatest literary masterpieces the world has known.

Even with Shakespeare's resounding emergence, and Greene's untimely death in 1592, memories of Greene would linger. In the decade after his death he kept reappearing as a ghost. We reencounter his specter in a half-dozen different texts and pamphlets, in stubborn pursuit of his main themes. One of them, *Greene in Conceit, New Raised from his Grave* (1598) even depicts him at his writing-table, clad in a shroud or winding-sheet, still scribbling, still settling scores.

For his part, although a potentially aggrieved party, Shakespeare would display nothing but generosity toward his deceased predecessor. In the exacerbated climate of the day, he might typically have replied to Greene's insults with an immediate blast, assailing him in a scurrilous pamphlet or broadside of his own. Nonetheless, his actual, eventual response to Greene was forbearing, respectful, and perhaps even slightly sentimental in tone.

One of Greene's pamphlet-sized prose romances was *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, a tale dealing with the destructive effects of jealousy, the effects of separation, the possibility of ultimate reconciliation. A mixed accomplishment, it is characteristic of what Greene himself called his "imperfect pamphlets," filled with emphatic mood shifts, pastoral fantasies, unruly and incestuous desires, and more. The barebones plot is that Pandosto, king of Bohemia, irrationally suspects his wife Bellaria of unfaithful intrigue with his friend Egistus of Sicily. The mad king's frenzies lead to her death, the flight and loss of their infant daughter Fawnia (who is raised incognito by a humble shepherd), the coincidences and sea journeys leading to her rapprochement with Egistus's son Dorastus (who, though of royal blood, is willing to become a shepherd for her sake), and a final revelation of identities and partial reconciliations.

Taking Greene's romance in hand and recasting it as his *Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare renamed characters and shuffled geography, but retained Greene's themes of headstrong guilt, separation, and

renewal. Like Greene, he preserved a sixteen-year time lapse between the play's two parts, as the respective children of Bohemia and Sicily grow up unknown to each other, prior to their romantic collision. Then, in his last two acts, he improvised much more inventively and freely, yet preserved and elaborated Greene's main themes—the healing effects of time, the amiable effects of pastoral dalliance, the reparative possibilities of love. Overall, as in several of Shakespeare's late plays, there is an effect of softening: most notably, he granted the mad king's wife, now renamed Hermione, a return to life.

Additionally, he created several new characters, among whom the most prominent is a winning rogue named Autolycus, an itinerant ballad-monger and shameless grifter. Although given to trickery and problematic pursuits, Autolycus is an ultimately attractive and amiable character. He enters the action of the play cheerfully singing “When daffadils begin to peer,” a ballad of springtime renewal, while confessing (no less cheerfully) to a variety of scams and misdeeds. Describing himself as a “snapper-up of unconsider'd trifles,” or petty thief, he attributes his own ragged condition to gambling and women: “With die and drab I purchase'd this caparison, and my revenue is the silly cheat.” We then immediately see him set out to cozen (cheat) a clown or rural simpleton, attributing (in a maneuver similar to those described by Greene in his own cony-catching pamphlets) his own ragged attire to a fictitious robbery, while picking the pocket of the clown who has come to his aid.

So here we have Shakespeare, deep in his own mid-life and twenty years after the death of Greene, turning to one of Greene's prose romances as his source. To be sure—in accordance with his own practice and the conventions of the day—he does not mention Greene by name, although *Pandosto* was a popular work and Shakespeare's indebtedness would have been recognized by many. More important than the simple fact of the adaption, though, is Shakespeare's affectionate rendering of an incorrigible rogue who—if not a literal portrait of Greene—certainly displays many of Greene's known attributes. Shakespeare not only grants him the boon of affectionate treatment but even, at the end of the play, grants him a post and an honest livelihood, which Autolycus accepts with pleasure and relief. The benign aspect of Shakespeare's nod to his one-time rival is heightened and confirmed by the tenor of the play itself, its emphasis on the healing effects of time, and the possibilities of reconciliation.

To treat the conclusion of the *Winter's Tale* as an act of explicit forgiveness of Greene's churlish insult might overstate the case. But Shakespeare does appear to advance the conciliatory spirit of the play by invoking his old rival in spirit of generous equanimity. Or, to put it differently: in one of his last plays, Shakespeare writes his own, bemused ending to Greene's intended quarrel. A

Poetry At the Threshold

Reflections on a New Hölderlin Translation

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I.

A new translation has just appeared in English of the poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin. The translator, David Constantine, is one of the very best of those who have attempted to render Hölderlin's elusive metrics into the frame of English verse. This new translation includes more than 100 poems (several in multiple versions) and brings together in one volume the early Alcaic odes, the night songs, the elegies, the hymns, the late poems of madness, and a sampling of other fragments that will surely delight readers of Hölderlin who treasure the range and variety of his contributions. Constantine also includes in this volume several prose translations into English of Hölderlin's own translations in German from the Greek of Sophocles, Pindar, and Euripides. Indeed, more than

one third of this 400-page work is devoted to translations of translations, making this new volume a curious and perhaps even an "eccentric exercise," as Constantine himself admits.¹ By my count this is the seventh work by Hölderlin to appear in English translation over the last decade.² We now have a minor canon in English for this accomplished German poet.

A scrupulous review of Constantine's new translation would demand nothing less than a careful engagement with the original texts of these Greek authors so as to grasp something of Hölderlin's own poetic project. But what I wish to address here is less an evaluation and description of Constantine's Hölderlin translations than to raise a simple question: Why Hölderlin? Why has the work of Hölderlin suddenly become



Franz Karl Hiemer, pastel portrait of Friedrich Holderlin, 1792. Public domain.

salonfähig in the English-speaking world after decades of neglect and oversight? What is it about Hölderlin's poetic style and way of thinking that has suddenly brought him to the attention of English-language readers and scholars as never before? In raising such questions, my aim is less to address the issue of generational reception or literary reputation than it is to confront a larger question about the relevance of poetic thinking to the philosophical understanding of what we might call "modernity."

Hölderlin, as poet and as thinker, stands at the threshold of modernity. That is, he stands over an epoch whose birth and genesis was marked by the trauma of revolutionary violence and political upheaval. Responding to such upheaval, Hölderlin seized upon the topos of the "turn-of-the-century" as a way of understanding his own age as one of turbulent unrest and disruption. In the Janus-faced image of passage, traversal, and transport, Hölderlin crafted his poetic verse as a response to what he perceived as an age of revolutionary transformation.

Writing at this threshold, Hölderlin would come to understand his own epoch as an age of transition between the lost power of ancient Greek tragic art and the coming force of a new consciousness that would raise up the abandoned spirit of Hesperian creativity to form a new epochal time of freedom and justice. Inspired by the French Revolution's assault on bourgeois canons of temporal reckoning, Hölderlin sought a new poetic measure for reflecting upon the natural rhythms and turns of time. As part of his revolutionary approach, he wished to think time anew as a ritual spectacle shot through with a performative ethos. Here time was to be encountered not in incremental gradients of calculative measurement, but as a celebratory event of human participation in a festal bond between mortals and gods. In one of his most well-known poems, "Remembrance,"

Hölderlin envisions this time of coming-together as the celebration of the vernal equinox that takes place at the liminal threshold of the season of turning,

*At the March time
When day and night are equal
(vv. 20-21).*

As the poet of the threshold, Hölderlin sought a path of transport between the old dying world of the *ancien regime* and the new world of historical freedom that lay just beyond the measure of the present. As his guide, he chose the figures of the ancient Greeks as a way to negotiate the tensions, boundaries, chasms, and contradictions between those realms separated by time, fate, history, and destiny. For him, the task of poetic communication was modeled on the same phenomenology of guest-friendship as in the closing scene from Homer's *Iliad*: the journey of Priam across the threshold of a battlefield separating two bitterly opposed enemies, a journey aided by Zeus' beloved son, Hermes. As the god of crossings and crisscrossings, of convergences and intersections, Hermes disposes over those realms marked by deep ambiguity and equivocation. In a word, Hermes is the god of the chiasm—of the crisscross of lines that intersect and whose divergence serves as the very basis of any possible convergence. Such a relation can be seen in the Greek letter chi (χ) formed by the intersection of divergent lines. Hermes comes forth, then, as the god of enigma, paradox, and riddle. He is also known as the god of travelers, who plows roads and marks their crossing with his herm statues—pillars with two heads that serve as signposts and milestones. This two-headed god stands over all thresholds as the god of doors, hinges, portals, and gates. But as the god of transport, he also regulates those realms of commerce having to do with mercantile-sexual-communicative transactions. He thus also

becomes linked with the practices of thievery, deception, letters, and music. In this way Hermes becomes the god who disposes over the art of hermeneutics, that subtle craft of negotiating the distance between art and artifice, fidelity and dissembling, the very art required of those embarking upon the act of translation.

and discipline of translation. Translation, for Hölderlin, signifies an exposure to the very difficulties of Hermes-like crossings and interchanges. To enter into the foreign is to bring into question my own identity. In authentic translation, my own language becomes foreign to me. Moreover, any attempt to reduce the strangeness of the

For Hölderlin, the poet becomes the Hermes-figure whose work begins *at the threshold and in it*, ever mindful of the vast chasm separating one's native language from the foreign that one seeks to appropriate.

For Hölderlin, the poet becomes the Hermes-figure whose work begins *at the threshold and in it*, ever mindful of the vast chasm separating one's native language from the foreign that one seeks to appropriate. Hence, as he sees it, the poet must scrupulously honor the unbridgeable separation between them, even as he simultaneously prepares a path for crossing over it. Such a demand is both impossible and necessary. It requires an understanding of the singularity of each culture, each language, each word, and each expression, even as it simultaneously demands a responsibility to perform a Hermes-like journey across each singularity to its other—a journey marked by an ordeal of difference and alterity. Such a journey enacts the very demand of ethics—a hermeneutic ethics of acknowledging the right of the other, even as it also affirms the necessity of starting out from the native and one's own. And here, I want to argue, we find the heart of Hölderlin's relevance to our own global and multicultural efforts to make sense of the spread of nationality and native identity. For Hölderlin, the key to such an understanding lies in the poetic practice

other's language to something familiar and conventional within my own milieu misses the very power of what the translation experience entails. For Hölderlin, to enter into the activity of translation is to experience an awakening to the hidden power of one's own language. Any good translator of Hölderlin's work needs to be attentive to this dimension of the poet's vision. By that measure, David Constantine's new translation offers us a real contribution not only to Hölderlin studies, but to the art and craft of translation itself.

During the period of his greatest poetic compositions (1800-1806), Hölderlin was actively involved in translating into German some of the most difficult poetic texts from the ancient Greek tradition, including Pindar, as well as Sophocles's bewildering tragedies, *Antigone* and *Oedipus Tyrannus*. And here is where Constantine's translation grants some of its boldest achievements. Not only does Constantine offer thoughtful and masterly translations of Hölderlin's poetic hymns and late songs, but his attention to detail in the tragedies helps bring focus to Hölderlin's passion for translation as a key to his poetic art.

Moreover, Constantine also provides translations of Hölderlin's two essays—"Notes on Oedipus" and "Notes on Antigone"—which convey some of the most insightful readings of Greek tragedy within modern German thought. If, for example, Hegel reads tragedy in terms of the logic of metaphysical supersession and reconciliation, Hölderlin proffers something vastly more nuanced and problematic—an understanding of tragedy as a way to think the irreconcilability of inward contradiction.

In his reading of the play *Oedipus Tyrannus*, for example, Hölderlin finds the exemplar of such inward contradiction in the figure of Oedipus himself. Oedipus appears on stage as the icon of modern subjectivity, a willful force of instrumental rationality bent on mastery through the art of reckoning. Hölderlin's Oedipus comes to embody the tragedy of all enlightenment in its boundless quest to demythologize the gods and to thereby gain control and dominance over the riddling, oracular mysteries of nature and language. In deploying the language of technical calculation, Oedipus stands opposed to the poet who seeks to keep alive the tensions and paradoxes of the foreign and the native that animate the language of poetry. In carrying out such a delicate task, however, the poet risks losing both himself and his own language. Giving oneself over to the allure of the foreign carries with it the danger of forgetting one's native identity. What one requires is memory, memory of what the poetic task demands. In his rhapsodic hymn "Mnemosyne," Hölderlin speaks to this question of self-forgetting in a powerful way:

*We are a sign with no meaning
Without pain we are and have almost
Lost our language in foreign lands...*
(v.1-3) (trans. altered).

It is as if here the poet is trying to express a gnawing fear about self-oblivion that threatens his task of retrieving the ancient language of the Greeks in his modern renderings. How to negotiate the distance between Pindar's paratactic enjambments and the demands of modern poetic verse? How to render Sophocles' startling idioms in a vigorous and energetic way that keeps alive their archaic power without leveling them to any modern equivalency? What would be required to make Sophocles' tragedies resound in a powerful voice that could speak to the modern condition of alienation and abandonment? These were some of the questions that directed Hölderlin's difficult and complex relation to the ancient Greeks. Above all, Hölderlin was committed to an idealized vision of ancient Greece as the site for the spiritual origin of the West. For him "Greece" was less the space of a geographical location than it was the name for an experience of absence, one marked by exile from, and mourning for, a possibility of authentic poetic dwelling. What Hölderlin attempts in his poetry is a complex retrieval of a Greek experience that never happened, of a vision of originary beauty whose power is not historical, but futural. That is, for Hölderlin, Greece exists as the name of a tragic hope born out of the painful loss of something irrecoverable, a hope whose very utterance bespeaks the power of homecoming. In this notion of homecoming to the foreign, Hölderlin locates the most authentic problem facing Western consciousness, a problem that for him comes to define the very identity of the German people as they strive to define their role within the contorted legacy of Western history/destiny. For what the term "Greece" comes to signify for Hölderlin is the name of an experience where the force of the sacred is still a living reality for human beings in their comportment to the gods. In "The Gods of Greece" (1788), Schiller had

already spoken of the *deus absconditus* that would mark modern existence as a time of destitution and default. In so doing, he had articulated for Hölderlin the task of the modern German poet: to recover in poetic song the trace of the fugitive gods. This was to become Hölderlin's defining vocation and the essence of his poetic craft—to attend to the vanishing of the sacred as the theme conditioning modern life. And it is here, in a preeminent sense, that the Greeks help Hölderlin to craft his own poetic vocation as the voice for a new German identity. But Hölderlin offers a clear warning: we study the Greeks not to imitate them, but so that we might fashion a new kind of identity out of our very difference from them.

