

# Ideology: Art, Ethics & Illusion

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*The end of the Cold War has brought about more than the triumph of some political ideologies and the disappearance of others. In fact, the collapse of communism has created a vacuum quickly being filled by various alternative visions, ranging from ethnic nationalism to individualistic liberalism.*

*But political ideologies are not merely a matter of governmental efficacy. Rather, political ideologies are intrinsically and inescapably religious-- each carry certain assumptions about the nature of reality, individuals and society, as well as a particular vision for the common good. These fundamental beliefs transcend the political sphere, and the astute Christian observer should thus discern the subtle ways in which ideologies are rooted in idolatrous worldviews. The key political ideologies of our era include liberalism, conservatism, nationalism, democracy and socialism. Each philosophy offers critique of our global ecotechnological crisis, unpacking the worldview issues inherent to each and pointing out essential strengths and weaknesses. The world's great religious traditions also offer an organic response.*

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[Dopesick: Dealers, Doctors, and the Drug Company that Addicted America](#) by Beth Macy [Little, Brown and Company, 9780316551243]

The only book to fully chart the devastating opioid crisis in America: An unforgettable portrait of the families and first responders on the front lines, from a New York Times bestselling author and journalist who has lived through it.

In this masterful work, Beth Macy takes us into the epicenter of America's twenty-plus year struggle with opioid addiction. From distressed small communities in Central Appalachia to wealthy suburbs; from disparate cities to once-idyllic farm towns; it's a heartbreaking trajectory that illustrates

how this national crisis has persisted for so long and become so firmly entrenched.

Beginning with a single dealer who lands in a small Virginia town and sets about turning high school football stars into heroin overdose statistics, Macy endeavors to answer a grieving mother's question—why her only son died—and comes away with a harrowing story of greed and need. From the introduction of OxyContin in 1996, Macy parses how America embraced a medical culture where overtreatment with painkillers became the norm. In some of the same distressed communities featured in her bestselling book *Factory Man*, the unemployed use painkillers both to numb the pain of joblessness and pay their bills, while privileged teens trade pills in cul-de-sacs, and even high school standouts fall prey to prostitution, jail, and death.

Through unsparing, yet deeply human portraits of the families and first responders struggling to ameliorate this epidemic, each facet of the crisis comes into focus. In these politically fragmented times, Beth Macy shows, astonishingly, that the only thing that unites Americans across geographic and class lines is opioid drug abuse. But in a country unable to provide basic healthcare for all, Macy still finds reason to hope—and signs of the spirit and tenacity necessary in those facing addiction to build a better future for themselves and their families.

*"Everyone should read Beth Macy's story of the American opioid epidemic" -- Professor Anne C Case, Professor Emeritus at Princeton University and Sir Angus Deaton, winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics*

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Excerpt:

### The United States of Amnesia

Though the opioid epidemic would go on to spare no segment of America, nowhere has it settled in and extracted as steep a toll as in the depressed former mill and mining communities of central Appalachia, where the desperate and jobless rip copper wire out of abandoned factories to resell on the black market and jimmy large-screen TVs through a Walmart garden-center fence crack to keep from "fiending for dope."

In a region where few businesses dare to set up shop because it's hard to find workers who can pass a drug test, young parents can die of heroin overdose one day, leaving their untended baby to succumb to dehydration and starvation three days later.

Appalachia was among the first places where the malaise of opioid pills hit the nation in the mid-1990s, ensnaring coal miners, loggers, furniture makers, and their kids. Two decades after the epidemic erupted, Princeton researchers Anne Case and Angus Deaton were the first economists to sound the alarm. Their bombshell analysis in December 2015 showed that mortality rates among white Americans had quietly risen a half-percent annually between the years 1999 and 2013 while midlife mortality continued to fall in other affluent countries. "Half a million people are dead who should not be dead," Deaton told the *Washington Post*, blaming the surge on suicides, alcohol-related liver disease, and drug

poisonings—predominantly opiates—which the economists later referred to as "diseases of despair." While the data from which Case and Deaton draw is not restricted to deaths by drug overdose, their central finding of "a marked increase in the all because mortality of middle-aged white non-Hispanic men and women" demonstrates that the opioid epidemic rests inside a host of other diseases of despair statistically significant enough to reverse "decades of progress in mortality."

At roughly the same time that the Case and Deaton study was published, a Kaiser Family Foundation poll showed that 56 percent of Americans now knew someone who abused, was addicted to, or died from an overdose of opioids. Nationwide, the difference in life expectancy between the poorest fifth of Americans by income and the richest fifth widened from 1980 to 2010 by thirteen years. For a long time, it was assumed that the core driver of this differential was access to health care and other protective benefits of relative wealth. But in Appalachia, those disparities are even starker, with overdose mortality rates 65 percent higher than in the rest of the nation. Clearly, the problem wasn't just of some people dying sooner; it was of white Americans dying in their prime.

The story of how the opioid epidemic came to change this country begins in the mid to late 1990s, in Virginia's westernmost point, in the pie-shaped county sandwiched between Tennessee and Kentucky, a place closer to eight other state capitals than its own, in Richmond.

Head north as the crow flies from the county seat of Jonesville, and you'll end up west of Detroit.

Geopolitically, Lee County was the ultimate flyover region, hard to access by car, full of curvy, two-lane roads, and dotted with rusted-out coal tipples. It was the precise point in America where politicians were least likely to hold campaign rallies or pretend to give a shit—until the unchecked epidemic finally landed on their couches, too.

Four hundred miles away, at the northern end of the Shenandoah Valley, a stressed-out preschool teacher would tell Kristi Fernandez around this time that her four-year-old son, Jesse, was too

rambunctious for his own good. He was causing mayhem in the classroom, so Kristi took him to his pediatrician, who prescribed Ritalin. It seemed to quell his jitters and anxiety, and the teacher complaints stopped. But he was still her high-energy Jesse. You could tell he was hyper even by the way he signed his name, blocking the letters out joyfully and haphazardly, adding a stick-figure drawing of the sun with a smiley face below the first E. The sun's rays stuck out helter-skelter, like a country boy's cowlick, as if it were running and winking at you all at once.

Lieutenant Richard Stallard was making his usual rounds, patrolling through Bullitt Park in Big Stone Gap. This was the same iconic small town romanticized in Adriana Trigiani's novel and film, *Big Stone Gap*, the one based on her idyllic upbringing in the 1970s, when a self-described town spinster with the good looks of Ashley Judd could spend her days wandering western Virginia's hills and hollows, delivering prescriptions for her family-run pharmacy without a thought of danger.

The year was 1997, a pivotal moment in the history of opioid addiction, and Stallard was about to sound the first muffled alarm. Across central Appalachia's coal country, people hadn't yet begun locking their toolsheds and barn doors as a guard against those addicted to Oxy-Contin and looking for anything to steal to fund their next fix.

The region was still referred to as the coalfields, even though coalmining jobs had long been in steep decline. It had been three decades since President Lyndon Johnson squatted on the porch of a ramshackle house just a few counties west, having a chat with an unemployed sawmiller that led him to launch his War on Poverty, which resulted in bedrock social programs like food stamps, Medicaid, Medicare, and Head Start. But poverty remained very much with the coalfields the day Stallard had his first brush with a new and powerful painkiller. Whereas half the region lived in poverty in 1964 and hunger abounded, it now held national records for obesity, disability rates, and drug diversion, the practice of using and/or selling prescriptions for nonmedical purposes.

If fat was the new skinny, pills were becoming the new coal.

Stallard was sitting in his patrol car in the middle of the day when a familiar face appeared. An informant he'd been working with for years had some fresh intel. At the time, the area's most commonly diverted opioid pills were Lortab and Percocet, both of which sold on the streets for \$10 a pill. Up until now, the most expensive painkiller of the bunch had been Dilaudid, the brand name for hydromorphone, a morphine derivative that sold on the black market for \$40.

The informant leaned into Stallard's cruiser. "This feller up here's got this new stuff he's selling. It's called Oxy, and he says it's great," he said. "What is it again?" Stallard asked.

"It's Oxy-compton ... something like that."

Pill users were already misusing it to intensify their high, the informant explained, as well as selling it on the black market. Oxy came in much higher dosages than standard painkillers, and an 80-milligram tablet sold for eighty dollars, making its potential for black-market sales much higher than that of the Dilaudids and Lortabs. The increased potency made the drug a cash cow for the company that manufactured it, too.

The informant had more specifics: Users had already figured out an end run around the pill's time-release mechanism, a coating stamped with oc and the milligram dosage. They simply popped a tablet in their mouths for a minute or two, until the rubberized coating melted away, then rubbed it off on their shirts. Forty-milligram Oxys left an orange sheen to their shirtsleeves, the 80-milligrams a tinge of green. The remaining tiny pearl of pure oxycodone could be crushed, then snorted or mixed with water and injected.

The euphoria was immediate and intense, with a purity similar to that of heroin. Stallard wondered what was coming next. In the early nineties, Colombian cartels had increased the potency of the heroin they were selling in urban markets to increase their market share—the goal being to attract needle-phobic users who preferred snorting over injecting: But as tolerance to the stronger heroin increased, the snorters overcame their aversion to needles and soon became IV heroin users.

As soon as Stallard got back to the station, he picked up the phone.

The town pharmacist on the other line was incredulous: "Man, we only just got it a month or two ago. And you're telling me it's already on the street?"

The pharmacist had read the FDA-approved package insert for OxyContin. Most pain pills lasted only four hours, but OxyContin was supposed to provide steady relief three times as long, giving people in serious pain the miracle of uninterrupted sleep. In an early concession to the potential for its abuse, the makers of OxyContin claimed the slow-release delivery mechanism would frustrate drug abusers chasing a euphoric rush.

Based on Stallard's news, the pharmacist already doubted the company's claims: "Delayed absorption, as provided by OxyContin tablets, is believed to reduce the abuse liability of a drug." If the town's most experienced drug detective was calling him about it just a couple of months after the drug's release, and if his neighbors were already walking around with their shirts stained orange and green, it was definitely being abused.

Approved by the Food and Drug Administration in late 1995, OxyContin was the brainchild of a little-known, family-owned pharmaceutical company called Purdue Frederick, based in Stamford, Connecticut. The company was virtually unheard of when a trio of research psychiatrists and brothers—Mortimer, Raymond, and Arthur Sackler—bought it from its original Manhattan-based owners in 1952, with only a few employees and annual sales of just \$20,000. The new owners made their initial fortunes specializing in such over-the-counter products as laxatives, earwax remover, and the antiseptic Betadine, used to wash down the Apollo 11 spacecraft after its historic mission to the moon. Expanding internationally in the 1970s, the Sacklers acquired Scottish and British drug companies and paved the way for their entry into the pain-relief business with the development of an end-of-life painkiller derived from morphine, MS Contin, in 1984. (Contin was an abbreviation of "continuous.") With annual sales of \$170 million, MS Contin had run its profit-making course by the mid-1990s.

As its patent was set to expire, the company launched OxyContin to fill the void, with the intention of marketing the new drug, a reformulation of the painkiller oxycodone, beyond hospice and end-of-life care. It was a tweak of a compound first developed in 1917, a form of oxycodone synthesized from thebaine, an ingredient in the Persian poppy. Famously private, the brothers were better known for their philanthropy than for their drug-developing prowess, counting among their friends British royalty, Nobel Prize winners, and executives of the many Sackler-named art wings from the Smithsonian to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Promotion and sales were managed by the company's marketing arm, Purdue Pharma, launched in the nation's best-known corporate tax haven—Delaware.

Purdue Pharma touted the safety of its new opioid-delivery system everywhere its merchants went. "If you take the medicine like it is prescribed, the risk of addiction when taking an opioid is one-half of one percent," said Dr. J. David Haddox, a pain specialist who became the company's point man for the drug. Iatrogenic (or doctor-caused) addiction, in the words of a 1996 company training session for doctors, was not just unusual; it was "exquisitely rare."

In the United States of Amnesia, as Gore Vidal once called it, there were people in history who might have expressed some skepticism about Haddox's claim, had anyone bothered reading up on them. Ever since Neolithic humans figured out that the juice nestled inside the head of a poppy could be dried, dehydrated, and smoked for the purposes of getting high or getting well, depending on your point of view, opium had inspired all manner of commerce and conflict. The British and Chinese fought two nineteenth-century wars over it. And opium was a chief ingredient in laudanum, the alcohol-laced tincture used to treat everything from yellow fever and cholera to headaches and general pain. In 1804, at the end of Alexander Hamilton's ill-fated duel, doctors gave him laudanum to numb the agony caused by the bullet that pierced his liver, then lodged in his vertebrae.

In the 1820s, one of Boston's leading merchants masterminded an opium-smuggling operation off the Cantonese coast, spawning millions for Boston Brahmins with the names of Cabot, Delano (as in FDR), and Forbes. This money would go on to build many of the nation's first railroads, mines, and factories.

Around that time, a twenty-one-year-old German apothecary urged caution when he published the first major opium breakthrough. Friedrich Sertürner had isolated the active ingredient inside the poppy, an alkaloid he named morphium after the Greek god of dreams, Morpheus. Sertürner quickly understood that morphine was exponentially more powerful than processed opium, noting that its side effects often progressed from euphoria to depression and nausea. He had not at all liked what the compound did to his dogs: It made them pass out drooling, only to awaken in an edgy and aggressive state, with fevers and diarrhea—the same state of withdrawal Chinese opium addicts had long referred to as "yen." (What modern-day addicted users call dopesick or fiending, William S. Burroughs referred to as junk sick, gaping, or yening.) "I consider it my duty to attract attention to the terrible effects of this new substance in order that calamity may be averted," Sertürner wrote, prophetically, in 1810.

But his medical descendants were not so conscientious. Dr. Alexander Wood, the Scottish inventor of the hypodermic needle, hailed his 1853 creation by swearing that, whereas smoking or swallowing morphine caused addiction, shooting it up would not. No one mentioned Sertürner's warning decades before. It was easier to be swayed by Wood's shiny new thing.

So when doctors departed from the homes of the injured Civil War veterans they were treating, it became standard practice to leave behind both morphine and hypodermic needles, with instructions to use as needed. An estimated hundred thousand veterans became addicted, many identifiable not by shirt smudges of orange and green but by the leather bags they carried, containing needles and morphine tablets, dangling from cords around their neck. The addiction was particularly severe among white Southerners in small cities and towns, where

heartbroken wives, fathers, and mothers turned to drugs to cope with devastating war fatalities and the economic uncertainty brought on by slavery's end.

"Since the close of the war, men once wealthy, but impoverished by the rebellion, have taken to eating and drinking opium to drown their sorrows," remarked an opium dealer in New York. <>

[The Promise of the Grand Canyon: John Wesley Powell's Perilous Journey and His Vision for the American West](#) by John F. Ross [Viking, 9780525429876

A timely, thrilling account of a man who, as an explorer, dared to lead the first successful expedition down the Colorado through the Grand Canyon--and, as an American visionary, waged a bitterly-contested campaign for environmental sustainability in the American West.

When John Wesley Powell became the first person to navigate the entire Colorado River, through the Grand Canyon, he completed what Lewis and Clark had begun nearly 70 years earlier--the final exploration of continental America. The son of an abolitionist preacher, a Civil War hero (who lost an arm at Shiloh), and a passionate naturalist and geologist, in 1869 Powell tackled the vast and dangerous gorge carved by the Colorado River and known today (thanks to Powell) as the Grand Canyon.

With [The Promise of the Grand Canyon](#), John Ross recreates Powell's expedition in all its glory and terror, but his second (unheralded) career as a scientist, bureaucrat, and land-management pioneer concerns us today. Powell was the first to ask: how should the development of the west be shaped? How much could the land support? What was the role of the government and private industry in all of this? He began a national conversation about sustainable development when most everyone else still looked upon land as an inexhaustible resource. Though he supported irrigation and dams, his prescient warnings forecast the 1930s dustbowl and the growing water scarcities of today. Practical, yet visionary, Powell didn't have all the answers, but was first to ask the right questions.

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Excerpt: On January 17, 1890, John Wesley Powell strode into a Senate committee room in Washington, DC. to testify. He was hard to miss, one contemporary comparing him to a sturdy oak, gnarled and seamed from the blasts of many winters. Clear gray eyes stared out from a deeply lined face, mostly covered by a shaggy bird's nest of gray beard, flecked with cigar ash. No one would call the fifty-six-year-old veteran and explorer handsome, but one knew immediately when he entered a room. Only five feet six inches tall, he spoke rather slowly, but forcefully, with a fearless independence of mind. When he expressed himself emphatically, the stump of his right arm would bob and weave as if boxing with the ghosts of the war that had maimed him; every once in a while, Powell would reach around his back with his left hand and forcibly subdue it—a movement that invariably silenced a room. It was not often comfortable to watch him, but most always mesmerizing. The authority he radiated even in a room crowded with titanic personalities was palpable.

Only a few years after losing his forearm to a minié ball at the battle of Shiloh, he had organized the most daring exploration in American history. Ten men had climbed aboard puny wooden rowboats and pulled out into the Southwest's Green and Colorado rivers, then spent three months flying, crashing, and bounding through the terrible

unknown cataracts of the canyonlands, and, finally, through the Grand Canyon itself, not knowing whether a falls or killing rapid lay around the next bend. Six men came out at the other end, barely alive, half naked, with only a few pounds of moldy flour between them. The experience had deeply changed Powell—and he had become a great American hero. Now, two decades later, Powell had come to testify not as a hero or explorer, but as one of America's foremost scientists, the head of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and an architect of federal science. He had something deeply important to communicate about America's future.

The Senate Select Committee on Irrigation and Reclamation of Arid Lands was the gatekeeper of an issue pivotal to the development of the nation—through them the federal government could bring water to the western deserts and thus open great new lands to new generations of pioneers. The committee was composed mostly of senators from western states devoted to fulfilling their constituents' dreams of a home and ever-increasing affluence. They wanted to hear from Powell—arguably the most comprehensively knowledgeable person about those still-little-understood western lands. They craved to hear that irrigation works would bring an Eden to the West, vouchsafing the vision of Manifest Destiny—the divinely conferred right of Americans to push across the continent with wealth and industry bringing to blossom whatever they touched. But Powell would not tell them what they wanted to hear. He told them all too rightly that the West offered not enough water to reclaim by irrigation more than a tiny fraction of its land. Their dreams of a verdant West needed to be tempered and shaped to reality. Powell might as well have told them the Earth was flat. The senators were outraged.

He had brought a map to explain—one of the profoundest such documents ever created in American history. The "Arid Region of the United States" features the western half of the United States, the territory carved up in a jigsaw-puzzle riot of color. Shapes of various sizes, some half the size of states, are colored in oranges, greens, blues, reds, yellows, and pinks. It's a visually stunning, beautiful map. At first glance, one is

captivated purely by its aesthetic. But the power of a well-designed map—as this one certainly is—comes from the powerful perspective it imparts, the intersection of geography and imagination: Contained within such maps lie entire worldviews, reams of fact, conclusions, and assumptions, which can often persuade its viewers into confronting new, sometimes revolutionary, ways of taking in the world.

Powell's map, assembled under his direction by USGS cartographers, revealed the western half of America separated into watersheds, the natural land basins through which water flows. Each patch represents a watershed—a hydrographic basin—wherein all entering raindrops or snowflakes drain into a common outlet. Where a raindrop fell, on one side of a mountain ridgeline or the other, for instance, the two points separated only by a matter of inches, would determine which stream or creek it fell into to be raced into larger rivers and finally into the sea. Drops hitting one edge of the Continental Divide, which runs along the crest of the Rockies, eventually reach the Pacific, while drops on the other edge will flow into the Atlantic or Arctic oceans.

This marked the first time that a map had been used to visualize a complex intersection of geographical factors—integrating water and land into a nuanced understanding of the Earth's surface. It was the Earth's first ecological map, building on, but pushing far beyond, Alexander von Humboldt's efforts earlier that century. Previous maps had mostly defined the nation by political boundaries or topographic features. Powell's map forces the viewer to imagine the West as defined by water and its natural movement. For its time, Powell's map was as stunning as NASA's photographs of Earth from space in the 1960s. The orderly drawing of Jeffersonian grids and political lines—Powell implicitly argued through this map—did not apply in the West; other, more complicated, natural phenomena were at play and must be taken very seriously.

Powell would use this map to unfold an argument that America should move cautiously as it plumbed its natural resources and developed the land—and to introduce the idea of sustainability and



stewardship of the Earth. In that Senate room, the immensely powerful William Stewart from Nevada listened to Powell, and the more he heard, the more it grated against everything he stood for. In that gilded age, riches were there for the taking, enshrined as a divine promise to America. Powell would proffer a wholly new outlook by claiming that Americans needed to listen not only to their hearts, pocketbooks, and deep aspirations, but to what the land itself and the climate would tell them.

Stewart and Powell would lock into a titanic struggle over the very soul of America—the future of the American West and the shape of the nation's democracy. America's story had always closely aligned with that of Exodus—the tale of a people who left behind an oppressive Old World to enter a wilderness and ultimately build a divinely inspired, promised land. How would that promise look? Powell singlehandedly tried to change the American narrative.

This is the story of the most practical of American visionaries who arose in the vast midlands of a brand-new continent—at least from the perspective of its European newcomers—and was forged by the vise of a bitter dispute over slavery, then given new edges honed in the American West. From the perils of these experiences, his imagination enlarged and primed, he would launch a new vision for America, a bold challenge to the status quo. It is a particularly national story that profoundly shapes the country to this day.

This one-armed scientist-explorer threw down a gauntlet that remains essential and important for the time we live in. Not only for the drought and water shortage now afflicting the West, but for the larger world of climate change. While cautionary, it also offers a clear way forward. <>

[Spying on Whales: The Past, Present, and Future of Earth's Most Awesome Creatures](#) by Nick Pyenson [Viking, 9780735224568]

A dive into the secret lives of whales, from their evolutionary past to today's cutting edge of science

Whales are among the largest, most intelligent, deepest diving species to have ever lived on our planet. They evolved from land-roaming, dog-sized

creatures into animals that move like fish, breathe like us, can grow to 300,000 pounds, live 200 years and travel entire ocean basins. Whales fill us with terror, awe, and affection--yet there is still so much we don't know about them. Why did it take whales over 50 million years to evolve to such big sizes, and how do they eat enough to stay that big? How did their ancestors return from land to the sea--and what can their lives tell us about evolution as a whole? Importantly, in the sweepstakes of human-driven habitat and climate change, will whales survive?

Nick Pyenson's research has given us the answers to some of our biggest questions about whales. He takes us deep inside the Smithsonian's unparalleled fossil collections, to frigid Antarctic waters, and to the arid desert in Chile, where scientists race against time to document the largest fossil whale site ever found. Full of rich storytelling and scientific discovery, *Spying on Whales* spans the ancient past to an uncertain future--all to better understand the most enigmatic creatures on Earth.

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Excerpt:

At this very moment, two spacecraft move at over thirty-four thousand miles per hour, about ten billion miles away from us, each carrying a gold-plated copper record. The spacecraft, Voyager 1 and Voyager 2, are meant as messengers: they carry information about our address in the solar system, the building blocks of our scientific knowledge, and a small sampling of images, music, and greetings from around the world. They also carry whalesong.

The long squeaks and moans on the record belong to humpback whales. In the 1970s, when the Voyager mission launched, our view of whales was rapidly changing, from game animals to cultural icons and symbols of a nascent environmental movement. Scientists had recently discovered that male humpbacks produce complex songs, composed of phrases collected under broader themes, nested like Russian dolls that repeat in a loop. Humpback whalesong has evolved even since we started listening as each new singer improvises on the loop, creating new structures and hierarchies that constantly change over years, and across ocean basins.

Whalesong, however, remains a riddle to anyone who isn't a humpback whale. We can capture its variation, details, and complexity, but we don't know what any of it truly means. We lack the requisite context to decipher and understand it—or, really, any part of cetacean culture. Even so, we send whalesong into interstellar space because the creatures that sing these songs are superlative beings that fill us with awe, terror, and affection. We have hunted them for thousands of years and scratched them into our mythologies and iconography. Their bones frame the archways of medieval castles. They're so compelling that we imagine aliens might find them interesting—or perhaps understand their otherworldly, ethereal song.

In the meantime, whales here on Earth remain mysterious. They live 99 percent of their lives underwater, far away from continuous contact with people and beyond most of our observational tools. We tend to think about them only when we glimpse them from the safety of a boat, or when they wash up along our shores. They also have an

evolutionary past that is surprising and incompletely known. For instance, they haven't always been in the water. They descend from ancestors that lived on land, more than fifty million years ago. Since then, they transformed from four-limbed riverbank dwellers to oceangoing leviathans, in a chronicle we can read only from their fossil record, a puzzle of bone shards unevenly spread across the globe.

The little we have learned about whales leaves us unsatisfied because the scales of their lives and facts of their bodies are endlessly fascinating. They are the biggest animals on Earth, ever. Some can live more than twice as long as we do. Their migrations take them across entire oceans. Some whales pursue prey with a filter on the roof of their mouth, while others evolved the ability to navigate an abyss with sound. And then they speak to one another with impenetrable languages. All the while, in the short clip of our own history, we've moved from heedlessly hunting them to an awareness that they have culture, just as we do, and that our actions, both direct and indirect, put their fate in jeopardy.

A paleontologist is a good tour guide for what we know about whales, not just because their evolutionary history is profoundly interesting. It's because we, as paleontologists, are used to asking questions without having all of the facts. Sometimes we're losing facts: fossils removed from their medium lose clues of context; promising bonebeds are razed to make room for roadways; or bones lay misidentified in a museum drawer. When faced with these challenges, paleontologists turn to inference, drawing on many different lines of evidence to understand processes and causes that we cannot directly see or study—the same approach used by any detective, really. In other words, thinking like a detective is a useful approach to confront the mysteries posed by the past, present, and future of whales.

This book is not a synoptic, comprehensive account of every different species of whale—there are far too many whales to fit into anything shorter than an encyclopedia. Instead, this book presents a selective account, a kind of travelogue to chasing whales, both living and extinct. I describe my

experiences from Antarctica to the deserts in Chile, to the tropical coastlines of Panama, to the waters off Iceland and Alaska, using a wide variety of devices and tools to study whales: suction-cupped tags that cling to their backs; knives to dissect skin and blubber from muscles and nerves; and hammers to scrape and whack away rock that obscures gleaming, fossilized bone.

The narratives in this book group into three general sections: past, present, and future. Broadly, I want to answer questions about where whales came from, how they live today, and what will happen to them on planet Earth in the age of humans (a new era that some scientists call the Anthropocene). But these stories don't cleanly fit into these three temporal silos. Instead, they build on one another and reciprocate because the ways that we need to think about whales require thinking about all the evidence at hand: unraveling the many mysteries of living whales requires a background about their evolutionary past, just as much as the surprises from the fossil record can clarify the meaningful facts about their lives today and into the future.

The first part of the book tells the chronicle of how whales went from walking on land to being entirely aquatic, relying on evidence from the fossil record showing what the earliest whales looked like. These fossils show us details that we couldn't otherwise know about the history of whales, and I explore exactly how we dig up these clues in the first place. Following fossil whale bones brought me to the Atacama Desert of Chile, where my colleagues and I puzzled over an ecological detective story with the discovery of Cerro Ballena, the world's richest fossil whale graveyard. How did this site come about, and what does it tell us about whales in geologic time?

The second part examines how and why whales became the biggest creatures ever in the history of life. The challenges of studying organisms as large as the largest species of whales means thinking about the limits of biology, and what exactly organisms at these superlative scales need to do, on a daily basis, to sustain their enormous sizes. While trying to connect muscle to bone at a whaling station, I share another serendipitous find: the discovery of an entirely new sensory organ in

whales. What does an organ, lodged right at the tip of a whale's chin, mean for how, when, and why baleen whales evolved to become all-time giants?

Lastly, the third part explores the specter of the uncertain future that we share with whales on Anthropocene Earth. In the twentieth century alone, whaling in the open oceans killed more than three million whales, reducing many populations to shadows of their baseline abundances. Despite this decimation, no single species went extinct until the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since then, not a whistle or splash of the Yangtze river dolphin has been recorded, and responsibility for the extinction of this species can be placed squarely on our shoulders: we dammed the only river in which it lived. Other species, such as the vaquita, remain on the extinction watch list, numbering fewer than one dozen or two dozen individuals. But the news from the field isn't entirely dire: some whale species have rebounded from the brink, even expanding to new habitats as climate and oceans change. What can we imagine about our shared future with whales, drawing on their lives today and what we know about their evolutionary past?

Ultimately, the quest to understand whales is a human enterprise. This book is a story not just about knowing whales but also about the scientists who study them. The scientists described in these stories come from a variety of different disciplines, ranging from cell biology and acoustics to stratigraphy and parachute physics. Some are historical but very much knowable through their writings, their specimen collections, and the intellectual questions that they asked. One of the great privileges of my professional life is the opportunity to work at the Smithsonian, which has afforded me not only the latitude to undertake this pursuit but also firsthand access to some of the world's largest and most important collections of material evidence, be it specimens, scientific journals, or unpublished field notes. Every day, I think about the many generations of scientists before me who handled this same evidence, scratching away at the very same questions, while constrained by the circumstances of their times. My hope is that this book says as much about the inner lives of scientists as it does about whales.

- Whales use half their brain to sleep: they stay half awake so they can
- periodically rise up to the surface to breathe while they sleep.
- The first whales were land-dwelling creatures the size of a German shepherd,
- walked on four legs, and had a snout instead of a blowhole.
- Whales are like us:
  - Rorqual whales are right-handed or left-handed, favoring one side as they roll their bodies to feed.
  - They have belly buttons, finger bones, and though they don't use them, some whales still have back leg bones buried in their body walls.
  - Bottlenose dolphins and maybe even killer whales are one of few mammals that can recognize themselves in a mirror.
- When a whale dies in the open ocean, its carcass sometimes falls to the sea floor, where it can create sustenance for an entire ecosystem for up to 100 years. Basilosaurus—one of the first fully aquatic whales—had the strongest bite of any mammal ever.
- Most whales are pack animals—they hunt in pods, travel together in groups, and synchronize when they come to the surface to breathe.
- Tag data has shown whales diving 1.8 miles deep, for over 2 hours, in pursuit of a meal.
- Toothed whales are the only underwater animals that use echolocation. Blue whales are the largest animal to ever exist on earth.
  - Their song can be heard over 600 miles away, and is the most acoustically powerful sound made by any organism.
  - The largest blue whale ever weighed was over 300,000 pounds—and it was 20 feet shorter than the longest one ever measured.
- Blue whales are about 10,000 times the size of their earliest ancestors
- (humans are only about one time larger than our earliest ancestors). Large baleen whales (such as blue or fin whales) will put on around 100 pounds every day in their first few years of life.
- Whales are the longest-living mammals on earth: one bowhead killed in 1995 was 211 years old.
- Baleen plates (the giant filters in baleen whales' mouths) are made up of the same materials as skin, hair or hooves.
- Some humpback whales migrate each year from the tropical latitudes of Hawaii to the panhandle of Alaska.
- Killer whales hunt in packs, and have been known to take down whales many times their size, even baby or adolescent blue whales.