What Hölderlin attempts to articulate in both his poetic hymns and in his translations of tragedy is a sense of the utter lostness of human beings within the modern condition. We stand, the poet claims, in a “destitute time” besieged by the loss and absence of the gods, fated to wait for their return, yet powerless to effect it in any meaningful way. And yet the poet's highest calling for Hölderlin involves the attempt to bring about a reversal of such a condition by pointing to our need for a poetic attunement to absence, departure, loss, and privation. Only in experiencing such loss, Hölderlin wants to say, can we come to a sense of our own purpose and fulfillment.

Perhaps nowhere is Hölderlin's attunement to such loss as enigmatically expressed as in his majestic hymn “Remembrance” that addresses the question of loss and absence by turning to the thematics of memory and recollection. Here language enacts a break or caesura from the unity of life, leaving the poet alone and grief-stricken at the thought of losing a dearly loved one. Moreover, here we come to understand memory as double-edged. On the one hand, it is necessary to grieve the

beloved, but just as necessary to let go of excessive grief so as not to abandon oneself to boundless self-indulgence or self-abnegation. In this symbol of memory, Hesiod found the origin of all poetic song since it was the Muses who bequeathed to him the source of their ambivalent *kerygma*:

*We know how to say many lies as if
they were true,
And when we want, we know how to
speak the truth.*
Hesiod, *Theogony*, vv. 27-28.

What the poetic Muses taught Hölderlin was the art of negotiating the difficult boundary between the truth of the word and its beguiling artifices. In few realms does such a contest for truth take place as powerfully as in the realm of translation. Translation becomes for Hölderlin the arena within which the poet undertakes a work that threatens him with dispossession and forfeiture. It is no surprise, then, to find that the German term for translation, *Übersetzung*, finds its etymological echoes in word roots related to displacement (*Versetzung*), transposition (*Umsetzung*), shake-up (*Umbesetzung*), and shock (*Entsetzen*). Constantine's labors here attend to the strange and uncanny process that takes place in Hölderlin's translations from the Greek to the German. Moreover, in his own English translations, Constantine addresses not only the technical process of finding accurate word equivalencies, he also focuses on how, for Hölderlin, translation itself functions as a way to bring us closer to the essence of language that manifests itself in the poetic word.

At the very heart of Hölderlin's preoccupations as a poet is the absolute precedence of language. For him, language is not an instrument of communication, a tool designed to enable us to transmit or convey “information;” it constitutes, rather, nothing less than the supreme event of

human existence, a world-forming power that exposes us to the highest possibilities of our being. In this function as poet of the Germans, Hölderlin's fate as a poet comes to be reflected in German history itself. As one of the great Hölderlin commentators of the last century, Bernhard Böschenstein,

put it: "Hölderlin is perhaps the sole German poet of the age of Goethe who has served as a mirror for the whole of the 20th century."³ And yet it is the way Hölderlin would be read in his 20th-century German reception that has led to such difficulty in properly assessing his work.

II.

Hölderlin was born in 1770 and died in 1843, but at the age of 36 he experienced a profound mental breakdown that led to his being admitted to the Autenreith clinic in Tübingen. After several months of incarceration there, with no hope of improvement, he was released to the care of a carpenter who tended to him in a tower overlooking the Neckar River for the last 36 years of his life. This image of the mad poet in the tower came to shape the mythology of Hölderlin that dominates his German reception. Neglected for a century (except by Brentano, Nietzsche, and Fontane), Hölderlin's work was rediscovered by a young German academic, Norbert von Hellingrath, who devoted a study to Hölderlin's hymns and to his Pindar translations, producing a new edition highlighting the late work and setting off a Hölderlin Renaissance in 1914. The effects of such a revival touched leading poets and thinkers such as Stefan George, Rainer Maria Rilke, Georg Trakl, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, Theodor Adorno, and Martin Heidegger, among others. What emerged from this Hölderlin-reception at a decisive point in German history was a bifurcated path—a left-wing Hölderlin and a right-wing Hölderlin—that reflected the

profound divisions of German culture during the epoch of the two world wars, and afterwards in the Germany divided between East and West.⁴ Hellingrath became a decisive figure in the Hölderlin reception; after his death at the battle of Verdun in 1916, he was turned into a martyr for a Hölderlin-inspired German nationalism later taken up by National Socialist ideologues, including Josef Goebbels. Indeed, the Nazi politicization of Hölderlin went to such extremes that, in 1943 on the hundredth anniversary of his death, Nazi supporters descended on Tübingen to honor the poet's grave by bestrewing it with swastikas.⁵ In conjunction with this nationalist orgy of Hölderlin-mania in Tübingen, the first truly critical edition of the poet's work was instituted by Friedrich Beissner. Beissner also founded the Hölderlin Society there as well as the first leading journal of Hölderlin studies, both of which still stand today as the leading organs of Hölderlin scholarship.⁶ In the journal's inaugural issue one contributor praised Hölderlin for "clearly calling to our consciousness the significance of Nordic blood for understanding the world of the ancient Greeks" and for recognizing "the depth of the racial affinity of both peoples."⁷

Given the obscenities committed in Hölderlin's name, it took several generations of German scholarship to cleanse the poet's palate and allow for a new reception of his work, including a radically new critical edition begun by D. E. Sattler in 1975 that has only recently been completed.⁸ To understand why it has taken so long for Hölderlin's work to be properly recognized for its genius in the English-speaking world, requires a retracing of the deep political divisions—both within Germany and without—that marked the history of the last century. Given this history, it can only appear as ironic that the first book-length translation of Hölderlin into English also occurred in 1943, the centenary marking Hölderlin's death. This first translation was undertaken by an émigré German Jew, the nineteen-year old Michael Hamburger, who stated in the "Introduction" to this first edition: "My aim, in these translations, was to reproduce the poems as literally as possible."⁹ Hamburger added that he sought above all to avoid "an intrusion of the translator's idiosyncrasies into the author's work" and to provide translations solely "as an introduction to Hölderlin's work or as an aid to those who cannot read the original with ease." Much has indeed changed both in Hölderlin scholarship and in translation studies since that time.

We now have seven new translations of Hölderlin's work into English over the last decade. This remarkable outpouring of poetic skill, academic rigor, and scholarly excellence has succeeded in elevating Hölderlin's profile in contemporary cultural discourse. And yet despite all this new activity there is, I would argue, still an unclear sense of what this legacy means and how it is to be interpreted. Hölderlin doesn't easily fit into the premade categories of historical alignment that go under the names "Romanticism," "Idealism," "Neo-Classicism." On the contrary, his verse seems to defy such conventions and to offer a problematic view

of Western history since it is so deeply rooted in a commitment to, and a yearning for, *myth*. It is perhaps on that account that Hölderlin's work has endured so powerfully through all its contradictory phases of reception and interpretation. The English-language reception of the poet's oeuvre has been muted by the lack of a dual-language edition of Hölderlin's poetry with critical commentary and scholarly interpretation, something akin to the three-volume editions in German undertaken by Jochen Schmidt and Michael Knaupp, or the superb single-volume Italian edition by Luigi Reitani.¹⁰ Until there appears such a thorough—and critical—edition of Hölderlin's work, we will have to labor through the flaws that mark Hölderlin's work in translation. And yet the appearance of David Constantine's new 400-page collection of Hölderlin in translation is truly a welcomed addition.

But there are several caveats. Almost half of this new edition has appeared previously under different guises; the notes, while helpful, are sparse and incomplete; while all the Pindar fragments are translated, there are none of the odes from Pindar at all. One could quibble about this or that defect here and there, but the advantages far outweigh any carping criticisms. On the positive side of the ledger, Constantine has added more than 60 new poems in translation, as well as new renderings of Hölderlin's own translations from the Greek of Pindar, Sophocles, and Euripides which, taken together, comprise over half of this new publication. This strange and compelling practice—of rendering into English Hölderlin's own German translations of the Greek—marks this collection as a bold and daring challenge. For what Constantine stakes out here in his translations of Hölderlin's translations is the very problem of language itself and what poetry can mean in all its fractious and recalcitrant potential. Translation sets language against itself and,

in so doing, it sets us into a struggle with and against our own language, so that we come into the danger of losing our own tongue (249). What genuine translation achieves, in this sense, is a proper transposition into what is improper, an attempt to make our own that which remains strange and foreign. Ultimately, translation is unsettling; it dislodges us from our native haunts, deposes us from our settled positions, and forces us to confront the alien otherness that haunts language in all its irreducible singularity and uniqueness. Language resists being converted into an equivalent. For all its malleability and openness to being colonized by the other, language—at its heart, in its poetic essence—resists being converted into a tool for smooth commercial transactions and mercantile exchange.

For Hölderlin, language appears as a fragile vessel, ever in danger of being broken through the careless intercourse between those human beings unremittingly bound to their bustling enterprises. And yet in his attempt to extend the boundaries of what the German language might be capable of saying, Hölderlin oftentimes found himself in a cul-de-sac. In his translations of *Oedipus* and *Antigone*, for example, he produced strange and unsettling manuscripts that proved difficult to understand. When the translation was read aloud to Goethe and Schiller, they laughed. Their friend Heinrich Voss remarked: “what can be said about Hölderlin’s *Sophocles*? Is the man crazy or is he only pretending to be, and is his *Sophocles* a covert satire on bad translators?”¹¹

The grammatical and syntactical errors in the translations were partly due to faulty Greek manuscripts that Hölderlin relied upon, but also because Hölderlin’s own knowledge of Greek was that of a poet, rather than of a scholar. Yet despite all of his slips and miscalculations—Constantine relates that there were “more than a thousand errors” (251)—Hölderlin produced

a translation of Sophocles that was both jarring and inspired, a work of art in its own right that dismantled the rules of traditional art down to their foundations. As Constantine claims, though Hölderlin “was not very sound in the grammar of the language, and in translating made basic mistakes,” it needs to be said that he “had more insight into the heart of ancient Greek culture than anybody else in his generation” (252). In coming to terms with the strangeness of Greek word order, grammar, and syntax, Hölderlin came to forcefully experience an estrangement from his own language that enabled him to hear it again in a new register. In this way, translation came to be experienced, literally, as a kind of *alienation*—of making what is familiar *strange* and, in so doing, becoming at home in an uncanny way with what is foreign, confounding, and threatening. It is this experience of what might be called an “alien homecoming” that Hölderlin saw as the very heart of Greek tragedy, where life and death were crisscrossed in a chiasmic relation that severed one from the other precisely at their point of intersection. It was this same tragic grammar of an alien homecoming that shaped Hölderlin’s own attempt at writing tragedy, *The Death of Empedocles*. The logic of Hölderlin’s translations, then, was marked by a strange and enigmatic insight—that appropriating what is native to one’s own language can only be properly achieved by first losing oneself in “the experience of the foreign” that tears one away from one’s native endowments into the realm of the alien other. It is this vision of alien homecoming that continues to haunt Hölderlin’s work as dramatist, as translator, and as poet. It is as if in translating the foreign language into one’s native tongue, the foreign not only becomes native, but the native—if it genuinely enters into the strangeness of the alien idiom—becomes foreign to itself. The foreign meaning is thus

written over with the grammar of the native, and in this cross-breeding transplantation, a nascent sense of the national comes into its own birth through the other.

Hölderlin's work of translation, as much as the translation of the work of Hölderlin, comes to us, then, as a palimpsest—written over and erased by two centuries of fervent division between left and right, traditionalists and postmodernists, poets and translators—where we are left to add our own signatures. How are we to respond? What kind of meaning can we wrest from the work of this poet whose language resists easy appropriation and conversion into our own purposes? How to translate a poet of the absential whose work speaks to and from the abyssal? How, in confronting the very border of meaning that presses upon the edge of ineffability, can we give voice to a language that is genuinely our own? These are the challenges that Hölderlin's work poses to us today as we attempt to situate it within the canon of an academic discourse burst asunder by the power of his poetic word. In coming to terms with such baffling and disorienting language—the enjambments that interrupt all sense of continuity and connection; the strange word combinations that call into question the meaning and function of “naming” as a cultural practice; the irregular, syncopated rhythms that come near to prose—we come into confrontation with the fundament of the poetic word itself. And, I think, it is this confrontation that makes Hölderlin's work especially relevant to our own age. For in coming to terms with the foreign, we also come to a sense of the foreignness that reigns within us as well. It is this sense, as Trakl put it, that “the soul is a stranger to itself,” which marks Hölderlin as

one of our own. This is what is at stake in Hölderlin's translation of ancient Greek; this is what marks his attempts to make translation itself a poetic art.

It is as if Hölderlin wishes to write in a style not only incommensurable with its original Greek source, but with the German language as well—all with the effect of rendering incompatibility itself as a new poetic style. For what Hölderlin genuinely attempts to craft in his writing is a poetics of absence, of a language attuned to the vast incommensurability of word and meaning or, rather, of being able to render in words the tragic withdrawal and recession of being in all its various guises and configurations.

As Gadamer puts it: “The ideal of poetic saying fulfills itself in untranslatability.”¹² How to translate ‘absence’? How to render in poetic form the notion of abyss as a way into the unconditional untranslatability of what language aspires to render? How to come to terms with the recalcitrance of language as the abyss of translatability, one that aspires to native appropriation even—and especially—where within one's indigenous language, what reigns is not nativity, natality, or nationality, but the foreignness of what is ever alien, strange, and foreign. In precisely this way, language comes to us as inappropriable to use and possession, as recalcitrant to human instrumentality. There, at the abyss of language, Hölderlin works to expose language to what is foreign to it and leaves it for us to make our own border crossing. A

David Constantine, trans., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Selected Poetry*. Bloodaxe Books, 416pp., £15 paper.

Endnotes

- 1 I should note than unlike most other recent English translations of Hölderlin's verse, this edition does not include dual-language versions of the poems or fragments. Given its 400-page length, this would most likely have necessitated a two-volume edition.
- 2 The list of new Hölderlin translations since 2008 includes: Ross Benjamin, trans. *Hyperion or The Hermit in Greece* (Brooklyn: Archipelago Books, 2008); Nick Hoff, trans., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Odes and Elegies* (Middleton.: Wesleyan University Press, 2008); David Farrell Krell, trans., *Friedrich Hölderlin: The Death of Empedocles* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008); Maxine Chernoff and Paul Hoover, trans., *Selected Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin* (Richmond: Omnidawn, 2008); Jeremy Adler and Charlie Louth, trans., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters* (London: Penguin, 2009), and Emery George, trans., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Selected Poems* (Princeton: Kylix Press, 2012). See also the excellent study by Charlie Louth, *Hölderlin and the Dynamics of Translation* (Oxford: Legenda, 1998).
- 3 Bernhard Boschenstein, "Nachwort," in: Gerhard Kurz, ed. *Friedrich Hölderlin: Gedichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000), 619.
- 4 Sture Packalen, *Zum Hölderlinbild in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1986).
- 5 For an account of Hölderlin under the banner of National Socialism, cf. Bernhard Zeller, ed., *Klassiker in finsternen Zeiten*, 2 vols. (Marbach: Deutsche Schiller Gesellschaft, 1983).
- 6 Beissner's edition, traditionally known as the *Grosse Stuttgarter Ausgabe* appeared in 8 volumes from 1943-1985, published by Cotta (and later Kohlhammer) in Stuttgart. The Hölderlin Gesellschaft was formed in Tübingen in 1943.
- 7 Hermann Haering, "Hölderlin im Weltkrieg," *Iduna: Jahrbuch der Hölderlin-Gesellschaft*, 1 (1944): 183.
- 8 The 20-volume edition by D.E. Sattler, the Frankfurt Edition, has been widely criticized on several fronts; cf. the helpful account provided by Charlie Louth, *The Modern Language Review* 98, no. 4 (Oct. 2003): 898-907.
- 9 Michael Hamburger, trans., *Poems of Friedrich Hölderlin* (London: Nicholson and Watson, 1943), i.
- 10 Jochen Schmidt, ed., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, 3 vols. (Frankfurt: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1994) and Michael Knaupp, ed., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, 3 vols. (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag 1993), and Luigi Reitani, ed., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Tutte Le Liriche* (Milano: Mondadori, 2001).
- 11 D.E. Sattler, ed., *Friedrich Hölderlin: Sämtliche Werke (Frankfurter Ausgabe): Sophokles*, 16: 20.
- 12 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Lob der Theorie* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983), 23.

A New Picture of Oscar Wilde

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Nicholas Frankel, *Oscar Wilde: The Unrepentant Years*, Harvard University Press, 374pp., \$30 cloth

THE POSTHUMOUS CAREER of Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) continues apace, as it has for many years now. Few fin-de-siècle celebrities—and Wilde was certainly that in his own day—have experienced such sustained success in their cultural afterlife. Not, for example, Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900), another alumnus of the year 1900’s class of dead celebrities, whose operetta *Patience*, written with his collaborator W. S. Gilbert, satirized the aesthetic movement Wilde did so much to foster. And certainly not John Ruskin (1819–1900), even though his neo-Gothic enthusiasms led him to support the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood of poets and painters, a clear influence on Wilde’s artistic sensibility. Not even Ernest Dowson (1867–1900), a fellow poet and *absintheur* whose self-destructive lifestyle may have matched Wilde’s, but whose artistic gifts and occasional flashes of wit—“Absinthe makes the tart grow fonder”—seem permanently fixed in the fin-de-siècle.

As for Sullivan and Ruskin, their reputations anchor them to an even earlier era: with their mutton chops, stiff collars, frock coats, and bland respectability, they remain moored to the proper, dutiful world of Victorian England. Of those nineteenth-century notables who also died in 1900, only Friedrich Nietzsche’s cultural afterlife rivals Wilde’s. The philosopher’s aphoristic talents are not dissimilar to Wilde’s epigrammatic gifts, and Nietzsche’s legacy is certainly enduring—thanks partly to his sister Elizabeth, who did more than anyone to keep that legacy alive in the most unfortunate way by encouraging her Nazi pals to misunderstand her brilliant brother, with his idea of the *Übermensch* and the will to power, as a fascist fellow traveler. But not even Nietzsche can equal the cultural legacy of Wilde, whose life and work continue to inspire scholars, playwrights, and filmmakers. *The Happy Prince* (2018), the bio-pic directed by and starring Rupert Everett as Oscar Wilde in his last years, is only the most recent example of the author’s continuing presence in contemporary culture.

The Wilde who is the subject of Everett’s film is also the topic of Nicholas Frankel’s *Oscar Wilde: The Unrepentant Years* (2017),

an excellent examination of the last five years of the author's life. After his 1895 conviction for committing acts of "gross indecency" with other men, Wilde spent two of his remaining years in three different English prisons (four, if you count Newgate, where he spent his first weekend after sentencing): Pentonville, Wandsworth, and finally Reading. The last three years were spent in exile, with Wilde residing immediately after his release in Dieppe and Berneval-sur-Mer on the Normandy coast, then Naples, and, finally, Paris, where he died in a seedy room at the Hôtel d'Alsace on November 30th, 1900. Perhaps the most familiar anecdote of his last days is the mordantly witty remark he made about the "duel to the death" he was fighting with the ghastly wallpaper (brown flowers on a blue background) in his hotel room: "One of us has to go." To be sure, Frankel gets that anecdote in the book (as does Everett in the film), but he gives us so much more than the received myth which by now forms a broad and mostly erroneous understanding of the post-prison Wilde: that he was a ruined man and a pariah of polite society, hated by all save a small circle of faithful friends, a man who had abandoned his art and rejected his former lover Lord Alfred Douglas—the latter point supposedly evident to anyone who has read the long prison letter to Douglas now known as *De Profundis*. A tragic figure, in short.

Part of that myth is true, of course, but like all partial myths it is not the whole truth. In particular, Frankel shows how the letter to Douglas changed over the course of its long composition from a bitter excoriation of the spoiled aristocrat as the agent of the artist's ruin to a deeply reflective spiritual autobiography of the sort that Wilde read in prison (such as Augustine's *Confessions*). Far from being a rationale for rejecting Douglas, the letter actually laid the emotional groundwork for his eventual

reunion with the man Wilde called Bosie. After his release from prison on May 19th, 1897, Wilde dithered a bit about resuming the relationship, but then he and Bosie "eloped" to Naples in September. In addition to making a convincing case that Douglas was hardly the "heartless Iago or Judas figure" he is widely understood to have been, Frankel also shows us something that Everett does not: that Wilde managed to sustain his creative powers, however diminished, over the last two years of his life. Not only did Wilde compose *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, the long poem about penitentiary life that makes a powerful argument for prison reform, he also prepared his most successful society comedies—*The Importance of Being Earnest* and *An Ideal Husband*—for publication in the form that we know them today, adding brilliant touches here and there. More generally, as the title of the book suggests, Frankel shows that Wilde in his last years was far from being the tragic martyr or suffering saint that such celebrated biographers as H. Montgomery White and Richard Ellmann have made him out to be. True, Wilde was the victim of a bygone era of homophobic injustice relentless in its viciousness, but, as Frankel puts it, "Wilde did not emerge from prison without ambitions or plans, and he took pleasure where it was to be had. While he faced injury and insult on an almost daily basis, to frame Wilde's story as tragedy or martyrdom is to ignore elements in his makeup at once personal and philosophical that go to the heart of who he was."

Who Wilde was, exactly, is a complicated topic, not least because the language that we now use to describe men who love other men has changed so much since the period when Wilde was hounded and finally brought to bay by the brutish Marquess of Queensbury, Lord Alfred Douglas's father, for "corrupting" his delicate son, who was Wilde's junior by some sixteen years.

Queensbury did not accuse Wilde of being gay, queer, or homosexual: he called him a “posing somdomite [sic]” on the card he left at Wilde’s club, prompting Wilde to sue Queensbury for libel, a charge that backfired once the defense counsel threatened to produce evidence affirming the truth of Queensbury’s allegations, whereupon Wilde withdrew the suit. But given the evidence disproving the libel charge, the Crown itself was obligated to prosecute the charge of gross indecency against Wilde.

There must always be something anachronistic about speaking of any Victorian’s ‘sexual identity.’

“Gross indecency” was a misdemeanor carrying a maximum sentence of two years in prison (which is what Wilde got). This vague category of sexual offense was added at the last minute to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, legislation primarily intended “for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of brothels, and other purposes.” The section of the act covering gross indecency was so ill-conceived that it soon became known as the “Blackmailer’s Charter” because it did not criminalize any specific act, leaving the meaning of “gross indecency” open to subjective interpretation. More important, the Act criminalized private, consensual relations between men, with the result that it may very well have brought into existence a new form of sexual identity: homosexuality. Wilde did not walk around thinking of himself and the men he loved as “homosexual”; in fact, he never used the term. Neither the word itself nor the concept of same-sex desire as a component of one’s inherent character had become established in Wilde’s day, but both were emerging. The word homosexual did not

appear in English until 1892, when the German sexologist Richard Krafft-Ebing’s book *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) was translated into English. As Krafft-Ebing’s title suggests, same-sex love was understood as a form of perversion, evidence of degeneration from “normal” desires. Strangely, Wilde takes precisely this view of himself in a long letter to the home secretary dated July 2nd, 1896 petitioning for early release from Reading. He relies on such medical authorities as the eugenicist Cesare Lombroso and the cultural critic Max Nordau (whose *Entartung* was translated into English as *Degeneration* in 1895) to claim that he should not be punished further for his “sexual madness,” since conditions such as the “erotomania, which made him forget his wife and children,” are “diseases to be cured by a physician, rather than crimes to be punished by a judge.” The petition, of course, was unsuccessful, and while Wilde’s use of the medical discourse of sexual perversion current at the time to describe himself may have been a stratagem to persuade those with power over him to show him mercy, Frankel is right to point out that “there must always be something anachronistic about speaking of any Victorian’s ‘sexual identity.’” At the same time, even though Wilde could hardly have “identified” as homosexual, he clearly “thought of himself as a social and sexual transgressor.” Moreover, despite his petition to the officials that he be released and “put under medical care so that the sexual insanity from which he suffers may be cured,” once he was out of prison and reunited with Douglas, Wilde made clear that he had no choice but to be who he was: “A patriot put in prison for loving his country loves his country, and a poet in prison for loving boys loves boys.”

The comparison of the country-loving patriot to the boy-loving poet reveals a political dimension to Wilde’s thinking that is worth considering in more detail.

Almost certainly, the unnamed country in the comparison would be Ireland, and the patriot an Irish nationalist like Michael Davitt (1846–1906), who was imprisoned on several occasions for his Fenian activities and published a memoir of his incarceration as *Leaves from a Prison Diary* (1885). After his release, Wilde wrote to Davitt, then a member of Parliament, about the inhumane treatment of a prisoner at Reading Gaol known as A.2.11. Wilde's assigned number at Reading was C.3.3. (cell block C, landing 3, cell 3), and when he published *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* he did so under the "name" C.3.3. out of a sense of solidarity with his fellow prisoners. Earlier, Wilde had published a strange political tract titled "The Soul of Man under Socialism" (1891), advocating a philosophy of "Individualism," a term that at the time was a near-synonym for 'anarchism.' This earlier tract, combined with *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* and, most important, the fact of Wilde's prosecution and incarceration by the state, made him an anarchist hero after his death, celebrated by such well-known ideologues as Emma Goldman and Gustav Landauer (who translated "The Soul of Man" into German in 1904). Frankel does not explore the anarchistic aspects of Wilde's posthumous career, but he provides so much information about the experiences C.3.3. endured that we must now understand everything Wilde wrote about those experiences as a major contribution to the cause of prison reform. Indeed, Wilde sent a long letter to the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* very soon after his release (it was published on May 28th, 1897) describing the horrible prison conditions under which children suffered (they were incarcerated alongside adults, often for petty crimes—like snaring rabbits). Wilde wrote a second letter to the *Chronicle* the following year (published March 24th, 1898) with the

hope of influencing the debate in Parliament over the bill that emerged as the 1898 Prisons Act. Wilde's suggestions for reform included an improved prison diet, better medical care, greater access to good books, and more frequent visitation from friends and family. Not all of these reforms were incorporated into the 1898 act, but subsequent legislation early in the twentieth century did include all the changes Wilde had recommended. He proudly signed his letter as "The Author of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*," and during the parliamentary debate the poem was quoted at least twice. One takeaway from Frankel's book is that Wilde's reformist influence on legislation affecting the treatment of English prisoners deserves broader recognition.