A Conversation with Nick Pyenson, author, [Spying on Whales: The Past, Present, and Future of Earth's Most Awesome Creatures.](#)

*From Moby Dick to Blackfish, whales have long captured the popular imagination, to the point where we might think we know everything there is to know about them. But as your book proves, we couldn't be more wrong. Why do you think humans are fascinated by whales—and why is there this discrepancy between that interest and our actual knowledge?*

Whales are mystical, totem animals that we love to extol and tell stories about—but the way we think about them (and our relationship to them) has changed a lot over the years. In previous centuries, we hunted them for food, for fuel, and to use their parts as everyday objects. More recently, science has shown us just how alike they are to us, and revealed our impact on their existence, whether it's how we are urbanizing the oceans or changing the parameters of their habitats. In less than half a century, we've accepted that they deserved to be protected. That's pretty amazing, given our legacy of treating them as prey, and perhaps long overdue.

A lot of our fascination with whales ultimately comes down to mystery. Despite thousands of years of interactions, they are still largely enigmatic to us; we still haven't given scientific names to nor even discovered all of the whale species alive in today's oceans. As the largest, deepest-diving creatures on our planet, they are also compelling and superlative, which makes the mystery that much more captivating. And that's why I think the science of whales is critical: we need to know more about them because their fate is tied to ours, on planet Earth in the age of humans. Fortunately we're in the golden age of studying them, with a variety of exciting tools at our disposal.

*What led you to a career as a paleontologist specializing in fossil marine mammals, and what does your work for the Smithsonian look like?*

As a kid, I really loved learning about evolution and fossils, but I didn't realize that interest could translate into an occupation until college, when I read about an active series of paleontological expeditions to Niger, looking for dinosaurs. The combination of travel, science, and discovery hooked me, and that set me on a course for graduate school in paleontology.

In one college field class we encountered a dead dolphin on a beach, and around the same time, back in a research lab on campus, I was working on a project looking at CT scans of fossil whale skulls, to understand how their brains evolved. Those were two of many intellectual moments that helped me to focus my career on marine mammal evolution.

My day job involves a lot of different activities, in museum collections, in the lab, or in the field. My main obligations involve research and care of the nation's fossil collections. There are over 15,000 fossil whale specimens among the 40-odd million fossils at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History—a treasure that spans all eras in geologic time and every continent and ocean. My other responsibilities include mentoring and hosting researchers of many kinds, especially students. The Smithsonian is similar to a university in many ways — we have libraries, shared instruments, and dozens of weekly seminars. The most important aspect of all of this is that my work relies on other people, and that community ensures the

conscientious custody of objects that tell stories about life on this planet.

*As you note in your book, much of the information we learn about whales only occurs postmortem. Why is it so difficult to study whales, and how are scientists overcoming these obstacles? Is there a better way to study these creatures in their natural habitats? How has technology changed the way we research whales?*

It's hard to measure, sample, or even collect images of wild, multi-ton fully aquatic animals, especially if they spend most of their time underwater and if their home range is dozens of miles in every direction. (The difficulty scales with size, which makes studying the largest whales truly a challenge apart.) These difficulties make it easier to study dead whales—their skeletons, namely—but studying even their bones is a formidable challenge because they can be the size of telephone poles. Fortunately, new technology provides scientists with a window into the lives of these animals that we wouldn't otherwise have. Suction cup tags record their movement the way a smart phone calculates human steps, and drones can follow whales, and even collect their snot. We also have the ability to use 3-D scanning to capture the shape of those really big bones. As scientists, we haven't ever really had this clear of a window into the mysterious, hidden lives of whales, which means that with every tag deployment, drone flight, and laser scan, we stand the chance of finding out something truly new about a species of whale, even the common ones.

*Your research has taken you all over the world, from Chile and Panama to Alaska and Antarctica. What's it like to do your job in the field, and do you have a particular favorite in-the-wild encounter with a whale—or whale fossil?*

It's one thing to study specimens in the clean and climate-controlled confines of a museum collection; it's another to see the organism alive, in its habitat. I think that it's important, as a scientist, to know something about your study organism first-hand. That's part of the reason I head out into the field, whether it's tagging, digging, or collecting rotting carcasses on the beach. It's also really important to me that I engage with my study objects in the

places where they are found because that context can tell you so much.

Sorting through my favorite moments is tricky; and picking your favorite fossil is hard choice, a bit like asking who's your favorite child? One my favorite moments with a living whale happened in Antarctica, at a moment in between tagging, when a curious young humpback whale spyhopped (or poked its head straight up) out of the water, next to our rubber boat. That kind of eye-to-eye moment is transcendent, especially with such a large animal that so clearly just wants to get a closer look. Insofar as favorite fossils, an easy answer for me are the ones I've had a hand in describing and naming, such as *Isthminia panamensis*. Handling those specimens is a personal experience because we learn so much from hands-on study. Of course, the most exciting thing is the next discovery, which can happen anytime you got out in the field.

*How can studying whales, and understanding their evolution, teach us more about the world at large?*

We live on a planet much older than we really can contemplate. Deep time at the scale of millions and billions of years is a hard thing to imagine when a few thousand years ago in human history seems ancient. Yet whales can tell us a lot about life in deep time. Their fossils show us that whales were very different in the geologic past. A range of four-legged forms, extinct eel-shaped species, and walrus-faced whales all preceded the large and small whale species we know today. The largest whales today are over 10,000 times their ancestors' sizes. Some lived on land, some part of the time in the water, and then they all ended up in oceans the world over. These extreme changes over many millions of years can show us—through the fossil record—something important about how evolution works. Sometimes it's by refashioning existing parts, like how snouts became blowholes; other times it's by generating a completely new structure, such as the innovation of baleen, the sieve that some whales use to filter-feed. Fossils are evidence of what we wouldn't otherwise know from just studying DNA of their living descendants.

Today's whales also tell us many things about living on planet Earth in the age of humans because they

encounter so much of the direct and indirect consequences of humanity, such as pesticides, microplastics, other contaminants in the ocean, or fishing nets and ships themselves. We know, for example, that military sonar has a real effect on whales, a reality that pits conservation against national security. Some of today's whales also live over a hundred years, which means that they have lived or will live through eras of dramatic ocean change, whether it's the rise and fall of industrial whaling or a future ice-free Arctic.

*The second part of [SPYING ON WHALES](#) focuses on an evolutionary mystery: how did whales get so large, and how do they stay that way? What made you want to explore these questions, and what did you discover?*

I was initially interested in understanding more about how the largest whales on the planet gulp feed. Specifically, I wanted to know more about how the bones, muscles and nerves of the head work together as a system to take massive bites of krill and other zooplankton, which is important for knowing how whales stay so big. It turns out that answering those questions is hard without access to fresh anatomical tissues; and through a series of fortunate connections, I was able to work with a team of scientists on whale carcasses in Iceland. While doing something else, we came across a mess of anatomy that didn't make any sense. Eventually we figured out that it represented a previously unknown sensory organ sitting in the chins of these large whales, which helps coordinate how these whales take enormous gulps of prey-laden water.

My time working on that problem reminds me that discovery in science isn't necessarily a "Eureka!" moment. For me, it's more like what the science fiction writer Isaac Asimov said: the "Gee, that's funny" moments that make you re-examine what you thought you knew. With whales, basically everything about their lives is funny—in that weird way—because of their evolutionary history.

*Much of what we hear about whales in the news surrounds whaling ships and efforts to curb their actions. In the 20th century, whaling killed over 2 million whales in the austral hemisphere alone. Yet the records from this industry have provided an*

*extraordinary amount of data about whales. Can you speak a little more to the effect that the whaling industry has had on both whale populations and on our knowledge of the species?*

The scale of whaling in the 20th century—that is, whaling in cultural memory of people alive—is hard to fathom. You can compare it to the extermination of other animal species from over a hundred years ago, such as passenger pigeons or bison. A single whale has the body mass of a large elephant several times over, which means that millions of whales removed from the ocean had a huge effect on the biomass of consumers in ocean food webs. Put another way, industrial whaling was a large-scale ecological experiment in the oceans—in which 99% of the original population of many species of large whales was removed—and we don't have a good handle on its consequences for how food webs work, either in the open seas, on the ocean floor, or along the coasts. Many of these species of whales still have not recovered from whaling, decades or centuries after their impact, which is important knowledge for conservation policy moving forward.

In some cases, whaling ships and companies recorded the tallies of harpooned whales. We now know that some of these statistics are biased from underreporting, but they still provide us with a kind of historical biodiversity that is irreplaceable because we wouldn't otherwise have knowledge of whales in the high seas. Also, in some cases, biologists aboard whaling ships and at whaling stations recorded anatomical data, or parasites, or gut contents, which provided the only way to know those details about many species of whales until the recent technological innovations of the 21st century.

*Unbelievably, in 2018, we're still discovering new species of whales! How can that be, and do you think we will ever truly have identified them all? What are some of your goals for future scientific discoveries in this field, and where is your research taking you these days?*

It's not that surprising to me that we don't know much about the oceans: we don't have maps for all of its seafloor, we only broadly understand its dynamics, and we don't know most of the organisms that live in it. You would think that, being the

biggest organisms, whales would be the easiest ones to know—but their lives take them so far away from our observation. Consequently, we are still finding out a lot about them, including how many species are alive today.

We live in the golden age of discovery for whale species — with new DNA technology, we will identify more so-called cryptic species that represent true lineages not easily discerned by a quick glance. And it's not just in the lab — scientists on boats or using remote surveillance might snap the first photos of species known only from washed-up carcasses, which is thrilling. The majority of the 80 or so species of living whales are inadequately known, from their anatomy to their ecology, so there's plenty of room for the next generations of scientists to make new discoveries. And, of course, there are definitely fossils yet unearthed that will probably be just as odd as (or even stranger than) what we've found so far.

*What are the major threats to whale populations today and what does their future look like? And what can we as laypersons do to help?*

For any year in the 21st century, whaling around the world accounts for only a small fraction of the total mortality of whales. Hundreds of thousands more die from net entanglements, fisheries by catch, poisoning from pollution, or by ship-strike. That list includes many human factors, but we also know that there are clear steps that we can undertake to help. Microplastic pollution in the ocean is emerging as a much bigger problem than previously recognized because plastic a universal part of civilization today—degrades into smaller and smaller bits, eventually getting incorporated into the bodies (by ingestion) of the smallest critters in the ocean. Plastic is everywhere too, even on the shores of the most remote islands. That means animals that consume these critters are eating plastic, with unknown consequences. Reducing our daily dependency on plastic—the point source—is not a bad start.

*What was your impetus for writing [SPYING ON WHALES](#), and what do you hope readers take away from this book?*

As a scientist, I've had wild and wide-ranging experiences, and I wanted to share the stories of how scientists wrestle with big problems and big discoveries. I thought that the best way to tell those stories was through the people I've worked with, as well as those long-dead who I have come to know through their writing and the specimens that they've collected. The book is also an exercise in thinking big, at broad scales of space and time: whales live long lives, across ocean basins, and they have an evolutionary history that spans dozen of millions of years.

I wanted to communicate that doing whale science is hard work. For me, much of the science I do involves bringing material discovered out in the real world back to a museum or laboratory setting, where it can be studied and preserved. I hope that readers see this underlying thread—the act of collecting real information about the world—as a fundamental part of stripping back the mystery of these amazing animals.

Lastly, I hope readers come away with a sense of excitement about the mysterious lives of whales. Despite how hard they are to study, we still know more about them today than we ever have before, and we stand to learn even more in the coming years. I hope the ongoing stories of discovery are as exciting to the casual reader as they are to the next generation of scientists. <>

[Eight Coins Tattoo Tarot](#) by Lana Zellner [U.S. Games Systems Inc., 9781572819191]

This vividly illustrated deck follows the artistic development of tattoo artist and designer Lana Zellner. The 82-card deck includes all of her original tarot art plus four new cards painted specially for this edition. The cards feature art forms and iconic imagery from both tattoo and tarot traditions, all hand drawn and painted using the watercolor painting style of spitshading.



The 188-page book presents full-color, enlarged illustrations for each Eight Coins card, along with Lana's descriptions and unique tarot insights.

Set includes:

- 82 cards
- 188-page full color book
- Eight Coins Tattoo Tarot Rose Spread

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 The Eight Coins Pose Tattoo Spread

Excerpt:

#### About the Artist

Lana Zellner is a tattoo artist, painter, and designer based in the mountains of Missoula, Montana. Pulling from her previous professional experience as an architect, Lana's art and tattoo work is heavily focused on line-work, bold design elements, and detailed ornamentation.



Lana has been reading tarot cards since she was twelve years old, when her mother gave her a deck of cards. Lana practices solitary Wicca, and spends most of her free time enjoying the vast seclusion of Montana's scenic landscape. Within her artwork, she enjoys bringing these spiritual interests to life.

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### About the Project

The Eight Coins' Tattoo Tarot deck was first and foremost a drawing project. Originally titled "78 Cards", it was a chance for me to grow as an artist and to push myself into new directions—specifically switching careers from architect to tattoo artist. It took me over a year to complete the first edition artwork for the deck, and over the course of that year, I changed my entire life.

### Getting Started

In April 2014, I was working as an architect and had recently moved from Brooklyn, New York to Philipsburg, a small town in rural Montana. My husband and I had decided to move to Montana so that we could escape the city and enjoy life in the mountains. I was working from home and slowly realizing that I wasn't getting the same satisfaction from architecture that I once did. On top of feeling creatively trapped in my career, I then lost a large architecture project and was completely heartbroken. I began to realize that I was ready for something new in my life.

Around this same time, I had also started getting tattooed quite regularly. As I sat in the shop for hours at a time, just staring at the art on the walls and making small talk with my tattoo artist, I could feel my heart telling me to start drawing again. I had drawn a lot as a child, and up through my early adulthood, but somewhere within my architecture career I stopped drawing for fun. Drawing had stopped being about art and became only a tool for my job. As I looked around the tattoo shop, at all of the beautiful drawings on the

wall, I thought... "Maybe I will go home and draw tonight".

So I did.

I went home and did my first drawing in years. I had fun! I discussed with my husband how sad it was that I had stopped drawing for so many years, and we decided I should get back into it. I dedicated myself to drawing every single day.

Over the course of a couple months I saw my drawings improve dramatically! I continued to draw every day, and I continued to see improvement in my drawing skill. Slowly, I began taking my time at the drawing table much more seriously. By the end of the summer, I had pretty firmly convinced myself that I loved drawing I was good at it, and I should switch careers to become a tattoo artist. I really had no idea how to do this, so I asked my tattoo artist.

The answer I got back from him —

"Keep drawing lots! Build a solid portfolio of your art work. Be persistent and do not take no for an answer." — Ian Caroppoli

In order to do this, I decided that I needed a big, focused project. I set some goals for my new project. I wanted my project to add close to one hundred drawings to my portfolio, and to follow along a cohesive theme. I wanted my new project to occupy my time for over a year as I figured out the many life changes I saw coming my way. Perhaps most importantly, I wanted a project that would force me to remain introspective and thoughtful as I grew.

I did a tarot reading for myself, and it clicked...I would design a deck of tarot cards.



### Creating the Deck

Because my deck was being created as a way for me to develop as an artist, I knew that the artwork in my deck would be completely different from drawing number 1 to drawing number 78. I did not want all of the Wands to be from my beginner drawing phase and all of the Pentacles be from a more advanced drawing phase. I wanted each of the suits, as well as the Major Arcana, to reflect the full scope of my artistic development. To ensure this, I decided that I would illustrate the cards in the order that fate would decide—I (or a person of my choosing) would shuffle the deck, and pull a card. I would draw that card, and keep its message in my heart as I worked on completing the artwork.

Because of this system, I deeply feel that the order of my illustrations very much reflects the personal story of this deck—my artistic development, and my journey into becoming a tattoo artist. Each drawing number has been noted in the book so that you can better understand my artistic journey if you are interested.

### Tattoo Image and Symbolism

Similarly to the tarot, tattoo art has a deep, rich history of symbolism and tradition. Over the years and across the globe, the same images and concepts have been recreated and redefined by thousands of artists. Classic tattoo imagery such as beautiful ladies, birds, wolves, foxes, daggers, snakes and flowers have withstood the test of time and geography.

Tattooing exists on nearly every continent of our planet; from Japan to Thailand, New Zealand to Hawaii, across Europe and throughout the United States. As tattooing grows in popularity, tattoo art has become its own unique form of art, respected more and more by the general population.

There are dozens of styles of tattooing but the majority of the paintings in this deck would probably be best considered a part of the "Neo-traditional" tattoo style. This style can usually be identified by the way it used American Traditional tattoo images (ladies, wolves, birds, etc.) in a new or modernized way. When painting, I enjoy working with the variety of complex color fades and detail-oriented linework that the Neo-traditional style offers. When tattooing however, I generally work in the American Traditional style; opting for more defined black lines, bold flat color fields, and dramatic black whip-shading.

Throughout the two years I've worked on this project, I have worked very hard to respect the traditions that surround tattooing. I've attempted to honor this beautiful art form, and to learn as much as I could about the history of tattoo art.

### Iconic tattoo images found in this deck:

- Dance with Death
- Crying ladies
- Lady wearing Wolf's head
- Lady wearing Lion's head
- Mermaids
- People with horned headwear
- Bearded men
- Traditional Handshake
- Snakes and Roses
- Foxes
- Koi Fish
- Swallows, Doves, Bluebirds, Ravens
- Roses, Chrysanthemums, Peonies, Mandala Flowers
- Abstract flowers in decorated vases
- Glowing lanterns and candles
- All seeing eyes
- Stairway into a tunnel or clouds

## Spitshading Technique

The artwork for each of my cards was created by hand with no digital enhancement or changes. I would sketch, draw, hard-line, and paint each card by hand. Then, I photographed the card and edited the colors only to make sure the artwork would print as close to the original as possible. I refused to edit out imperfections, as I did not want it to appear that my deck was digitally created.

The deck took me about two years to complete. So as you might expect, the style and quality of my artwork has changed dramatically since the beginning. Many of my cards still include sketch marks and there are plenty of color bleeds seeping out of the lines. I find these markings to be an important part of my journey and something that makes my deck unique. I believe that these "accidents", style changes, and visible development skill are the story of the Eight Coins' Tattoo Tarot deck. Hard work, dedication, persistence, and of course mistakes, are all part of developing yourself as an artist.

The first twenty cards in the deck were completed with colored pencil and marker, on a variety of paper types and sizes. All of the cards after that (and the first four, which were recreated for this version of the deck) were completed with Dr.Ph. Martins Radiant Watercolors on watercolor paper, 8"x14" of Arches 140 lb.

For these cards, I was using the traditional tattoo painting style of "spitshading" is a technique where the tattoo artist using their mouth to control color saturation of water on the brush. Saliva is used to pull a smooth gradient of color similar to the paper. This gives my tarot cards a traditional tattoo flash. This method of painting has been used by tattoo artists for many years, and I am proud to have completed my deck using this method.

For the U.S. Games Systems' publication of my deck, I redid the first four drawings deck, I redid the first four drawings because of the different style they were created in a completely format than the others. I thought very hard about going back and updating the he end I decided not to. I believe it is important for this deck to show years of show development that some were not

spitshaded, show potential for change within an artist consistent hard work. <>

[The Ethical Turn: Otherness and Subjectivity in Contemporary Psychoanalysis](#) by David M. Goodman and Eric R. Severson [Relational Perspectives Book Series, Routledge, 9781138813281]

Emmanuel Levinas claims in [Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority](#) that "morality is not a branch of philosophy, but first philosophy" and if he is right about this, might ethics also serve as a first psychology? This possibility is explored by the authors in this volume who seek to bring the "ethical turn" into the world of psychoanalysis. This phenomenologically rich and socially conscious ethics has taken centre stage in a variety of academic disciplines, inspired by the work of philosophers and theologians concerned with the moral fabric of subjectivity, human relationship, and socio-political life. At the heart of this movement is a reconsideration of the other person, and the dangers created when the question of the "Other" is subsumed by grander themes.

The authors showcased here represent the exceptional work being done by both scholars and practitioners working at the crossroads between psychology and philosophy in order to rethink the foundations of their disciplines. [The Ethical Turn: Otherness and Subjectivity in Contemporary Psychoanalysis](#) guides readers into the heart of this fresh and exciting movement and includes contributions from many leading thinkers, who provide fascinating new avenues for enriching our responses to suffering and understandings of human identity. It will be of use to psychoanalysts, professionals in psychology, postgraduate students, professors and other academics in the field.

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## Ethics as first psychology by David M. Goodman and Eric R. Severson

According to Elie Wiesel, "Madness is the result not of uncertainty, but certainty". Thought does not begin with knowledge. Knowing and understanding arise from exchange, address, and a person in front of me — always saturated with the ethical. Said differently, it is our very boundedness to one another, our vulnerability of living in this world as fleshly and small, and the calling and address made by one another's vulnerabilities that are the starting points of rationality, personhood, and subjectivity. Emmanuel Levinas makes the assertion that ethics precedes ontology and that "ethics is first philosophy" (Levinas, 1989). We begin with the encounter and then theory, systems, and ontological paradigms stagger forward into words, definitions, and institutions. This is a radical notion, which upsets knowledge claims and foundational rubrics that frequently guide conceptualizations about the human subject. It is this type of assertion, one among many, that has fueled an ethical turn in the humanities during the second half of the 20th century. A phenomenologically rich and socially conscious ethics has taken center stage in a variety of academic disciplines, inspired by the work of philosophers and theologians concerned with the moral fabric of subjectivity, human relationships, and socio-political life.

Throughout the modern era, and particularly since the enlightenment, the Western idea of the "self" has leaned heavily on autonomy, self-sufficiency, and individualism. This masterfully bounded, and rationally consolidated self has lost significant ground in the second half of the 20th century. Problematic at many levels — political, social, economic, religious, familial, and Psychological — this hegemonic paradigm has been unsettled by new paradigms of intersubjectivity, social constructivism, hermeneutical theory, gender studies, and ethical phenomenology which have forced a more sophisticated approach to understanding the self's origins — origins that are inescapably bounded to Others, always and inevitably ethical. Though called by many different names, this recognition is at the heart of the ethical turn that has impacted a variety of academic disciplines.

A "turn" implies unresolved transition — a movement that has not yet reached a destination, yet also cannot return to the security of its origin.

A "turn" of any sort moves both toward and away from something. The ethical turn is a movement away from a situation that has dominated the history of thinking, across the disciplines, across the centuries. From the earliest stirrings of philosophy, ethicists have derived the principles of morality from grander principles and universal paradigms. Ethics has been secondary, and rarely primary, for philosophy. Thinkers such as Levinas express considerable concern about the ways that the relation to the other person has, therefore, always been conditioned by larger frameworks of philosophical ideas. Propositions, abstractions, conceptualizations, and detached inquiry become foundations for truth and morality. They are several steps removed, distant and untouched by the ethical imperatives resident in sensate encounter. Levinas goes so far as to link this paradigmatic propensity to the Shoah.

In the ethical turn, however, philosophy has moved toward relation to the other person as an origin point from which notions and conceptualizations emerge. It is from the encounter in the face-to-face relation with the particular other, the one who is before me, that philosophy has its origins. Theories and systems take shape in the wake of this encounter; they are not the origin of philosophy but the efforts of philosophers to come to grips with a responsibility that begins before thinking has initiated. Hannah Arendt directed attention to political theory, for instance, pointing out the great distance between the grand notions of the human condition and the lived experience of human beings. She wrote: "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world". Arendt points to the experiences of a person in the singular, and demonstrates the abstractions and complications that arise when the encounter with the singular other is conditioned by political theories. The ethical turn is not a matter of positioning some theory of ethics at the forefront of philosophy; this movement is about the primacy of the suffering other. It is a turn toward the one who sufferings, along with the awareness that this suffering calls into question any

philosophical framework that might make sense of it.

As philosophy re-directs itself to examine and question these foundations for the relation to the other person, a similar awakening has taken place in other disciplines. There is a lot more to this "turn" — more history, nuance, and diversity — than we can touch upon here. In this volume our concern lies with the impact of the ethical turn upon mental health disciplines, psychoanalysis more specifically. Psychology, psychiatry, and social work have had a complex relationship to the ethical turn. On the one hand, no professions are ostensibly more concerned with the dynamics of interpersonal relationships than these. On the other hand, mental health disciplines have longstanding commitments to grand psychological theories and philosophies of science that problematize Levinas's contention that "ethics is first philosophy." The literature on "evidence-based practice" is illustrative of the many entanglements that prevent a dimensional ethics from serving as the starting point of clinical formulations and decision-making. Ethics remains a consideration for mental health practitioners, but for the most part this simply means concern about professional liabilities, accreditation, and a discipline's reputation [i.e., procedural ethics]. There are occasional forays into eruptive moral issues, such as the involvement of psychologists in torture practices (Soldz, 2010). Yet for the most part, the ethical turn we are describing goes beyond these understandings, and threatens the stability of a system that requires practitioners to be first and foremost scientists, clinicians, or evidence-informed technicians. The proximity of mental health practice to the medical community further complicates any turn toward fundamental ethics. Allured by the placements, appointments, titles, funding, and legitimizations inherent in medicine, the mental health disciplines have often been seduced by its metrics and forms of epistemological authority. However, inasmuch as psychology conforms to a medical model, it is pushed toward quantification, diagnosis, and generalization, and away from the unique encounter with the other person. So while the mental health professions seem poised to participate in the ethical turn, there has not been

much epistemological or practical space to allow a substantive response to this movement.

Ethics has, however, made something of a comeback in particular quarters of psychoanalytic theory and practice. The rise of attachment and mentalization research, neuroscientific emphasis on our "social" brains, and the "relational turn" in several dominant theoretical models have all

#### The ethical turn in psychoanalysis: three dimensions

What created the ethical turn in psychoanalysis and what was the "clearing" that allowed it to take shape? The relational turn surely laid the foundation for the ethical turn, but there is more to it than that. There are, no doubt, widely diverse entry points and angles from which to approach the turn to ethics within the psychoanalytic tradition. We propose that there are three crosspollinating dimensions, which we will name and briefly describe. The main braids that interweave include: (1) attachment, mentalization, and evolutionary biological research, (2) scholarship related to critical theory and political positioning, and (3) phenomenological, hermeneutical, social constructionist, and dialogical literatures. These three strands do not serve to demarcate separate aspects of this ethical turn as much as demonstrate a diverse set of tributaries feeding into this conversation. Each brings a different angle, unique voices, and a possibility of new ethical insights emergent from human boundedness.

The themes of vulnerability and dependency take center stage in Lynne Layton's work. In Chapter 5 Layton points out that our current social conditions of increasing income inequality, downsizing, outsourcing, and high unemployment have created a significant amount of anxiety about class status and well-being across all classes. This has led to a splitting between states of immense vulnerability and insecurity on the one hand, and on the other, to public hatred of any signs of vulnerability and dependency. Dependency has come to signify "poor" and "failure." From a psychological perspective, however, we know that denying dependency leads to a kind of grandiose sense of omnipotence. As a result, it becomes hard to see

how rich and poor, powerful and vulnerable, are in fact connected to each other, how we are all part of the same social system and thus mutually interdependent. Grandiose states tend to be unstable and crash, precisely "third" relate to these questions? More broadly, how are psychoanalysis' assumptions challenged and enriched by philosophical and theological traditions that speak about subjectivity and its relationship to the Other in radically different ways? In what ways is psychoanalysis uniquely situated and able to attend to these complicated questions, perhaps more so than many other clinical orientations?

Pointing back to the Wiesel quote that began this Introduction, we contend that psychoanalysis has the potential of holding uncertainty in a way that much surrounding theory and practice is unable to do. It, however, remains susceptible to the pull toward certainties and conceptual territories. We are concerned about its susceptibility to contemporary intoxication with neuroscience, which effectively reverses Levinas's prescription and makes ethics second psychology at best. In neuroscience, all too often, ontology actually precedes ethics and sets its parameters. In the chapters that follow, another way is proposed: an otherwise than ontological psychoanalysis. The road forward is not terribly clear, and the authors below do not all agree on which way we must turn. But they do share a common suspicion that we have much work to do to hear and see the other, in psychoanalysis and beyond. Their efforts move us forward, tentatively, and promise to enliven the work of psychoanalysts.

As Esther Sperber's chapter takes time to point out, there is much to be learned in the awkward exercise of cross-disciplinary conversation. The chapters in this volume have their genesis in the 2013 Psychology and the Other conference. These gatherings are eclectic, exciting, and surprising, and the discourses that follow exemplify the dynamic results of these daring conversations. The authors' contributions represent an ongoing calling to this recognition and to the uncertain face and needs of the other person, as they address the intersection of psychoanalysis and the ethical subject — an intersection considered from a plurality of positions within the psychoanalytic

community. This volume features a grouping of scholars and clinicians who are representative of diverse entry points and angles into this conversation.

### Contents of the volume

Lewis Aron has taken profound and lasting leadership in this movement, and we are delighted to include some of his latest work in this volume. There is a significant trend among philosophers to ground the philosophy of ethics in the experience of vulnerability, and in Chapter 2, he extends that insight to the underlying ethos of the clinical situation. Aron argues that by acknowledging one's own permeability and vulnerability, the psychoanalyst no longer projects all of the conflict, splitting, shame, disgust, animalistic embodiment, penetrability, and vulnerability onto the patient. He points to a reclamation of the bedrock "femininity" that Freud repudiated.

In Chapter 3, Esther Sperber provides both a response to and engagement with Aron's chapter, and a unique articulation of the value of interdisciplinary conversation. Sperber demonstrates the power and scope of the ethical turn by elaborating the dynamic connections between Aron's insights into vulnerability and the discipline of architecture. She points to a similar resistance in the field of architecture to any acceptance of the mutuality and vulnerability inherent in the work of the architect.

Donna Orange is also a key figure in this burgeoning field. Her contribution, in Chapter 4, explores an important objection to the ethical turn. If we follow Emmanuel Levinas and begin to think of ethics as first philosophy, and first psychology, does this situation not make the demands of the other person, the destitute other, a tremendous burden on some patients? Does not Levinas's philosophy valorize the already over-accommodative and masochistic patient who, if anything, needs to become more agentic and to develop a stronger ego? Orange uses distinctions borrowed from Emmanuel Ghent and Stephen Mitchell, as well as some careful examinations of relevant Levinasian texts, to explain the difference between compulsive submission to others and genuine ethical response.

Several chapters in this volume relate the ethical turn to religious experience, and especially the traumatic experiences of modern Jews. In Chapter 9, Claire Katz offers her considerable expertise in the work of Levinas to explore what it means to have history, in particular, the meanings that inform the approach to Jewish education proposed by Levinas as an answer to rampant 20th-century anti-Semitism. Using the analysis of anti-Semitism by Jean-Paul Sartre, but especially Levinas's confessional Jewish writings, Katz asks: is one to be Jewish in a manner that is not simply a reaction to the anti-Semite's construction of Jewish identity? She then examines Levinas's writings on Jewish education and the problem of assimilation. In these essays, Katz finds a plea to the French Jews to reclaim Judaism, but specifically to return to a Judaism that is pre-modern, pre-secular, and pre-anti-Semitism — in short, a Judaism possessing a history and an identity that Levinas believes is its own. Katz is acutely aware of the implications of the pressure of anti-Semitism for psychoanalysis, and in his response to her chapter, in Chapter 10, Lewis Aron makes these connections explicit, pointing to parallel problems in Freudian psychoanalysis. Aron points to the dangers of privileging the individual over the social, the intrapsychic over the interpersonal, and civilization over primitivity, which brings us back to the interrelated and entangled problems of racism, anti-Semitism, misogyny, and homophobia.

In Chapter 11, Judith Alpert provides an unforgettable introduction to transgenerational trauma, with a personal and powerful exploration of her own Jewish family history and especially the violence experienced by her grandmother in the Russian pogroms. Occluded by the larger atrocity of the Holocaust, the pogroms seem like a disappearing fragment of Jewish history. As with all atrocities, one monstrosity readily absorbs and displaces another, and so the specificity of human suffering is lost, and its victims are rendered nameless. In the recent transgenerational turn of psychoanalysis, those ghosts emerge from namelessness, and enhance our knowledge of ourselves. In tracing the history of her grandmother's ill trauma, and the unspoken history she retained, Alpert begins to witness herself In

tracing her own story, in turn, she illuminates the intersubjectivity of our conversations with the ghosts of transgenerational trauma.

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Jill Salberg explores the way gender binaries appear and are reinforced in psychoanalysis. In Chapter 12, Salberg points out that such binaries are a legacy of patriarchy, which has deep streams both within Judaism and within Freud and psychoanalysis as a whole, and still continues to infuse fantasy life. While gender has always had a primary position within psychoanalysis, it has been in the past twenty-five years that there have been substantial reformulations. Salberg points out that relational psychoanalysis has recast Freud's singular ego, the seat of self-awareness, as multiple self-states each carrying affects, memories, and desires. She uses the insights of Adrienne Harris to suggest that gender emerges to solve some intrapsychic, interpersonal, or intersubjective problem. As a consequence, there may be within one person both girl and boy self-states, each authentically true within certain family configurations and experiential contexts. Salberg's essay demonstrates these tensions through an intriguing exploration of the Jewish stories of Beruriah and Yentl.

Chapter 13 provides a response to both Judith Alpert and Jill Salberg's chapters by Susannah Heschel. With her characteristically keen insight, Heschel points out that both Alpert and Salberg narrate the manner in which traumatic experiences are encapsulated in women's bodies. Heschel explores the openings created by Alpert and Salberg to rethink memory, Jewishness, and the surreptitious limitations imposed on women in maledominated societies.

Michael Oppenheim, in Chapter 14, offers a study on the complicated relationship between Martin Heidegger's Nazism and *Being and Time*, focusing on the view of responsibility and the wider purview of human relations. He then turns to discussions of the complex responses to Heidegger seen through Loewald's psychoanalytic understanding of intersubjectivity and responsibility, and through Levinas's philosophic rendering of these themes. He uses these conversations to underscore the

importance given to responsibility by some post-Freudian psychoanalysts.

José Saporta takes us into the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, and suggests a model for how dialogue and context shape meaning and meaning-making in psychodynamic psychotherapy. In Chapter 15, Saporta considers some of Bakhtin's important concepts as they apply to dialogue in psychotherapy, including: the theory of the utterance, addressivity and positioning, the importance of difference and the excess of meaning for the outside other, monological vs. dialogical ways of relating, authoritative vs. internally persuasive discourse, and stability vs. indeterminacy of meaning. Saporta points out that psychotherapy mobilizes dialogical processes within the self and between self and others, which leads to more complex and flexible meaning-making that is more responsive to unique local contexts. Rather than a limited number of fixed positions from which to make meaning, rigidly and universally applied to all contexts, Saporta suggests that we develop a richer variety of positions from which to generate this meaning in varied relational contexts.

Donna San Antonio uses philosophical hermeneutics to explore the implications of the ethical turn for cultural identity, beginning with her own experiences as an Italian-American. In Chapter 16, she points out that cultural identity is socially influenced, nuanced, and unstable, even more so when we let ourselves consider the multiplicity of our identities, rejecting some aspects of cultural ideals that we previously embraced. Psychoanalysis, San Antonio points out, is in part an iterative process of undermining the cultural ideals with which we identify ourselves.

Chapter 17 turns our attention to creativity and hospitality. Brian Smothers suggests that empathy and understanding are two essentials of psychoanalytic inquiry, yet there are patients encountered in clinical practice for whom these interventions appear to cause greater distress than relief. Smothers wonders: what are we to do when our patients desire to become known, yet the act of being known reminds them of traumatic intrusions? For such patients, being known represents a



paradox, as each encounter with another is full of both exciting and horrifying potentials. Using the concepts of enactment and traumatic impingement as points of investigation, Smothers seeks to explore a stance of hospitality that is comfortable moving within the medians of the known and unknown without seeking foreclosure. An attitude of hospitality toward emerging developments within the therapeutic dyad has the potential to allow for the co-creation of novel possibilities for the paradoxes of knowing and being known, while restoring a sense of creativity that is often lost in moments of enactment or impingement.

Christina Emanuel's contribution, Chapter 18, provides an unforgettable exploration of the ethical turn as it relates to disability studies. She movingly introduces us to her own work with autistic individuals and suggests some reasons for the paucity of work on disability in the psychoanalytic literature. Although psychoanalytic writers commonly theorize race, class, and gender, they have not theorized disability, with the disabled comprising a group of most othered others. Emanuel makes suggestions about what might be gained by adding a Disability Studies sensibility to Psychoanalytic theory and practice. Bringing in themes from the Disability Studies literature, we can better theorize the body that shows up in psychoanalytic discourse.

In Chapter 19, Peter August demonstrates the powerful way that play is opened up by the ethical turn. In play, the seriousness and solemnity of psychoanalytic discourse are undermined by the invitational quality of playful discourse. August uses the ideas of Maurice Blanchot and D. W. Winnicott to show that psychoanalysis is less about explanation than it is about invitation. Those who "play" are unburdened of the demand to communicate univocally. Play, August argues, is free to respond to what fascinates polysemously. Every idea is relentlessly dismantled and meanings are eliminated by "infinite degree," leaving us, in the end, at the beginning. August's vision of psychoanalysis as playful and circular rather the abstract, explanatory, and linear might likewise describe our vision for the experience of reading this book as a whole: a journey of sorts that is unfolding yet circuitous, which takes the reader

back to the "beginning" even as it suggests uncharted territories and possibilities. Amidst the disparate chapters and topics outlined above, one can nevertheless find patterns and connections, reflecting the writers' shared project of unearthing and elaborating fresh understandings and meanings for the endlessly rich and mysterious phenomenon of otherness. Exactly how these understandings and meanings connect to one another, and where they might stimulate further dialogue, we leave to the playful insight and exploration of the reader.

[Thomas Merton—Evil and Why We Suffer: From Purified Soul Theodicy to Zen](#) by David E. Orberon [Cascade Books, 9781532638992]

Thomas Merton is one of the most important spiritual voices of the last century. He has never been more relevant as new generations look to him for guidance in addressing some of life's biggest questions: how can we find God, how should we engage with other faiths, and how can we oppose violence and injustice? Looking carefully one can find, tucked away in Merton's prodigious writings, his response to another timeless question: Why do we suffer? Why does an all-powerful and all-loving God permit evil and suffering? In surveying all of Merton's work we find that he repeatedly confronted this issue throughout most of his adult life. Intriguingly, Merton's approach to this question changed dramatically a few years before he died in 1968. An examination of all aspects of his life yields evidence that Merton's immersion in Zen during this time contributed most to that change.

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Excerpt: Thomas Merton was one of the most prolific and important Catholic writers of the twentieth century. He authored over sixty books,

scores of essays and articles, and hundreds of poems addressing a wide variety of subjects. His autobiography was an international best seller, and many of his writings helped shape the conversation about a host of spiritual and social issues. Merton wrote about many topics that one might expect a monk to address: e.g., the importance of contemplation, prayer, the state of the Catholic Church and monasticism, and the like. However, while cloistered and living apart from the world in rural Kentucky, Merton was still very much a part of it, through his writing and correspondence. In fact, Merton wrote a great deal about the social ills of the day: racism, nuclear proliferation, and the ways technology can alienate humanity. Finally, during the last years of his life Merton wrote about his exploration of Zen and Buddhism and thus helped establish an important bridge for the Western Christian exploration of Eastern thought.

Several aspects of Merton's life make him a fascinating figure to study. He had the ability to convey insights about the human experience and about God that resonate with readers. As one biographer wrote,

He had the ability to articulate, often with brilliance and astounding perceptiveness, the vagaries of the human condition: hope vying with despair, love with hatred, communion with alienation. He could reach deep into the human heart and surface questions for his readers that, till they read him, lay hidden and unasked, struggling for expression. Unique synthesizer that he was, he could put things together that no one had seen as one before. He knew how to raise to a new level of understanding people's perception of God and prayer and human life. He was able to show that life was for the living in that in this living we find God and self and meaning and purpose.

As I mentioned above, Merton wrote about more than just spiritual matters. He was on the forefront in speaking out against the war in Vietnam, the nuclear arms race, racism, and other social ills of that time. One friend described it this way:

He was as capacious a mind as I've ever encountered. He took everything in, tied it

together, and somehow it came out always in an orderly way. It was a good thing that he chose the essay as his way of dealing with the world. He was a monk and he just had little hunks of time to write. But in two or three hours it's amazing the cogent gems he could turn out. He was an exceptionally sensitive man, as well as an exceptionally religious man. The race situation, the bomb—he saw the consequences clearly and early, and from a place so far out of the mainstream. He was years ahead of almost everybody in his concern that the machines were going to take over—the whole business of dehumanization. And he was quite right.

While many are drawn to the perspicacity of Merton's writings, no one familiar with his life story would confuse him for being any kind of, to use one of his own terms, a pseudoangel. He never claimed to be a saint, and was thoroughly human, filled with the same conflicting and competing instincts that live in all of us. Merton's life as a cloistered monk did not shield him from conflict, worry, or self-doubt. In fact, many biographers point to the fact that Merton was restless. Once he attained one thing, he wanted another. As one friend of his put it:

He loved people, he really loved people. But at the same time as he loved them he wanted his distance from them. People would often say to me that they found it odd, if not slightly scandalous, that a monk could share a few beers with you, just call from the monastery and arrange for a picnic, and yet I think this was a lifeline for him. He didn't want the secular life but he needed the reassurance that came by being with people. He was a fusser and a complainer to tell you the truth and when you read his journals you see that when he is here he wants to be there: if he's in the hermitage, he needs to get out; if he is following one diet maybe he should be really following another. He was, with all these contradictions, just plain human.

Scholars began writing about Merton while he was still alive. Since his death in 1968, hundreds of books and countless articles have been written about various aspects of work. However, one fascinating area that has not been adequately

explored concerns the problem of evil. That is, how did he affirm a belief in an all-loving and all-powerful God in light of evil and suffering in the world?

Merton never wrote a book or even an article dedicated to the problem of evil. Because of this it is necessary to examine each instance where he does address this topic throughout his entire canon—i.e., books, journals, correspondence, articles, and talks he gave to novice monks, letting him speak for himself. In this way one can discover his theodicy, that is, his justification for belief in a God who is all-loving and all-powerful, in spite of the evil and suffering in the world. I follow this thread of thought throughout Merton's life. I argue that Merton did indeed espouse a particular kind of theodicy. Specifically, for most of his adult life Merton believed that suffering leads to the purification of the human soul. In addition, he often states that God causes this suffering in order to bring about a good. Thus, I have dubbed this response to the problem of evil as a Purified Soul Theodicy. As will be shown, Merton also believed that God does not abandon us to suffer alone. God is always with us, even when and especially when we suffer. Merton consistently puts forth this belief in a variety of writings over decades. However, his attitude toward the problem of evil began to change in his last few years of his life. Remarks he gave to two different religious groups offer an interesting contrast to demonstrate this change. First, in late November 1963 Merton was serving as master of novices, instructing new monks that had joined the order. After the death of President Kennedy, he gave these new monks the latest news about the assassination. Without hesitation, he told the group that this act, while tragic, was the will of God. When challenged by a novice on this point, he unwaveringly continued, discussing the uncanny nature of Oswald's shot being able to find its target, and declaring that such acts were part of an elaborate operation of cause and effect. However, just five years later, remarks he gave to a group of priests and nuns in Alaska are markedly different. In discussing the book of Job, and the problem of evil, his long held and espoused purified soul theodicy is nowhere to be found. In addition, in stark opposition to his

comments to the novice monks in 1963, Merton now rails against trying to understand God and the problem of evil through any kind of schematized system of causes and effects, in essence abandoning the task of theodicy altogether. What could have caused such a change? I argue that his immersion in Zen, primarily understood through the writings of D. T. Suzuki, significantly contributed to this transition.

In the following four chapters, bracketed by this brief introduction and a conclusion, I explore Merton's life, the concept of the problem of evil, Merton's own theodicy, and finally how and why he abandoned it. Chapter 1 focuses on Merton's life, with special attention on the theme of suffering throughout it. In chapter 2 I provide a survey of prominent contemporary theodicies so that Merton's can be properly contextualized. Next, in chapter 3 I begin the process of examining Merton's works to identify his own purified soul theodicy. Then, in chapter 4 I demonstrate how Merton's response to the problem of evil changed during the last years of his life, and argue that his increased immersion in Buddhism and Zen was a significant factor leading him to abandon the task of theodicy. Finally, in a brief conclusion I pull together ideas from these chapters and draw some overall conclusions. <>

[In Bondage to Evil: A Psycho-Spiritual Understanding of Possession](#) by T. Craig Isaacs [Pickwick Publications, 9781532631412]

"Either you believe in possession or you do not. It is that simple, or at least that is how it often seems. However, the existence of the possession state in the human condition is not a matter of faith, it is a phenomenon that demands exploration." So begins the introduction of this psycho-spiritual exploration of involuntary (or demonic) possession. Avoiding the pitfalls of many such works, here is presented the inarguable fact that the possession state does occur and must be taken seriously if those who are afflicted are to be helped. The only argument that remains is the attributed cause of the state. Covering a comprehensive array of topics from the history of demonic possession to a present understanding of the phenomenology and intrapsychic dynamics of the possession state, the

book also provides a depth of understanding with respect to the various forms of possession encountered throughout the world. Readers will also gain an understanding of the various cultural and psychological explanations for possession, including neuropsychological, hypnosis, and psychodynamic theories. It concludes with the examination of three cases of demonic possession and the presentation of diagnostic criteria to assist in differentiating possession from common forms of psychopathology.

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#### A Brief History of Possession

The history of possession by evil is inextricably tied to the history and development of the concept of the Devil, as well as to the demonologies of the

various cultures in which possession is encountered. Jeffery Burton Russell has written what is possibly the best analysis to date on this topic in his books, *The Devil, Satan, and Lucifer*; works in which Russell traced the development of the concept of a devil from antiquity up to the Middle Ages.

The Devil has not always been viewed as a singular entity that embodied a culture's, or a religion's, concept of evil. Rather, Russell sees three progressive stages in the human understanding of the Devil. Stage one, represented by most monist religions and early Hebrew thought, was characterized by a lack of distinction between good and evil analogous to the early stage of human psychological development when good and evil are not fully differentiated. Stage two, represented by Iranian, Gnostic, and Manichean dualism, postulated that good and evil are totally different, opposed, and unconnected; this stage is analogous to individual development in youth, when things are seen in terms of black and white. The third stage, hinted at by Nicholas of Cusa and expressly stated by C. G. Jung is the notion of a unity transcending good and evil; this suggests that evil can be overcome not by denying it but by transcending it.

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Either you believe in possession or you do not. It is that simple, or at least that is how it often seems. However, the existence of the possession state in the human condition is not a matter of faith, it is a phenomenon that demands exploration.

A man walks into the psychotherapist's office. He is visibly nervous, fidgeting with a button on his shirt, gazing absently at the floor as he begins to describe what brings him in for consultation. It is embarrassing for him to talk about, but he has nowhere else to turn. He already went to his priest, but the priest said he needed to see a therapist. He went to a psychiatrist, but the medications only helped him sleep, they did not stop the thoughts or the fears. He begins to tell how his son committed suicide just over a year ago. How a few days after this he began to have disturbing intrusive thoughts, thoughts about killing his wife and his grandchild.

He describes how these thoughts have been extremely difficult not to act upon, and the terror he has been in, a terror multiplied by what he learned only a few weeks ago. As he felt he could no longer contain his secret thoughts and impulses and hide them from his family, he shared his fears in a tearful session with his youngest son. It was then that he learned from his son the distressing fact that the boy who had recently committed suicide had had the same thoughts, the exact same thoughts. It was even because of this that he had killed himself, because he too could not restrain himself from action any longer. A dread came over the man, and the fear that this was no ordinary obsession. He began to question, "Am I possessed?"

Three men and a cat are sharing an apartment. It becomes obvious to two of the men that the third is into some very weird interests. He is burning candles in odd places, and bringing some very questionable people home. The two decide that they will ask him to move out. He agrees, but only after cursing the others and the apartment. The two scoff at this and use it as a topic of joking for weeks. One day, a few weeks later, the house cat dies. The veterinarian says that the internal organs had "seized up" for some inexplicable reason. They are saddened but think no more of it. A week later they find themselves in the local emergency room. One of the roommates is in extreme abdominal pain. He dies. The emergency room physician tells the remaining man that his friend has died, that his internal organs seemed to have "seized up" for some as yet unknown reason. In understandable terror the remaining man tells the physician the story of the curse; the physician says, "Sir, you don't need a doctor, you need a minister!" Are they suffering the effects of a curse?

Whatever the reasons may be, whatever belief system one uses to interpret these events, a phenomenon has occurred that warrants investigation; an investigation that will take us to that liminal place between psychology and religion.

During the last century the concept of spirit-possession fell into increasing disrepute. As psychological knowledge increased, and the scientific study of psychological phenomena

became more prevalent, the thought that the supernatural might be involved in individual pathology became discredited. Consequently, we moved from a belief that demons or spirits were causing the ills of humanity to the thought that people were suffering solely from mental illnesses.

With this shift in thinking many improvements were instituted in the treatment of the mentally ill. No longer were the insane placed into prisons and treated like animals. No longer were they seen as evil and as in league with the Devil. Rather, they were given treatment, much as a victim of any physical disease was treated. This advent of what is now called "Moral Treatment" was one of the launching points for today's work in psychology. However, with the resurgence of belief in demonic possession, and the increase in the practice of both formal and informal exorcism, the question arises whether or not we have really done away with the phenomenon of possession. It appears that even though we may have witnessed the removal of the belief in demonic possession from our diagnostic categories, the phenomenon that was once described with attributes of the demonic still remains with us.

Much of what was once seen to be demonic possession can today be fit into one of the many psychodiagnostic categories available to us. We are able to view the schizophrenic aspects of the possession. We can see the hysterical attitudes of the possessed. The paranoid characteristics of those individuals, as well as the dissociative qualities involved, are clearly visible. Our problem arises when attempting to narrow the diagnostic criteria down to a point of truly classifying the possessed, and then attempting to treat the possessed as if he or she were schizophrenic, hysterical, paranoid, or suffering from dissociative identity disorder. It is at this point that we find ourselves at a loss, trying to accurately fit the possessed into any current classification. This may be because none of the current diagnostic categories can adequately describe as a whole the various phenomenon encountered in a possession. Possession may be a category of its own.

When we threw out the supernatural explanations of the universe, did we also then force ourselves to

ignore certain of the stranger phenomena associated with possession, so that we could avoid the connotations which the concept of demon possession carried? If we did, and if a phenomenon of possession does exist—distinct from any other disorder that we now acknowledge—then we are being negligent in our service to those who are suffering from this malady. If such a phenomenon is present as a distinct manner of functioning, then it is time that we once again begin to recognize it and to learn how to treat it on its own merits, rather than attempting to treat this manner of functioning "as if" it were schizophrenia or any other diagnostic possibility.

The present work is an attempt to distinguish the possession state as an independent diagnostic category, and to begin to form a picture of the phenomenology and dynamics of possession so that it might be more easily distinguishable from the other forms of functioning that are similar in appearance.

The concept of spirit-possession is one that elicits a variety of responses in the modern person, from fear and respect to ridicule and disbelief. Yet in almost all known societies and cultures there have been the phenomena of persons entering into those altered states of consciousness commonly attributed to possession; states such as seeing visions, hearing voices, and acting as if a new and different personality has taken over.

Erika Bourguignon once grouped and classified these behaviors and beliefs under the rubric of what she called "trance behaviors and associated beliefs." This classification assists us to better understand and differentiate among the various phenomena that have historically been seen as forms of possession.

Different cultures tend to understand trance behaviors by either a naturalistic or a supernaturalistic form of explanation. The Western technological societies tend to view the world in a more rationalistic and scientific manner and so have more frequently preferred the naturalistic form of explanation. Within this frame of reference, altered states of consciousness can be seen as the result of some form of inducement such as hypnosis, extreme fear, and drugs. They might be seen as

the consequence of an illness, whether somatic or psychological in origin. The most common somatic explanation that Bourguignon has encountered for the cause of an altered state of consciousness is fever. She has found the primary psychological explanations to have been either multiple personality (today's dissociative identity disorder), hysteria, some form of psychosis, or even epilepsy. We shall look more closely at how these psychological explanations have been elucidated later in our discussion.

The naturalistic explanation of these behaviors is relatively new in comparison to its counterpart. Explaining the altered states of consciousness by means of the supernatural has historically been the prominent method, and still is in many cultures today. Even in our highly technological society there remains a large sub-culture that explains the world in a supernatural manner. The supernatural way of thinking is evident even in people who would prefer to believe themselves to be "modern" and "rational," as is obvious from the simple fact that almost every large newspaper still carries the daily horoscope.

As with the naturalistic system—which has a variety of ways for explaining the possession phenomena—so too, the supernaturalistic system is complex and varied. A belief in involuntary possession is not common to all cultures, but the similar phenomena, of persons entering altered states of consciousness, is common. The explanations of these similar phenomena are what differ more than do the phenomena themselves. Bourguignon divided these explanations into non-possession beliefs and possession beliefs, which is similar to Oesterreich's description of voluntary and spontaneous (or involuntary) forms of possession.

Under the rubric of non-possession beliefs we find the practices of witchcraft, mysticism, mediumship (communication with spirits), and shamanism. Though Bourguignon refers to these as non-possession beliefs, Oesterreich sees these as forms of voluntary possession. The person has intentionally become possessed for some specific purpose, for a short period of time. The witch may become possessed with mana—or power—or with a certain spirit in order to curse, bless, or create medicines.

The shaman may go on the spirit-journey to gain power, knowledge, or to find a lost soul and return it to its owner: all for a price. The medium may be possessed by the dead or other spirits to bring information to those still living or "confined to the earthly plane." The mystic may enter an altered state of consciousness in order to find God, or to lose his or her ego into a form of "cosmic consciousness." Even though in almost all of these practices the person may have felt a call to enter the altered state—whether it was the witch seeing Satan ask her to join him, or the Native American shaman hearing the call of the wolf as a call to spiritually join Brother Wolf—still it was the person's choice to become possessed by either the new personality or the new-found ability or power.

This is illustrated in an event related by Pattison. He tells the story of a teenage Native American girl who one day saw ghosts in the forest and thereafter became haunted by a ghost, and seemingly possessed. Later she found out from her mother that this was the ghost of her dead grandfather who had been a powerful shaman. Before his death, the grandfather had chosen to pass his powers on to the girl when she was ready. The possession was believed by both the girl and her mother to be the grandfather attempting to pass on his powers to the girl at this point in her life. But she had the ability—with the help of her mother and the community—to either accept these powers or to reject them. She had the choice of whether to be possessed by her grandfather's power, and so then to possess them as a shaman in her own right, or to reject the power. The incident concluded with the girl deciding to reject the power, and upon doing so the haunting and possession ceased.

This is the difference between the two forms of possession. With the voluntary—or non-possession—form, the person is able to reject the possession. But this is not case with what Bourguignon has called the possession belief—the involuntary possession.

Possession, as most people think of it, is best described by Bourguignon's description of possession belief, or Oesterreich's spontaneous possession. It is within this category that such stories

as Dracula and The Exorcist are to be found. It is here that we encounter the belief in, and fear of, demons and devils. It is this phenomenon—the phenomenon of involuntary possession—that we will be focusing upon in this work. In the following pages we will be examining the various explanations of involuntary possession, from antiquity to the present.

As mentioned before, for many today, demonic possession (which is a form of involuntary possession) is merely the historical explanation for certain diseases and mental illnesses. Freud saw it as such when he said that "the neuroses of ... early times emerge in demonological trappings." Thus we are led to believe that in antiquity all forms of mental illness were seen as possessions by either demons, the gods, or ghosts and so conversely that in our day all expression of what was classically seen as possession is in actuality mental illness. We will explore the validity of this belief by examining the place of involuntary possession in the beliefs and medical practices of societies from antiquity into classical and medieval times.

We will also look at the role of spirit-possession in various religious and cultural practices: in mysticism, Voodoo, shamanism, spiritualism, witchcraft, and Satanism. We shall also take a look into the concept of illness, and possession, in the Christian community today, as well as the concept of possession by the Holy Spirit. We will be doing all this in order to gain an understanding of the history and phenomenology of spirit-possession.

We will then move on to discuss the various explanations utilized for the phenomenon of involuntary possession, both sociological and psychological. Possessions still occur in many societies and cultures today. From these cultures, anthropologists have derived many explanations—other than the demonic—for the phenomena they have observed. We will examine these explanations to get a better understanding of the societal impact upon the possessed individual.

Then we will more closely investigate Freud's contention that the demonic possessions of yesteryear are actually neuroses, or psychoses, masquerading in demonic garb. We will be looking at the question, "Is there a certain area of

psychopathology into which involuntary possession usually falls?"

Finally, we will illustrate a clinical differentiation between the currently recognized categories of psychopathology and involuntary possession. Many writers, thinkers, and researchers at the interface of religion and psychology have attempted to provide a distinction between what they see as two separate phenomena. What this differentiation has usually come to is very similar to what the Roman Catholic Church for centuries has used as the criteria for a true possession: the possession usually is accompanied by certain parapsychological happenings, while these are noticeably absent in the presently described psychological disorders. Therefore, we will not only be studying the symptomology and personality characteristics of the possessed persons, but also the presence or absence of those phenomena commonly attributed to the occurrence of an involuntary possession.

This work looks at the results of fourteen cases of exorcism that worked to heal the possessed person. From these we are able to identify the phenomena that surround possession and differentiate it from other psychopathological disorders, producing an objective manner of distinguishing possession from recognized psychopathologies. We will assemble a set of diagnostic criteria that will in the future enable us to distinguish possession, or what might then be called the possessive states disorder, from schizophrenia, paranoia, hysteria, and other psychological syndromes. <>

[Aquinas's Disputed Questions on Evil: A Critical Guide](#) edited by M. V. Dougherty [Cambridge Critical Guides Cambridge University Press, 9781107044340]

[Thomas Aquinas's Disputed Questions on Evil](#) is a careful and detailed analysis of the general topic of evil, including discussions on evil as privation, human free choice, the cause of moral evil, moral failure, and the so-called seven deadly sins. This collection of ten, specially commissioned new essays, the first book-length English-language study of Disputed Questions on Evil, examines the most interesting and philosophically relevant aspects of Aquinas's work, highlighting what is distinctive about it and situating it in relation not only to

Aquinas's other works but also to contemporary philosophical debates in metaphysics, ethics, and philosophy of action. The essays also explore the history of the work's interpretation. The volume will be of interest to researchers in a broad range of philosophical disciplines including medieval philosophy and history of philosophy, as well as to theologians.

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Thomas Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae De malo* (QDM) is a lengthy, mature work consisting of 16 questions that subdivide into 104 articles.<sup>1</sup> It has been characterized as "one notable exception" to the tendency of later medieval thinkers to avoid writing major works dedicated to the topic of evil. The third longest of Aquinas's series of disputed questions, QDM is valuable and best known for containing the most extensive accounts of several fundamental philosophical issues in the whole of Aquinas's written corpus. Among them are a detailed analysis of evil as privatio, a lengthy



exposition of human free choice, a highly original discussion of the cause of moral evil, and a thorough presentation of the so-called seven deadly sins.

Recent years have seen an increased interest in Aquinas's QDM. The long-standing predisposition to view the *Summa theologiae* (ST) as his final word on matters in philosophy and theology has given way to a more refined view that not only takes into account the relationships among Aquinas's later works but also reflects a greater sensitivity to the occasions for which Aquinas composed his major writings. QDM is not a comprehensive work of theological synthesis in the manner of the ST or the *Summa contra Gentiles* (SCG), but, rather, is a careful and detailed analysis of select problems falling under the general topic of evil. Compared with articles in the ST, those in QDM are generally more expansive, exhibit a greater number of objections and replies, offer lengthier arguments, and engage philosophical authorities with greater scrutiny. Additionally, QDM offers many vivid examples of moral situations and moral transgressions.

Arguably, the work presents Aquinas's best and most detailed treatment of a variety of important philosophical issues.

Aquinas's QDM illustrates the vast range of issues that can be considered under the broad topic of evil. The work begins with a subtle analysis of the metaphysics of evil (q. 1), and afterwards turns to the nature of sin (q. 2) and its causes (q. 3). After a discussion of original sin (qq. 4-5), Aquinas's much-debated analysis of human free choice (q. 6) appears. Then Aquinas offers an extensive account of the lesser or pardonable moral failures known as venial sins (q. 7), followed by a detailed treatment of the seven capital vices, popularly known as the seven deadly sins (qq. 8-15).

Completing the work is Aquinas's meticulous account of demons and their influence in the world (q. 16). There is substantive overlap, therefore, between what later medieval thinkers and what present-day philosophers would consider essential to the topic of evil: the issues of moral failure, habits, and the metaphysics of evil are certainly recognizable areas of inquiry in contemporary philosophy. Such

overlap, however, should not occlude certain oppositions between medieval and contemporary outlooks. From one perspective, the medieval view may appear too broad in comparison, as contemporary philosophers are much less interested in demons and in theological doctrines such as original sin. Yet from another perspective, the medieval view can appear too narrow. Aquinas is surprisingly silent in QDM on what contemporary philosophers of religion designate as the problem of evil, namely, how a God possessing the traditional attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnibenevolence could allow the great suffering that is manifest in the world.

### The origin of QDM

Identifying a precise date for the composition of QDM has been a matter of difficulty among commentators, despite the general agreement that the work is one of Aquinas's later compositions. As a work in the genre of *quaestiones disputatae*, QDM had its origins in disputations, only to be edited and published in final form sometime later. Interpreters commonly distinguish three stages in the composition of QDM: the original disputations, a later redaction or correction, and subsequent publication. Precision in dating the first stage for QDM is difficult; some propose Aquinas may have held the disputations in Italy at the Dominican stadium in Rome at Santa Sabina,<sup>1</sup> whereas others suggest that they originated later in Aquinas's university activity in Paris. In dating the later redaction or correction of QDM, commentators have pointed out that Aquinas's citation of recently available sources demonstrate that q. 1 must have been edited after March 1266, and that q. 16, a. 12 must have been edited after November 1267.<sup>8</sup> It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the final text of QDM was established by Aquinas no earlier than the end of 1267. However, if one adopts the view that the edited version of q. 6 on free choice presupposed the intellectual climate of the condemnations by the Parisian bishop, Stephen Tempier, on December 6, 1270, then the date of the second stage must be moved up to around that time.