But Frankel is careful not to over-revise the closing chapter in the biography of the man his contemporaries called "the High Priest of the Decadents." Another takeaway from Frankel's book, lest we become too impressed with Wilde as the moral crusader for prison reform, is the sense of just how self-destructive Wilde became toward the end. He drank absinthe to excess, ran up sizable debts he could not possibly pay, and sometimes behaved like the "erotomaniac" he once claimed to be. Despite advice from close friends to exercise discretion in his sex life, Wilde remained, to use Frankel's word, unrepentant. When his good friend and former lover Robert Ross suggested that he make himself respectable by marrying again (his wife Constance died in 1898), the 44-year-old Wilde responded that he "was practically engaged to a fisherman of extraordinary beauty, aged eighteen." In the end, there is something admirable about his refusal of redemption and respectability because that refusal entailed the affirmation of the man that Wilde most wanted to be—himself. ◻

The Publisher's Reader *Extraordinaire*

Brooke Allen

Helen Smith, *An Uncommon Reader: A Life of Edward Garnett, Mentor and Editor of Literary Genius*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 448pp., \$35 cloth

WITH THIS MAJOR BIOGRAPHY of Edward Garnett (1868-1937), publisher's reader extraordinaire, Helen Smith, a young British academic, has done readers and scholars of modernist literature a great service. Garnett is one of those names that pops up in almost every book about the moderns—Conrad, Joyce, Lawrence, Forster, Ford Madox Ford, et. al.—but is never dwelled on for long. While many students of the period will have heard of him and have some vague idea of the role he played, they won't quite know what it is he did, because of the myriad ways in which the literary world has changed. What, after all, is a publisher's reader? Nowadays they tend to be mere gatekeepers, recent college graduates working for a pittance, who thanklessly read, or at least skim, the company's slush pile. In Garnett's

era they could—and some did—define their own roles. When he started out in the 1890s, there were no literary agents and no editors in the modern sense of the word. He became not only the discoverer of talent, occasionally of genius, but also its ally and, eventually, the midwife to its masterpieces; reading his story is like discovering the missing link that connected these disparate moderns. Garnett, wrote E.M. Forster, “occupies a unique position in the literary history of our age. He has done more than any living writer to discover and encourage the genius of other writers, and he has done it without any desire for personal prestige.”

A friend of Garnett's attempted to describe his method. “Garnett has been called the ‘discoverer’ of genius. He was more than that. He often evoked it, inspired it and moulded it in its early stages.” His career spanned fifty years, could be overwhelming in its demands—at one point he was reporting on some seven hundred manuscripts a year—and was far from remunerative. But the joyful moment of discovery, described below by Garnett himself, never waned; he exulted in

the keen shock of pleasure, the delighted flash of recognition, when, amid the mass of trivial, indifferent, or heavily conscientious efforts he lights once and awhile on a beginner's work showing that instinctive creative originality which we call genius. What hereafter may be fated in the development of this genius, to what point it may arrive or may never arrive, all this is hidden from him—it is enough for the discoverer in that happy moment to see there in the piece of work an individual talent bringing its special revelations, a talent which he knows cannot be reduplicated, however endless the chain of talents the world has in store.

Like so many major cultural figures of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Garnett did not have the “benefit” of an MFA degree or even an undergraduate education. But he came from a line of book people: his grandfather was the Assistant Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum; his father, Richard, became Superintendent of the British Museum Reading Room (now the British Library), and later its Keeper of Printed Books. Among his parents’ friends, as Edward was growing up, were George Meredith, Coventry Patmore, Samuel Butler, and the Pre-Raphaelite painter Ford Madox Brown; the latter’s grandson, Ford Madox Hueffer, was a childhood playmate of Edward’s and later a notable modernist author under his pen name of Ford Madox Ford. Edward attended the City of London School, and upon leaving school entered the office of the publisher T. Fisher Unwin as a packer of books. He was clumsy and inept in this physical labor, and thus became reader for the firm by default.

In the course of his career Garnett would work for several publishers—later employers included Heinemann, Duckworth, and, most notably, Jonathan Cape—and the distinction he brought to their lists was legendary. But he was always more the writer’s man than the publisher’s. “Garnett

had not the slightest doubt where his allegiance lay: literature always came first, his employer a very distant second.” He had no compunction about advising a favorite author to go elsewhere if his own employer wasn’t offering a sweet enough deal; the multiple conflicts of interest inherent in his working method would be unacceptable in modern corporate culture. But none of this was important to Garnett. He wasn’t exactly an unworldly man, for he could be very shrewd indeed, but he was essentially uninterested in money, even slightly scornful of material success.

Garnett’s first discovery—“mentee” is probably how he would be described in today’s inelegant jargon—was a Polish ship’s mate, 37 years old and unpublished, named Jozef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski, who spoke English only as a third language. In 1894 he submitted a manuscript to Unwin’s “Pseudonym Library,” an imprint devised by the then-twenty-six-year-old Garnett, and on the strength of the talent Garnett divined in this work, which would eventually be named *Almayer’s Folly*, Garnett persuaded him to give up his seafaring life and devote himself to a career in literature. The rest is history: Korzeniowski changed his name to Joseph Conrad and became one of the pillars of literary modernism.

It probably would not have happened without Garnett’s help—“collaboration” might be a better word—which lasted from his first meeting with Conrad until Conrad’s fourth book, *Heart of Darkness*, when the author no longer needed the ministrations of his literary mentor. “The two men were not unlike temperamentally,” writes Smith, “sharing a skeptical turn of mind, an underlying strain of melancholy and a bleak view of man’s materialist tendencies... [Garnett’s] dealings with Conrad involved a delicate balancing act: one wrong word, one hasty criticism could shatter his friend’s ever fragile confidence and cause him to

abandon *An Outcast of the Islands* and possibly a literary career altogether.” Garnett made profuse and minutely detailed notes on everything Conrad wrote at this early period. Garnett especially admired what he called Conrad’s “scenic” method, his knack of creating a visual and sensual idea in the reader’s head; it was a technique he would recommend again and again to later protégés. His Preface to Conrad’s 1897 novella *The Nigger of the ‘Narcissus’* is, as Smith points out, “now regarded as a key document of literary modernism.”

It is not surprising, perhaps, that Garnett’s first major author—first major “cause,” as it were—hailed from the Continent. From his earliest years Garnett deplored the insularity and what he saw as the anti-intellectualism of British authors and the British reading public—their philistinism, in fact. Fiction, he perceived, was in England still not accorded the intellectual respect it had long received on the Continent. As late as 1899, a whole century after Jane Austen’s impassioned defense of the novel in *Northanger Abbey*, he was penning his own:

Many men of letters to-day look on the novel as a mere story-book, as a series of light-coloured, amusing pictures for their ‘idle hours,’ and on memoirs, biographies, histories, criticism and poetry as the age’s serious contribution to literature. Whereas the reverse is the case. The most serious and significant of all literary forms the modern world has evolved is the novel; and brought to its highest development, the novel shares with poetry to-day the honour of being the supreme instrument of the great artist’s literary skill.

Garnett’s own literary idol was Turgenev, and one of the things he most admired in Conrad was his perceived “Slavic” nature (an idea that Conrad, violently anti-Russian, rejected for political reasons). “It is time someone should estimate for us what the Russians have done in literature, should

show clearly how they have successfully widened the whole scope and aim of the novel,” Garnett insisted.

Garnett had a unique (in the true sense of the word) perspective on Russian literature at this cultural moment because his wife, the redoubtable Constance Garnett, was in the process of translating the great Russians, most of whom had never been translated directly into English before but only via French or German. Constance was as remarkable in her way as Edward. A Fabian socialist who had studied at Cambridge and taught Classics there, at Newnham College, she married Edward when she was twenty-seven and he a mere twenty-one. “If it were true that [Edward] would never be self-supporting,” she wrote to a friend, “obviously somebody would have to look after him, & so why not I?” It turned out to be, to say the least of it, an unconventional partnership. In the early years of their marriage Edward and Constance befriended a group of Russian revolutionary exiles who had settled in London; one of them, Sergei Stepniak, became especially close to the family, and Constance fell deeply in love with him, though Smith has not been able to establish the extent of their relations. These revolutionaries suggested that Constance learn Russian to while away the boring months of her pregnancy in 1892, and her progress was rapid; that same year, not long after the birth of the couple’s only child, David Garnett, she was already beginning literary translations, and two years later, with Tolstoy and Turgenev, her standard translations of the Russian classics began to appear in print. The Garnetts, then, were intimately involved in Russian literature, a fact that would have a tremendous effect on Edward Garnett’s aesthetic and, through his mentorship of chosen authors and his forceful critical prose—Arnold Bennett, for one, said that Edward wrote some of the best criticism of fiction that he had ever

read—on the aesthetic of educated readers of that time. John Middleton Murry called Garnett the “most single-minded, the most austere devoted, and the most influential critic of modern English literature.”

twenty-six-year-old schoolteacher who was struggling with an unwieldy novel about his early years as the son of a coal miner and a possessive, aspiring mother. “Ford Madox Hueffer discovered I was a genius,” wrote

He became not only the discoverer of talent, occasionally of genius, but also its ally and, eventually, the midwife to its masterpieces; reading his story is like discovering the missing link that connected these disparate moderns.

Garnett believed that “the English were essentially antipathetic to fine writing,” and initially he disliked the work of the very English John Galsworthy, calling him “a good Briton” who “sees things through the eyes of a Clubman who carries England with him wherever he goes.” Through Conrad’s pressure, however, Garnett came to revise this view and eventually became a champion of Galsworthy’s work, and a friend. The two were the mainstays of weekly luncheons at a cheap restaurant called the Mont Blanc; other attendees included Hilaire Belloc, W.H. Hudson, Stephen Reynolds, Norman Douglas, and Edward Thomas, the brilliant poet whose career Garnett championed until his death in World War I. Another new writer whose cause he espoused was E.M. Forster, whose first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, had powerfully impressed him. Garnett, a grateful Forster recalled, “picked up a book by an unknown writer, which, in his opinion, was promising...forced an enthusiastic review into a magazine, and so gave me a chance of reaching a public.”

Garnett had long been searching for a new genius to arise from the working class, someone who would bring the immediacy of working men and women’s lives to the English reading public. Then, in 1911, Ford Madox Ford recommended to him a

the young D.H. Lawrence to a friend, “...published me some verse and a story or two, sent me to Wm Heinemann with the *White Peacock*, and left me to paddle my own canoe. I very nearly wrecked it and did for myself. Edward Garnett, like a good angel, fished me out.” The two men immediately became close. Garnett was there when Lawrence became ill with pneumonia, and when his teaching career ended with the breakdown of his health; there when he broke with his restrictive fiancée, Louise Burrows; there when he began the scandalous relationship with Frieda Weekley that would sever him from conventional society. (The Garnett home, Lawrence claimed, was the only place in England where he and Frieda were welcome.) And it was Garnett who, along with Lawrence, wrestled mightily with the manuscript that eventually became the great novel *Sons and Lovers*. “From the scraps of Edward’s comments that remain and from the parts of the manuscript that Lawrence incorporated into what became *Sons and Lovers*,” Smith writes, “it seems that he revised with Edward’s notes at his elbow and his words ringing in his ears.” Eventually Garnett took on the task of editing the novel, cutting its bulk by ten percent. Some later scholars have objected to Garnett’s cuts, and in 1992 Cambridge

University Press published a text restoring them, but Lawrence's own letters to Garnett at the time are convincing proof that he approved what Garnett did, and appreciated his taking on this onerous task when Lawrence himself was eager to get on with more interesting new projects. His dedication of *Sons and Lovers* is eloquent: "To my friend and protector in love and literature Edward Garnett from the author."

As Lawrence's friends noted, he all too quickly grew to relish the role of genius in which Garnett had cast him. He turned his back on the style and technique he had so brilliantly achieved in his breakthrough novel: "I shan't write in the same manner as *Sons and Lovers* again, I think: in that hard, violent style full of sensation and presentation." He was already deeply involved in *The Sisters*, an early version of what would eventually become *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and rejected Edward's aesthetic doubts about Lawrence's new methods—his habit of making theoretical abstractions at the expense of vivid episodes, for instance. "[W]hen Edward read a sentence such as 'He still had power over her: he was still Man to her,' he considered it belonged in the pages of a popular weekly magazine and condemned it as 'common.'" Lawrence was irritated by this kind of judgment, but his fiction came to encompass more and more of such excesses, and when all is said and done, can we really doubt that *Sons and Lovers* is Lawrence's best book? Garnett identified several conflicting elements in Lawrence's personality, "the poet, the artist, the preacher, the teacher and the *gamin*"; when the teacher and the preacher took over, Garnett felt, the fiction was in trouble. Nevertheless, he later defended *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, a book he disliked, against the censors.

During World War I the middle-aged Garnett served as an orderly in an ambulance unit and, later, in the Ministry

of Fisheries. He joined the new firm of Jonathan Cape in 1921. Cape's "greatest gift," Garnett claimed, "was that he knew nothing about books and admitted it. He looked around him for the best reader he could find, chose me, and followed me blind." At Cape, Garnett cultivated new generations of literary stylists, including T.E. Lawrence, Liam O'Flaherty, Naomi Mitchison, Dorothy Richardson, H.E. Bates, Sean O'Faolain, and Henry Green. His struggles with the manuscript of *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* in its various versions were even more epic than his efforts with *Sons and Lovers*, and T.E. Lawrence would dedicate his next book, *The Mint*, to him. Henry Green (1905-73), one of the youngest writers Garnett would mentor, left a memorable description of what it was like for a neophyte author to have the benefit of Garnett's aid:

He began with the most delicious praise. He had not only read your work, the stuttering work, but he had seen in it more, far more, than in your dreams you had dared to claim. Better still he had an intense curiosity about you, which is perhaps of even greater importance to young writers.... Like a St. Bernard he could smell out the half-frozen body which, if encouraged, might yet be able to wrestle with words. The bottle of brandy round his beck was flattery, and at the next meeting with him it was blame. Afterwards he bullied you with a mixture of blame-flattery, nearly always to your good.

It probably goes without saying that Garnett was not entirely content in his role of handmaid to art; he, too, aspired to be a creator. In this he was to be disappointed again and again: he failed in fiction, in drama, in poetry. To close friends, he sometimes expressed his depression at "the second-hand sort of existence that is implied" in the work he did. Yet some felt that it was his high standards and expectations, his very qualities as an editor and critic, that kept him from achieving his

artistic goals. Of his literary powers, Edward Thomas wrote: “You have to see & hear him to know them & I am convinced he can never write anything worthy of them.”

Garnett died in 1937, aged 69, of a cerebral hemorrhage. He and Constance had been living separately for many years; he had set up a London establishment with Nellie Heath, an artist and longtime family friend. The Garnetts’ son David—nicknamed Bunny—had (perhaps to his father’s secret chagrin!) achieved instant literary success with an early novel, *Lady Into Fox*, and went on to have a prolific writing career, gaining notoriety as one of the more sexually fluid members of the Bloomsbury Group. Edward’s first “genius,” Conrad, had preceded him to the grave in 1924, telling him near the end that “the belief in the absolute unflawed honesty of your judgment has been one of the mainstays of my literary life.”

More recent geniuses concurred. “I loved your father,” Henry Green told David Garnett. “I owe far more to him than to anyone else. He had an attitude towards novels and how to write them, from which stems almost any original idea that I have gained.”

Helen Smith has served her subject very well. It would be interesting, now that he has been so well “biographized” (there is also a 1982 biography by George Jefferson, as well as a group study by Carolyn Heilbrun, *The Garnett Family*), for a mainstream critic to take measure of just how great Garnett’s influence on modern letters was. His almost forceful imposition of a Continental aesthetic on the insular British literary world in the decades before the First World War had a tremendous effect on the direction taken by British fiction, certainly more than the casual reader can understand. a

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**ART
WORLDS**

The Incursion of Administrative Language into the Education of Artists

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THE WAY THAT ARTISTS HAVE BEEN EDUCATED in the last thirty years is very different from the ways they have been educated in any previous century and in any other culture. It would be appropriate if the new form of education echoed the cultural and artistic changes in the last three decades—if it had to do with politics, gender, globalization, and postmodernism—and to a small degree it does. But for the most part what's new in the education of artists has no direct connection to artists' concerns. The current generation of artists is being evaluated according to carefully plotted spreadsheets, labeled as learning goals, outcomes, benchmarks, core expectations, assessment criteria, capstone achievements, and rubrics.

It is ironic, if that's not too weak a word, that the very same years in which art has moved so decisively from the studio out into the world, when artists have become so engaged with ethnicity, gender, place, and identity, when freedom of expression and thought have come to count for so much, are also the years in which student artists are judged according to pages of minutely tuned, incrementally quantified and impeccably bureaucratized criteria.

The purpose of the new criteria is not to limit artistic expression, but to allow teachers to make fair evaluations of their students, or deans and administrators to make justifiable assessments of their faculty and departments, or accreditation organizations to make measured evaluations of entire institutions. The new criteria are

all about fairness, accountability, and comparability. In theory, that wouldn't be a problem, if it were a process that ran in the background, without impinging on what happens in the studio or classroom. But the language of the spreadsheets is spreading into the classrooms, and from there into the way artists talk and think.

It's easy to get a sense of how widespread these new criteria have become. Run an internet search of "art rubrics," and you'll find images of hundreds of spreadsheets. A deeper search of art academies, art schools, and art departments will reveal that many have posted their spreadsheets online. A Google Books search of the words "assessment" and "rubric" shows a steep increase in those terms over the same three decades: the problem is accelerating.¹

Measurable criteria are part of the streamlining of higher education that began in the UK and Australia in the 1980s, and has now spread to North America, the EU, and beyond. The center of the world's production of quantifiable criteria for evaluating students is the UK, which codified quantified assessment in the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) and its successor the Research Excellent Framework (REF). The UK model is currently under study for implementation in French and German universities, and it exerts a general and pervasive influence in the direction of greater complexity and the successive quantification of criteria of student and faculty achievement in all subjects. The UK's influence on the US is indirect and often unnoticed. When I'm trying to scare my colleagues away from implementing more criteria, I like to mention the h-index, invented in the UK, and its successors the i10 index and the g index. These are metrics that reduce a scholar's entire output to a single number, which can be easily plugged into formulae the university uses to help make decisions about the allocation of resources. This dispiriting administrative achievement has been the subject of many studies in the UK.² In my experience, most North American scholars don't know about it, except perhaps as an entertaining graph on their Google Scholar page.

When I first became aware of this problem, it seemed abstract and remote from my field. I teach art history and theory in an art school. Many of my students are artists at the BFA and MFA level. I talk to them in seminars and lecture classes, and I visit their studios and conduct art critiques. I only encounter rubrics and other quantified criteria when I participate in committees. But gradually, belatedly, I've come to realize that the language of the spreadsheets is becoming the language of the studio classroom and the art critique, and therefore also the language the students hear and speak. I see the words from the spreadsheets in the artists' statements we ask our students to write, and I hear them in their conversation. Quantified administrative literature is contributing to the art production of the current generation of students: it is now part of the art world, part of art history.

1 Or try "learning goal," "learning outcome," for example on xkcd.culturomics.org.

2 See for example the entertaining account in Roger Burrows, "Living with the H-Index? Metric Assemblages in the Contemporary Academy," *Sociological Review* 60 no. 2 (May 2012), pp. 355-72.

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In my experience the faculty who write these spreadsheets usually work by looking at what comparable institutions have done. The slow work of developing quantifiable criteria happens in conversation in committee meetings. Words whose histories and alternative meanings may not be known are typed into the cells of spreadsheets, where they are divided into degrees of success or failure, and subdivided into further categories. The spreadsheets are built around a relatively small number of generative criteria.

For example, art students are expected to “synthesize” the form and color in their artworks; to create a “unified” practice; to “articulately” describe their work; to “clearly” set out their principal ideas; to have a good idea about their “message” or “meaning”; to develop a “position,” a “stand,” or a “perspective” on their work; to be “reflective” about what they do; to develop a “visual language” or “visual competence”; to formulate a “research agenda”; to be able to speak about their “inquiry” or what they intend to “interrogate”; to settle on a “field” or “subject” for their work; to be able to describe their “problematic”; and perhaps above all to create for themselves a “practice.” Words like the ones I have put in quotation marks sound innocuous enough, and they can be when they are used in ordinary studio conversation. But if an art department says, in its official literature, that its students will learn to “synthesize” form and color, then the meaning of the word matters. What should count as an inadequate synthesis? Are there stronger or weaker sorts of synthesis, that could be assigned grades or numbers? What form or strength of synthesis will count as an adequate fulfilment of the department’s criterion? And what is the opposite of synthesis?

Sometimes it’s form and color that need to be synthesized; other times it’s form and content, or ideas and forms, or just ideas. Students of the La Salle School of Architecture, in the Ramon Llull University in Barcelona are asked to “apply a spirit of synthesis of ideas and forms.”³ In the EU, educational norms are monitored by a series of agreements known as the Bologna Accords. Among their documents are the “Dublin Descriptors,” which ask that graduate degrees should be awarded to students who are capable of the “synthesis of new and complex ideas.”⁴ In the US, similar rubrics can be found in the literature of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

3 Quoted in *SHARE: Handbook for Artistic Research Education*, edited by Mick Wilson and Schelte van Ruiten, 2014, p. 195; www.sharenetwork.eu/downloads.

4 See “Shared ‘Dublin’ descriptors for Short Cycle, First Cycle, Second Cycle and Third Cycle Awards,” October 18, 2004, online at nva0.com.

The *NASAD Handbook* says one of a student’s “essential competencies” is the “ability to analyze and synthesize relevant aspects of human interaction in various contexts (physical, cognitive, cultural, social, political, and economic)...”. Under “Painting,” classified as an “essential competence,” there is an entry requiring the “ability to synthesize the use of drawing, two-dimensional design, and color.” At the MFA level, under “General Requirements: Art,” the *Handbook* lists a number of skills including “awareness of current issues and developments,” “writing and speaking skills,” and “advanced professional competence” in some area of studio work; that section is introduced with this description: “The elements outlined... should be combined and synthesized in an individual exhibiting exceptional skill in studio art or design and a well-developed personal aesthetic.”

In each of these examples, the word “synthesis” is key to the meaning of the criterion. Yet without a definition of “synthesis,” each of these criteria falls back on the instructor’s personal sense of the student’s achievement—which is exactly the kind of reliance on subjective and incomparable judgment that the entire edifice of quantified evaluation is intended to avoid.

It’s not hard to see how the concept of synthesis made its way into art education rubrics. In the studio, instructors are often on the watch for signs that the student’s work looks unified or coherent. It’s usually a good thing when an art student begins to make work that speaks with a single voice, that brings together a range of materials and techniques, or shows a coherent attitude toward the art of the past. We ask our students to think about parts of their work that don’t fit; we suggest which elements might work well together; we give advice about which works might go together in an exhibition. We say the parts and forms and ideas in their work should speak to one another. In short, we hope our students can assemble, from the bewildering range of possible influences and techniques, a coherent, more or less unified practice—what used to be called a style.

The institution where I teach, the School of the Art Institute (SAIC), is collaborating with the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing (CAFA) on a project called “Art Words,” which looks at the generative criteria such as synthesis, in hopes of providing useful information about their meanings and histories. The idea is to help administrators who build the spreadsheets, so that the key words can be used more accurately.

Synthesis, for example, has a long and complex history in philosophy. Concepts like unity and coherence have attracted attention from analytic philosophers, critics, and even theologians, and that literature can be very helpful in deciding exactly what “synthesis” should mean in any given case.

The “Art Words” project is assembling this sort of philosophic and etymological information, and we are also looking at the uses of the words in art history. One unexpected result has been that the historical uses of the words often point in directions very different from what the spreadsheets imply.

The unity of the artwork is an old ideal, which can be traced to Aristotle. But it was critiqued as early as the late 18th century, when writers like Novalis and Wilhelm von Schlegel advocated and practiced disunities.⁵ The fragment was an ideal for art long before Freud’s division of the psyche or the deconstruction of intentionality in poststructuralism. Even though attempts at synthesis, unity, and coherence continued in many ways, the 19th century Romantic critique ended the period in which those properties provided the central model for an artwork’s structure.⁶

Some Modernist artists made a point of not synthesizing their historical precedents. Marcel Duchamp’s last “retinal” (that is, naturalistic) painting, *Tu m’* (1918) has elements of linear perspective, color theory, trompe l’oeil, and commercial art. Picasso, Hannah Höch, Kurt Schwitters, and others made intentionally disharmonious collages. The idea that an artist’s style might be multiple was already in the air in the 1920s. Francis Picabia, for example, experimented with a succession of deliberately disparate styles and media.

In the 21st century, techniques for producing fragmentation, ruin, and collage are part of the toolkit of contemporary artists. In effect we teach strategies of disunity in the place of the Aristotelian unities, and our students practice making disunified works as soon as they become aware of the possibility. And yet our spreadsheets continue to call for synthesis. It would be interesting to add criteria of Romantic, modernist, and postmodernist disunity. Synthesis could be a criterion for beginning and lower-level BFA art students, and specific forms of disharmony and incoherence could be criteria at the MFA level.

Except for small and independent institutions, there really isn’t an escape from the current quantification of art education. Unfortunately, it’s the period in which we live. The SAIC/CAFA “Art Words” project is intended to supply reference material that can help find the words that can supplement or even replace concepts like “synthesis,” so that our administrative literature can better represent the art that has been made over the last century or more, and the art that our students aspire to make. .A

5 See, for example, Elizabeth Harris, *The Unfinished Manner: Essays on the Fragment in the Later Eighteenth Century* (University of Virginia Press, 1994).

6 It can be said, for example, that Jacques-Louis David synthesized 18th century academic forms and the newly formulated neoclassicism; that Jean-Auguste Dominique Ingres synthesized the medieval “troubadour style,” David’s manner, and neoclassicism; or that Édouard Manet synthesized discrete historical episodes in art history, from Titian and Velazquez to academic realism. But the same century saw the rise of pastiche and incongruity in the choice of styles.

Humanity's Most Beautiful Problem

Katy Kelleher

David Scott Kastan with Stephen Farthing, *On Color*. Yale University Press, 272pp. \$28 cloth.

Color is humanity's most beautiful problem. It surrounds us, saturating every aspect of our life. We wear blue jeans and eat plates of greens. We drink red wine and sleep on crisp white sheets. We paint all walls with any number of hues, from faint haint blue to rusty Falu red. Our language, too, is rich with color imagery. Our states tend red or blue. We call our enemies yellow-bellied or green with envy. Even for those who can't see color, shades still flow seamlessly through their vocabulary. Color words, if not colors themselves, are inescapable. And the concept of color colors our understanding of the world, and of ourselves.

Yet it's a problem because, as David Scott Kastan and Stephen Farthing note in their brilliant new book, *On Color*, "for all color's instability, we don't know much about it. There is no comparably salient aspect of daily life that is so complicated and so poorly understood." Humans have agreed that color exists, yet we don't know where it

resides. Is it in the eye? In the brain? In the reflection of light off an object's surface? If neurobiologists, physicists, and physiologists are at war, trying to claim the territory of color for their own, Kastan and Farthing suggest that philosophers are the "peacekeeping troops... with their own interests of little concern to the disputants."

On Color is a book not only for the peacekeeping philosophers, but also for the neurobiologists, physicists, physiologists, and artists among us. Divided into ten chapters, each of which speaks to a different hue, and following the familiar order of ROYGBIV (plus black, white, and gray), this collection of essays builds steadily, leading the reader towards a more complex understanding of the objects that color our world and concepts that bleed through our psyches. You can either read the book essay by essay, or sit down and devour it in a single sitting. Consumed all at once, Kastan and Farthing's book is a revelation for us "color tourists." Neither artists (who have an innate understanding of color) nor scientists (who possess a tight grip on the physical properties of it), the color tourists are those who simply enjoy the effects of scattering, refracted, reflected light. We may pore over paint chips, or we may find

ourselves breathless at the sight of a particularly vivid sunset. While the experts at Pantone or the physicists at MIT will find plenty to appreciate about *On Color*, it's the color tourists who will benefit most from this intellectual guidebook. *On Color* maps meaning onto the hues we see everyday, from the midnight blue of a raw denim jacket to the inky black of a photocopy and the glaring white of an untouched canvas.

The first color essay in the book is about red—but it's also about color theory. This is a neat trick that Kastan and Farthing devised. Instead of writing about the color and its numerous, and often contradictory, cultural associations, they chose to give each chapter a specific line of inquiry. Red is about roses, but it's also about language and thought and how color often seems to exist outside the world of dictionaries and thesauruses. "Color inevitably exceeds language—or maybe defeats it," write Kastan and Farthing. They trace the evolution of color theory, from the Greeks' understanding of color as something intrinsic to an object (though notably, Democritus, writing in the 5th century B.C.E., disagreed) to the Newtonian view. "Color, which once seemed so clearly to belong to the things we saw as colored, gradually was relocated: from the objects that ostensibly had them to the light by which we saw them, and, finally, to the mind, which lets us see that light as color," Kastan explains. The way we perceive color is affected by so many factors, from the conditions of light to the hues that surround any given object. Color isn't immutable and static. It "happens," according to Kastan and Farthing. Roses aren't simply red, and neither are sunsets or convertibles or apples. Of course, these things can all be red, but they can also appear brown or black or even blue, depending on the conditions.