Despite the unresolved issues concerning the first two stages, interpreters now generally agree

about the dating of the final publication of QDM. All surviving manuscripts of QDM originate in a single university exemplar that was contemporaneous with Aquinas. This Parisian manuscript consisted of 28 *peciae*, which were rented out for copying at the university and formed the basis of all extant manuscripts of the work.<sup>10</sup> The consensus is that QDM was published around 1270-1272 during Aquinas's second regency in Paris, with qq. 1-15 (23 *peciae*) published around 1270, and q. 16 appended by Aquinas around 1272 (28 *peciae* total). This publication date of around 1270-1272 for the complete set of sixteen questions suggests, however, that Aquinas was working on QDM around the same time as the *Secunda pars* of the ST, a work that overlaps in ways with matters treated in QDM. The Leonine Commission editors of the critical edition of QDM have proposed that "A somewhat simultaneous composition of these two works would explain rather well both the disputed question and the *Summa*, which seems to give the final position of Saint Thomas's thought."<sup>11</sup> In light of the general contemporaneity of both works, each should be consulted when assessing Aquinas's mature thought on themes common to both, especially since the treatments in QDM tend to be lengthier than their counterparts in the ST.

### The unity and diffusion of QDM

To be sure, the great variety of issues falling under the general topic of evil selected for analysis by Aquinas in QDM might tempt some readers to question the very unity of the work. To allay such long-standing concerns, one might consider that the Leonine editors have emphasized the historical unity of the sixteen questions in the manuscript tradition. Although, as mentioned above, qq. 1-15 circulated first, it is known from the earliest extant taxation list of exemplars that q. 16 formed part of the original *peciae*. This evidence has led the editors to conclude that "from the critical point of view it [q. 16] makes up an integral part of the total work, with no evidence of discontinuity." The manuscript history of QDM is also relevant for assessing the status of the well-known q. 6 on free choice. Apart from potential concerns regarding the fittingness of its subject matter for the topic of evil, as well as potential concerns about its location in the order of

the work, one might pause over its placement in QDM as a whole, because it alone of all of the questions does not subdivide into articles. On the basis of the manuscript tradition, however, the Leonine editors have insisted that q. 6 "occupies its logical place there from the beginning." Still, not all commentators have been persuaded.

While the influence of Aquinas's QDM is not comparable to that of the ST, particularly as the latter replaced Peter Lombard's *Sententiae* as the standard theological textbook of the later medieval period and beyond, it would not be fair to say that QDM has been neglected. A total of eighty-three extant manuscripts of QDM have been identified, and a recent catalogue identifies thirty-seven printed editions of the Latin text of QDM published between the 1470s and 2009, including the various *opera omnia* editions of Aquinas's works through the ages. A major impetus for the renewed attention to the work was the 1982 appearance of the critical edition of QDM by the Leonine Commission, the institute inaugurated by Pope Leo XIII in 1880 to produce an authoritative series featuring of all of Aquinas's texts. Additionally, translations of QDM in the major Western languages have appeared in the last twenty-five years or so, including two complete English translations. Recently, some translations of select questions with detailed commentary have appeared. Unsurprisingly, the wider availability of the work has generated increased interest from those working from theological as well as philosophical standpoints.

### The approach of this volume

This collection of essays examines the most interesting and philosophically relevant aspects of QDM without attempting a complete or systematic coverage of the work. The chapters exhibit how QDM makes a unique contribution to the Thomistic corpus by highlighting what is distinctive about the work and by situating Aquinas's analyses in relation to discussions found in Aquinas's other writings. Additionally, these contributions summarize the relevant history of interpreting the work and enter into ongoing debates among present-day philosophical interpreters.

The first contribution to this volume, by John F. Wippel, examines the major metaphysical themes that appear in the first question of QDM, which sets forth the metaphysical foundations of Aquinas's account of evil that is presupposed in the questions that follow. On some interpretations, QDM as a whole derives its name from this first question. The chapter begins by noting that Aquinas's awareness of the problem of evil is evident from a well-known objection in the ST that precedes the Five Ways for the existence of God. While Aquinas does not appear to treat the problem of evil in QDM, in the ST he considers the objection that if God existed, there would be no evil. According to Wippel, Aquinas's philosophical argumentation to show that God is good is highly significant for his overall analysis of the metaphysics of evil. The first question of QDM contains Aquinas's most detailed defense of the view that evil is not something positive but is a privation; that is, it is the absence of what ought to be present in a particular thing. Wippel shows that for Aquinas, evil is neither a thing nor an entity, nor does it possess an essence or nature in itself; rather, it is a special kind of negation involving the absence of the being (and goodness) of what is proper to a given subject. With these precisions, Aquinas is committed to the existence of evil in a qualified way: moral and physical evils are undoubtedly real. Aquinas's philosophical account in QDM of the origin of these moral evils has received much attention by scholars, and Wippel examines the history and debate surrounding the assertion by Jacques Maritain that Aquinas's analysis is one of his most original philosophical discoveries. The chapter concludes with the observation that Aquinas's treatment of particularly horrendous physical evils (such as devastating earthquakes that take many human lives) rests ultimately in part on theological considerations. On this view, a fully satisfying account of the problem of evil appears beyond the limits of philosophy.

In their contribution to this volume, Bonnie Kent and Ashley Dressel consider Aquinas's presentation of sins of weakness and sins from malitia (or, as generally translated, sins from malice). Aquinas's analyses of moral failure in QDM are indebted to a variety of traditions that preceded him, and part

of this inheritance is an assortment of frameworks for classifying sins. Kent and Dressel argue that commentators have tended to overstate the Aristotelian features of Aquinas's account of both kinds of sins. A close inspection of QDM shows that Aquinas departs from Aristotle's positions in key respects. Aquinas holds, for instance, that virtue does not inoculate a person from temptation, so that even a virtuous person can sin from weakness. Furthermore, on Aquinas's view it is possible for someone to choose a morally bad act while recognizing it as such, as is the case in acts of willful wrongdoing that Aquinas designates as sins from malitia. The chapter analyzes Aquinas's psychology of sins of weakness and sins from malitia, noting the divergences from Aristotle's views that mark the presentation in QDM. The chapter also addresses an interpretive puzzle that faces readers of QDM. Aquinas appears to offer two conflicting and seemingly incompatible accounts of sins of malitia: one that is Aristotelian, and another that assumes several essentially Christian tenets.

Tobias Hoffmann and Peter Furlong contribute a chapter that considers Aquinas's account of human free choice in QDM. Of the sixteen questions of the work, the one on human free choice (q. 6) is arguably the best known. It has been a key text in a long-standing debate concerning Aquinas's view of the precise relationship between intellect and will in human agency. This relationship is often considered in controversies over whether Aquinas should be viewed as a proponent of intellectualism or voluntarism in his moral psychology.<sup>1</sup> Many scholars have asked whether according to Aquinas the intellect or the will has primacy in human free choice. In the last century, Odon Lottin had proposed a developmental account by arguing that Aquinas's earlier writings favor the view that the will follows the intellect, and that in later works (including QDM, q. 6) a greater emphasis is given to the will. Lottin revised his evolutionary approach several times, and his works spawned much discussion. In their chapter, Hoffmann and Furlong begin their analysis of q. 6 by considering what is required for moral responsibility, and they conclude that the necessary condition for freedom is possessing perfect sourcehood, that is, voluntariness in the perfect sense. In their

terminology, agents enjoy perfect sourcehood if and only if they are the source of their actions, they have alternate possibilities, and they control which alternative is actualized.

Hoffmann and Furlong then show how Aquinas's presentation of the relationship of intellect and will in acts of free choice accounts for the fulfillment of these conditions. After arguing that Aquinas's position on free choice is incompatible with determinism, they contend that Aquinas's remarks concerning the fall of the angels in QDM, q. 16 validate their conclusion that Aquinas endorses an incompatibilist theory of free choice.

In his chapter, Steven J. Jensen addresses a long-standing problem that interpreters have found in Aquinas's treatment of venial sins. Question 7 of QDM carefully considers the status of these lesser moral failures. The distinction between venial sin (*peccatum veniale*) and mortal sin (*peccatum mortale*) was firmly anchored in earlier ethical thought, as Peter Lombard had endorsed it in his *Sententiae*, thereby making it a matter of reflection for later medieval theorists on ethics. Aquinas uses the distinction to explore degrees of gravity of moral failure, and in QDM he is generous with examples of wrongful actions falling under the two categories. Among venial sins Aquinas counts excessive eating and drinking, speaking an idle word, lying in jest, and lying to please or help someone; among mortal sins Aquinas counts homicide, adultery, blasphemy, devil worship, and theft. Corporeal analogies assist Aquinas in setting forth the degrees of gravity of moral failures: venial sins are like curable diseases or food that is not easily digestible, and mortal sins are like incurable diseases or poisonous food. Jensen observes that some commentators have accused Aquinas of a significant inconsistency concerning venial sin: on the one hand Aquinas maintains that every human action is ordered to an ultimate end, yet on the other hand he maintains that venial sin neither places a creature as its end (as is the case with mortal sin) nor places God as its end (as is the case with a good action). Does a venial sin have an ultimate end? One might wonder how sinning venially is possible, given these restrictions. Appealing to several neglected distinctions in Aquinas's writings, Jensen provides a solution and

indicates problems with contemporary analyses of Aquinas's division of types of moral failure. In the course of his argument, he critiques appropriations of Aquinas's thought by contemporary philosophers, including proponents of the new natural law theory.

Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung contributes a chapter that begins with a summation of the far-ranging tradition of the seven deadly sins or seven capital vices (*vitia capitalia*) that Aquinas inherited, a tradition spanning a millennium with origins in the Christian monastic communities of the fourth century. By adopting this scheme as a major framework for analyzing the moral life, Aquinas participates in a venerable tradition, and much of his analysis in QDM is heavily indebted to his predecessors. DeYoung provides a detailed and historically sensitive account of Aquinas's analysis of the capital vice of vainglory (*inanis or nana gloria*), highlighting along the way Augustine as an important forerunner to Aquinas's reflections. Aquinas offers a surprising level of detail in his account of vainglory in QDM, as he distinguishes carefully between vainglory and pride, argues that one can be vainglorious even when others are not present, and develops a sophisticated taxonomy of the many ways glory can be directed toward unfitting ends. Nevertheless, Aquinas ascribes to glory an important and necessary social function when glory is properly understood. The chapter demonstrates how Aquinas's presentation appropriates both Aristotelian and Augustinian elements in a novel way, revealing that Aquinas's invocation of the seven capital vices is not simply a deference to tradition.

Thomas M. Osborne, Jr.'s contribution to this volume offers an instructive example of how seemingly conflicting claims found elsewhere in Aquinas's writings can be successfully resolved by examining the more expansive discussions in QDM. Osborne considers a central issue of Aquinas's action theory that is treated both in QDM, q. 2, and in ST I-II, q. 18—20. Text these passages has been difficult for generations of Thomistic commentators, some of whom have concluded that certain passages are irreconcilable. Osborne argues that QDM and ST offer consistent accounts, but this consistency is only clear when the texts of ST are read in light of QDM. In QDM, Aquinas successfully absorbs the

terminology and major theses of his contemporaries to provide a more consistent approach than is evident in *ST* and in *In Sent.* These precisions allow Aquinas to offer a successful analysis of complex moral acts, such as when an agent commits adultery in order to steal, or gives alms under further considerations such as penance or vainglory.

In their chapter, Carl N. Still and Darren E. Dahl consider how Aquinas appropriates the Augustinian—Dionysian account of evil as a privation within his analysis of human moral failure in *QDM*. At first glance, the notion of privation seems more applicable to physical evils, such as blindness or physical deformities, than to moral evils that originate in the will. Moral acts — even evil ones — appear to have a positive dimension, insofar as they are expressions of the will. In *QDM*, Aquinas faces the challenge of providing a description of moral evil in a way that preserves the metaphysical account of evil as privation but still does justice to the positive element of human acts. In opposition to those who would find inconsistency or incommensurability in Aquinas's presentation, Still and Dahl argue that Aquinas provides a unified account, one that is particularly dependent upon Aristotelian concepts of human agency.

In her contribution to this volume, Therese Scarpelli Cory uses Aquinas's inquiry into whether demons can cognize human thoughts as a springboard for examining what she calls "the mind-reading question," namely, whether a person who directly observed the inner workings of another's mind would be able to see what the other is thinking about. Recent years have seen a growing interest in the medieval views of angels and demons from a strictly philosophical point of view.<sup>27</sup> In reflecting on the existence and characteristics of immaterial creatures, medieval theorists developed and significantly expanded many philosophical doctrines in metaphysics, psychology, and cognition. In her analysis of the mind-reading question, Cory notes that the issue overlaps in significant ways with contemporary discussions in cognitive science about reading minds through neuroimaging techniques. Aquinas answers the mind-reading question in the negative, and his analysis reveals that he has a more sophisticated account of intentionality than is

generally acknowledged. In particular, Aquinas's concept of intentionality is broader than static mental representation, as Aquinas is shown to be aware of the mental phenomenon of attentiveness.

In the penultimate chapter of this collection, Fran O'Rourke engages the lengthy history of reflections on evil as a privation of the good (*privatio boni*). O'Rourke unravels the earlier Neoplatonic contributions that formed this complex tradition, one where the writings of Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius were conduits of a host of earlier, unnamed sources. A full analysis of Aquinas's appropriation of evil as *privatio* in *QDM* requires an identification of his explicit as well as hidden sources, and O'Rourke chronicles this history. Aquinas was unaware that much of what he found in Pseudo-Dionysius had been appropriated from Proclus, who had theorized extensively about evil in his treatise *De malorum subsistentia*, a work written in refutation of Plotinus's account of evil in the *Enneads*. Plotinus himself absorbed various Platonic as well as Aristotelian positions in his account of evil. O'Rourke also notes that Aquinas complements Augustine's presentation of evil as the absence of good by adding a crucial clarification, thereby overcoming an imprecision that limits the Augustinian account: evil is not the absence of good as such, but rather the absence of a due good.

In the last chapter of this volume, I consider Aquinas's analysis of some rather unusual examples of moral situations featuring the capital vices of gluttony (*gula*) and lust (*luxuria*), investigating to what extent there is overlap with present-day concerns among philosophers regarding the problem of moral luck. Questions 14 and 15 of *QDM* respectively examine the capital vices of gluttony and lust, but commentators have been divided about Aquinas's commitment to the inherited framework of the seven capital vices, despite the dominance of the septenary in one-half of the questions of the work. Aquinas's relatively brief and traditional remarks in qq. 14-15 can be viewed, however, in a much larger context, as many detailed analyses of acts of gluttony and lust appear throughout many of the preceding articles. These earlier discussions — often featuring unusual examples — serve an important function as they illustrate key points of Aquinas's moral theory.

Aquinas's analyses are shown to have some overlap with contemporary discussions in philosophy concerning the role of accidental factors in the moral life.

[What Is the Present?](#) by Michael North [Princeton University Press, 9780691179698]

A provocative new look at concepts of the present, their connection to ideas about time, and their effect on literature, art, and culture

The problem of the present—what it is and what it means—is one that has vexed generations of thinkers and artists. Because modernity places so much value on the present, many critics argue that people today spend far too much time in the here and now—but how can we tell without first knowing what the here and now actually is? [What Is the Present?](#) takes a provocative new look at this moment in time that remains a mystery even though it is always with us.

Michael North tackles puzzles that have preoccupied philosophy, neuroscience, psychology, history, and aesthetic theory and examines the complex role of the present in painting, fiction, and film. He engages with a range of thinkers, from Aristotle and Augustine to William James and Henri Bergson. He draws illuminating examples from artists such as Fra Angelico and Richard McGuire, filmmakers like D. W. Griffith and Christopher Nolan, and novelists such as Elizabeth Bowen and Willa Cather. North offers a critical analysis of previous models of the present, from the experiential present to the historical period we call the contemporary. He argues that the present is not a cosmological or experiential fact but a metaphor, a figurative relationship with the whole of time. Presenting an entirely new conception of the temporal mystery Georg Lukács called the "unexplained instant," [What Is the Present?](#) explores how the arts have traditionally represented the present—and also how artists have offered radical alternatives to that tradition.

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Excerpt: Taken together, these chapters might be considered an extensive answer to a question posed toward the end of his life by Michel Foucault. Teaching a course at the Collège de France on Kant's "Answering the Question: What Is Enlightenment?," Foucault began with an idiosyncratic take on this famous essay, rereading it as if it were not so much about autonomy as about the present. The "new question" that Kant introduces, Foucault says, "is the question of the present, of the contemporary moment. What is happening today? What is happening now? And what is this 'now' which we all inhabit, and which defines the moment in which I am writing?" Foucault returned to "the question of the present" in an even later analysis of Kant's essay, one that he did not live to deliver. In both of these pieces, he defines modernity as a certain complex relation to the present. But it is also obvious to him that before that relationship can be understood, the present itself must be defined: "What is my present? What is the meaning of this present? And what am I doing when I speak of this present? Such is, it seems to me, the substance of this new interrogation on modernity."

On one hand, then, Foucault seems to be asking for something like a history of the present, an account of how attitudes toward it have changed over time, and how those attitudes sharpened in some way around the time of Kant. On the other hand, though, he ends his essay by asking for an "ontology of the present, an ontology of ourselves," and he puts this question at the center of "a form of philosophy which, from Hegel to the Frankfurt School by way of Nietzsche and Max Weber, has founded a form of reflection within which I have tried to work: As Vincent Descombes points out, it is not at all clear why Foucault insists on calling this project an ontology, when everything he says about it seems historical in nature. But the difference between the historical and the properly philosophical seems to be marked for Foucault by the necessarily critical nature of the latter. Talking about the present in a

merely descriptive way means accepting what people have had to say about it, while a more fundamental account of the present would have to take a step away to some critical distance from existing ideas about it. And this does imply having some idea of what the present is, as such, apart from any particular opinion about it.

The book to follow is in some sense a history of the present. It aims to survey as much as possible of what has been said and thought about this particular aspect of time. One of the things this history will establish is that the question of the present is a perennial one and not something that European philosophy woke up and discovered one day. This account in itself must tend to have a critical effect, since so many different things have been thought about the present in the course of human history. For all the time we have had to study this subject, which is never unavailable to us, it would seem we should have made more progress. But the analysis to follow also means to be critical in a sharper sense in that it finds most notions of the present to be fundamentally metaphorical. It ends, then, not as an ontology of the present but rather as the opposite. Now, it seems, is one of the words that fools us into believing it represents something real. The puzzles that have accumulated around it over the centuries are, therefore, not problems to be resolved but rather signals that the term itself might be dissolved.

At the same time, though, it is hardly possible to ignore so much history, so many generations in which the present has been taken for granted as the very bedrock of experience. Something must be there when we point with the word now. And it does turn out that in a number of unconventional ways, writers and artists have established their own practical ontology of the present. As forms of art, painting, narrative fiction, and film have to contend with the question of the present, since they have to represent it in some way. Thus the arts often make it hard to take the present for granted and in so doing establish a critical relation to it. The second part of this book will be an account of how this happens, how the arts necessarily contend with narrow conventions of the present and, in some cases, replace these with their own working

definitions of that term. The second part of the book will therefore have a somewhat uncommon relation to the first part, since the arts will not be called upon to illustrate the ideas proposed by science and philosophy but rather to critique them.

The reason for doing all this has been explained quite effectively by Foucault. The questions he ventriloquized in the 1980s—What is happening today? What is happening now?—are even more insistently asked right now, as the issue of the contemporary comes to dominate conversations about art and politics. However, what might seem the necessary next question—What is this "now"?—does not seem to follow. A recent anthology on the problem of the contemporary promises what it calls "a vocabulary of the present," but the vocabulary it offers is almost all modifiers. The present itself is apparently too fundamental to be included in the lexicon. To be sure, the editors of this collection are certainly right to assert that temporality as we now experience it is multiple and even contradictory. Wouldn't it be useful then to square this assertion with the otherwise unexamined notion that there is something called "the present"? All our conversations about the present seem so constrained because they are caught within the straitjacket of the concept itself. Perhaps the only way to step beyond the contemporary as a historical conundrum is to step outside the conceptual boundaries that convention has erected around the now.

### Here and Now

At this point, it may seem easier to say what the present is not than what it is. In fact, it may seem easiest of all to say simply that the present is not. If many physicists, neurobiologists, and linguists contend that the respective versions of the present that have been so important in their disciplines do not stand up to scrutiny, then perhaps the present as such could be dispensed with. It would be interesting to see if ordinary standards of punctuality could be sustained without the concept of now. Would simply knowing that one has to be there at noon be enough without adding to one's arrival at noon the additional notion of now? But this is to suppose that a category of thought has arisen and sustained itself without playing any

necessary role in human life, which is a lot to swallow, no matter what logic seems to dictate.

Clearly the present is necessary in some way, or it would not have persisted as one of the longest-running puzzles of human thought. As contemporary artist Harry Dodge puts it in a pamphlet released as part of the Hammer Biennial, "humans need an architecture that pushes later away from now," or to put it more comprehensively, humans seem to need a device to keep the past and the future away. The alternative, as Dodge puts it—that "everything is next to itself. And is happening at once"—is a little hard to take in, much less accept. And yet that does seem to be the implication of much recent art history, which sees art as essentially anachronic, as it is also the assumption of many recent films, like those of Christopher Nolan, and perhaps of the present-tense novels of writers like David Mitchell. One of the surefire devices of contemporary narrative of all kinds is time-travel, a trope that seems to thrive by defying the ordinary restrictions of the present, though it may simply be expressing a principled disbelief in them. What is a time-travel movie but a literalization of Kubler's metaphor for the present as a screen on which all of time is projected?

If these contemporary artists, scholars, and writers are confined to the present, then, it is a much different, much larger present than the traditional instant, longer even than the present that James managed to extend, by philosophical might and main, to about a minute. At the very least, there does not seem to be any particular reason to fear the brevity of this present, if it is different from other presents in the past. If anything, the present seems to be getting longer, more capacious, the more we think about it. It is the oldest authoritative version of the present, Aristotle's, that makes it out to be nothing at all, and one of the most recent, Nolan's, that expands it to include all time.

It may be, though, that to expand the present is to redefine it out of existence. If it is at all long, it can no longer be the present. This seems to mean that the present is, in its essential brevity, a metaphor for our sense of the passage of time. If we think of time as movement, then there must be some part of it that moves, and this must be distinct from past

and future, since these may grow or shrink but do not seem to move. But this sense of the present as sheer movement clashes with another apparently necessary attribute of the present, which is the stillness implied by its constant presence. Perhaps these difficulties arise from the entrenched habit of thinking of the present as a part of something else. Perhaps the present is really something more like the way we encompass within ourselves the whole of time. In this sense, the present would not be the actual part of time but rather the actuality of time. This is perhaps what Dodge has in mind with the idea that "everything is next to itself. And is happening at once," a notion that sounds a lot like Kubler and the generally anachronic approach to the visual arts in general.

A philosophical work that offers a more systematic explanation of this approach to time is Paolo Virno's [Déjà Vu and the End of History](#), originally published in 1999 and recently translated into English. Virno's analysis depends on two different "readings of time." On one hand, there is the time of past and present, related as cause to effect: "The most immediate of presences always appears to be a consequence, standing out from a now-faded 'back then:'" On the other hand, time can be considered a matter of potential and act. As Virno explains it, the relation between cause and effect obtains "between two different 'nows', one succeeding the other," whereas the relation between potential and act is "between not-now and a single 'now', between the never-actual and the present." Cause and effect, for Virno, determine a time-line of strict succession. Since a cause gives way to its effect in giving rise to it, cause and effect inhabit fundamentally separate times, the time of a past now gone and the time of a present in isolation. Potential and act, however, are related to one another simultaneously, since potential does not cease to exist whenever it is actualized. Therefore, according to Virno, "when they assume the features of potential and act, the past and present no longer designate successive moments, but concomitant dimensions." Virno's best example in this respect is language, since the potential of a language to generate utterances does not diminish in any way as people speak, nor



does it reside somehow in the past but coexists with the time of every statement.

It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that, as Virno describes potential, it gradually comes to be a name for time itself. Potential, as he puts it, is "the non-chronological past of the act." Potential must always come before the act, but not in a strictly temporal sense, since its before is more logical than chronological. For the same reason, there are no temporal distinctions within the past-as-potential: it is all there all the time. At one point, Virno calls it "a not-now devoid of any date." Though it must change, the past-as-potential is also always complete and total, though in a rather paradoxical sense. A particular act never reduces in anyway the compass of the potential from which it comes. Potential of the kind Virno describes, which is not a physical quantity, is not converted or used up and so it always remains full and complete. In this sense, then, the past-as-potential is also permanent: "Potential is neither transitory nor retractable: its temporal prerogative is that of permanence."

Despite some terminological differences, Virno's description of the past-as-potential bears a significant resemblance to Bergson's idea that "the whole of the past goes into the making of the living being's present moment" and to similar ideas in the phenomenological tradition that follows from Heidegger. The basic distinction between a time of chronological succession and one of constant coexistence is fairly clear, though it is hard to tell in Virno, as it is in Bergson, whether these times are ontological or phenomenological. Potential as Virno describes it must be outside the individual mind as it is outside the present, but if so, what is its basis? Virno's most useful example, language, suggests that potential may be social, though he sometimes speaks of "a general disposition towards articulated discourse" that sounds like an innate capacity." In any case, language as "the past-in-general of acts of speaking" is Virno's model for the past-in-general-in-general, for he maintains that all human acts realize a prior potentiality that never diminishes and never ceases to exist.

The relation between past and present that Virno describes does not itself occur in any measurable

time, for the relation between an utterance and the rules that make it possible is not a temporal relation. Figuring the present on this model means that it may imply a vast tract of time, all the time it took to make the speaker as well as the utterance, without distending itself toward either past or future. It does not need to include these because it is these, as the throw of a ball to first base is the act of putting the runner out. The relation of the present to everything else is, appropriately, a present-tense relation, and thus relations need not take the present out of itself at all. Virno speaks quite eloquently about a higher form of déjà vu he calls a "memory of the present," by which he means a kind of self-reference by which the mind recalls itself to itself. But he might as easily have adapted his phrase to suggest something else, not that we can remember the present but rather that the present has a memory. As the result of all that has happened, the present retains a memory of it, but only as the present. Even if the present is all there is, that doesn't stop it from being everything.

For a concrete actualization of this version of the present, we might look to a recent graphic novel by Richard McGuire. Here first appeared as a short strip in the comic magazine *Raw* in 1989, and it immediately asserted an influence so profound that Chris Ware, who is constantly quoted in this respect, has said, "I don't think there's another strip that's had a greater effect on me or my comics." But that original version was quite short, and the new version, expanded to about 290 pages, raises much more complex questions about time and narrative. As the title implies, *Here* is the story of a place, in particular the house in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, in which McGuire grew up. As an all-purpose deictic, though, the title also implies that it is the story of the place, the place we always are whether we are at home or not. Every two-page spread is focused on the same spot, one corner of the living room of the Perth Amboy house, and different times flit past this fixed optic, rather as if McGuire were illustrating the "Time Passes" section of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. As in that novel, the point of view seems to be that of the house itself, independent of all its human inhabitants. But the view straight into the corner of the room also seems designed to remind us of our

own binocular vision, the always centered, always symmetrical view of things we carry with us everywhere, the view that, for all sighted people at least, is the sensory substrate that supports the grammatical notion of here.

The inevitable partner of that personal here is, of course, now. As here is the name of the place we always occupy, now is what we call the corresponding time. And this turns out to be one of the basic concerns that drove McGuire to expand his original strip. "If you stop to think about this, the 'now' becomes heightened," he told the Atlantic. "We are so rarely 'in the moment; we spend most of our time thinking of the past or worrying about the future. The 'now' is the only thing that really exists." Here, therefore, is just as much about time as it is about space, and though it covers a vast tract of time, the way it pictures this time makes it seem a collection of mutually exclusive presents. Joel Smith has referred to the "perpetual present tense" in which Here takes place, and this may seem inappropriate for a book that stretches from 3 billion BCE to 22175 CE, but it is apt in the sense that each time is shown to exist in its own limited present tense. Time-travel, in this case at least, just takes us to another now, as spatial travel simply lands us in another here.

Where most graphic novels struggle mightily to justify the form by connecting the adjective to its noun, Here tries to separate them, posing the pictorial against the narrative and vice versa. Apparently on purpose, McGuire breaks most of the rules that Will Eisner set out, when the term graphic novel was still new, for what he defined as "sequential art." Eisner's very influential treatise states as a given that visual images operate as a language, so that their order can be superimposed on that of the dialogue and narration to produce what he calls a "visual narrative" that can be read like a book.<sup>1</sup> For Eisner, getting this narrative right depends on a sense of timing in which punctuation can exist only against a background of continuity. The major task of the comics artist, therefore, "is to arrange the sequence of events (or pictures) so as to bridge the gaps in action." This is just what McGuire does not do. In Here, the panels float above or below one another, widely separated by date, discontinuous and out of order, connected

only by their shared relationship to the same point in space. As it is, that space seems to separate more than it connects. A typical two-page spread suspends two to five different presents in a spatial matrix provided by another present, so that the space between times is not a neutral medium connecting them, the box made by the two pages not a solid backdrop, but just another box.

Here is therefore structured by a tension between these still images and the traces of narration that they seem to contain. The basic model for the book is clearly that of the snapshot. Many pages were, in fact, generated by distributing pictures from the family photo album and then, in a process a bit like rotoscoping, transforming these into loose drawings or watercolors." The resulting images retain much of the instantaneous temporality of the snapshot, as indicated by its classic subject matter: the off-balance; the unposed; the casual. McGuire confuses the situation a bit by dating these images only by year, perhaps a purposely anachronistic gesture in a time when every picture taken by phone can be dated to the second. But this gesture does raise an interesting question: how much time is each picture supposed to cover? What does it mean when a moment that can have lasted only a second, like a ladder tipping over, is labeled 2014? Is this the typical or the climactic moment of the year? The weirdly related image next to it, of a paint can toppling over in 1990, shows rather vividly how the arbitrarily restricted spatial boundaries of the snapshot have always helped to indicate its similarly arbitrary excision from the flow of time. But if a moment like this is such a tiny piece of time, then why is it named for an entire year? On one hand, this practice gives these ephemeral moments an odd kind of stability, the stability of photographs, in which the moment does indeed last much, much longer than it can have in reality. On the other hand, labeling these instants with the year alone implies an exceedingly long view, far from the time in question, from which a whole year is reduced to "the year Dad fell off the stepladder," as if 365 days of experience has dwindled to a pinprick. In other words, these inset images raise the question first raised quite self-consciously by instantaneous photography: how long is an instant?

The toppling stepladder, lined up as it is with the falling paint can from 24 years before and the fallen mirror from 65 years before and the ungracious insult from 162 years before, also poses the other major question about snapshots: how do they fit together? In this respect, Here leaves unresolved some fairly major puzzles. It is clear enough that the wallpaper going up in 1949 (56) is the wallpaper coming down in 1960 (55), though it is not the same stepladder (in fact, the house does not seem to be able to hang onto stepladders, since it has a different one in 1998 and yet another in 2014). But is it the same person in both cases? The man who takes down the wallpaper in 1960 seems to be the same man taking the family photo in 1957, but the woman in that picture does not seem to be the one who wanders through 1957 just a few pages earlier. One wears glasses and the other does not, though she is searching for her book. In other words, the compositional fact that the pictures are cut up and scattered unchronologically through the book is matched by a deeper anachronism, in that the stories told in the pictures do not seem to add up. One two-page spread featuring babies in their mothers' arms seems to imply a series of families, moving into and out of the house, from 1924 to 1945 to 1949 to 1957 to 1988, but the mothers do not seem to belong to the families otherwise identified with those years. In fact, it is hard to tell whether the mothers from 1945, 1949, and 1957 are supposed to be the same or different. Sadly, the wallpaper seems more durable than the people.