Does this sound heavy? It's not. The book never feels overly weighty or bogged down with jargon. The chapter on red also talks

about the Internet sensation of "the dress," the vision of pigeons, and the mechanics of optical illusions. There are digressions throughout, and humorous asides sprinkled in here and there. The book dances with its subject matter, dipping in and out of theory and analysis.

The chapters ebb and flow with a similar rhythm. Some are more rigorous than others, but none are lightweight. From the rosy-tinted look at color philosophy, Kastan and Farthing move into a discussion of orange and its late arrival into the English language. Unlike other hues, which are named for themselves and themselves alone, orange is named after an object. We call orange orange because of oranges. While the essay on red discussed a global perspective of color theory, this piece zeroes in on the history of the English language, from Chaucer to T.S. Eliot.

The next two entries, on yellow and green, move into cultural commentary. Yellow is about race, and how humanity has emphasized our physical differences through assigning inaccurate labels to entire groups of people. Although the primary focus is on Asian countries and the way that Western cultures have simultaneously stolen from them and degraded them, Kastan and Farthing do touch upon the greater issue of race:

Asians clearly but not inevitably became yellow, and similar stories could be told about how the indigenous population of North America became red, or Africans black, or even about how Caucasians came to be thought (or to think of themselves) white. The color coding of race now seems to us more or less natural—at least until we look. People are variously colored, but they are never colored with the color that putatively identifies them racially. We are all colored people; we just aren't the colors people say we are.

It seems logical that, from questions of race, we would move into a discussion of

politics. Green is the story of green parties and green movements, environmental awareness and independent politicians. But Kastan and Farthing don't stop there. They also describe how other colors have come to be associated with specific political movements and nationalities. We learn about the colors of the Irish flag, and the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. We learn about the color of fascism (brown) and the history of America's red state, blue state divide. Where one might expect to find a discussion of chlorophyll and chloroplasts, instead Kastan and Farthing choose to shine their light on revolutions and coups, patriots and rebels.

While it may seem excessive to have chapters on blue, indigo, and violet—all members of the same cool tribe—it works rather well. For Kastan and Farthing (and for many writers and artists who came before) blue is the color of transcendence. It's also the color of depression, the heavens and the hell that we can experience on earth. Indigo is a story of a valuable dye. Indigo is emblematic of the ways in which humans have exploited other (differently pigmented) humans for color and profit. Violet, however, might just be my favorite chapter in the book. I've never been a fan of purple, but Kastan and Farthing have me reconsidering the color. Instead of focusing on purple and its connections to royalty, they decided to illuminate how violet was used by the impressionists to create a dreamy luminosity. For painters like Monet and Pissarro, violet was the color of the air, of twilight and shadows, of light itself. Pissarro's Impressionist landscapes are revealed to be dually significant. They both gesture towards abstraction and attempt to capture the lived experience of looking strolling down a snowy lane. They ask the viewer to pay very close attention, but allow your eyes to go hazy, to both see and feel the world at once:

They offer a ravishing image and lure the viewer in toward them. But paying close attention disorganizes the world they seemingly present. Only by keeping your distance, one might say, does the world stay in focus. In most aspects of our life, it is the other way around: attentiveness is rewarded with clarity, and distance distorts and disfigures. But here we recognize the world only when we misrecognize the painting, or at least when we decide not to look carefully at it.

It's genius, how these painters used violet. Even though I spent years studying art history, I had never considered the role purple played in the development of modern art. Kastan and Farthing pulled back the veil, allowing me to see this moody hue for what it is—radical, beautiful, bold.

As the book nears its end, it allows a move back toward the big-picture questions. It moves back towards more general inquiries in order to talk about the nonchromatic colors of black, white, and gray. This feels appropriate, considering the loaded nature of each hue. The essay on white is brilliant and searing, and the piece on black is a discussion of beginnings, endings, and nothingness. The story of gray is, surprisingly, also the story of migration. The chapter is ostensibly about photography, but at the end of the book, I found myself wondering about the morality of color. Color makes our lives more vivid, more beautiful. But it also hides ugly truths. Yet black and white photography (or “black to white,” as Kastan and Farthing more accurately call it) does no better a job of telling the truth.

This is the greatest triumph of the book. It reveals harsh truths about the world, while talking about a seemingly frivolous topic. It's not overtly political, though one can easily deduce the authors' leanings (they're rather blue, if you haven't guessed). But *On Color* is less concerned with politics than it is morality. It's about seeing the world clearly, while retaining the ability to enjoy a good illusion. **A**

Archaeology's Heroic Age

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William Carlsen, *Jungle of Stone: The Extraordinary Journey of John L. Stephens and Frederick Catherwood*. William Morrow, 544pp., \$18 paper

New Yorker John Lloyd Stephens and British artist Frederick Catherwood are icons of the heroic age of archaeology, classic nineteenth-century adventurers immortalized for revealing the glories of ancient Maya civilization to an astonished world. Both were inveterate travelers long before they sailed for Central America. Stephens was a master of evocative travel writing, who brought the Nile, Poland, Russia, and other exotic destinations into American living rooms. To describe Catherwood as a gifted artist is an understatement. His drawings and paintings were accurate, vivid, and imbued with enough exotic romance to satisfy even the most exacting armchair explorer. Their extraordinary journeys through fever-ridden rainforests and politically hazardous landscapes recovered a forgotten Native American civilization. Even more importantly, they insisted that Maya civilization was an indigenous society, nurtured on local soil. Ultimately, all subsequent Maya research stems from their often hazardous adventures.

Every beginning archaeology student learns their names, and perhaps reads Stephens's wonderful description of the Maya city of Copán. He compared the ruins to a

“shattered bark in the midst of the ocean... her crew perished and gone.” The city was quiet, the only sound monkeys moving over the travelers' heads “in long and swift possessions, forty or a fifty at a time.” Memorable prose indeed, but these two talented men have faded into the historical background, except for a biography published in 1947. Now a gifted journalist, William Carlsen, has stepped forward with a comprehensive biographical tale of Catherwood and Stephens, based on skilled detective work, wide travel through Central America, and as many primary sources as he could muster.

There was far more to his heroes than just archeology. As Carlsen points out, they were unlikely partners, Stephens a gregarious New York lawyer, who had dabbled extensively in politics, Catherwood a reserved architect and businessman. Carlsen ranges widely in his biography, placing each of them in the broad contexts of their earlier lives and their initial travels. Catherwood's success came from travels up the Nile. He exhibited huge canvases in a famous “panorama exhibition hall” in New York. Stephens dressed as a Cairo merchant and managed to visit Petra, at the time a dangerous place jealously guarded by Bedouin tribesmen. His travel books rapidly became bestsellers. The two met in New York and heard rumors of cities in the Central American rainforest. In 1839, they set sail for what is now Belize. Stephens wangled himself a diplomatic

appointment as U.S. attaché to Central America. This was a wise move, for it opened doors in a region plagued with civil wars. Carlsen is particularly adept at placing their archaeological travels through the brutal terrain of the tropical rainforest in a wider context of volatile, and sometimes very hazardous, political factionalism. He gives us vivid insights into their journey to Copán, and then to Guatemala City and Palenque. We meet some compelling individuals, like Francisco Morazán, who became the supreme master of Central America from total obscurity in two years, and the mestizo rebel general Rafael Carrera. Stephens and Catherwood walked a tightrope throughout much of their journey, beset by constant threats of violence, to say nothing of appalling travel conditions and endemic fever. There is no question that Stephens' diplomatic protection and his ability to get on well with all kinds of people allowed them to travel without undue hinderance.

Copán was a triumph, Palenque, with Stephens now clear of his diplomatic chores, a challenge of arduous travel. Previous visitors, and the lavish publications of the eccentric Lord Kingsborough, had prompted rumors of an isolated very ancient city far from Europe. Stephens and Catherwood promptly shattered the myth with accurate descriptions and rudimentary surveys. Plagued by mosquitoes and constant rainfall, they revealed an elaborate center, once a "scene of unique and gorgeous beauty and magnificence." From Palenque, they made a quick trip to Uxmal, less covered in vegetation, where Catherwood made memorable sketches.

Back in New York, Stephens wrote his bestselling and lavishly illustrated *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, which appeared to great acclaim in 1841. The two men were now celebrities. Anxious to deter competitors, they slipped away to the Yucatán, where they picked up

their work at Uxmal. Catherwood used a daguerreotype as well as drawing to record the Nunnery and other imposing structures in some of his finest work. From Uxmal, they visited Kabah and other ruins, which invariably astonished them, descended into the huge Balonchen cave with its precious water, and the dazzling ruins of Chichén Itzá, dominated by the Castillo with its colossal serpent's heads and four stairways. Finally, they visited Tulum and its temples.

By the end of 1843, the two-volume *Incidents of Travel in Yucatán* devoted 937 pages to their new discoveries and to Maya civilization. In it, Stephens wrote of the indigenous Maya as rising "like skeletons from the grave." Their mysteries, he wrote, "will not be easily unraveled." How right he was! Meanwhile, Catherwood was ruined by a fire that destroyed his New York Panorama. Fortunately, most of his artwork from the expeditions survived.

Thereafter, the exhausted team split up. Stephens dabbled in railroad schemes in Central America, but his tropical diseases caught up with him and he died in New York in 1852. Two years later, his devoted friend Catherwood died in the *Arctic* steamship disaster in the Atlantic.

Jungle of Stone is not only a definitive biography but a thoroughly compelling read. The adventures pile on fast and furious, the characters encountered are often compelling. But, above all, it is the archaeology, and the achievements of the Maya, that form the powerful backdrop to the story. Two men came home with stirring adventures to recount. They documented an astounding pre-industrial civilization, whose artistic and social achievements rivaled those of their contemporaries in places like Angkor Wat in Cambodia and in China. This is an important book to be savored and enjoyed, which also restores two amazing archaeological pioneers to the limelight they so richly deserve. Even better, Carlsen's writing does them justice. A

Painting After the Digital Revolution

Liz Trosper

*"Only as subjects can we speak.
As objects, we remain voiceless—
our beings defined and interpreted by others."*

—bell hooks¹

Laura Owens. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, November 10th, 2017 to February 4th, 2018; Dallas Museum of Art, March 25th to July 29th, 2018; and Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, November 11th, 2018 to March 25th, 2019. Exhibition organized at the Whitney Museum of American Art by Scott Rothkopf, and overseen in Dallas by Anna Katherine Brodbeck and in Los Angeles by Bennett Simpson with Rebecca Matalon. Catalogue distributed by Yale University Press, 664pp., \$45 paper.

Is this true of painting? Do paintings speak for themselves? Or do we rely on social constructs—writing, research and interpretation by others? If so, is it possible for the artist to intervene in this process of interpretation? *Laura Owens* does. Her works are encoded with content that questions the context of the work of art and the ways it is received for interpretation. She uses corollary material—such as the exhibition catalog—to connect context and meaning, involving herself in the interpretations of her artwork.

Laura Owens is all about history—the discourse of formalism and the future history of painting as a dialectic involving women in more substantial ways than heretofore. *Owens* has tapped into the stream of painting discourse as a dialectic and as an intellectual pursuit. She isn't trying to make good art. She's trying to create new, hard questions for herself. In so doing, she is trying to trouble the power structure of the system using its own language—high formalism—starting each painting with the question, "What can a painting be?" *Laura Owens* attempts to answer the most fundamental questions in painting, put succinctly by Frank Stella: What is a painting and how does one make a painting? This approach lends to the exhibition's aura that it is equally about body and brain—painting, a sensual medium, as intellectual pursuit. Thinking and doing.

That *Owens* is a knowing student of painting's history is obvious, and the connection between *Owens* and Matisse is well charted. Where the 20th century master speaks of art being like a good armchair, *Owens* talks about making painting



Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 2016, acrylic, oil, wood and collage on canvas, 69 x 62 7/8 x 2 in. (175.26 x 159.7 x 5.08 cm), © Laura Owens, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, promised gift of a trustee.



Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 1998, acrylic on canvas, 66 x 72 in. (167.6 x 182.9 cm), collection of the artist, © Laura Owens, courtesy of Gavin Brown's Enterprise, New York and Rome; Sadie Coles HQ, London; and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne.

accessible—work like the custom, shaped and embroidered seat cushions placed throughout the exhibition to hold copies of the *Laura Owens* catalog. The cushions function literally, and the catalog figuratively, as armchairs for the viewer. The *Laura Owens* catalog itself, each with unique printing on the cover, is both an invitation to accessibility, with its essays and background material, and an attempt by the artist to

intervene in the process of interpretation by scholars and viewers alike.

When I see Owens's early work, with its flattened spaces and canted angles, I am reminded of Matisse's 1911 *Red Studio*. Matisse's depiction of the stacks of paintings in the studio, paintings within a painting, relate not only to themes of time and space found in Owens's work, but also to the constant remediation of images on digital

platforms such as Instagram and Reddit. Through the trope of paintings within paintings, *Laura Owens* finds a way to synthesize thousands of years of painting history with the total upheaval in work and leisure wrought by the digital revolution.¹ Owens's work takes a digitally savvy approach to investigating the present condition of painting, situated within the endless remediation of images in the digital age, and the spaces of art: where it's made, its computational spaces (digital and analog) and its exhibition spaces.

In her large-scale newspaper panels from 2015, space and time are densely layered for the viewer to experience bodily, in terms of scale, and then to slowly unravel in our minds as a visual puzzle. Complexly built, these works bear the markings of multitudinous layers and modifications in the digital space that anticipate the physical processes of serigraph or paint. The newspaper imagery is sourced from a wall covering revealed during a renovation project in Owens's home. The paintings collapse time, referencing the time of the newspaper's printing, the events reported, the newspaper's discovery, the digital image manipulation, the image printing, the overpainting and the unfolding time of the present in which they are viewed in the gallery space. The large scale of the paintings, and their collapsing innards, reference time, space and the fluidity of digital images, while pointing to the humble finitude of the human body experiencing art within time.

Owens's work holds the tension of the human body—its hands and its brain. Thinking and doing. The artwork is as calculated and methodical as it is playful. Signals of control, alternating with free play, are coded in the painstaking trompe l'oeil techniques: densely layered Photoshop masks,

images gesturally overpainted with themselves, slowly stitched marks that look uncontrived and digitally fabricated freehand marks. Careful, methodical, quiet consideration is present in the work. Surgically laid daubs, meticulously masked edges, intricately laser-cut forms present themselves in pristine form. We see playful explorations of value using both illusionistic drop shadows and physically created cast shadows. We see plentiful doodles and scribbles, signaling a daydreamy freeness, at the same time as we notice extreme focus in the time-consuming layers and stitching embedded in the work. *Laura Owens* points out that contemporary painting can no longer afford the overly simplistic, brutish, physical connotations that are the legacy of Pollock, nor the Apollonian and aesthetically bare legacy of conceptual art. Contemporary painting demands both and more.

Under these conditions, we join the artist in considering questions about what a painting can be and do. In looking at an installation of clock paintings from 2011-2012, we ask ourselves why a painting would tell us what time it is? Is the analog clock an apt object-as-analogy for the current condition of painting? Or by combining paint, canvas and the clock arm as a mark, does each become something more, something funny, transcending the limitations of any one part? This fundamental questioning, using play and quotidian objects, brings the viewer's attention to the spaces and objects around us and invites us to question them.

Kirsty Bell writes "the works themselves are characterized by levity and assuredness."² For some, this is true, and yet some are more sparse and contemplative or even riddle-like. I would rather characterize Owens's work as exemplifying the culture of play, humor, and irony found in the image-drenched culture of Reddit. The paintings beg us to

1 As explored by Claire Bishop in "The Digital Divide," *Artforum* (September 2012), pp. 435-442.

2 "On Laura Owens's Idea of Edges," *Laura Owens*, p. 418.



Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 2006, acrylic and oil on linen, 56 x 40 in. (142.2 x 101.6 cm), © Laura Owens, collection of Charlotte Feng Ford.



Laura Owens, *Untitled*, 2001, acrylic, oil, ink, and felt on canvas, 117 x 72 in. (297.18 x 182.88 cm), © Laura Owens, collection of Annie and Matt Aberle.

be irreverent of the spaces in which we view them. Because of this, there is a disconnect between what the museum space is designed to do and the content of *Laura Owens*. Under the *éminence grise* of Edward Larrabee Barnes—or any other starchitect—these works are under duress to evoke levity. The artwork seems ill at ease among guards, gallery attendants or whatever you want to call them—essentially among whichever human beings are tasked by the power structure to watch you looking at the art.

Owens's work brings attention to the inflexibility of context through its own fluidity and works stealthily in the space between dichotomies. For example, in a lecture at UCLA's Hammer Museum, she talks nimbly about abstraction and photorealism, the Italian Renaissance and early 20th Century painting, all in the same breath. Owens references bodily experiences with both Color Field (e.g. Morris Louis), and photorealism (e.g. Richard Estes). Owens's work, like that of Elizabeth Murray, embodies

Through the trope of paintings within paintings, Laura Owens finds a way to synthesize thousands of years of painting history with the total upheaval in work and leisure wrought by the digital revolution.

This is precisely the kind of meta-absurdity that Owens's artwork questions. In concrete echo chambers, words like "sublime" or "awe" seem to fit but words like "playfulness" don't. Anxiety about the expensive artworks and a general distrust of the viewing public systematically kills levity. Robert Hughes's 2008 documentary *The Mona Lisa Curse* is never far from my mind when I'm placed into these uneasy relationships with expensive art, viewing it under the watchful eye of guards. This might mean that we need artists like Laura Owens more than ever, because it highlights the somewhat inflexible and specific ways that museums have been built and the kinds of viewing that they cultivate. Like Elizabeth Murray's work, perhaps Owens's work "helps us forget the increasingly dangerous circles in which we seem to be spinning."³

³ Francine Prose, "Somewhere Else Completely," originally from *Elizabeth Murray: Paintings 1999-2003*, reprinted in *Laura Owens*, p. 305.

these "tensions and reconciliations," of being compared, in positive ways, to the patriarchs of high formalism, such as Matisse, rather than to her female predecessors working on formal investigations, such as Hilma af Klint, the inventor of Abstraction, Liubov Popova, Sonia Delaunay, Hedda Sterne, and of course, Elizabeth Murray, who worked similarly in between illusory and abstract spaces.⁴ One can easily see—and it is spelled out in the catalog—a strong formal influence of Elizabeth Murray in the sculptural, protruding and shaped portions of Owens's work, the edges and the space of the canvas not being contained within a traditional pictorial frame or plane. This dialectic, and the feminist historical connections it raises, connects with the ideas explored by Gerda Lerner in her histories of feminist consciousness and of patriarchy.

With an exhibition like *Laura Owens*, perhaps we could put an end to the cyclical refrain put so well by Linda Nochlin:

⁴ Prose, "Somewhere Else Completely," p. 305.

“Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” If you have to ask that question, you are not paying attention. The Dallas Museum of Art’s execution of the exhibition, however, confirms that Nochlin was right. Art is a social struggle “mediated and determined by specific and definable social institutions, be they art academies, systems of patronage, mythologies of the divine creator, artist as he-man or social outcast.”⁵ That great men have stood on the shoulders of giants and that great women have had to keep reinventing their own histories is an idea from Gerda Lerner’s *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*. Both Nochlin and Lerner offer intellectually rigorous methods for rectifying the systemic flaws in patriarchal historical practices. At the same time *Laura Owens* revels in art history, it also seems to be pointing out that “women can reveal institutional and intellectual weaknesses in general, and at the same time that they destroy false consciousness.”⁶

Laura Owens was billed by the DMA as an opening to a year of exhibitions celebrating “pioneering female artists,” and I wonder why this exhibition dazzled viewers in New York without being labeled “women’s art”? What does it say about Dallas? What does it say about how the DMA views women that this nationally touring exhibition of one of the most successful American artists—female or male—wasn’t shown with the same pride of place as Pollock’s black paintings? Why wasn’t an effort made to replicate the dazzling trompe l’oeil spatial effects of the Whitney installation when the museum rebuilt Betty Parsons’s gallery for *Blind Spots*—a very narrow slice of Jackson Pollock’s practice? Hard questions abound in response to the question of “pioneering” women.

5 Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (1971), in *Women, Art, and Power and Other Essays* (Routledge, 2018), p. 158.

6 Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”, p. 176.

One thing is without question—that the Dallas installation of *Laura Owens* diminished its content, shown in disconnected spaces with little buildout. Some of the show was on view in the main halls of the museum and billed as a freebie. The main body of the exhibition was shown in the Hoffman Galleries, a space usually occupied by the *Concentrations* series—exhibitions for emerging and underrepresented artists. While the physically disjointed spaces might connect with Owens’s themes of time, space, body and brain, and meta-critique of context, it seems to indicate that the identity politics espoused in the exhibition PR are less than genuine in terms of an honest pursuit of equitable treatment within the institution—and what’s worse, it shed poor light on the art.

To truly support pioneering women, the DMA might have considered using their platform with *Laura Owens* as an attraction for a broader museum effort to give platform to under-recognized female artists. While there are certainly forward-thinking feminist curators at the DMA working hard on this front, it seems that the prevailing tendency of exhibitions has been to reflect, rather than challenge, the dominant culture. For example, during the twelve-month program of exhibitions led by “pioneering women,” three of the ten major exhibitions in 2018 were by women. Of the women shown, artists such as Laura Owens and the Guerrilla Girls are international art stars. Neither exhibition contributed significantly to bringing recognition to previously unrecognized women artists. This is marginally true for Ida O’Keefe, as the sister of an art historical icon.

The problem with this kind of effort is that it has to be sincere and backed not only by a few sincere members of the curatorial staff, but by the museum as a whole. Here, the DMA did not even achieve parity or equity in its roster of artists. One would only

have to survey female assistant professors or professors of painting nationwide to get a shortlist for “pioneering women” that would actually constitute a pioneering effort, rather than re-presenting exhibitions already anointed elsewhere. The pipeline is there, but even if the DMA did not believe this, they could pioneer by looking at programmatic support of working women artists. This kind of conversation and advocacy is desperately needed in the American South, an area far behind the rest of the developed world in supporting working women, let alone female artists. Examples of innovative efforts on this front include Mother House Studios in the UK, Aviatrix Atelier in Berlin and even networks like Cultural Reproducers in Chicago. These pioneers are making serious headway in providing the structural, material, and personnel support for women artists so that they don’t have to choose between artwork production and procreating.

Laura Owens speaks openly about her intent to “disrupt the narrative of the historical heroic painter.”⁷ Kirsty Bell writes, “These works are aimed right at the messy edges where the identity of an artist or painter is in constant collision with other simultaneous identities as lover, mother, teacher, colleague, or friend.”⁸ Throughout *Laura Owens*, viewers can see what they might interpret as evidence of her female, mother-human embodiment—buttons, childrens’ cartoons, macramé, her son, cut paper, puff paint—but playfulness in Owens’s work predates her motherhood and competes with it. Navigating the channel of motherhood is difficult, riddled with un-childlike, non-free responsibilities. *Laura Owens* provides a model of the mother

as human being, as artist, as creator that goes beyond overly simplistic interpretations of her visual motifs. The artist has forged a successful career during her childbearing years, without sacrificing in the name of hegemonic myths about what a female artist can reasonably do. Advancing Lerner’s model for the creation of feminist consciousness, *Laura Owens* provides broad shoulders for other women to stand while disrupting he-man mythologies.

Laura Owens used sometimes beautiful and delightful, sometimes visually puzzling artwork to ask us hard questions about the mythologies of the heroic male painter. Why should we expect anything else from an artist who has founded her practice on asking herself ever more challenging questions? The exhibition pointed out that too many people are happy to rest on the laurels of past accomplishments in formalism, believing arrogantly that everything that could be accomplished in terms of formal investigation has been accomplished by the patriarchs of the medium. Pushing back on the cyclical narrative of the “pioneering” woman artist, *Laura Owens* pointed out the insufficiency of simply patching new women into the all-male discourse of painting history.

Laura Owens interrogated space, time, body, and brain, giving us material evidence of a creative practice that incorporates the realities of painting after the digital revolution. The exhibition also interrogated the power structures of art, its interior spaces, its geography and its hegemony. The exhibition’s installation in Dallas demonstrates that context changes everything for an artwork. Whether intended by the artist or not, *Laura Owens* compelled us to question the hegemonic spaces of the museum, emboldened by the disservice of the museum’s installation, but also perhaps the inflexible constraints of the architecture itself. **A**

7 Laura Owens, lecture at UCLA Hammer Museum, February 3rd, 2011, online at <https://vimeo.com/92311793>

8 Bell, “On Laura Owens’s Idea of Edges,” p. 420.



Laura Owens, *Untitled* (detail), 2014, ink, silkscreen ink, vinyl paint, acrylic, oil, pastel, paper, wood, solvent transfers, stickers, handmade paper, thread, board, and glue on linen and polyester, five parts: 138 1/8 x 106 1/2 x 2 5/8 in. (350.8 x 270.5 x 6.7 cm) overall, © Laura Owens, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, purchased with funds from Jonathan Sobel.

My Detroit, My Afghanistan

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L LEFT MY HOMETOWN in the Detroit area in 1967 for dissertation fieldwork on the folk music of Afghanistan. Both of those places have been media stars for a long time now. The general picture of those two troubled areas I know well has little to do with my own sense of place. My recent book *Motor City Music: A Detroiter Looks Back* was triggered by the city's skewed coverage. As for Afghanistan, I've been reading mythology about it for decades now and keep in touch with developments. But after seventeen years on the ground, America can still neither figure the place out nor leave it. What follows is a short stab at setting the record straight just a little, not as an historian, but rather as someone who lived through the earlier, forgotten phases of two crisis-ridden spots on the globe. I'll profile each of my two misunderstood sites, then zoom back to think about what their situation says about America, starting with Afghanistan. But let me preface with a moment of overlap. In July of 1967, Detroit was in the throes of a major disturbance now often called an "uprising," or "rebellion," rather than "riot." US Army troops appeared

on the streets for the third time, a record for American cities. My new wife Greta evacuated her mother from Detroit to our safe house in Ann Arbor. My mother's friends had been very dubious about "the children" going to a place like Kabul. I just said, "We'll go if the rebels don't take Detroit airport."

In looking back at the two places, I'll be following two threads: Americans' lack of historical depth and the media's insistence on a simplified view of social decline and violence. Afghanistan started its climb to world attention just after my time there, in the late 1970s, when images of heroic American-armed freedom-fighters resisting the Soviet occupation flooded western media. Before 9/11, *mujahedeen* was an honorific. As the phases of the conflict ground on mercilessly, from civil war to the Taliban to American occupation, the iconography shifted. Probably the most famous photograph of recent times has been Steve McCurry's "Afghan Girl," revisited repeatedly, and even cruelly, by his lens and *National Geographic*, which paid for an expedition to track down the stunning maiden with the green eyes.

Finding a prematurely aged refugee woman who desperately wanted not to be known, they bought off her husband and projected the new image as a victory for western humanism. Eventually, such iconic shots of the locals were eclipsed on screens of all sizes by photojournalism and Hollywood depictions of American grit, heroism, and disillusionment. Almost never were actual Afghans the initiators or active agents who could control their own image. The few fine documentaries and feature films by Afghans themselves have appeared on the festival circuit, at best. The 2007 Hollywood film *The Kite Runner* tried to piggyback on Khalid Hosseini's immensely successful 2003 novel, in an attempt to take an insider's insights into mainstream territory.