Still, there are quite a few segments in the book that suggest some sort of long-term continuity, such as the two-page spread in which a man in 1954 seems to complain about a dog barking in 1986. The man fusses about the dog's barking at the mailman "every day," and, in fact, this seems to go on for another thirty years, though it can hardly be the same dog. There is another two-page spread in which a game of Twister seems to go on for almost fifty years. Such instances are apparently meant to depict the timelessness of routine, but they also show the odd paradox of routine, which is just as apt to make time feel long as short. When every morning shower is the same morning shower, time

may collapse on itself or suddenly come to seem endless.

Perhaps the most appropriate icon for this whole situation is the arrow, shot in 1402, that takes three pages to advance about two inches from its initial position, and which never does reach its destination. This is very obviously time's arrow, but it is also a direct reference to one of Zeno's famous paradoxes. Here McGuire seems to illustrate Zeno's contention that an arrow cannot advance from any one point in its flight, that it is, in fact, motionless at that point. This is a paradox that pictures are especially good at exploring, for it is impossible to tell from this, or any other picture, whether the arrow is at rest or in flight. McGuire applies some graphical motion blur to the background of his drawing, as if to reassure us that the arrow is actually in motion, but it is the same motion blur in the first and third frames in the sequence, so McGuire is either being a little lazy as a draftsman or he wants to suggest that the arrow is somehow arrested in flight. The frames advance across the page, though not very rapidly, but the arrow remains in the same position in each frame. Even if time does advance, these pictures seem to suggest, we still experience it as a series of present moments, each one essentially static, each with the same basic quality of being now. This is perhaps the most obvious image of time that pictures are meant deliver.

On the other hand, here is not a single image but a book of images, and it often seems to take pains to remind us of that fact. The basic visual unit of this work is the two-page spread, with the gutter in the middle aligned to and thus standing for the corner of the room. The easy way in which the book becomes a room suggests that the room was always in some sense a book. This is one of many reasons why the e-book version is almost a different work. There are a number of instances in which the materiality of the page is both used and confused, as in those few sequences of superimposition in which a full-page image becomes an inset image on the next page, making it look for a second as if that page had a hole cut in it. Though the same effect is achieved in the e-book, it is achieved so naturally and instantaneously that the ironic sense of interference

is lost, when the page seems to be there and not there at the same time.

Perhaps it is not an accident that there is a book lying on the table in this particular picture. There are, in any case, a number of books in this book, some on the shelves that appear in later years on the wall by the fireplace, some actually being read. This book is probably the most important, though, because it appears at the beginning and the end of *Here*, as if to establish a frame for everything that happens in between. This book is the focal point of

a narrative that encloses all these various images within a story, one that starts as the woman at the beginning wanders into the living room, having forgotten what she is looking for, and which ends almost 290 pages later when she remembers and picks up her book. "Now I remember," she says, and she seems to mean merely that she has remembered wanting her book, but McGuire may also mean that books are particularly good at reinforcing memory, better even perhaps than pictures, precisely because they can create narratives like this one, about the book. Or he may mean something even broader, that people in general have forgotten books, that they tend now to think of books in a context established by pictures, so that when we see a book we remember, "oh, right, that thing with pages." Where photography once seemed at odds with the established flow of narrative, narrative, in a weirdly inverted way, now seems to interrupt the stasis of photographs.

This frame story, this two-part narrative about forgetting and then remembering, establishes a theme that runs throughout the book. The passage of time, the loss of it, is often signified in these pages by the loss of objects. One sequence starts with the loss of a wallet, an umbrella, then a mind and self-control, as if to explain all this forgetfulness; first the car keys and then the car itself, a dog, eyesight, hearing, and then in a visual and aural rhyme, an earring (134-142). At the end of this sequence, the reader is plunged back into 1 million BCE, where it seems everything is lost but an empty featureless ocean, and then even further back to 3 billion BCE, where there is nothing but

gas. The general loss behind all these particular losses is identified in a small box from 2014: "Where did the time go?"

Against this sense, expressed by someone in 1986, that "the older I get the less I know," many of the figures in the book attempt to tell stories. There is a very long sequence from 1989 involving a joke about a doctor, the point of which is apparently the grim brevity of life, and which is so funny it nearly ends the life of one of the listeners. There is the courtship story told on the same couch in 1988, which ends with the triumphant punch line "and the rest is history." And there is the Native American vignette from 1609, in which the plea "tell me a story" may just be a ploy of the woman to hold off the advances of the man. In any case, it is a plea that is so basic it can be expressed, in her language, in a single word.

Together, these vignettes suggest a basic human desire for narrative, of which the physical book is just one manifestation. And yet McGuire himself has offered another interpretation of the climax of his narrative. According to this interpretation, when the woman finally remembers and reaches down for her book, she does not complete a narrative arc but rather finds herself truly in the present for the first time. As he puts it, "the book ends with a moment of recognition of the 'now'" Scattered and abstracted as she wanders through the room, the woman finally comes to herself when she sees the book. "Now I remember" thus means something like "I remember now," or "I have recaptured the present from which I had been displaced." Thus it is not necessary to read the book, but just to find it, and the moment in which the character picks up her book coincides, not so ironically, with the moment in which we put ours down. The purpose of this narrative, in other words, is not to overcome or extend the present but rather to place us more firmly in it. It is, as Virno might put it, to remember the present.

McGuire thus upends the traditional relationship between narrative and the present, one that has been a fixture from Lukács to Jameson, and he also adopts an uncommon position in a more general argument about the present. For it is a fixture of much current lamentation about the contemporary

world that it has lost its grip on the past and the future and spends too much time in the present. But it must also be the case that our present is much larger than any in the past, simply because it includes that past. By now, that inclusion is largely literal, since the recording technologies of the past two centuries have surrounded us with images and sounds from other times. The structure of *Here* implies that this has turned the present into a vast screen onto which the past and the future are projected, not in sequences, by and large, but rather in bursts and fits of reverie. The whole of time is always available, always present, and equally present, since we don't have to go through the intervening years to get to any particular point in time.

By organizing his book as he has, McGuire implies a basic commonality between the punctual moment in which the woman, finding her book, says "now" and the vast stretch of time extending from 3 billion BCE to 22175 CE. For the way that *Here* is organized suggests that all these times are equally present within or around the house in Perth Amboy. Time is a vast, potential fund of moments, any of which can be actualized in any order, since we do not have to go through recent times to arrive at ones farther past. All the nows are still here. What links them together is that elementary sense of presence we get by looking at where we are now, which is where we will always be, as long as we are.

And yet McGuire's book also raises uncomfortable questions about how long that may be. The point of view on which the pages depend is extended in both directions beyond the time of human habitation, so that technically speaking, there is no one to see the gas clouds in which the planet begins and ends. What sense do the dates make at these extremes? What would the present mean then, before and after there is anyone to experience it? McGuire's book, like Mitchell's novel and Nolan's movies, thus seems to participate in a contemporary vogue for the postapocalyptic that may be quite closely related to a general uneasiness about the category of the present. The timelessness so frequently evoked by books and movies beyond the end of history seems the inverse of the inextensive moment of time in which we are said to

live. Or is it the fatally ironic fulfillment of that time, the emptiness of that brief instant extended into infinity as a kind of fairy-tale punishment? For some contemporary writers, filmmakers, and artists, such prefiguration are also refigurations, alternate metaphors for time and the present. Extending the present beyond the end may be a way of suggesting that it is already extensive, as long as we avoid the traditional metaphors that pin it down. <>

[The Art of the Wasted Day](#) by Patricia Hampl [Viking, 9780525429647]

"A sharp and unconventional book — a swirl of memoir, travelogue and biography of some of history's champion day-dreamers." —Maureen Corrigan, "Fresh Air"

A spirited inquiry into the lost value of leisure and daydream

[The Art of the Wasted Day](#) is a picaresque travelogue of leisure written from a lifelong enchantment with solitude. Patricia Hampl visits the homes of historic exemplars of ease who made repose a goal, even an art form. She begins with two celebrated eighteenth-century Irish ladies who ran off to live a life of "retirement" in rural Wales. Her search then leads to Moravia to consider the monk-geneticist, Gregor Mendel, and finally to Bordeaux for Michel Montaigne--the hero of this book--who retreated from court life to sit in his chateau tower and write about whatever passed through his mind, thus inventing the personal essay.

Hampl's own life winds through these pilgrimages, from childhood days lazing under a neighbor's beechnut tree, to a fascination with monastic life, and then to love--and the loss of that love which forms this book's silver thread of inquiry. Finally, a remembered journey down the Mississippi near home in an old cabin cruiser with her husband turns out, after all her international quests, to be the great adventure of her life.

The real job of being human, Hampl finds, is getting lost in thought, something only leisure can provide. [The Art of the Wasted Day](#) is a compelling celebration of the purpose and appeal of letting go.

[Idleness: A Philosophical Essay](#) by Brian O'Connor  
[Princeton University Press, 9780691167527]

The first book to challenge modern philosophy's case against idleness, revealing why the idle state is one of true freedom

For millennia, idleness and laziness have been regarded as vices. We're all expected to work to survive and get ahead, and devoting energy to anything but labor and self-improvement can seem like a luxury or a moral failure. Far from questioning this conventional wisdom, modern philosophers have worked hard to develop new reasons to denigrate idleness. In *Idleness*, the first book to challenge modern philosophy's portrayal of inactivity, Brian O'Connor argues that the case against an indifference to work and effort is flawed--and that idle aimlessness may instead allow for the highest form of freedom.

[Idleness](#) explores how some of the most influential modern philosophers drew a direct connection between making the most of our humanity and avoiding laziness. Idleness was dismissed as contrary to the need people have to become autonomous and make whole, integrated beings of themselves (Kant); to be useful (Kant and Hegel); to accept communal norms (Hegel); to contribute to the social good by working (Marx); and to avoid boredom (Schopenhauer and de Beauvoir).

O'Connor throws doubt on all these arguments, presenting a sympathetic vision of the inactive and unserious that draws on more productive ideas about idleness, from ancient Greece through Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Schiller and Marcuse's thoughts about the importance of play, and recent critiques of the cult of work. A thought-provoking reconsideration of productivity for the twenty-first century, [Idleness](#) shows that, from now on, no theory of what it means to have a free mind can exclude idleness from the conversation.

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Excerpt:

### Philosophy and Idleness

Questions about the nature of moral values predominate in philosophy's analysis of human action. There has been comparatively little concern with bringing to light assumptions about the kinds of people we are supposed to be in order to live as effective and happy actors within the highly integrated and productive societies of today. A moment's reflection makes it very clear that "fitting in" and "doing well" require us to be made—perhaps even, we might like to think, by our own free choices—into beings of a very specific and not obviously natural type. Among the key characteristics of this type is a reluctance to idle or a tendency to recognize some wrong in idleness even as we are tempted by it or succumb to it. Philosophers have weighed in with arguments designed to defend negative perceptions of idleness. Traditional moralistic rebukes of the idle are remodeled according to the latest notion of the greatness of humanity. Higher-level narratives about what we truly are or ought to be are offered in explanation of why idleness is not appropriate for beings like us. The aim of this study is to examine and ultimately to expose the presumptions and faults of those narratives.

I will eventually contend that idleness may, in certain respects, be considered closer to the ideals of freedom than the most prestigious conception of self-determination found in philosophy. This book, however, proceeds mainly by way of criticism and without advocacy for the idle life. This is not out of preference for either a superior stance of negativity or scholastic purism. Rather, positive recommendations risk underappreciating how deeply an ambivalence toward idleness is constitutive of much of what many of us take ourselves to be (a point that will be visited many times over the course of this study). That ambivalence will not be resolved by philosophical sketches of a life freed from the driving forces of industry.

Excluding a didactic and constructive approach does not, however, mean that the question of

idleness exists here as a strictly theoretical problem.' The critical impetus is sustained by a sense of the harm our idleness-excluding-world does to human beings. That powerful anxiety, directly connected with the need to work for one's good standing, precariously serves our health and happiness. A social space within which a feeling of worth is gained by visible career and material success underwrites a peculiar vulnerability. Humiliation and trauma loom when the circumstances that enable realization of those goods are either only partially available to begin with or are suddenly taken from those who once enjoyed them. Suicide rates increase, families collapse, children struggle. A more stable and less ambitious socioeconomic system could possibly save us from some of the familiar perils of modern life. A bolder image of freedom is, though, offered by idleness. What that would look like in full is another kind of question. But one can conjecture that the genuinely idle would be spared the various forms of pain that are held in store even for those who try to make the most of the twinned institutions of work and social esteem. It is that very intuition that underpins the appeal of idleness even as it sits alongside the winning importance we ultimately attach to those institutions.

The notion of idle freedom—where work is no kind of virtue or path to worthiness—is meaningful and real enough to deserve protection. Here that protection will involve exposing the deficiencies of those many philosophical pronouncements in support of the official view of the world, the view that idleness is a bad, whereas busyness, self-making, usefulness, and productivity are supposedly the very core of what is right for beings like us. Exposing the assumptions and problems of the arguments against idleness might help to preserve the notion of freedom it embodies, even if it is mainly an oppositional freedom: liberation from those unsettling expectations that are all too difficult to resist. The main task of the book, then, will be, in a way, to prevent the philosophical case against idleness from having the last word. And we shall, in fact, see that philosophical accusations do not always lie so very far from more prosaic ones. The worries that, because of idleness, we are in danger of wasting our lives, of not doing justice to

ourselves, or simply of not contributing are articulated in systematic and challenging forms in the texts to be considered. Some readers will not agree with my criticisms of those proposals that maintain that human beings are obliged to work toward something so much more impressive than idleness. Others may not believe they actually experience any desire for idleness—that, at least, is what I am sometimes told—and will therefore be unmoved by efforts in its behalf. This book does not hope to persuade them that they should think otherwise about whether they should develop that desire.

My critical approach could not be accurately described as balanced. I do not proceed with an open mind on whether or not idleness is a bad thing, and I am generally skeptical about any philosophical argument against it. Nevertheless, anti-idleness material is approached in the manner that seems to be expected by its authors. That is, I respond to the arguments found in those texts. I find almost none of them effective, for reasons that will become clear in the course of this book. Nor is my critical approach systematic. My various responses might conceivably amount to the basis of a different conception of work, happiness, or freedom. At this point a cohesive position is not, however, evident. Lastly, what is on offer here is not purely analytical in its dealings with its selected philosophers. Motivations as well as coherence will also be considered.

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Idleness is a complex phenomenon whose meaning varies, sometimes quite radically, across contexts. The notion of idleness I want to explore encapsulates a form of experience that places us outside the norms or conventions of societies like ours. It is not only a state of not working, though that is a key marker. It involves a departure from a range of values that make us the kinds of people we are supposed to be in order to live well. The very idea of being a "self" of the appropriate kind is thereby placed in question. The features of the phenomenon of idleness—in the sense that is in focus here—can be roughly grouped. First, there are what we may label its phenomenological features, its distinctive feel. Idleness is experienced

activity that operates according to no guiding purpose. That absence of purpose explains its restful and pleasurable qualities. Idleness is a feeling of noncompulsion and drift. We often become idle by slipping into it, either in the middle of tasks or for extended periods. The structure of our individual lives permits idleness in varying degrees, depending on the level of our commitments and the seriousness with which we take them. In principle, it is possible to imagine a life that is largely idle—that is, in which idleness is not a momentary release from work.

In this book, claims made against that possibility will be of special interest. Philosophers appear to express no worry about momentary or intermittent idleness, but a life of idleness is often seen by them as representative of humanity in a debased form.

A second dimension of idleness is its effective content. The activities that fill an idle period are not geared toward productivity. Should an interesting thought, of value to ongoing or future projects, arise during idleness, it is a serendipitous outcome. A further distinctive feature of idle behavior is its structure. It simply does not happen as a process involving disciplined self-monitoring. There is no sense of an inner power struggle in which something in us needs to be overcome or improved. Hence idleness, as we shall see, is perceived by its modern critics as an obstacle to some grand idea of self-realization. However, idleness is not mindless: no less than non-idle behavior, it contains conceptual components and judgments. As we idle we know what we are doing, even if we have no idea of an overall end or purpose in what we do. Idleness need not therefore be interpreted as essentially irrational. To construe it in that way is nothing more than to express the prejudice that rationality belongs to self-mastering, rule-guided actions only. Idleness, on the contrary, may offer a glimpse of an alternative way of living, one that looks wholly reasonable—makes sense—to those who experience it. It does, after all, seem to place us in a liberating possession of ourselves, free of pressure, and evidently content. From these characteristics it is obvious that idleness stands in opposition to much of what is taken to be right and normal: it has nothing to do with performance, with work, with social standing, with gaining in prestige.

Idleness can be found in other forms. Mannered idleness—once theorized among a certain class as the art of being idle—is quite different from the form described above. Mannered idleness is a way of life, carefully pursued and designed to create an impression of effortless existence comfortably elevated above the unintelligible toils of the masses. In its ostentation it involves little or no weakening of a conventional social sense. It wants to be seen and admired. That it is usually enabled by necessary social inequality—some will work while others are seen to play—also separates it from idleness in the sense that is implicitly dissatisfied with the usual social arrangements.

It is important to distinguish the notion of idleness, as it will be studied here, from leisure. Idleness obviously shares some of leisure's features. The boundaries of leisure, though, are to be found in the degree to which leisure can be incorporated within the general model of the modern social actor. For most who enjoy it, leisure is an instrument, allowing us to cede temporarily from life-shaping demands. Yet it is implicated in those demands. Leisure can renew our capacity to perform. It allows us to recover from labor or to think freely about our next task or to augment ourselves by taking the trouble to gain valuable new experiences (cultural tourism and the like). In today's world leisure may be considered a liberation of a sort, yet many labor regimes make leisure—paid vacation leave—obligatory. Leisure is good, apparently, not only for the worker but also for the employer. The general model of the effective social actor within a system of work is partly sustained in this way. Idleness, by contrast, threatens to undermine what that model requires, namely, disciplined, goal-oriented individuals. For that reason, idleness cannot be incorporated within the productivity model—unlike leisure—since it is a noninstrumental break from all that is required to make us useful. William Morris expressed a typical concern that leisure, which has become abundant in the modern world, should not be allowed to "degenerate into idleness and aimlessness." Like numerous other social theorists, Morris speculated on the right balance between work and leisure. Too much leisure is idleness, a state of affairs in which no balance with work maybe conceived, with



imperiling consequences for the latter. In its indifference to productivity idleness clearly intersects with laziness. In some contexts—both critical and sympathetic ones—they are essentially synonyms. The family of Anna in Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's *Seven Deadly Sins* cry out the traditional refrain that idleness is the beginning of all evil as they sing about the vice of laziness. Laziness is broadly perceived as a moral failing, as the state of a person who knows perfectly well what to do but who opts for rest anyway. In that specific sense, laziness can be separated from the implicitly critical or rebellious ways of idleness. In practice, though, no definitive demarcation between the two is to be found, and the notion of laziness will sometimes be in focus in the discussions of idleness that follow.

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A history of idleness as a moral category would consider a range of similar-looking concepts that have emerged over its millennia-long history. Some discussion would need to be given, for instance, to sloth and acedia. This is not a work of genealogy, however. The focus of the analysis here is the distinctive way in which idleness comes into view in philosophy in what is broadly called the modern age. This is the age characterized by its interest in individual liberty, civic society, democracy, capitalism, and reason. Effective living within this world requires particular talents. We are expected to participate in its practices in various ways. We must develop skills that will prepare us for usefulness. Discipline is vital: we address our tasks with diligence and stand ready and willing for more. Disoccupation—idleness—is not an easy experience since our acquired discipline orients us towards yet more activity. Discipline here is not to be understood as task specific. That is, it does not refer to a situation in which one may take a highly structured approach to one's work or hobbies but be shapeless with regard to all else. Ideally our whole lives must take on a shape, a clear purpose, a "rational plan of life," as John Rawls calls it, which brings integrity to the totality of our actions. We are permitted to play, perhaps even to idle, but we will tend not to take up any of those options without considerable hesitation, since they run counter to the motivations that are normal for social

agents like us. These moments of alternative living are not to be allowed to spoil the central project.

It should hardly be a surprise that the most significant philosophical considerations of idleness are found in our modern period. This is the era in which progress is directly connected with the efforts of human beings to bring reasoned order to the world. That order starts with the order we bring to ourselves. Idleness is obviously one kind of impediment to progress understood in that way. The contemporary age—modernity as some prefer to label it—is not, though, a monolith in which vital questions of what kinds of freedom, society, and humanity we want are settled or agreed. These notions are obviously subject to debate. Each theory of what we ought to be, nevertheless, understands itself as an advance on the world that has gone before. Rejections of archaic authority and hopes for a better type of humanity are shared. The specifics of each conception of freedom, society, and individuality demand, as we shall see, specific arguments against idleness.

The texts examined in this book come mainly, though not exclusively, from the period of German idealism and its aftermath. But nothing here is examined for the sake of scholarship or historical commentary. A more important principle of selection is that the philosophers considered each articulate views of idleness that are now implicit, if not prevalent, in everyday discourse. They are undoubtedly more advanced and deeply grounded than common clichés about idleness and its dangers. But by looking closely at those views, we might hope to learn something about the kinds of justifications that are readily brandished whenever idleness becomes attractive.

The first chapter begins not with German philosophy or with philosophy at all but with a discussion of Robert Burton's analyses of idleness. We start there in order to establish what I take to be encompassed within premodern rejections of idleness. The model gleaned from Burton's work helps us to see what, in the sections that follow, is distinctive about Kant's later efforts to defend usefulness and rational self-determination. Kant's position may be cast in rather demanding theoretical terms but it aligns perfectly with a

common view that a life worth living will be characterized by self-advancement and admirable industry. Kant, in fact, associates the attributes of usefulness and rational self-determination with "worthiness," a kind of inner quality that we have some obligation to realize. He maintains that the achievement of worthiness is not always pleasant or in line with our natural desire for idleness. It is nevertheless an ineluctable demand that is placed on us by virtue of the very beings we are.

G.W.F. Hegel, to whom I turn in the second chapter, takes a more integrationist view of human beings who have attained their worth. Nothing that we need to value is lost as human beings advance beyond the condition of savagery he finds among the peoples who still subsist in a state of idleness. He argues for the developmental advantages of those who can make themselves useful—even when there is no immediate use for them—and are able to contribute to the "system of needs" of all in a modern economy. As we shall see, a striking part of the story of this development is Hegel's identification of the formed or "educated" consciousness of a slave with the willingness to work usefully. Whereas Hegel's picture has something to do with what for him is the compelling dynamic of society, Karl Marx denounces idleness—a reluctance to work—on mainly moral grounds. It is a refusal to do what others need you to do, and it represents a retreat from the space of the "social" to selfishness. What is absent from Marx's account is a consideration of arrangements in which idleness—laziness, in his terms—is possible without some questionable reversion to isolated individuality.

The third chapter looks at the phenomenon of boredom as a consequence of idleness. In this perception of idleness we find no proposal for ennobling or positively liberating work. The philosopher who best represents this view is Arthur Schopenhauer. He argues that we are without the capacity for contented idleness. Our main task in life is to avoid idleness. We work, or throw ourselves into activities of virtually any kind, in order to escape the boredom that comes with idleness. This position represents a break from the idealizations of busyness found among Schopenhauer's illustrious predecessors. In a very

important respect, however, it remains at a conventional level in that it does not consider whether our restlessness—our alleged incapacity for idleness—might be the product of social arrangements which form us in that way. Schopenhauer, rather, interprets human nature—though not always consistently—as fixed and ahistorical. The notion that boredom accompanies idleness is further illustrated in an examination of "the idle woman" offered by Simone de Beauvoir. Her position challengingly outlines the risk of boredom among individuals whose formation is not geared toward the realization of their actual needs.

Chapter 4 examines utopian efforts to reconcile the grim necessity of work with the distinctive freedom enjoyed in idleness. That reconciliation seems to promise to extricate human beings from Promethean burdens. It offers us the prospect that work might actually be a sphere of happiness rather than discipline and subordination to an alienating system. The models examined are those proposed by Friedrich Schiller and Herbert Marcuse, who both identify "play" as the space of this reconciliation. The obvious difficulties of giving coherent expression to what seems like a new harmony of extreme opposites will be examined. The book concludes, in chapter 5, with an assessment of the very idea of idleness as freedom. Idleness is contrasted with autonomy, a conception of freedom that continues to set the standards, among philosophers, of what freedom is supposed to be.

[In Praise of Idleness: And Other Essays, 2nd Edition](#) by Bertrand Russell [Routledge Classics, Routledge, 9780415325066]

Intolerance and bigotry lie at the heart of all human suffering. So claims Bertrand Russell at the outset of [In Praise of Idleness](#), a collection of essays in which he espouses the virtues of cool reflection and free enquiry; a voice of calm in a world of maddening unreason. From a devastating critique of the ancestry of fascism to a vehement defence of 'useless' knowledge, with consideration given to everything from insect pests to the human soul, this is a tour de force that only Bertrand Russell could perform. <>

Essay: In Praise of Idleness by Bertrand Russell, October 1932, Harper's Magazine

Like most of my generation, I was brought up on the saying: 'Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do.' Being a highly virtuous child, I believed all that I was told, and acquired a conscience which has kept me working hard down to the present moment. But although my conscience has controlled my actions, my opinions have undergone a revolution. I think that there is far too much work done in the world, that immense harm is caused by the belief that work is virtuous, and that what needs to be preached in modern industrial countries is quite different from what always has been preached. Everyone knows the story of the traveler in Naples who saw twelve beggars lying in the sun (it was before the days of Mussolini), and offered a lira to the laziest of them. Eleven of them jumped up to claim it, so he gave it to the twelfth. This traveler was on the right lines. But in countries which do not enjoy Mediterranean sunshine idleness is more difficult, and a great public propaganda will be required to inaugurate it. I hope that, after reading the following pages, the leaders of the YMCA will start a campaign to induce good young men to do nothing. If so, I shall not have lived in vain.

Before advancing my own arguments for laziness, I must dispose of one which I cannot accept. Whenever a person who already has enough to live on proposes to engage in some everyday kind of job, such as school-teaching or typing, he or she is told that such conduct takes the bread out of other people's mouths, and is therefore wicked. If this argument were valid, it would only be necessary for us all to be idle in order that we should all have our mouths full of bread. What people who say such things forget is that what a man earns he usually spends, and in spending he gives employment. As long as a man spends his income, he puts just as much bread into people's mouths in spending as he takes out of other people's mouths in earning. The real villain, from this point of view, is the man who saves. If he merely puts his savings in a stocking, like the proverbial French peasant, it is obvious that they

do not give employment. If he invests his savings, the matter is less obvious, and different cases arise.

One of the commonest things to do with savings is to lend them to some Government. In view of the fact that the bulk of the public expenditure of most civilized Governments consists in payment for past wars or preparation for future wars, the man who lends his money to a Government is in the same position as the bad men in Shakespeare who hire murderers. The net result of the man's economical habits is to increase the armed forces of the State to which he lends his savings. Obviously it would be better if he spent the money, even if he spent it in drink or gambling.

But, I shall be told, the case is quite different when savings are invested in industrial enterprises. When such enterprises succeed, and produce something useful, this may be conceded. In these days, however, no one will deny that most enterprises fail. That means that a large amount of human labor, which might have been devoted to producing something that could be enjoyed, was expended on producing machines which, when produced, lay idle and did no good to anyone. The man who invests his savings in a concern that goes bankrupt is therefore injuring others as well as himself. If he spent his money, say, in giving parties for his friends, they (we may hope) would get pleasure, and so would all those upon whom he spent money, such as the butcher, the baker, and the bootlegger. But if he spends it (let us say) upon laying down rails for surface cars in some place where surface cars turn out not to be wanted, he has diverted a mass of labor into channels where it gives pleasure to no one. Nevertheless, when he becomes poor through failure of his investment he will be regarded as a victim of undeserved misfortune, whereas the gay spendthrift, who has spent his money philanthropically, will be despised as a fool and a frivolous person.

All this is only preliminary. I want to say, in all seriousness, that a great deal of harm is being done in the modern world by belief in the virtuousness of work, and that the road to happiness and prosperity lies in an organized diminution of work.

First of all: what is work? Work is of two kinds: first, altering the position of matter at or near the earth's surface relatively to other such matter; second, telling other people to do so. The first kind is unpleasant and ill paid; the second is pleasant and highly paid. The second kind is capable of indefinite extension: there are not only those who give orders, but those who give advice as to what orders should be given. Usually two opposite kinds of advice are given simultaneously by two organized bodies of men; this is called politics. The skill required for this kind of work is not knowledge of the subjects as to which advice is given, but knowledge of the art of persuasive speaking and writing, i.e. of advertising.

Throughout Europe, though not in America, there is a third class of men, more respected than either of the classes of workers. There are men who, through ownership of land, are able to make others pay for the privilege of being allowed to exist and to work. These landowners are idle, and I might therefore be expected to praise them.

Unfortunately, their idleness is only rendered possible by the industry of others; indeed their desire for comfortable idleness is historically the source of the whole gospel of work. The last thing they have ever wished is that others should follow their example.

From the beginning of civilization until the Industrial Revolution, a man could, as a rule, produce by hard work little more than was required for the subsistence of himself and his family, although his wife worked at least as hard as he did, and his children added their labor as soon as they were old enough to do so. The small surplus above bare necessities was not left to those who produced it, but was appropriated by warriors and priests. In times of famine there was no surplus; the warriors and priests, however, still secured as much as at other times, with the result that many of the workers died of hunger. This system persisted in Russia until 1917 [Since then, members of the Communist Party have succeeded to this privilege of the warriors and priests], and still persists in the East; in England, in spite of the Industrial Revolution, it remained in full force throughout the Napoleonic wars, and until a hundred years ago, when the new class of manufacturers acquired power. In America, the

system came to an end with the Revolution, except in the South, where it persisted until the Civil War. A system which lasted so long and ended so recently has naturally left a profound impress upon men's thoughts and opinions. Much that we take for granted about the desirability of work is derived from this system, and, being preindustrial, is not adapted to the modern world. Modern technique has made it possible for leisure, within limits, to be not the prerogative of small privileged classes, but a right evenly distributed throughout the community. The morality of work is the morality of slaves, and the modern world has no need of slavery.

It is obvious that, in primitive communities, peasants, left to themselves, would not have parted with the slender surplus upon which the warriors and priests subsisted, but would have either produced less or consumed more. At first, sheer force compelled them to produce and part with the surplus. Gradually, however, it was found possible to induce many of them to accept an ethic according to which it was their duty to work hard, although part of their work went to support others in idleness. By this means the amount of compulsion required was lessened, and the expenses of government were diminished. To this day, 99 per cent of British wage-earners would be genuinely shocked if it were proposed that the King should not have a larger income than a working man. The conception of duty, speaking historically, has been a means used by the holders of power to induce others to live for the interests of their masters rather than for their own. Of course the holders of power conceal this fact from themselves by managing to believe that their interests are identical with the larger interests of humanity. Sometimes this is true; Athenian slave-owners, for instance, employed part of their leisure in making a permanent contribution to civilization which would have been impossible under a just economic system. Leisure is essential to civilization, and in former times leisure for the few was only rendered possible by the labors of the many. But their labors were valuable, not because work is good, but because leisure is good. And with modern technique it would be possible to distribute leisure justly without injury to civilization.