The biggest steps forward have come in the more pliable, if less noticed, documentary field. James Longley's 2018 *Angels Made of Light*, though still directed, edited, shot, and scored by foreigners, comes as close as you can to letting Afghans speak for themselves by allowing the working-class school boys of Kabul narrate their own stories. Yet a fine vernacular film such as Attiq Rahimi's 2012 *The Patience Stone*, remains unseen by American audiences. Filmed in France and subtitled in Dari, its tough wartime tale was apparently too gritty for US distributors.

When I was there, however, Afghanistan was not a land frozen in time with seemingly endless "tribal" or "ethnic" warfare. It was a peaceable kingdom, a fully functioning democratic constitutional monarchy. The 1964 constitution granted significant equality to women. Often unveiled in cities and towns, they worked as teachers, doctors, radio singing stars, and cosmopolitan magazine editors like our friend Shukria. When the new Parliament was seated, each member was allowed unlimited time for a speech. It took days. We saw people listening on transistor radios

tied to their donkeys. Shukria had been sent abroad for training; she had been in Australia and Germany, and was handed an executive position while still in her twenties. The country was alive with helpful foreigners. Every nation that had some kind of peace corps or alternative military service sent people, from the East or West bloc. A welcoming foreign policy could easily be built onto the deep hospitality that Afghans normally show strangers. Whenever our lowly VW beetle got stuck in the pothole paradise that passed for country roads, people would materialize and just pick it up and move it. We youngsters were outliers—many Americans worked for USAID and lived in comfortable homes with central heating and air conditioners. For Thanksgiving, they would feast on turkeys trucked over the Khyber Pass from our air base in Pakistan. Dessert was a no-name version of those old super-market half-gallon squares of ice cream, looking out of place in the steppes and mountains of Central Asia. We didn't get PX privileges, but sometimes kindly Midwesterners would invite us over.

Whenever our lowly VW beetle got stuck in the pothole paradise that passed for country roads, people would materialize and pick it up and move it.

Oddly enough, this luxurious lifestyle went over well with some Afghans. In those days before the Soviets invaded and Americans began to bomb the countryside, the locals could compare the USSR calmly to the USA, since the cold war competition

was at its height. In Kabul, the Soviets paid their staff peanuts and refused to hire Afghan help. So not only did embassy staff clean their toilets, but their miserable salaries forced them to bargain in the bazaars. One Afghan told us that they could plainly see our system led to a comfortable life, as opposed to the penny-pinching Soviet situation. To top it off, the Soviets were godless, which didn't go over well in an Islamic country. The fact that Greta and I were Jewish was not a problem. We arrived just after the Six-Day War, during which King Zahir Shah posted guards around the homes of the small Jewish community in case anyone made trouble, which they didn't. Afghans had no particular love for the Arabs, and I recall one Foreign Ministry official pointing to the map on the wall, incredulous that the tiny nation of Israel could defeat all those surrounding countries—that's how you score points with the Afghan warrior mentality.

At that time, the West thought of Afghanistan as a place you could drive your VW mini-bus to on the way to Singapore, perhaps. The Balkans, Turkey, and Iran were not a big deal to get through, all being colorful, cheap, and pretty safe around 1970. You could live in Kabul on a dollar a day, fleabag hotel, gritty food, and hashish all included. The influx of these WT people—"world travelers"—raised eyebrows in Afghanistan. Used to helpful foreigners who made an attempt to learn a language and stayed long-term, the locals simply could not understand the newcomers. Children started to chant "tu-rist, tu-rist" when they saw them coming and to beg for treats. WT men would offend by walking around shirtless, women by wearing shorts or skimpy tops. A carpet dealer we knew expressed his disgust for a dirty couple who walked in one day, offering to trade the woman's sexual services for a fine carpet. "What kind of people are these?" he asked me in Persian. After the 1971 Indo-Pakistani

war, a swarm of travelers got stuck in India since the border to the west was sealed. These were the ones that couldn't afford to fly out or had to take their cars back with them. Hungry, perhaps with needy children, they piled up at the crossing and refused to leave, though it was stinking hot in the desert. Finally, the Red Cross made a deal with the Pakistanis to let the foreigners through during a prisoner swap, on condition that they could not overnigh in Pakistan. So they expressed into Afghanistan in dire straits, a Foreign Affairs ministry official told me. "We helped them—we're hospitable," he said, "but we're a poor country." How often in the last decades have we heard of a place like Afghanistan charitably bailing out desperate westerners?

This curious, generous interlude slipped out of memory as spasmodic cycles of conflict fired up in 1979. Now the rivalry that had brought foreign aid and helpful westerners turned ugly, with American arms countering Soviet troops in a vicious proxy war. Half the country became refugees. Many of the rest, along with their communal life, fell to resistance and infighting. The music I collected was muted by dislocation and rising theological control. But what interests me here, in parallel with the Detroit story that follows, is the way the sense of Afghanistan so easily shifted, with no real attempt to get at why the media needed new iconography to fill a gap of imagery in the popular mind. If America's role in helping Pakistan to arm the wrong rebels was mentioned, it was perversely celebrated, as in the 2007 film *Charlie Wilson's War*. By the time we got to the Bin Laden episode, no one had a clue what had gone on, except that we needed to bomb and occupy the place in revenge for the 9/11 attack that had nothing to do with Afghanistan. The Taliban themselves provoked a media storm by blowing up the ancient colossal Buddhas of Bamian, delighting in our outrage.

The country became a place to try out solutions that had little to do with the problems or the people. Zillions of dollars were dispensed to a growing corrupt elite, with no accountability. Some small-scale organizations pierced the fog of war and brought some sunshine to women and communities. But by and large, American intervention usually imagines that local understandings and initiative should yield to some tenuous and shaky larger social order. Yet it was—and remains—a land of local leanings. Traditional ways were so locked into village life that a strong state could never really get a foothold, especially with huge ethnic diversity, with the country divided by the Rockies-height Hindu Kush (“killer of Hindus”) mountains. And there was no water to speak of. Sure, there were rich people, but in a land-locked, low-resource country, who could get wealthy enough to really count? The ruling classes lived in mud-brick fortified compounds, different mainly in scale from village life. The few multi-story buildings in Kabul did little to change the tone. In a recent book, Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili has argued that Afghan stability is much better served by nourishing grassroots models than imagining that a shaky coalition of dubious state actors can impose top-down solutions, often mandated by foreigners.¹

Time to turn to Detroit, again surveying the short view of history, which assumes that today’s despair is just another chapter in a saga of hopelessness, and the refusal to let the locals represent themselves in the media. In Detroit, the idea of a timeless “ghetto” or “jungle” is lodged deeply in the nation’s white psyche. Detroit moved into the visual field of the “world eye” a bit later than Afghanistan, with the period

eventually called “ruin porn.”² Paralleling the focus on the ruins of Bamian and Kabul, visitors from Tokyo and Berlin ran around the city looking for the picturesque remnants of what had been a great world city. A colleague living downtown told me one of those Japanese-German teams asked her to direct them to the ruins. “Which ones?” she said. “Ze bee-utiful ones,” they replied. No one from the media seemed particularly interested in finding out why the city had fallen into such a sorry state. Even when the bankruptcy phase a few years ago brought a new focus to the city, the reportage was about the shocking proposal to sell off the pricey paintings of the Detroit Institute of the Arts rather than the impact on the remaining, mostly African American citizens whose fate was at stake. Talking to friends, I found myself trying to describe the city I had known in earlier times. My resulting book is part memoir, part social history of an eclipsed metropolis from the angle of its music.

It might be helpful to sketch out the meteoric rise and fall of the city on the straits (which is what *Détroit* means in the French of 1701, the founding year), perhaps better known as the city in dire straits. Until 1910, it was a fairly sleepy city with a complex and violent past. As the auto industry exploded, the population doubled by 1920, doubled again by 1930, and reached a peak of nearly two million when I was born in 1943. Late-arriving waves of white and African American southerners poured into the city, which expanded to 139 square miles. What would have been suburban development elsewhere became neighborhoods within this mushrooming city placed on the flatlands of southeastern Michigan. Despite the vicious racism and

1 Jennifer Brick Murtazashvili, *Informal Order and the State in Afghanistan* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

2 For a fine perspective on the wider implications of urban ruins, see Dora Apel, *Beautiful Terrible Ruins: Detroit and the Anxiety of Decline* (Rutgers University Press, 2015).

anti-Semitism as the father of Detroit's prosperity, Henry Ford, factory work made possible a solid African-American middle class. Reverend C. L. Franklin's church, the training ground for his daughter Aretha's voice, embodied a confidence that produced results such as Motown, America's only major black-created and -controlled record company. Despite enforced school segregation, my father became a diligent and helpful high school teacher at all-black Miller High, where he taught kids like jazz great Kenny Burrell. My own magnet school, Cass Tech, produced legions of classical music success stories alongside nurturing talents like Diana Ross, Lily Tomlin, and Jack White. Everyone visited the Detroit Institute of Art and patronized the stately Public Library. When World War Two and I arrived, Detroit was dubbed "the arsenal of democracy" by President Roosevelt. One fighter plane rolled off the old auto line every hour in a single factory. The unions had finally gotten recognition, if only by shedding their more radical members.

True, social progress was outweighed by the weight of vicious policing of the black community, who were not allowed into white neighborhoods, thanks to government-sanctioned "redlining" policies. Beginning the process of ruination, the city destroyed the heart of the black entertainment and business district, Paradise Valley, to build a freeway that would link the downtown with the newly-hatched white suburbs. The auto moguls had long been quietly moving the work out to places out of the union's reach, beginning in doomed Flint, to Ohio and down South and abroad. Eventually, there was neither work nor decent housing for those left in the city limits.³ No wonder the city fell into

³ The best account of this process remains Detroitier Thomas Sugrue's *Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton

ruins after mixing this toxic cocktail of arrogance, the inexorable logic of capitalism, and strong vintage racism. Detroit turned out to be the most ephemeral of great cities, streaking from nowhere across the American sky and fading into oblivion within three generations, from 1910 to 1970. It seems the momentum of this violent trajectory made it possible to forget everything that had happened in those sixty years. Joyce Carol Oates describes it this way in the Afterword to her breakthrough 1969 novel *Them*, based on her time teaching there: "Detroit at the peak of its economic power...a rhapsody of chemical-red sunsets, hazy-yeasty air, relentless eye-stinging winds...overpasses, railroad tracks and shrieking trains, factories and factory smoke, the choppy, usually gunmetal-gray and greasy-looking Detroit river..."⁴

The triumph of organized labor, the emergence of a solid black middle class built on factory jobs and small business, the careful construction of a quality school system and major cultural institutions—Detroit Institute of Arts, a magnificent Public Library—all this and more vanished in the urban haze that Oates describes. As in Afghanistan, the locals lost control of the narrative. Except, that is, in the utopian arena of music. The city became synonymous with Motown, the shining exception to the blotting out of black enterprise. But that's an illusion as well. Having built his empire on the model of the auto industry, Motown's inventor, Berry Gordy, followed the corporate plan and pulled production out of Detroit in 1972,

University Press, 1996; new paperback edition, 2014). The scholarly literature on this major city remains woefully sparse—it seems the city needs to exist more in myth than documented reality.

⁴ Joyce Carol Oates, *Them* (Random House, 1969), p. 540.

moving to Los Angeles and leaving the workers who made the songs just as badly off as the ones who made the cars. Still, the main theme of my book is the way that music cut through and overarched the barriers and congestion of the dense Detroit social traffic. Motown itself was built to do this job, and it retains a (carefully engineered) feel-good charge after decades of disruption in the city and America.

Progress has been more pronounced in drama and fiction, with Dominique Morisseau's skillful insider Detroit drama trilogy (*Detroit '67*, *Paradise Blue*, and *Skeleton Crew*), while Angela Flournoy's 2015 novel *The Turner House* made a breakthrough in laying bare the full complexity of an African American family's fate in a period of domestic and urban dissolution and evolution.⁶

Detroit turned out to be the most ephemeral of great cities, streaking from nowhere across the American sky and fading into oblivion within three generations, from 1910 to 1970.

You do see white people solving their problems by singing a Motown song together in a number of Hollywood movies, but mostly, popular entertainment continues to score points off Detroit's desperation, from the dystopian wasteland of 1987's *Robocop*, sort of on the side of law enforcement, to the opposite view of the police as sadists in Kathryn Bigelow's 2017 *Detroit*. Thankfully, for both Afghanistan and the Motor City, recent depictions are edging into empathy; any progress is welcome. In 2002, the rapper played by Eminem in *8 Mile* humanized the dispossessed white population through appropriation of blackness, a standard trope. By 2007, Clint Eastwood's *Gran Torino* needed violence, as always, to make his point, but softened towards an acceptance of diversity, if only in the case of Asian Americans, rather than black neighbors. Bigelow's *Detroit* at least held the legalized violence of the police to account, if still not fully giving voice to its victims.⁵

My own experience with these two far-removed case studies of the American imaginary at work suggests just how wide the gap can be between personal experience and America's short-term memory, as mediated by popular culture. The incomplete or distorted views still circulating about Detroit and Afghanistan come from the same sources: an easy, often racist assumption about how minorities and foreigners "have always" lived, and a penchant for facile and image-driven memory traces, rather than taking the long view of events and peoples. Both habits of thinking are lazy and lead to bad decisions. Sometimes those of us who write about such situations can help to shift attitudes, but only a few inches off dead center. In my work over five decades, I've found that presenting music as a positive force can create some empathy, or even sympathy, and I will keep trying to play that tune over the noise. **A**

⁵ Documentaries have done a better job of offering insider viewpoints. There are too many to review, but it's worth noting that a few even reach beyond the standard black-white polarity that brands Detroit, such

as Mike Holland's 2015 *Stateless: Syrian Refugees in Detroit*.

⁶ Two entertaining insider accounts of life in Detroit today are Drew Philips's *A \$500 House in Detroit* (Simon and Schuster, 2017) and Aaron Foley's 2015 *How to Live in Detroit Without Being a Jackass* (Belt Publishing, second edition 2018).

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