Modern technique has made it possible to diminish enormously the amount of labor required to secure the necessaries of life for everyone. This was made obvious during the war. At that time all the men in the armed forces, and all the men and women engaged in the production of munitions, all the men and women engaged in spying, war propaganda, or Government offices connected with the war, were withdrawn from productive occupations. In spite of this, the general level of well-being among unskilled wage-earners on the side of the Allies was higher than before or since. The significance of this fact was concealed by finance: borrowing made it appear as if the future was nourishing the present. But that, of course, would have been impossible; a man cannot eat a loaf of bread that does not yet exist. The war showed conclusively that, by the scientific organization of production, it is possible to keep modern populations in fair comfort on a small part of the working capacity of the modern world. If, at the end of the war, the scientific organization, which had been created in order to liberate men for fighting and munition work, had been preserved, and the hours of the week had been cut down to four, all would have been well. Instead of that the old chaos was restored, those whose work was demanded were made to work long hours, and the rest were left to starve as unemployed. Why? Because work is a duty, and a man should not receive wages in proportion to what he has produced, but in proportion to his virtue as exemplified by his industry.

This is the morality of the Slave State, applied in circumstances totally unlike those in which it arose. No wonder the result has been disastrous. Let us take an illustration. Suppose that, at a given moment, a certain number of people are engaged in the manufacture of pins. They make as many pins as the world needs, working (say) eight hours a day. Someone makes an invention by which the same number of men can make twice as many pins: pins are already so cheap that hardly any more will be bought at a lower price. In a sensible world, everybody concerned in the manufacturing of pins would take to working four hours instead of eight, and everything else would go on as before. But in the actual world this would be thought

demoralizing. The men still work eight hours, there are too many pins, some employers go bankrupt, and half the men previously concerned in making pins are thrown out of work. There is, in the end, just as much leisure as on the other plan, but half the men are totally idle while half are still overworked. In this way, it is insured that the unavoidable leisure shall cause misery all round instead of being a universal source of happiness. Can anything more insane be imagined?

The idea that the poor should have leisure has always been shocking to the rich. In England, in the early nineteenth century, fifteen hours was the ordinary day's work for a man; children sometimes did as much, and very commonly did twelve hours a day. When meddlesome busybodies suggested that perhaps these hours were rather long, they were told that work kept adults from drink and children from mischief. When I was a child, shortly after urban working men had acquired the vote, certain public holidays were established by law, to the great indignation of the upper classes. I remember hearing an old Duchess say: 'What do the poor want with holidays? They ought to work.' People nowadays are less frank, but the sentiment persists, and is the source of much of our economic confusion.

Let us, for a moment, consider the ethics of work frankly, without superstition. Every human being, of necessity, consumes, in the course of his life, a certain amount of the produce of human labor. Assuming, as we may, that labor is on the whole disagreeable, it is unjust that a man should consume more than he produces. Of course he may provide services rather than commodities, like a medical man, for example; but he should provide something in return for his board and lodging. To this extent, the duty of work must be admitted, but to this extent only.

I shall not dwell upon the fact that, in all modern societies outside the USSR, many people escape even this minimum amount of work, namely all those who inherit money and all those who marry money. I do not think the fact that these people are allowed to be idle is nearly so harmful as the fact that wage-earners are expected to overwork or starve.

Of the ordinary wage-earner worked four hours a day, there would be enough for everybody and no unemployment -- assuming a certain very moderate amount of sensible organization. This idea shocks the well-to-do, because they are convinced that the poor would not know how to use so much leisure. In America men often work long hours even when they are well off; such men, naturally, are indignant at the idea of leisure for wage-earners, except as the grim punishment of unemployment; in fact, they dislike leisure even for their sons. Oddly enough, while they wish their sons to work so hard as to have no time to be civilized, they do not mind their wives and daughters having no work at all. The snobbish admiration of uselessness, which, in an aristocratic society, extends to both sexes, is, under a plutocracy, confined to women; this, however, does not make it any more in agreement with common sense.

The wise use of leisure, it must be conceded, is a product of civilization and education. A man who has worked long hours all his life will become bored if he becomes suddenly idle. But without a considerable amount of leisure a man is cut off from many of the best things. There is no longer any reason why the bulk of the population should suffer this deprivation; only a foolish asceticism, usually vicarious, makes us continue to insist on work in excessive quantities now that the need no longer exists.

In the new creed which controls the government of Russia, while there is much that is very different from the traditional teaching of the West, there are some things that are quite unchanged. The attitude of the governing classes, and especially of those who conduct educational propaganda, on the subject of the dignity of labor, is almost exactly that which the governing classes of the world have always preached to what were called the 'honest poor'. Industry, sobriety, willingness to work long hours for distant advantages, even submissiveness to authority, all these reappear; moreover authority still represents the will of the Ruler of the Universe, Who, however, is now called by a new name, Dialectical Materialism.

The victory of the proletariat in Russia has some points in common with the victory of the feminists in

some other countries. For ages, men had conceded the superior saintliness of women, and had consoled women for their inferiority by maintaining that saintliness is more desirable than power. At last the feminists decided that they would have both, since the pioneers among them believed all that the men had told them about the desirability of virtue, but not what they had told them about the worthlessness of political power. A similar thing has happened in Russia as regards manual work. For ages, the rich and their sycophants have written in praise of 'honest toil', have praised the simple life, have professed a religion which teaches that the poor are much more likely to go to heaven than the rich, and in general have tried to make manual workers believe that there is some special nobility about altering the position of matter in space, just as men tried to make women believe that they derived some special nobility from their sexual enslavement. In Russia, all this teaching about the excellence of manual work has been taken seriously, with the result that the manual worker is more honored than anyone else. What are, in essence, revivalist appeals are made, but not for the old purposes: they are made to secure shock workers for special tasks. Manual work is the ideal which is held before the young, and is the basis of all ethical teaching.

For the present, possibly, this is all to the good. A large country, full of natural resources, awaits development, and has to be developed with very little use of credit. In these circumstances, hard work is necessary, and is likely to bring a great reward. But what will happen when the point has been reached where everybody could be comfortable without working long hours?

In the West, we have various ways of dealing with this problem. We have no attempt at economic justice, so that a large proportion of the total produce goes to a small minority of the population, many of whom do no work at all. Owing to the absence of any central control over production, we produce hosts of things that are not wanted. We keep a large percentage of the working population idle, because we can dispense with their labor by making the others overwork. When all these methods prove inadequate, we have a war: we cause a number of people to manufacture high

explosives, and a number of others to explode them, as if we were children who had just discovered fireworks. By a combination of all these devices we manage, though with difficulty, to keep alive the notion that a great deal of severe manual work must be the lot of the average man.

In Russia, owing to more economic justice and central control over production, the problem will have to be differently solved. The rational solution would be, as soon as the necessities and elementary comforts can be provided for all, to reduce the hours of labor gradually, allowing a popular vote to decide, at each stage, whether more leisure or more goods were to be preferred. But, having taught the supreme virtue of hard work, it is difficult to see how the authorities can aim at a paradise in which there will be much leisure and little work. It seems more likely that they will find continually fresh schemes, by which present leisure is to be sacrificed to future productivity. I read recently of an ingenious plan put forward by Russian engineers, for making the White Sea and the northern coasts of Siberia warm, by putting a dam across the Kara Sea. An admirable project, but liable to postpone proletarian comfort for a generation, while the nobility of toil is being displayed amid the ice-fields and snowstorms of the Arctic Ocean. This sort of thing, if it happens, will be the result of regarding the virtue of hard work as an end in itself, rather than as a means to a state of affairs in which it is no longer needed.

The fact is that moving matter about, while a certain amount of it is necessary to our existence, is emphatically not one of the ends of human life. If it were, we should have to consider every navy superior to Shakespeare. We have been misled in this matter by two causes. One is the necessity of keeping the poor contented, which has led the rich, for thousands of years, to preach the dignity of labor, while taking care themselves to remain undignified in this respect. The other is the new pleasure in mechanism, which makes us delight in the astonishingly clever changes that we can produce on the earth's surface. Neither of these motives makes any great appeal to the actual worker. If you ask him what he thinks the best part of his life, he is not likely to say: 'I enjoy manual work because it makes me feel that I am fulfilling

man's noblest task, and because I like to think how much man can transform his planet. It is true that my body demands periods of rest, which I have to fill in as best I may, but I am never so happy as when the morning comes and I can return to the toil from which my contentment springs.' I have never heard working men say this sort of thing. They consider work, as it should be considered, a necessary means to a livelihood, and it is from their leisure that they derive whatever happiness they may enjoy.

It will be said that, while a little leisure is pleasant, men would not know how to fill their days if they had only four hours of work out of the twenty-four. In so far as this is true in the modern world, it is a condemnation of our civilization; it would not have been true at any earlier period. There was formerly a capacity for light-heartedness and play which has been to some extent inhibited by the cult of efficiency. The modern man thinks that everything ought to be done for the sake of something else, and never for its own sake. Serious-minded persons, for example, are continually condemning the habit of going to the cinema, and telling us that it leads the young into crime. But all the work that goes to producing a cinema is respectable, because it is work, and because it brings a money profit. The notion that the desirable activities are those that bring a profit has made everything topsy-turvy. The butcher who provides you with meat and the baker who provides you with bread are praiseworthy, because they are making money; but when you enjoy the food they have provided, you are merely frivolous, unless you eat only to get strength for your work. Broadly speaking, it is held that getting money is good and spending money is bad. Seeing that they are two sides of one transaction, this is absurd; one might as well maintain that keys are good, but keyholes are bad. Whatever merit there may be in the production of goods must be entirely derivative from the advantage to be obtained by consuming them. The individual, in our society, works for profit; but the social purpose of his work lies in the consumption of what he produces. It is this divorce between the individual and the social purpose of production that makes it so difficult for men to think clearly in a world in which profit-making is the

incentive to industry. We think too much of production, and too little of consumption. One result is that we attach too little importance to enjoyment and simple happiness, and that we do not judge production by the pleasure that it gives to the consumer.

When I suggest that working hours should be reduced to four, I am not meaning to imply that all the remaining time should necessarily be spent in pure frivolity. I mean that four hours' workaday should entitle a man to the necessities and elementary comforts of life, and that the rest of his time should be his to use as he might see fit. It is an essential part of any such social system that education should be carried further than it usually is at present, and should aim, in part, at providing tastes which would enable a man to use leisure intelligently. I am not thinking mainly of the sort of things that would be considered 'highbrow'. Peasant dances have died out except in remote rural areas, but the impulses which caused them to be cultivated must still exist in human nature. The pleasures of urban populations have become mainly passive: seeing cinemas, watching football matches, listening to the radio, and so on. This results from the fact that their active energies are fully taken up with work; if they had more leisure, they would again enjoy pleasures in which they took an active part.

In the past, there was a small leisure class and a larger working class. The leisure class enjoyed advantages for which there was no basis in social justice; this necessarily made it oppressive, limited its sympathies, and caused it to invent theories by which to justify its privileges. These facts greatly diminished its excellence, but in spite of this drawback it contributed nearly the whole of what we call civilization. It cultivated the arts and discovered the sciences; it wrote the books, invented the philosophies, and refined social relations. Even the liberation of the oppressed has usually been inaugurated from above. Without the leisure class, mankind would never have emerged from barbarism.

The method of a leisure class without duties was, however, extraordinarily wasteful. None of the members of the class had to be taught to be

industrious, and the class as a whole was not exceptionally intelligent. The class might produce one Darwin, but against him had to be set tens of thousands of country gentlemen who never thought of anything more intelligent than fox-hunting and punishing poachers. At present, the universities are supposed to provide, in a more systematic way, what the leisure class provided accidentally and as a by-product. This is a great improvement, but it has certain drawbacks. University life is so different from life in the world at large that men who live in academic milieu tend to be unaware of the preoccupations and problems of ordinary men and women; moreover their ways of expressing themselves are usually such as to rob their opinions of the influence that they ought to have

upon the general public. Another disadvantage is that in universities studies are organized, and the man who thinks of some original line of research is likely to be discouraged. Academic institutions, therefore, useful as they are, are not adequate guardians of the interests of civilization in a world where everyone outside their walls is too busy for un-utilitarian pursuits.

In a world where no one is compelled to work more than four hours a day, every person possessed of scientific curiosity will be able to indulge it, and every painter will be able to paint without starving, however excellent his pictures may be. Young writers will not be obliged to draw attention to themselves by sensational pot-boilers, with a view to acquiring the economic independence needed for monumental works, for which, when the time at last comes, they will have lost the taste and capacity. Men who, in their professional work, have become interested in some phase of economics or government, will be able to develop their ideas without the academic detachment that makes the work of university economists often seem lacking in reality. Medical men will have the time to learn about the progress of medicine, teachers will not be exasperatedly struggling to teach by routine methods things which they learnt in their youth, which may, in the interval, have been proved to be untrue.

\$bove all, there will be happiness and joy of life, instead of frayed nerves, weariness, and



dyspepsia. The work exacted will be enough to make leisure delightful, but not enough to produce exhaustion. Since men will not be tired in their spare time, they will not demand only such amusements as are passive and vapid. At least one per cent will probably devote the time not spent in professional work to pursuits of some public importance, and, since they will not depend upon these pursuits for their livelihood, their originality will be unhampered, and there will be no need to conform to the standards set by elderly pundits. But it is not only in these exceptional cases that the advantages of leisure will appear. Ordinary men and women, having the opportunity of a happy life, will become more kindly and less persecuting and less inclined to view others with suspicion. The taste for war will die out, partly for this reason, and partly because it will involve long and severe work for all. Good nature is, of all moral qualities, the one that the world needs most, and good nature is the result of ease and security, not of a life of arduous struggle. Modern methods of production have given us the possibility of ease and security for all; we have chosen, instead, to have overwork for some and starvation for others. Hitherto we have continued to be as energetic as we were before there were machines; in this we have been foolish, but there is no reason to go on being foolish forever. <>

[Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now](#) by Asma Naeem with contributions by Penley Knipe, Alexander Nemerov, Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw, and Anne Verplanck [National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution in association with Princeton University Press, 9780691180588]

The first book highlighting the historical roots and contemporary implications of the silhouette as an American art form

Before the advent of photography in 1839, Americans were consumed by the fashion for silhouette portraits. Economical in every sense, the small, stark profiles cost far less than oil paintings and could be made in minutes. [Black Out](#), the first major publication to focus on the development of silhouettes, gathers leading experts to shed light on the surprisingly complex historical, political, and social underpinnings of this ostensibly simple art

form. In its examination of portraits by acclaimed silhouettists, such as Auguste Edouart and William Bache, this richly illustrated volume explores likenesses of everyone from presidents and celebrities to everyday citizens and enslaved people. Ultimately, the book reveals how silhouettes registered the paradoxes of the unstable young nation, roiling with tensions over slavery and political independence.

Primarily tracing the rise of the silhouette in the decades leading up to the Civil War, [Black Out](#) also considers the ubiquity of the genre today, particularly in contemporary art. Using silhouettes to address such themes as race, identity, and the notion of the digital self, the four featured living artists--Kara Walker, Kristi Malakoff, Kumi Yamashita, and Camille Utterback—all take the silhouette to unique and fascinating new heights.

Presenting the distinctly American story behind silhouettes, [Black Out](#) vividly delves into the historical roots and contemporary interpretations of this evocative, ever popular form of portraiture.

Exhibition Schedule: National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., May 11, 2018 - March 10, 2019

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### Director's Foreward

[Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now](#) is the first major exhibition to trace the development of the silhouette, shedding light on the surprisingly complex historical, political, and social aspects of this ostensibly simplistic art form. The show primarily examines the rise of the genre in the decades leading up to the Civil War but also reveals the lasting power of the silhouette by looking at how artists today imaginatively incorporate them into their work. Thus, *Black Out* explores the profound connections between past and present, and it does so with an unprecedented display of spectacular, dizzying contemporary art installations alongside more quiet, albeit equally moving, historical silhouettes, many of which come from our collection. I can think of no better way to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the National Portrait Gallery, the wide-ranging and surprising treasures of the museum, and the vibrancy of portraiture.

The title of the show, [Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now](#), lends itself to more than one interpretation and intentionally evokes visual opposites. Consider black versus white, what is seen versus what is not seen, the positive space of the paper versus the negative space of the cutout. To "black out" can, of course, mean to temporarily lose consciousness, vision, or memory, but it can also be defined as keeping something—or in this case, someone—in the dark, or even erasing them from history. This is significant, because in many ways, those who produced silhouettes in the United States during the nineteenth century, such as the enslaved artist Moses Williams or the disabled female "paper cutter" Martha Ann Honeywell, have been "blackened out," or, rather, "blocked out" of the historical and art historical narrative. Having the chance to insert them into our collective memory aids in the recovery of histories that have—until now—been lost. In addition to the number of silhouette artists who have long been forgotten, countless sitters who could only afford this

egalitarian form of portraiture, notably Native Americans and enslaved African Americans, have been left in the shadows.



Since its opening in 1968, the National Portrait Gallery has become more and more aware of erasures in history and the role that the museum can play in addressing them. In the beginning, only

painting and sculpture, or what was deemed "high art," was considered worthy of acquisition, and it was only in 1974 that the Portrait Gallery received congressional approval to collect works on paper. Given that the Portrait Gallery has not had much time to acquire silhouettes, it is remarkable that the collection presently holds more than one thousand of these unique likenesses; although, admittedly, a sizable portion of these came to us through an incredible gift by Robert L. McNeil Jr., who generously donated a group of portraits by the acclaimed silhouett-ist August Edouart.

Black Out recognizes how much—or rather, how little—the complicated double-meanings of silhouettes have changed over time. The show features the work of four female contemporary artists: Kristi Malakoff, Camille Utterback, Kumi Yamashita, and Kara Walker. Malakoff plays with the dichotomy between "high art" versus "craft" through her oversized Maibaum. Camille Utterback has extended the technologies behind machine-made silhouettes to include computers and coding. Kumi Yamashita turns shadows onto herself and conflates the practice of silhouettes using Asian traditions of origami and her own hybrid cultural identity. Meanwhile, Kara Walker's narrative of antebellum plantation life echoes the violence—and delicate beauty—of cut paper by creating nightmarish vignettes where black bodies perform in the shadows of white oppression. It is at once thrilling to witness how the production of silhouettes has evolved over the past two centuries and revelatory to see how some of the issues pertaining to the silhouette, including the exploration of identity, class, and race, have remained the same.

[Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now](#) owes its genesis to Dr. Asma Naeem, the National Portrait Gallery's curator of prints, drawings, and media arts. I extend my deepest thanks to Asma for conceiving of such an original and meaningful exhibition and for writing a beautiful lead essay that will encourage current and future scholars to ask more questions about this understudied art form. The show not only brings our collection of silhouettes to the fore but also investigates how enslaved individuals and disabled people were imaged. I commend Asma for her continuing commitment to and focus on representations of

those who are too often relegated to the margins of history.

Kim Sajet, Director, National Portrait Gallery

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Considering how America's spatial and social boundaries were continuously being drawn, erased, and redrawn between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, as the young country cut its ties with England and tested its ideals as a new nation, as it both slowly expanded with the Louisiana Purchase and Manifest Destiny and contracted with mounting regional divisions over slavery, as towns and rivers were named and renamed, as enslaved bodies were shipped in and natives were forced out, as new histories were forged and previous ones forgotten, as financial panics and banking systems swelled and dissipated, and as time and distance collapsed with the railroad and telegraph, it is rather strange that the new citizens of this emerging nation turned to the obscure art form of the silhouette—profiled portraits cut from paper—when deciding how to be imaged. Indeed, during this time, hundreds of thousands of Americans hung silhouettes on their parlor walls or pasted them into scrapbooks as family mementos. Of course, because they were far more affordable than oil paintings, and were made quickly, and in multiples, silhouettes were bound to be hugely popular and certainly democratized portraiture well before the advent of photography in 1839.

But beyond such practical reasons, the question remains why the art of silhouettes captured the imaginations of broad swaths of American people when so much—so many issues about national identity, selfhood, and equality—hung in the balance. More fundamentally, how did an art form that rendered everyone pitch black flourish, particularly at a time when the very concept of "blackness" was being contested as an alleged marker of inferiority or property far and wide—on ships, across oceans, on plantations, and at public lecterns? And, more recently, why is it that silhouettes have remained such an important form of expression to this day? [Black Out: Silhouettes Then and Now](#) considers these questions while exploring silhouettes in terms of their deep historical roots and powerful contemporary

presence. Its scope is part biography and material culture, in terms of the National Portrait Gallery's extensive collection and the many significant objects lent by other institutions, and part contemporary art, in terms of the bold, imaginative ways artists are conceptualizing silhouettes today.



*Fischbach: Silhouettes*

**Silhouette Self-Portrait of W. Fischbach, 1875-99, Cut paper on paper, 8.5x7cm (3 3/8x2 3/4in.) RKD—Netherlands Institute for Art History, The Hague**

As this suggests, [Black Out](#) will not adhere to traditional art historical frameworks. Part of this is due to the fact that the history of silhouettes has received scant scholarly attention in the first place. Until now, silhouettes have been positioned in the art world as craftwork and antique collectibles. As Emily Jackson wrote in her 1911 publication *The History of the Silhouette*, "At its best, black profile portraiture is a thing of real beauty, almost worthy to take its place with the best miniature painting; at its worst, it is a quaintly appealing handicraft, revealing the fashions and foibles, the intimate domestic life and conventions of its day." Marked

with such phrases as "almost worthy," Jackson's description is telling, both as an attempt to promote silhouettes almost to the level of miniature painting and as a way to demote the worst renditions as handicraft.

Not surprisingly, the majority of the publications on the art form are predicated on one of these two strands of thought.<sup>1</sup> The notable exceptions that examine silhouettes in a trenchant historical or art historical context are Andrew Oliver's 1977 catalogue for the National Portrait Gallery's collection of silhouettes by Auguste Edouart, Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw's study of contemporary artist Kara Walker and nineteenth-century silhouettist Moses Williams, Wendy Bellion's essay on the direct relationship between silhouettes and democracy, and Anne Verplanck's scholarship on nineteenth-century Pennsylvania Quaker silhouettes.<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Shaw's writing, there has been little analysis of why silhouettes retain such currency in our cultural landscape today. Thus, the aim of this catalogue is twofold: to investigate the historical underpinnings of silhouettes and to present the work of four living artists—Kristi Malakoff, Camille Utterback, Kara Walker, and Kumi Yamashita—in juxtaposition with the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art that each deconstructs.

Admittedly, much of this volume will linger in the past, with the hopes that scholars will further unravel the entangled threads between the historical and contemporary work discussed in the pages that follow. My essay argues that historical silhouettes were in certain ways the perfect aesthetic vehicle for a country roiling between moral and philosophical polarities regarding such issues as slavery and colonial independence. Silhouettes were a reconciling of paradoxes, not only aesthetic but also political and social, in terms of their merging of high and popular culture, their instability as fine art and handicraft, and their slippages between whiteness and blackness. As I argue, contemporary artists continue to manipulate these paradoxes. In the next two essays, Alexander Nemerov and Gwendolyn DuBois Shaw each probe the ontological and cultural contours of the remarkable worlds of unconventional nineteenth-century silhouettists Martha Ann Honeywell and

Moses Williams, respectively. Nemerov connects Honeywell and her ability to make minuscule cuttings to nineteenth-century ideas on the divine cosmos and the search for self-discovery by her contemporary Margaret Fuller. Looking at identity through a different lens, Shaw explores how the same racializing hierarchies that permitted Williams to be a silhouette cutter inflected the profile imaging of Native American delegations visiting Thomas Jefferson in the early 1800s. In the final essay, conservator Penley Knipe carefully examines silhouettes from the inside out, revealing various aspects of their material composition that many readers will find surprising.

Ultimately, the earlier objects in this volume point to the historical complexities of the diverse fabric of our country and pry open the previously shuttered lives of early American citizens; many who, like Flora, a nineteen-year-old enslaved woman, or Sylvia Drake and Charity Bryant, a same-sex couple, would otherwise be overlooked in normative hierarchies of power and wealth but for their likeness being captured in silhouette. The later objects reveal how four contemporary artists appropriate the silhouette tradition to create works that, much like their historical counterparts, put pressure on conceptualizations of identity, social relations, and portraiture as cultural document. Not only does this volume deepen our understanding of how Americans—women, men, black, white, statesmen, laborers—wanted to see themselves in the years of the Early Republic, but it also opens new interpretative pathways between our past and present in terms of how period notions of individualism, race, and power, and even our digital selves, can be critiqued through the medium of portraiture.

Asma Naeem, Curator of Prints, Drawings, and Media Arts, National Portrait Gallery <>

[Claude Lévi-Strauss: A Critical Study of His Thought](#) by Maurice Godelier, translated by Nora Scott [Verso, 9781784787073]

*One of the world's leading anthropologists assesses the work of the founder of structural anthropology*

Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss was among the most influential thinkers of the 20th century. In this

rigorous study, Maurice Godelier traces the evolution of his thought. Focusing primarily on Lévi-Strauss' analysis of kinship and myth, Godelier provides an assessment of his intellectual achievements and legacy. Meticulously researched, Claude Lévi-Strauss is written in a clear and accessible style. The culmination of decades of engagement with Lévi-Strauss' work, this book will prove indispensable to students of Lévi-Strauss' thought and structural anthropology more generally.

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Excerpt: On 30 October 2009, death brought to a close the final chapter of the life and work of Claude Lévi-Strauss. He had produced an immense body of work - scientific and literary, multifaceted, uncommonly powerful and creative - and his bold hypotheses, irritatingly rigorous demonstrations, and surprising and dazzling conclusions over more than half a century had shaken up and enriched not only anthropology, his own discipline, but the entire field of the human and social sciences.

In 1945, Lévi-Strauss was still an unfamiliar name, especially in France, when he published his first major theoretical article.' In it he boldly challenged the status quo of all these disciplines by declaring that the use of the principles and methods of structural analysis would soon deeply modify our understanding of kinship, myths, art, social organizations and so on - just as they had recently done in the field of linguistics.

In 1947, the promise was kept and the challenge met, with the publication of the French edition of *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Then, over the space of five decades, a succession of essential works of reference attested time and again to the

same creative power: *The Savage Mind* (published in French in 1962), the *Mythology* series (four volumes 1964-1971, titled variously *Mythologiques* or *Introduction to the Science of Mythology*, the initial title), *The Way of the Masks* (French, 1975), *The Jealous Potter* (French, 1985) and *The Story of Lynx* (French, 1984), to cite only a few of the some twenty books, not to mention the 200 articles.

Lévi-Strauss quickly became famous in France, where he had chosen to pursue his career in research and teaching, and even more quickly won international celebrity, as attested by the many debates, quarrels, symposia and publications in all languages that greeted the appearance of each new work.

Looking back, it is clear that Lévi-Strauss's fame - the status and impact of his work on the scientific and literary community, but also on the general public - breaks down into two phases: the first from 1945 to around 1980, and the second to 2000 or slightly later.

During the first phase, his renown grew quickly, and his publications had an impact on an increasing number of areas and circles, and in a growing number of Western countries. He was seen as providing new foundations for not only anthropology and the social sciences, but also the criticism of literature and art. It was in this period that Lévi-Strauss would twice expose the principles and demonstrate the effectiveness of structural analysis, by publishing first of all *Structural Anthropology* (French, 1958) and then *Structural Anthropology, Volume 2* (French, 1973), which he saw as manifestos.

Ten years later, in 1983, he dropped the title 'Anthropologie structurale trois' for a new book, which would become *The View from Afar*. In 1988, he explained himself in an interview with Didier Eribon, who asked him the reason for this decision:

in the meantime, the word 'structuralism' had become so degraded and was the victim of such abuse that no one had any idea what it meant. I continued to know, but I'm not sure that this would have been true of my readers ... The educated public in France is bulimic. For a while, it fed on structuralism. People thought it carried a

message. That fashion has passed ... Simply because structuralism was - and continues to be - a type of inquiry far removed from the major occupations of our contemporaries.

It may be that Lévi-Strauss already no longer believed, as he had written in 1956, that anthropology, after the aristocratic humanism of the Renaissance and the bourgeois humanism of the nineteenth century ... marks the advent, for the finite world which our planet has become, of a double universal humanism ... a democratic humanism in opposition to those preceding it and created from privileged civilizations for the privileged classes, [and which] calls for the reconciliation of man and nature in a generalized humanism.

Despite these declarations, Lévi-Strauss would never cease to send out messages to humanity. Some were positive, like certain passages in the three lectures he gave in Japan in 1986, published only after his death, as *Anthropology Confronts the Problems of the Modern World* (French, 2011); others negative and pessimistic, like the closing passage of *The Naked Man* (French, 1971), or his praise of Montaigne and the duty to live 'as though life had meaning', in the penultimate chapter of *The Story of Lynx* (French, 1991). In the conclusion to the present work, I will analyse the various positions Lévi-Strauss adopted over his lifetime on history and on the future of humankind.

But, as early as 1965, Lévi-Strauss had remarked on the deep misunderstanding that had grown up between structuralism and literary criticism:

The fundamental vice of literary criticism with structuralist pretensions stems from its too often being limited to a play of mirrors ... The work studied and the analyst's thought reflect each other, and we are deprived of any means of sorting out what is simply received from the one and what the other puts into it.

Gradually, criticism of structuralism grew as fascination with it waned, until, in 1979, in his book *The Postmodern Condition*, Jean-François Lyotard launched an attack on structuralism and Marxism, accusing Marx and Lévi-Strauss of being, each in his own way, producers, under cover of science and

objective truths, of 'grand narratives, 'meta-narratives with universal claims concerning the nature of man, history, differences between cultures, etc., rife with the arrogance of the West in the face of the rest of the world.

War had been declared on the search for structures and invariants. And though, at one time, Lévi-Strauss had joined with Althusser, Barthes and Foucault in announcing the 'death of the Subject' - a formula which, when taken out of context, sounded like pure scientism - from the 1980s we would see the triumphal return of the subject and the individual in social sciences and literary criticism. The return was both predictable and necessary, for the subject exists and individuals are, each in their own right, the actors of their own history and actors, however small, of history writ large.

Over the next twenty years, more and more scholars came to espouse 'postmodern' views and attacked the social and human sciences, deconstructing them one after the other in an attempt to bring to light the ideological biases embedded in their production, the common source of which was Western thought and its claim to universality and therefore to hegemony. Not all was negative in this critical endeavour, however: it often extended the criticisms long addressed to sociologists, historians, economists, etc. by thinkers paradoxically inspired by Marxism or structuralism. Postmodernism was also intended to provide a new understanding of humankind by paying attention to all the voices present within societies and cultures that had previously been ignored, overlooked or disdained. It posited that each of these voices would contribute its own truth, which, taken together with all the others, would constitute the many-faceted reason of humanity. These voices and discourses too would have to be deconstructed so as to reveal their own ideological biases, formed well before Western domination had overwhelmed them. The 'postmoderns' did not do this. In short, it is not easy to be rid of the problems raised by the search for objectivity in the human sciences.

Between the 1980s and 2000, Lévi-Strauss's fame and the status of his work underwent a change. He was now perceived as a great scholar continuing

his academic work on kinship, with *Anthropology and Myth* (French, 1984); Amerindian myths, with *The Story of Lynx*; or art, with *Look, Listen, Read* (French, 1993). Although the scholar was motivated, as always by desire as well as pleasure, to understand, he now declared he was convinced, like Montaigne, that 'we have no communication with Being.

Lastly, in order to grasp the nature and concatenation of the two periods characterizing this half century - without any claim to make the rapid succession of events in the world at this time, the principal reason for the rise or fall of the various intellectual trends in the West - we can assert without great risk that the geopolitical context of these events had something to do with it.

Let us cast our minds back. In 1945, the West, with the powerful help of the USSR, had just conquered a coalition of three countries - Germany, Italy and Japan - each of which claimed the right to expand their 'living space', to the detriment of their neighbours, in the name of the superiority of their race and ideologies. These ideologies - Nazism, fascism or Japanese imperialism - all combatted or rejected the idea of democracy. In the aftermath of the war, one of the most pressing needs of many researchers was therefore to understand the 'objective reasons', most often transfigured by ideology, that had led to this conflict. The individual could not be the main object of this research. How could the origin of World War II be explained by Hitler's action and Chamberlain's or Daladier's inaction alone?

The immediate consequence of the war was a new world division driven by the USSR. Communist regimes invoking Marx, Lenin and Stalin would seize power in several countries in Europe, Asia, Africa and then Latin America, and ultimately cover half the globe. Through its criticism of capitalism and Western imperialism, the 'socialist camp', as it was called in those days, attracted the sympathy of Western colonies that were now demanding their independence.

As of 1950, the conflict was openly engaged between the two economic and political systems now splitting the world. The West already felt a sustained ideological threat from the socialist



countries. Communist ideology held up the virtues of a planned, centralized economy in the more in keeping with their desires and interests; nevertheless, the success of such undertakings will never depend on the individual alone, but on the social forces he or she is able to mobilize, and the degree of resistance advocates of the old system are capable of mounting.

To discover the internal working logic of social systems and the structures that explain this logic, to analyse the conditions in which these systems have or have not managed to reproduce or transform themselves, and to measure the actual role played by the individuals belonging to these systems in their emergence, reproduction or disappearance: these are some of the basic goals that constitute the common ambition and horizon of the research conducted separately by the different social and human sciences, whatever fashions may accompany their development. It is in this way that la mode condemned Lévi-Strauss's work to a sort of scientific death, by first glorifying and then rejecting and forgetting it, without this glory or neglect ever having rested on a true effort at scientific evaluation.

The preceding explains why I wrote this book. To my mind, Lévi-Strauss is one of the twentieth-century thinkers who made the greatest strides toward discovering and analysing the structures of the human mind and those of several domains of social life - kinship relations, rites and myths, art, etc. From the outset, he went to the heart of the relationship between systems and individuals as subjects, always emphasizing the role of structures rather than that of subjects. For this he was criticized, and the criticism was necessary. But a large portion of his theses and conclusions constitute an achievement on which we can build if we want to continue to progress in our knowledge of humankind. It is true, however, that other aspects of his work are no longer admissible as they stand. It is to this critical evaluation that the present book is also devoted, and I will base my re-reading on the two domains with which I am most familiar: the study of kinship and that of myths and mythical thought.

The corpus of Lévi-Strauss's work forms a very long braid, with five interlacing strands that traverse time to the tune of some 200 articles and twenty-one books that make up this oeuvre. The five strands reflect the five domains he incessantly explored. They are:

- kinship
- myths and mythical thought
- art
- the principles and methods of structural analysis, as well as the relations entertained by structural anthropology with linguistics, history, philosophy, mathematics, but also with Marx, Freud, Rousseau, Gobineau, etc.
- the history and assessment of the future of humanity.

These five strands have never ceased to be intertwined even though, depending on the era, one sometimes assumes more importance than others, for instance the study of kinship during the first part of his career, or that of myths and mythical thought in the second part.

Of these five domains, I will leave aside art, for I claim no competence that would allow me to assess, for instance, what Lévi-Strauss wrote about music in general and Wagner and Rameau in particular, about serial music, or his negative comments on Picasso and modern painting, among others.<sup>1</sup> A few bibliographic references will suffice to indicate his continued interest in art. In one of his first major articles, concerning 'Split Representation in the Art of Asia and America', published in the United States in the journal *Renaissance* in 1945, he compared the style and motifs of ancient Chinese bronzes, Maori carvings and those of Northwest American Indians, boldly advancing the hypothesis that there had existed a very ancient cradle of culture common to the populations that had reached America from Asia and those that had left South China and the region of Taiwan to settle the Pacific islands and become what are now known as Polynesians. The last book published during his lifetime, *Look, Listen, Read* (French, 1993) analysed the music of Rameau and the painting of Poussin.

In the meantime, the publisher Skira brought out a superb book entitled *La Voie des masques* (1975), later published in English as *The Way of the Masks*, to which I will return, for it was in attempting to define the nature of the kinship systems in the societies that made and used these masks - the Kwakiutl, Tlingit, Nootka, Tsimshian, Haida, etc., the complexity of whose systems had nearly defeated Franz Boas - that Lévi-Strauss came to develop the concept of 'house'. He would later look for 'house' systems on all continents and continued to develop his analysis from 1976 to 1982, the year of his final lesson at the Collège de France. For this reason, *The Way of the Masks* serves as an introduction to the texts published in *Anthropology and Myth* (French, 1984), which sum up his thinking.

The fourth strand of the braid is composed of the texts in which Lévi-Strauss exposed the principles and methods of structural analysis, collected or dispersed in four works: *Structural Anthropology* (French, 1968), *The Savage Mind* (French, 1962), *Structural Anthropology, volume II* (French, 1973) and *The View from Afar* (French, 1983). To these we can add *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss* (French, 1961), edited by Georges Charbonnier," and another *Conversations with Claude Lévi-Strauss* conducted and edited by Didier Eribon (1988, expanded 2001). These texts are indispensable for anyone wishing to understand what structural analysis is and what it purports to contribute, and I will refer to them often in the course of this book.

The fifth and last strand of the braid unrolls the sequence of texts in which Lévi-Strauss conducted a critical re-examination of the notions of race, culture, progress, Western supremacy, and resistance to development, as well as the notions of human condition, history and the future of humanity.

In 'Race and History', first published in 1952, Lévi-Strauss was already analysing the notion of progress, and he demonstrated the absence of objective criteria that would allow one to compare and judge all societies from all periods. He was also developing the distinction between cumulative history and stationary history. In 1954, he defined anthropology as the study of 'those forms of social life - of which the so-called primitive societies are merely the most readily identifiable and most

developed examples - whose degree of authenticity is estimated according to the scope and variety of the concrete relations between individuals'. This distinction between 'authentic societies' and 'unauthentic societies' (societies of modern man) would be found again in a short book published posthumously, *Anthropology Confronts the Problems of the Modern World* (French, 2011).

In 1956 the idea appeared that anthropology would be the bearer of a new, democratic and generalized humanism insofar as it would imply, in addition to respect for human beings, respect for nature. In 1963, Lévi-Strauss raised the problem of cultural discontinuities and the sources of resistance to development found among many peoples subjected by the West. In 1971, *The Naked Man* ended on a vision of what will remain of humans and their works, namely 'nothing.' In 1986, the first of three lectures he gave in Japan announced 'the end of Western cultural supremacy', and he saw in the example of Japan, which combined tradition and industrial modernity, the promise of a possible revival of humanity's cultural diversity. In 2001 he explored the relationship between 'productivity and the human condition;" and in 2003, the last article he wrote would remind us once again that 'the experience of nature is a fundamental need'. Given the same man asserted, as early as 1973, that 'structuralism did not carry a message' and his research 'was far removed from the major preoccupations of our contemporaries', he was no doubt right to remark to Maurice Olender, in 1976, that 'one is the last to know oneself'. I will return in my conclusion to the (increasingly pessimistic and negative) messages that Lévi-Strauss conveyed at the end of his life on the future of humanity. <>

[What Is Real?: The Unfinished Quest for the Meaning of Quantum Physics](#) by Adam Becker [Basic Books, 9780465096053]

The untold story of the heretical thinkers who dared to question the nature of our quantum universe

Every physicist agrees quantum mechanics is among humanity's finest scientific achievements. But ask what it means, and the result will be a brawl. For a century, most physicists have followed Niels Bohr's Copenhagen interpretation and dismissed questions

about the reality underlying quantum physics as meaningless. A mishmash of solipsism and poor reasoning, Copenhagen endured, as Bohr's students vigorously protected his legacy, and the physics community favored practical experiments over philosophical arguments. As a result, questioning the status quo long meant professional ruin. And yet, from the 1920s to today, physicists like John Bell, David Bohm, and Hugh Everett persisted in seeking the true meaning of quantum mechanics. [What Is Real?](#) is the gripping story of this battle of ideas and the courageous scientists who dared to stand up for truth.

From wandering around the cosmos, I somehow ended up trying to understand what quantum physics was talking about. Not quite as much of a disconnect as you might imagine seeing that particle physicists began expanding their interests into cosmology in the 1970s in search of new grand unified theories, something that had long been their holy grail.

First googling the term "quantum", [Wikipedia: In physics, a quantum is the minimum amount of any physical entity involved in an interaction.], I was fortunate in putting my hands on the recently published work of Adam Becker. Anyone interested in, or even slightly curious about, the fundamental nature of the physical world we inhabit will likely benefit from and enjoy the storytelling style of Becker, as I did, following the tale of how this world's most currently eminent scientists have bickered about what is really real for almost a century now. From the debates between Danish physicist Niels Bohr and Albert Einstein to Schrodinger's cat to Hugh Everett's suggestion that all is explained by the theory of parallel universes, we are introduced to a science of physics that challenges the imagination.

In the midst of this, while the reader is given a sampling of the studies being engaged in, Becker demonstrates how the socio-political environment within which the work is being attempted has influenced the structure of the research being done. Science, after all, works within the world in which we all live and only occasionally breaks free to expand our thinking. This is a telling that goes beyond equations into a very human history of how

we stumble sometimes towards new learning and the forces that may help or hinder us.

I recommend this as an entertaining and educational trip to the least possible speck of what is considered (by some) to be real to find out that it won't stand still long enough for us to understand it, measure it, or agree about what it is. Somehow, I find it reassuring that the mystery is still there. <>

[After Derrida: Literature, Theory and Criticism in the 21st Century](#) edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté [After Series, Cambridge University Press, 9781108426107]

This collection of essays explores the main concepts and methods of reading launched by French philosopher Jacques Derrida who died in 2004. Derrida exerted a huge influence on literary critics in the 1980s, but later there was a backlash against his theories. Today, one witnesses a general return to his way of reading literature, the rationale of which is detailed and explained in the essays. The authors, both well-known and younger specialists, give many precise examples of how Derrida, who always remained at the cusp between literature and philosophy, posed fundamental questions and thus changed the field of literary criticism, especially with regard to poetry. The contributors also highlight the way Derrida made spectacular interventions in feminism, psychoanalytic studies, animal studies, digital humanities and post-colonial studies.

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Excerpt: If we agree that there can be no easy way of summarizing the main concepts that would underpin a philosophy of the text identified with "deconstruction," this comes from the fact that deconstruction should be apprehended first by its framing effects, that is by considering the general questions it poses, then by its style, not only Derrida's idiosyncratic style but also the style of other investigations looking closely at certain texts, and finally by posing the question of its futurity — a future often thematized in advance given an almost obsessive concern with issues of historicity and globality, in texts that move from the biology of bodies that have been affected by allergies to the Other to patterns of auto-immunization often discussed by the later Derrida, always pointing to societal evolutions that usher in a more and more technological world. Hence the three sections that organize the presentations of our authors who all contribute original essays specially commissioned for this collection.

These authors draw new maps after the dust of the old wars has settled. Getting ready for new skirmishes, they recapitulate what has been gained in order to assess where we stand today. The "Frames" section begins with essays exploring key theoretical frameworks, the main contexts, discourses, and critical conversations from which Derrida's analyses emerge. The "Focus" section then pays more attention to certain applications of deconstruction, mostly in the literary domain. In "Futures," the contributors examine Derrida's influence and its outreach into foreseeable

conversations to come, so as to limn new fields impacted by deconstruction like animal studies, literature and law studies, and world literature and its interpretive communities, and the digital humanities.

The "Frames" section starts by revisiting the place Derrida occupied in the history of French critical thought, a half-century of rapid advances underpinned by the evolution of the concept of writing launched by Roland Barthes's groundbreaking 1953 Writing Degree Zero and culminating with Jacques Rancière's 1998 Mute Speech. As I have suggested earlier in this introduction, this excellent survey of the evolution of French literature from the Romantics (mostly Victor Hugo) to Gustave Flaubert and Marcel Proust was inspired by Derrida's grammatology. If there cannot be a positive or historical grammatology, nor any continuous genealogy, writing surfaces as a key question for historicist studies in the field of literary studies and digital humanities: writing embodies the rejection of all norms and regimes of expression in the name of an emerging democracy. All topics are available to writers suddenly allowed to say anything that comes to mind. Mute Speech confirms indirectly (because the name of Derrida is never mentioned) the return of the problematic of "grammatology"; its questions turn historical — they are applicable to particular authors and definable periods — while considering the structural conditions of literature in general.

Derrida's problematic of writing was honed after reading key literary texts, from Gide and Mallarmé to Joyce and Pound, from Rousseau to Artaud, Ponge and Celan. Quite early, Joyce was an unexpected source of inspiration for Derrida as he struggled with Husserl's treatment of writing. Then in *Ulysses Gramophone*, Derrida deconstructed the notion of a Joycean "competence" and the idea that it could be measured by the number of hours spent pondering admittedly intractable texts. Joyce was the first modernist author to be taken seriously by Derrida as a literary machine whose force, once unleashed, would disrupt the entire philosophical machine of phenomenology, and beyond that, of speculative idealism. Joyce became the rival of Husserl as they were momentarily paired in Derrida's Introduction

to Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*. Derrida had perceived a tension between the transcendental foundation of subjectivity attempted by Husserl and the historicism embraced by Joyce in the wake of Vico, Hegel, and Marx. If Husserl had defined the role of tradition and transmission in the case of anonymous mathematical or geometrical "idealities," one would want to know whether this was the case with literary idealities.

Derrida had caught phenomenology hesitating about literature — this has remained his point of departure. Husserl had feared that literature, and by extension all writing, that is writing as such, might undermine the possibility of a foundation, insofar the subjective foundation he was after ought to be pinned to a living identity of the self with the self. By slipping in the issue of literature, therefore of cultural traces, and by extension of technology, Derrida ushered in a concept of writing defined as endless iterability. This is the root of the complex process of mediation that he named *différance*. The logic of iterable differences would be allegorized by Joyce first not just because he was the "most Hegelian of all writers" (Hegel's system would also be affected by the same logic of writing, as Glas demonstrates), but because *Finnegans Wake* had staged a fierce struggle between rival brothers, Shaun the political orator and Shem the penman, figuring the writer in general. As Lacan did a few years later, Joyce had turned into a symptomatic allegory of the letter and literature for Derrida. In the end, more than an alternative to phenomenology, Joyce's texts would embody a radical power of affirmation condensed in Molly Bloom's "yes" to love and life.

Beckett pushed further the investigations of the paradoxes of speaking-as-one-lives as opposed to writing-as-one-dies. Even if Derrida never discussed him directly, he acknowledged their philosophical and literary proximity. However, if one looks at Derrida's discussions of poetry as several contributors do in this volume, or at his confrontation with Joyce and Beckett, one verifies that his practice as a reader could never be reduced to a program, deconstructive or not. Indeed, if Derrida aimed at deconstructing those pesky institutions of knowledge that predetermine our response to texts and thus prevent the necessary openness to literary

novelty he requires, what he highlighted in Joyce's texts was their extraordinary power of affirmation.

If Joyce helped Derrida throw a wrench into the works of Husserl's phenomenology, one cannot forget how much deconstruction owes to Heidegger's conflicted relation with his former master Husserl. Heidegger never used the term of "deconstruction," but various usages of terms like *Abbau* and *Destruktion* anticipate Derrida's coining. Most commentators have noted that references to Heidegger are a regular feature in Derrida's essays from the beginning to the end of his career. It was thus important to begin this volume with an essay that pays homage to this proximity. In "The Instant of Their Debt: Derrida with Freud and Heidegger in Greece," Vassiliki Kolocotroni goes back to a scene Freud experienced when he visited the Acropolis: a sudden moment of derealization, an awareness that the present scene, because it was loaded with too much expectation, cannot be construed as a present any longer but offers a baffling example of originary repetition. Using this shared "uncanny" sense of place as a point of departure, Kolocotroni compares the itineraries of two similarly belated travelers to Greece, Derrida and Heidegger. Both Derrida and Heidegger evoke their visits to Athens in terms of uncanny anticipation, which leads them to meditate similarly on death, debt, and memory. Kolocotroni focuses on their parallel accounts of stays in Greece, Athens, *Still Remains* from 1996 and *Sojourns* from 1962, so as to draw out the motif of modernity's errancy and textual debts. Questioning the very possibility of return, Heidegger's rumination on Greece suggests deferral as well as deference in the presence of empty temples and still inhabited auratic words. Derrida's visit to Greece's "luminous memory" is likewise preoccupied with language and death. Derrida dwells on what remains as ruin and residence, while reflecting on photographic stills, images keeping a testimony of mourning and (re)collective thinking. Derrida catches echoes of these themes in the lives, deaths, and works of Socrates, Freud, Heidegger, and Blanchot. Echoing Blanchot's famous novel, Derrida will be seen composing a "death sentence" of his own. Kolocotroni evokes Blanchot's autobiographical text, "The Instant of My Death," abundantly

commented by Derrida, to suggest that creativity implies a debt to death condensed in the economy of writing.

Following from the mention of Freud, the essay by Andrea Hurst, the author of *Derrida Vis-à-Vis Lacan: Interweaving Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis*, examines Derrida's contentious and productive interaction with psychoanalysis. "Derrida and the Psychoanalysis of Culture" discusses and ends up querying Sarah Kofman's statement that deconstruction consisted in a "psychoanalysis of philosophy," a statement Derrida later rejected in no uncertain terms. Indeed, quite early, Derrida brought issues of paternity and Oedipal rivalries to bear on his readings of Plato and Hegel; at the same time, he was unforgiving when pointing to the metaphysical undertones he saw in Freud's texts or in Lacan's modernized Hegelianism. One can say that Derrida invented his own variety of psychoanalysis when it came to literature. His critique of Lacan's concepts such as the letter, the signifier, and the phallus testify to his immersion in a psychoanalytical discourse. Such critical readings rebounded in the work of Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy. Later, almost posthumously, Derrida made peace with Lacan. What is the place of literature, from Poe to Shakespeare, from Mallarmé to Kafka, in this protracted controversy? Can a psychoanalytical reading avoid reducing texts to examples of preestablished theories, or should one argue that the unsettling of the metaphysical tradition belongs both to psychoanalysis and to deconstruction?

Ginette Michaud's essay is linked with the preceding one insofar as Derrida kept stressing the question of femininity as a problem for psychoanalysis and for philosophy, which did not prevent him from pointing out his own difficulties with feminism. In "Derrida and Sexual Difference," Michaud reminds us that Derrida had been one of the philosophers promoting the question of sexual difference in philosophy and literature. Derrida began his inquiry by placing Jean Genet next to Hegel in *Glas*, Genet becoming another "sister" of Hegel in the process. He investigated the notion of sex and gender as a category absent from Heidegger's philosophy in *Geschlecht I and II*. Is it possible to think in terms of gender what would be

a post-Heideggerian phenomenology? Thanks to his lifelong and intimate dialogue with his friend Hélène Cixous, Derrida was made attentive to the issue of "feminine writing" more than once. From the many books written in dialogue with Cixous, can one conclude that Derrida ascribes a specific difference to texts written by women? How can one call a woman writer like Cixous a "genius"? Derrida's questions were posed to the field of gender studies via the concept of the "performative," and some of these have been deemed aggressive or offensive; they have had a lasting impact on the philosophy of drag and gender performance developed by Judith Butler. Does deconstruction confirm or invalidate the concerns of postfeminist approaches to literature? Ginette Michaud, one of the editors of the Derrida archive, answers those burning questions in a balanced manner.

A similarly querying question is tackled by Martin McQuillan when he discusses the conversations, at once cordial and critical, exchanged by Derrida and Paul de Man. In "Derrida Queries de Man: A Note on the Materiality of the Letter versus the Violence of the Letter," McQuillan examines decades of friendship between Jacques Derrida and Paul de Man without dwelling on the "scandal" that accompanied posthumous revelations about the latter's politics and private life. The controversy all but made deconstruction a liability in American universities. Paul de Man and Derrida met in 1966 during a famous conference devoted to structuralism in Baltimore, after which they maintained a productive exchange and a sincere friendship. However, de Man began by criticizing Derrida's "blindness" when reading Rousseau in *Of Grammatology*. His reading protocols complicate the strategies deployed by Derrida. For de Man, any text can appear to be already deconstructing itself, whereas for Derrida, one needs a philosophical gesture. Martin McQuillan, a reputed specialist of both authors, assesses the consequences of their confrontation. Taking, like Kolocotroni, a point of departure in well-known images, McQuillan uses Mark Tansey's emblematic painting *Derrida Queries de Man* as a starting point. Commenting on Marc Redfield's discussion in *Theory at Yale*, McQuillan unpacks the points of

contact and divergence in the work of Derrida and de Man, following their discussions of Nietzsche and Rousseau in a series of texts going from "The Rhetoric of Blindness" to Derrida's later essays on his departed friend.

The second section, "Focus," presents a close-up on one central concern in Derrida's approach to literature: how can one combine an attentiveness to the singularity of a text with the inevitable generality and repetitiveness of any method of reading? In "Derrida as Literary Reader," Derek Attridge evokes the crucial role that he himself played when he presented for the first time the vast array of concepts and protocols of reading deployed by Derrida about literature. In *Acts of Literature*, Attridge's invaluable contribution segued from his conversations with Derrida to the latter's readings of various texts, all exemplifying the need for a radical openness to literature. In this essay, Attridge starts from a tension between the apparent lack of limits of texts presented by Derrida as being without any "outside," and the interpretive communities or institutions of leaning that provide a limiting frame. If the law of any text is to question the politics of interpretation, and beyond that the political frameworks in which the interpretation takes place, how can we relate to the singularity of literary texts and respond adequately? Alluding to texts by Baudelaire, Shakespeare, Ponge, Mallarmé, Kafka, Blanchot, and Celan, Attridge shows that any author's writing can find a place in an ethical and political context enhancing deconstruction's main tenets.

Returning to the question of the singularity of literary texts, Joshua Schuster focuses on the dialogue between Celan and Derrida. In "Broken Singularities (Derrida and Celan)," Schuster pays attention to the "formal existentialism" of texts that Derrida presupposes when he reads Celan's poems as a uniquely singular "shibboleth." Celan presents his poems as philosophical "noems" that are also idiomatic, signed, and irreversibly historicized performances. Celan's work is marked by a tension between dialectical reversals like time and space, the possible and the impossible, citation and recitation, because one has to combine the logics of iteration and irreversible instances never to be repeated. The reader's task is to identify points of

no return, singular instants that will not be re-cited. If literature aims at inscribing singular moments, moments that change the conditions of events by undoing themselves, the agency of texts takes on the structure of the trace even when it presents nonreversible and non-systemizable moments.

Developing themes derived from the crossing paths of Martin Heidegger and Paul Celan, Yue Zhuo poses a similar question about the essence of poetry. In "Derrida and the Essence of Poetry," Zhuo argues that Derrida aimed at defining an essence, the essence of poetry, by moving from readings of poets like Antonin Artaud and Paul Valéry to an engagement with the signatures of poets like Paul Celan and Francis Ponge. The starting point will be Derrida's surprising account of the "thing" we call poetry. In "Che cosa e la poesia?" Derrida implicitly dialogued with Heidegger's conception of poetry before developing his own myth: poetry is seen as a little hedgehog, an animal lying on the side of the road; moreover, poetry is defined as a text requesting to be learned by heart. How can one reconcile this statement with the problematic of writing that dominated in Derrida's earlier texts? How can Derrida point to the "heart" as the organ of poetry? In order to analyze his statements about poetry, Zhuo discusses first how Paul de Man negotiated between Hegel, Hölderlin, and Heidegger before presenting Derrida's readings of Celan and then of Paul Valéry, Francis Ponge, and Antonin Artaud. Another French poet, Stéphane Mallarmé, provides the opportunity for a last dialogue, the contentious conversation between Derrida and Alain Badiou. Laurent Milesi tackles their interaction in "From Mallarmé to the Event: Badiou after Derrida." The writings of Mallarmé durably inspired both philosophers. If Badiou's Platonic foundationalism clashes with Derrida's anti-foundationalism, both engage with the poetry of Mallarmé in order to posit an "experience of the impossible." This experience ushers in the notion of an event to which any subject will be connected by an inner necessity, whether it be an ethical responsibility or a fidelity to a truth that has brought something radically new. Milesi highlights points of convergence and divergence: if both philosophers adhere to diverging concepts of the

trace, Badiou appropriated Derrida's concept of dissemination while Derrida used Badiou's idea of subtraction. Their dialogue took a more positive turn after 2000, when both thinkers were united by a common concern for the experience of the event as both undecidable and impossible, which led them to dismantle generalities and posit teeming irreducible singularities.

The third section, "Futures," discusses topics that point to an elsewhere, to other domains deconstruction has opened up. One of these is what is currently called animal studies. For Derrida, the animal poses a decisive question that is also the issue of the language we use. Taking the coining of "animot" as a point of departure, Jane Goldman starts from Derrida's posthumous book *The Animal That Therefore I Am* to investigate the contested divide between humans and animals. Derrida was instrumental in launching animal studies in the literary field given a relentless criticism of all previous writers who had discussed animals, but when he reviewed and attacked canonical analyses of animality presented by Heidegger, Lacan, Levinas, and Agamben, he found his strongest allies among poets. How does Derrida allow us to read the animal in literature? Goldman tackles this question, already broached in the collection [The Animal Question in Deconstruction](#) (2013), by adducing examples from authors like Daniel Defoe, Paul Celan, and Virginia Woolf. Against Robinson Crusoe's dog introduced in the seminar *The Beast and the Sovereign*, against Emmanuel Levinas's Kantian dog critically discussed in [The Animal That Therefore I Am](#) — unlike Virginia Woolf, a modernist writer who had found an original strategy to give voice to Flush, a cocker spaniel — Derrida chose to follow his unnamed female cat, even if this meant doggedly questioning the limit separating humans from animals.

It is to a similar expansion of deconstruction that Jen Hui Bon Hoa invites us. In "Deconstruction, Collectivity, and World Literature," she interrogates a wider community of readers. Derrida has observed that while no text can escape the regulatory regimes of genre, such a participation in genres never amounts to a belonging. Can one extrapolate a principle of non-identitarian community from Derrida's concept of participation

without belonging? Derrida shows that texts are always already enmeshed in identity politics relying on communities of genre while not completely identified with them. In a famous 1983 essay on "inoperative communities," Jean-Luc Nancy had privileged indetermination facing genres; however, this position bars him from addressing sociohistorical particularity, a tendency that becomes more marked in Giorgio Agamben's theories of community. Derrida indicates a solution by positing not an originary indetermination but the proliferation of determinations. These principles of community are brought to bear on concepts of cosmopolitanism and translation as they have been used in debates on world literature with Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Jacques Rancière, and Emily Apter. Here, examples like Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and Viet Thanh Nguyen's 2015 novel *The Sympathizer* are used to verify the relevance of Derrida's view that the premise of originary dispossession is the founding condition of politics today and in the future.

Another topic that forces us to pose the question of the future is the couple formed by deconstruction and justice. In "Literature Calls Justice: Deconstruction's 'Coming-to-Terms' with Literature," Elisabeth Weber examines Derrida's famous statement that justice is the only concept that cannot be deconstructed. In the last decade of his career, Derrida developed the notion of a "democracy to come" and criticized the death penalty and the politics of apartheid. The most influential book of this period was no doubt *Specters of Marx*, which Weber unpacks here by looking at Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in order to open vast file of the intersections between Marxism and deconstruction, and also between literature and the law. What have been the ideological consequences of slavery in American culture? Can the Shakespearean motto of "the time is out of joint" be used to understand the legacy of Marxism today? Can we forget that the United States has condoned the usage of torture for prisoners suspected of terrorism and wages war in several countries using drones to kill unseen enemies? Weber explores how literature and critical theory contribute to a better understanding of trauma, of human rights and their violations. Derrida incites us



to reflect on concepts whose borders have become uncertain, like "the human," "rights," and "democracy." Such burning issues have often been tackled better by novelists than by ethicists and philosophers — however, they all appeal to a concept of justice, at least when they envision the future.

The future is also a central concern for Maurizio Ferraris, a specialist of the technology of the archive. In "The Documental Revolution and the Archives of the Future," Ferraris points out links between Derrida's philosophy of writing and recent developments of our culture characterized by an explosion of archives, records, and memory machines of all types. When we witness the "progress" of a technology that keeps producing cheaper, simpler, and more lasting ways of keeping traces of our existences, it all looks like an extension of a Derridean dream — or nightmare, perhaps. If one essential feature of human nature is a dependence on writing and memory, does this change when we are bombarded with electronic documents? 'What happens to a science of literature when its very object, the literary text, is regulated by technologies of the archive like hypertexts, e-books, the Web, YouTube, electronic blackboards, computers, databanks, etc.? Our life as humans living in society cannot subsist without such inscriptions. Records are central to our lives; literature, with its rich traditions, belongs to these testimonies. However, our society of communication has turned into a society of recording. Recordings are constructed social objects; inscriptions overflow our world and rule our lives.

Technological innovation arrives so fast that the concept of the archive has been radically transformed. Maurizio Ferraris explores the consequences of Derrida's concept of the archive from the groundbreaking Archive Fever to the overarching principle of "documentality."

The writings of Derrida provide a sustained meditation on writing, traces, and archives thanks to which we can begin to think our historical moment marked by new digital humanities, which appear as ways of quantifying the overabundant data that inundate our lives; these devices and machines manifest the emergence of a new, perhaps

monstrous or dangerous, future; but as Hölderlin said of the gods and Heidegger of technology, where there is danger, there we can find a saving grace. <>

[Philosophy and Climate Science](#) by Eric Winsberg [Cambridge University Press, 9781107195691]

There continues to be a vigorous public debate in our society about the status of climate science. Much of the skepticism voiced in this debate suffers from a lack of understanding of how the science works - in particular the complex interdisciplinary scientific modeling activities such as those which are at the heart of climate science. In this book Eric Winsberg shows clearly and accessibly how philosophy of science can contribute to our understanding of climate science, and how it can also shape climate policy debates and provide a starting point for research. Covering a wide range of topics including the nature of scientific data, modeling, and simulation, his book provides a detailed guide for those willing to look beyond ideological proclamations, and enriches our understanding of how climate science relates to important concepts such as chaos, unpredictability, and the extent of what we know.

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The philosophy of climate science is a sub-field of the philosophy of science that is growing very fast. Just a few years ago, there were only a few people who had published on this topic, but now there are dozens. There are also a growing number of aspiring philosophers in graduate school who are turning their attention to climate science as an area of science that is both extremely socially relevant and ripe for philosophical investigation. A few well-known climate scientists, including Reto Knutti, Gavin Schmidt, Leonard Smith and Jonathan Rougier, have even written papers that are explicitly intended as contributions to the philosophical literature.

The goal of this book is both to provide an introduction to this growing literature to those interested in what philosophy of science can contribute to our understanding of climate science and its role in shaping climate policy debates, as well as to advance the debate on many of its topics. The first four chapters of the book are more or less introductory, and should be accessible to anyone regardless of their background in either climate science or philosophy. The remainder of the book builds on this background. After reading the first four chapters, each of the following sections is more or less self-contained: Chapter 5 (plus the appendix), Chapters 6-9, Chapters 10-12, and Chapter 13.

"Of course not every single adherent of the scientific world-conception will be a fighter. Some glad of solitude, will lead a withdrawn existence on the icy slopes of logic." From the Vienna Circle's manifesto, *Wissenschaftliche Weltauffassung* (Hahn, Neurath and Carnap 1929)

2016 was the warmest year on record. It broke the record of 2015, which broke the record of 2014. The nine consecutive months from December 2015 to August 2016 were all record-breakingly warm. This was the fifth time in the twenty-first century that a new record had been set. All 16 of the years that have passed in the twenty-first century are among the 17 warmest on record (with 1998 rounding out the lot.) All five of the five warmest have been since 2010.

Regionally, the patterns have been a bit more complicated but reflect the underlying trend.

Ocean surface temperatures had their warmest year; all six continents experienced one of their top five warmest years on record, and Arctic sea ice experienced its smallest seasonal maximum ever and its second smallest seasonal minimum. The 13 smallest seasonal maximums have all been in the last 13 years. The melting of Arctic ice is an especially significant change in the global climate because of its feedback effect: as the temperature rises, ice melts, and melting ice reduces the amount of sunlight reflected back into space, which makes the temperature rise even more. The melting of the Arctic permafrost, moreover, could release billions of tons more carbon and methane into the atmosphere — also accelerating warming.

Precipitation patterns continued to get more extreme, with some regions experiencing record drought (especially southern Africa and Australia) and some experiencing record flooding (especially China and Argentina). Some regions experienced both. Understanding and predicting the impact of warming temperatures on regional precipitation remains a serious challenge.

Climate change is real, and it is happening in front of our eyes. And while Americans are almost evenly split with regard to whether or not they believe that human activities are the cause of these changes, the scientific community is not. The relevant experts on the climate system are virtually unanimous in their acceptance of anthropogenesis: the proposition that human activities (primarily in the form of the combustion of fossil fuels, but also the extraction of those fuels, deforestation, livestock farming, and the manufacture of concrete) are responsible for at least the bulk of those changes. Not only do climate experts unanimously hold these views. So do virtually all the members of neighboring scientific disciplines and their scientific societies.

Still, well-meaning people sometimes conflate that unanimity with the idea that anthropogenesis is an obvious truth — that it can be established with ease or simplicity. I was at a public lecture once where the speaker (a journalist) said that the truth of anthropogenesis was like  $1+1=2$ . I do not think this kind of rhetoric is helpful. One obvious danger of overstating the simplicity of the reasoning is that

it encourages poorly informed laypersons to think they can evaluate the reasoning themselves, and potentially find simple flaws in it. It's true that the greenhouse effect, which explains why the earth doesn't look like the ice planet of Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*, is a simple mechanism involving heat-trapping gasses, and one whose existence is easy to establish. And it's not hard to show that humans have been producing ever-growing quantities of those gases for over 200 years. So, there is some relatively simple reasoning, based on a simple model, that makes the hypothesis of anthropogenesis plausible and perhaps even more likely true than not. But the community of experts believes unanimously in anthropogenesis not merely because of this simple reasoning, or because of anything that should be likened to  $1+1=2$ . They believe it because of decades of painstaking work in collecting and studying data, pursuing multiple independent lines of evidence, building and studying complex models run on clusters of powerful computers, and recruiting into their ranks the expertise of literally dozens of different scientific disciplines:

Climatology, Meteorology, Atmospheric physics, Atmospheric chemistry, Solar physics, Historical climatology, Geophysics, Engineering, Geochemistry, Geology, Soil science, Oceanography, Glaciology, Paleoclimatology, Ecology, Synthetic biology, Biochemistry, Biogeography, Human geography, History, Economics, Ecological genetics, Applied mathematics, Mathematical modeling, Computer science, Statistics, and Time series analysis, just to name a few.

In short, the scientific study of the climate and its response to human activities isn't just vitally important to the future of the planet. It's also rich, interesting, complex, and deeply interconnected with almost every area of study that occupies the minds of twenty-first-century scientists. On top of all that, it is literally awash with all the conceptual, methodological, and epistemological issues that perennially preoccupy philosophers of science: the nature of scientific data and its relation to theory; the role of models and the role of computer simulations in the practical application of theory; the nature of probabilities in science and in decision

making; how to think about the latter when the probabilities available seem ineliminably imprecise; the methodology of statistical inference; the role of values in science; confirmation theory; the role of robust lines of evidence in confirming hypotheses; social epistemology (the value of consensus in science; group knowers and authors; the value of dissent) and too many others to list.

It's just the kind of scientific practice that you would expect philosophers of science to take an exceptionally keen interest in. But until relatively recently, you would have been pretty disappointed. The reasons for this are complicated. One reason is that philosophers of science tend to cluster around a small group of scientific topics, in which they collectively build expertise, and about which there is collective agreement that they are "philosophically interesting." A Martian, visiting earth, who tried to learn about the range of scientific activities in which humans engage by visiting a meeting of the Philosophy of Science Association, would find us to be very parochial in our interests.

Another reason might have to do with philosophy of science's withdrawal to "the icy slopes of logic" during the post-war McCarthyite period of American academic history, detailed by George Reisch, Don Howard, and others.<sup>1</sup> Reich and Howard remind us of a time when American philosophers of science followed the leadership of the members of the Vienna Circle (who had come to the United States to flee the Nazis), not only with respect to their epistemological and (anti)metaphysical commitments, but also with respect to one of their deepest motivations: that philosophy of science should be engaged with "the life of the present," and pursue the aim of turning the scientific enlightenment toward the project of bettering the social conditions of mankind. But the pre-war association of those same philosophers with workers' parties and democratic socialism put the careers of their followers in peril. In reaction, the general character of philosophy of science in the English-speaking world became politically neutralized: distanced from issues of social concern, and focused on areas of science of little social consequence.

Whether in part because of the warming of the climate or not, and certainly in no small part due to the growing influence of feminist philosophy of science, the icy slopes of logic have been melting of late, and the number of philosophers of science interested in socially relevant philosophy of science has grown in the last decade or two. Socially relevant philosophy of science can mean a variety of different things,<sup>1</sup> but it certainly refers to philosophical work that engages with science that has significant social impact. It is therefore no surprise at all that there is a growing interest in climate science among philosophers of science of late — both as a research topic in its own right, and as a useful case study that is easily adaptable to philosophy of science pedagogy. The topic also complements much of the recent work on climate ethics. Climate ethics is primarily concerned with ethical issues that surround climate change and how issues of justice bear on the duties and responsibilities producers of greenhouse gases have toward those they will affect. This work is best done in the context of a reasonably good understanding of the science of climate change, and thus climate ethicists can certainly benefit from a philosophically informed presentation of the foundations of climate science.

This book was written for the benefit of everyone who wants to come down from the icy slopes, as well as for climate scientists curious about what philosophers think about their work. I hope for it to serve both as an introduction to the major themes of the philosophy of climate science, and as an effort to add to that enterprise — to advance our philosophical understanding of the field. It is written to be as useful as possible, in the first instance, for students and scholars in philosophy of science who are interested in exploring climate science as a topic of philosophical study. But it is also intended to be accessible to a wider general audience, and to be useful as a resource for people studying general philosophy of science who prefer to see that material presented with real, living examples of scientific practice. I certainly hope some climate scientists will be curious to see what philosophers think of their discipline.

The book is not intended to be a polemic in defense of climate science or in defense of

anthropogenesis. Almost everywhere, I will be assuming that, with regard to questions about which the community of climate scientists share broad agreement, the answers that climate science delivers are the best answers we can find. I will be primarily interested in interpreting those answers (when it isn't obvious how to do so) and uncovering the logic, methodology, and conceptual foundations of the reasoning used to produce those answers.

The first part of the book is primarily about the methodology of climate science: Chapter 2 is about climate data and the relations between those data and climate hypotheses. Chapter 3 is about climate models in general, with an emphasis on static, equilibrium models of global radiation balance. Chapter 4 is on climate simulations. Chapter 5 is on chaos and its implications for climate science, particularly with regard to the difference between making predictions and making projections, and the nature of a "forcing experiment," which is one of the main ways in which simulations are used in climate science.

The second part of the book is mostly about uncertainty, and about how to interpret climate hypotheses for which we have only probabilistic support: Chapter 6 is on the interpretation of probability in climate science. Chapter 7 is on the related notion of "confidence" in climate projections, and on the nature and origins of climate uncertainties. Chapter 8 is on statistical inference and on decision making under uncertainty and decision making under risk. It includes a discussion of so-called integrated assessment models, which try to make decision making itself model-based and scientific. Chapter 9 is on the interplay between uncertainty quantification in climate science and the role of social values in climate science.

The last part of the book is mostly on epistemological issues: Chapter 10 is on evaluating model skill, including discussions of "verification and validation" of climate models and of the epistemological impact of the fact that climate models are "tuned." Chapters 11 and 12 are both on the role of "robustness analysis" in climate science: that is, on the epistemological importance of the fact that some climate hypotheses are

supported by a variety of lines of evidence, and of the fact that some hypotheses are jointly predicted by a whole ensemble of different models. Chapter 13 is on the application of various themes from "social epistemology" to the epistemology of climate science. Chapter 14 offers some concluding remarks.

I opened the book with, among things, a plea for a proper appreciation of the richness and complexity of climate science. The best-supported claims of climate science, the ones to which the IPCC assigns high probability with high confidence — that there is a detectable externally forced warming trend, that the trend is attributable to human activities, that ECS is between 1.5°C and 4.5°C, etc. — are supported by decades of painstaking work in collecting and studying data, pursuing multiple independent lines of evidence, and building and studying complex models run on clusters of powerful computers.

One reason for making this plea was so that philosophers would come to appreciate the degree to which the conceptual, methodological, and epistemological issues that perennially preoccupy philosophers of science come to life in various interesting and novel ways in climate science. If you've made it this far in the book, I hope it is because you've come to agree with that claim.

The relationship between hypotheses and data in climate science is more complex than some accounts make it out to be, and misunderstandings about this sometimes lie at the root of misunderstandings, more generally, about how well the climate system is understood. Models and simulations in climate science should be understood primarily as pragmatic tools, rather than as generally confirmed representations. They should be evaluated, first and foremost, as either having or lacking relevant kinds of "skill," rather than as adequately representing the world, in some generalized kind of way. The principal kinds of skill we want them to have is to be good at making projections, rather than predictions. Failure to appreciate that difference is another source of misunderstanding about the epistemic power of climate models and simulations; especially in the face of the chaotic

character of the atmosphere and the other systems to which it is coupled.

The right way to understand claims, particularly those made by the IPCC, to the effect that some hypothesis or other is "very likely," or "virtually certain," or "more likely than not," is as credences. Even though these are often the official pronouncements of groups of individuals to which we want to attach the greatest possible degree of objectivity, we nevertheless understand them as statements of personal probability. Even though these are often the official pronouncements of groups of individuals to which we want to attach the greatest possible degree of objectivity, we nevertheless understand them as statements of personal probability; or credences. While the basic mechanisms governing the climate system and anthropogenic climate change are very well understood, significant uncertainties remain concerning the question as to how precisely the climate system will change, especially on regional scales. In fact, our epistemic situation about the future of the climate system and its effects on social and economic systems displays two levels of uncertainty. We are not faced with outcomes with known probabilities, that is, but rather with situations in which we are not epistemically warranted in positing a probability distribution over sets of possible outcomes with high confidence. Values enter into science precisely in situations of complex modeling adaptable to a variety of purposes, and in situations of risk and uncertainty.

We have also surveyed several issues related to the epistemology of climate science — to establishing the skill of particular climate models, the credibility of particular climate hypotheses by looking at ensembles of climate models, and finally of establishing the credibility of climate hypotheses by assembling independent lines of evidence including but not limited to climate simulation models. Despite the ubiquity of the "verification and validation" framework for thinking about the epistemology of simulation, it is poorly adapted to the application of simulations that rely heavily on parameterizations and tuning. It is also poorly adapted to situations, such as the one we face in climate science, where the software modularity of our models overstates the degree of scientific

modularity of the underlying system. Despite some of the difficulties philosophers have faced in properly analyzing the underlying concept, climate hypotheses that are supported by both robust lines of evidence and robust ensembles of models are the ones in which we should place the most trust. Being able to identify the characteristics that ensembles of models ought to display in order to count as genuinely robust is not at all unrelated to having process understanding of the system being modeled.

Finally, we looked at epistemological issues that relate specifically to the social characteristics of climate science: what should non-experts (including philosophers of science) infer from the fact that there is a consensus of experts regarding some climate hypotheses; what is the nature of authorship in a radically epistemically distributed science like climate science; and given the usual assumptions about the value of dissent in science, what can we say about when scientific dissent begins to become detrimental (as sometimes seems to be the case regarding the hypothesis of anthropogenesis)?

All of these discussions and lines of argument have profound consequences for how we ought to think about the epistemic status of the main claims of climate science. Consider what we learned, in Chapter 2, about the nature of the relationship between models and data. The complexity of this relationship explains, in part, why it has been so easy for climate change deniers to manufacture controversies like the troposphere controversy (see section 2.4) and the climategate controversy. It also underlines why it is dangerous for laypeople to think they are well positioned to evaluate, using ordinary reasoning and common sense, the strength of the arguments behind these controversies. As we saw in section 2.4, settling the question of what the troposphere data showed about the quality of climate models was not easy, and required the efforts of scientists with diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Or consider what we learned about models and simulations, and their use in studying complex and chaotic systems, in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 10. While less dogmatic than outright climate change deniers, there are some milder critics of climate science who

believe that models and simulations shouldn't be understood to contribute much epistemic weight to our confidence in many climate hypotheses. Whether because of general doubts about computational methods, or because of worries about the chaotic nature of the atmosphere — worries about butterflies and moths — they believe that only the results of "basic science" should be relied on; especially when adopting policy recommendations. Much of what we learned in the above chapters can be helpful, I think, in putting to rest many of these doubts. And what we learned in Chapters 3, 11 and 12 also helps us to understand the ways in which models and simulations function in harmony with other sources of evidence in securing the claims for which the IPCC has the greatest confidence and to which it assigns the highest probabilities.

And finally, in Chapter 13 we learned some useful things about what epistemic attitudes that we, as climate laypersons, should adopt about findings for which there is broad consensus in a scientific community: while we should always be mindful of the fact that the findings of science are fallible, there are circumstances under which it is plainly irrational for laypersons to try to second-guess the results of our best science. And we learned that, while criticism and dissent are among the most important hallmarks of science, there are circumstances under which scientific dissent can be epistemically harmful.

I want to end the book by devoting a small amount of space to a topic we have not discussed very much. A big part of the project of this book has been to get a philosophical grip on how climate science works — on the methods by which it establishes that either full belief, or high degrees of belief, in certain hypotheses is justified. Because of that, I have focused primarily on the sanctioning of claims that enjoy that degree of justification: that there is an observable pattern of warming over the last century and a half; that this pattern of warming is attributable to human activities that increase the concentrations of heat-trapping gases in the atmosphere; that the equilibrium climate sensitivity lies somewhere in the range of 1.5°C to 6°C; etc.

But I don't want to leave the reader with the impression that establishing high degrees of belief in climate hypotheses is the only policy-relevant thing that climate science is good for. This is a second important reason for emphasizing the richness and complexity of climate science and discouraging the view that climate science is like  $1+1=2$ . In particular, I also want to urge that we take seriously the idea that climate science can be informative in another kind of way: by raising the possibility of various outcomes. I especially want to urge this with respect to claims regarding low probability outcomes, and even claims regarding outcomes for which it is impossible to attach a range of probabilities with any degree of confidence. These can be outcomes, nevertheless, which we should take seriously because of their potentially catastrophic consequences. Many such outcomes fall under the description of what is sometimes called "abrupt climate change."

The climate system is a complex, chaotic, multivariate system that is almost certainly capable of exhibiting, under the right circumstances or forcings, behavior that is qualitatively and radically different from anything we have seen before. We can see examples of what would give rise to this in the geological record: cases where a moderately sized change in one component of the climate system pushed the system as a whole into a radically different regime. The very same sort of thing could happen as a result of our pushing greenhouse forcings past some presently unknown threshold. Not only might we trigger abrupt and disruptive changes in the climate, but changes might be relatively irreversible once they are set in motion. Nothing, moreover, guarantees that changes of this kind will not happen over a very short period of time — decades or even years.

Possible abrupt changes of this kind include disruption of the Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC), rapid release of methane from the Arctic sea floor, ecosystem collapses, collapse in the Arctic sea ice, collapse of ice sheets in Antarctica or Greenland, and release of methane from the melting of the Arctic permafrost. All of these sorts of occurrences are considered very unlikely over the next century. But at the same time, most of those probability assessments are made

with very low confidence. Part of the reason we are stuck having low confidence in these assessments is precisely that we have no data that are relevant to these regimes, and so it is nearly impossible to accumulate independent lines of evidence in support of them or otherwise. The right epistemic thing to say about them, perhaps, is that we should simply remain agnostic about them for the time being. But all of them would have catastrophic consequences. Our best philosophy of science, formal epistemology, and decision theory are, however, poorly adapted to thinking through how to act rationally in the face of that kind of epistemic situation. Some of the most important future work in the philosophy of climate science and climate policy, I would wager, will be directed at this class of problems. <>

[The Design of Childhood: How the Material World shapes Independent Kids](#) by Alexandra Lange [Bloomsbury Publishing, 9781632866356]

From building blocks to city blocks, an eye-opening exploration of how children's playthings and physical surroundings affect their development.

Parents obsess over their children's playdates, kindergarten curriculum, and every bump and bruise, but the toys, classrooms, playgrounds, and neighborhoods little ones engage with are just as important. These objects and spaces encode decades, even centuries of changing ideas about what makes for good child-rearing--and what does not. Do you choose wooden toys, or plastic, or, increasingly, digital? What do youngsters lose when seesaws are deemed too dangerous and slides are designed primarily for safety? How can the built environment help children cultivate self-reliance? In these debates, parents, educators, and kids themselves are often caught in the middle.

Now, prominent design critic Alexandra Lange reveals the surprising histories behind the human-made elements of our children's pint-size landscape. Her fascinating investigation shows how the seemingly innocuous universe of stuff affects kids' behavior, values, and health, often in subtle ways. And she reveals how years of decisions by toymakers, architects, and urban planners have helped--and hindered--American youngsters'



journeys toward independence. Seen through Lange's eyes, everything from the sandbox to the street becomes vibrant with buried meaning. [The Design of Childhood](#) will change the way you view your children's world--and your own.

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#### Excerpt:

In 1924, Lillian Moller Gilbreth found herself a widow with eleven children. She and her late husband, Frank Gilbreth, were the inventors of motion study, breaking tasks down into minute component parts to figure out how to speed up repetitive tasks and reduce worker fatigue. The couple was also the subject of *Cheaper by the Dozen*, a 1948 bestselling biographical novel written by two of those children. While Frank Gilbreth was alive, he and Lillian worked for industries ranging from construction to medicine to rehabilitation. Lillian had a PhD in psychology, and she eventually became the second woman member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the first female engineering professor at Purdue University. She wrote or co-wrote many of Frank's books, often anonymously, as it was thought that a woman's byline might undermine their authority. After Frank's sudden death, even longtime clients were reluctant to renew their contracts with her alone, and she had to reestablish herself as a sole female practitioner. Unwilling to let Gilbreth, Inc. perish with its male founder—and still needing to provide for her children—she did just what many professional women of the present day do when presented with an obstacle: She pivoted.

First, she established a course in motion study, headquartered at her Montclair, New Jersey, home and office.<sup>1</sup> If companies did not want her services,

they might still send their employees to her for training, as teaching was considered a woman's profession. This would allow her to travel less and spend more time with the family. Next she began to think about areas of industry in which being a woman and a mother might be an asset rather than a liability.<sup>1</sup> Even when Frank was alive, they tested many of their ideas on their children, establishing "the one best way" to take a bath, to train preteens to touch-type, and to chart age-appropriate chores for each child. The couple pioneered the use of short films to study how jobs were performed, and they once set up camera equipment in their laboratory to film five of their children getting their tonsils out. The ensuing hijinks provided enough material for *Cheaper by the Dozen* and a sequel, *Belles on Their Toes*. In the latter Frank B. Gilbreth Jr. and Ernestine Gilbreth Carey write of their mother: "If the only way to enter a man's field was through the kitchen door, that's the way she'd enter ... Mother planned, on paper, an efficiency-type kitchenette of the kind used today in a good many apartments. Under her arrangement, a person could mix a cake, put it in the oven, and do the dishes, without taking more than a couple of dozen steps."

Her kitchen plans got her a contract with General Electric, then coverage in the newspapers, and then an offer by a newsreel company to film this unicorn, a woman engineer with eleven children, baking an apple cake in her "efficiency kitchen." The cake was a must, as it was the only dish Gilbreth could prepare: Her family had employed a cook during her childhood, and the Gilbreth household had included a couple of servants so that both parents could work. Studying films of women in their kitchens, Gilbreth counted the number of steps required to walk from pantry to stove to sink and the number of operations required to measure, stir, bake, and wash up while making a cake. She then rearranged the elements of the kitchen to put stove and prep counter side by side, with ingredients stored above, pans below, and the refrigerator nearby. A cart within arm's reach provided a second work surface and could be wheeled over to the sink when the task was done. The arrangement was L shaped, one of three efficient setups used in most contemporary kitchens,

where a fixed island typically replaces the cart. (My kitchen is a U, yours may be a C.) Though her biographer Jane Lancaster points out that Gilbreth seemed little interested in getting other women out of the kitchen, when her daughter Ernestine married Charles Everett Carey in 1930 and asked her mother for a kitchen design as a wedding present, Lillian created one she branded the Teamwork Kitchen, with a butcher's apron for Carey and cupboards engineered for his greater-than-six-foot height.'

Gilbreth saw an opportunity where others did not, turning sexism to her advantage. Even while Frank was alive the Gilbreths had seen the home as a site of labor, and they applied four critical eyes to repetitive everyday tasks. Dad "believed that most adults stopped thinking the day they left school—and some even before that. 'A child, on the other hand, stays impressionable and eager to learn. Catch one young enough,' Dad insisted, 'and there's no limit to what you can teach,'" wrote the younger Gilbreths in *Cheaper by the Dozen*.' Though Frank and Lillian used their children to demonstrate that motion study could be child's play, it wasn't until Lillian was faced with the possibility of a world without work outside the home that she turned her research within those walls—and designed her own escape hatch.

[Cheaper by the Dozen](#) has always been one of my favorite children's books, but it wasn't until I began to write my own book about children that I figured out why. Frank Gilbreth's attitude toward raising kids came across as entirely modern. He saw them as little sponges, to be spoken to as adults and provided with the tools to teach themselves. Their eagerness to learn was a better approximation of his own lust for learning than the spirit of most workaday adults. Lillian Gilbreth's career transformation, in widowhood, planted an early clue that critical thinking could be applied to toothbrushing as well as production lines. As a tidy little girl who wanted a place for everything, I loved the idea that there was a better way to do anything, and I became conscious of my own movements and arrangements. When I cook dinner using a minimum number of bowls, cutting boards, and pans, I think of Lillian. When in my early thirties I finally had the chance to design my own

kitchen, multiple childhood readings of *Belles on Their Toes* made mapping a work triangle a snap. A children's book taught me most of what I needed to know.

More personally: When I had a child, I found myself more focused at home than on the distant architecture that had been my topic—partly by choice, partly because the 2008 recession eliminated much of my freelance work. But even as I happily played with my son, I couldn't turn my critical mind off. At first it was the construction site on the carpet: I am a design critic married to an architect, so naturally our baby gifts included three or four different sets of building blocks, in cardboard, foam, and wood. Was one set better than the other? Who chose the colors, the sizes, the illustrated fruits? As he became more mobile, it was the high chair and the stroller: Do we buy the one he needs now, or can we find one that will grow with him? As we explored the neighborhood, I wondered why the playground's bulbous plastic parts seemed so different from the metal-frame geodesic dome that I climbed in my own backyard. He went to school and the classroom was arranged not in rows of tiny desks but in sections: block corner here, child-size tables and chairs there, a rug beyond, even though the building itself seemed made for kids in grids. Navigating the city with a baby carrier and then a stroller (and then a stroller and a preschooler) I was suddenly aware of curb cuts and subway elevators, of small parks in which one could rest, and streets so wide we never made it across before the countdown clock ended.

To have a child is to be thrown suddenly, and I found rather miraculously, back into the world of stuff. Dirty stuff, clean stuff, sleepy stuff, heavy stuff. Today's world of apps promises you freedom from so many things: phone calls, food preparation, driving, but even the Gilbreths found there were limits to efficiency when it came to child-rearing. You can outsource the laundry, but you still have piles of clothes. You can speed up the toothbrushing, but you can't replace it with watching a video of toothbrushing. Babies love iPads, but they still need to play with actual blocks. In what initially felt like a limitation, I found my next topic, as Gilbreth found hers. I studied the landmarks of my son's territory as it grew from rug

to house, school to playground to the whole city (under my supervision). This history is not unknown—though it has barely diffused beyond specialized audiences—but it seems particularly important to revisit it now. Middle-class parents today obsess over their children's food, their kindergarten curriculum, their sports prowess, their test skills, drilling down on daily rituals as if one worksheet, one piano lesson might make all the difference. But the kitchens, classrooms, playing fields, and bus stops in which kids eat, learn, run, and chat are as important as the activities they support. Loris Malaguzzi, who developed the Reggio Emilia preschool and primary-school curriculum with parents in and around that Italian city, called environment "the third teacher": The adult in the classroom has a role, but so does the classroom itself, stocked with materials for children to manipulate and create, accessible on low open shelves, provocative of imagination.

I came to see each successive stage of childhood development as an opportunity for encounters with larger and more complex environments; as each challenge is met, the child needs to find another within her grasp and set herself the task of mastery. (Because so many of the texts I consulted were written before 1970 and refer to the child solely as a "he," I'm going to take the opposite tack in my text.) Malaguzzi is far from alone in this belief in child-led and object-oriented learning. Psychologist Jean Piaget, whose theory of the child mind came to dominate late twentieth-century education, theorized that knowledge has to be learned from experiences, like by putting a block under a blanket and then finding that it still exists, or, in a later stage, by dropping blocks from different heights and seeing what happens. Through active experiment children construct their understanding of the world—just one of tens of building metaphors embedded, almost subconsciously, in the language of childhood.

That's why each chapter in this book starts, like this one, with a children's story. The more research I did on design and childhood, the more I realized that the authors I'd loved since the age of four dramatize, at least in part, what the experts describe in far more abstract language. The freedom of the child in the city after a blizzard:

That's architect Aldo van Eyck, but it is also *The Snowy Day*. The joy of scavenging materials to build a playhouse: That's Simon Nicholson's theory of loose parts, but it is also *The Borrowers*. Theory and practice united in delight. If Lillian Gilbreth is better known for her lightly fictionalized exploits than her pioneering work, so be it: Her children's accounts of growing up efficiently provide as good an introduction to motion study as most will need. Thoughtful tales, beautifully illustrated, are an illuminating source on childhood when based on careful observation. Picture books, along with the toys, equipment, and childhood spaces that are the primary "texts" for this book, are the products of as much engineering, experiment, and thought as the office buildings and museums I was wont to write about. They may be for children, but that doesn't mean they are childish. I had to get over my own unconscious bias toward writing about kids—revealing myself as both a critic and a mother—in order to take them seriously.

Blocks seem so basic. And yet we find them teaching the architect and the scientist, the fabulist and the fact finder. Progressive education in the United States and Europe—education not based on the primer and the lash—begins when a teacher places a block before a child and watches what happens. In chapter one, we tour a shop's worth of building toys, showing the dazzling claims for their efficacy in action. This history leads from Friedrich Froebel's wooden cubes, intended to demonstrate the crystalline structure of nature, through the magic of the "automatic binding brick," better known as LEGO, to constructed online worlds, like *Minecraft*, that exploit parents' long-standing association of the plain, the geometric, and the wood with the idea of the "Good Toy." In chapter two, I describe the first territory children are able to explore: the house, describing how manufacturers began to ply parents with furniture promising better department, improved health, increased creativity, and, most of all, storage. (Where else would you put all those toys?) Storage becomes a leitmotif of the family home, which first bulges with attics, basements, and garages, and then streamlines with carports, built-ins, and kid-size cupboards. Pushed and pulled by the perceptions of children's space needs, the average size of the American house grows from

980 square feet in 1950 to 1,660 square feet in 1973 to 2,600 square feet today. Pioneer girl Laura Ingalls didn't have her own room. She owned a single doll, handmade by her mother. And she went to school in a one-room schoolhouse, a surprisingly durable architecture of education that served students well into the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Chapter three walks the child to kindergarten, comparing the view from the shared desk in the one-room schoolhouse to that of the "campfire" in today's project-based learning environments.

Children's lives, however, are not lived solely indoors. Before cities established dedicated play spaces, the streets were children's ball court, social center, and jungle gym. Chapter four further explores the neighborhood, where schoolkids, bored by their own backyards, should be able to access open space on their own. I discuss the history of playground design, and the contentious role designers play in it. The first playgrounds in Boston were piles of sand in empty lots, which allowed children of all sizes to build the cities of their dreams; junk playgrounds, introduced after World War II, added tools and real construction to the mix. While the aesthete in me thrills to the abstract playscapes of Isamu Noguchi, after a day of building with blocks in the classroom, why should the schoolyard's equipment be fixed and impervious to children's ideas of fun? From the late nineteenth century on, writers, thinkers, educators, and politicians wanted to get children out of the city. Off the streets, out of apartments, into private homes, and bused to suburban schools. Children were to be their parents' problem, and the building of playrooms and the purchasing of play equipment—a swing set for every yard!—created an ideal of childhood that was privatized and consumer-driven. In chapter five, we (like the child approaching adolescence) reach the outermost ring and look at the urban fabric that holds together home, school, playground, and streets, which, in an ideal world, would safely enclose childhood's domain. Over the past century, urban designers have offered alternatives to this age-segregated model, which fences children off from their own city. From Progressive Era suburbs that put a premium on community space to mixed-use modern developments that reject the narrative that high-

risers are unsuitable for children to new towns built like old villages—a little bit dense, a little bit forested—planners have sought models of urban life that might make every member of the family happy.

Certain themes emerge and reemerge from chapter to chapter, irrespective of the increasing scale of the problems they discuss. This is a book about design, but many of its figures, like Lillian Gilbreth and Caroline Pratt, creator of the classic unit block, aren't called designers. Many of those figures also happen to be women, unusual for architecture and design history. Work with children was seen as a woman's job—Friedrich Froebel may have launched the kindergarten, but he chose women to staff it because of their supposedly nurturing nature—so when you look at design for children you find female educators, therapists, philanthropists, and clients seeking solutions to problems. If the inventors are men, this work is likely to be seen as minor. As curator Juliet Kinchin writes, "In the case of male designers in particular, the experience of engaged parenting and teaching is often treated as a sideline or aberration—not least by the designers themselves—and downplayed as a formative influence on their more publicly appraised work, or omitted altogether."<sup>2</sup> For women working in the field, it may have been their only option, leaving them without the opportunity or inclination to minimize their kid-size work.

Parallel to the topic of who designs for children lies a bigger question: Do children need design at all? Or, rather, how might they be enabled to design the toys they need and experiences they desire for themselves? The act of making that designers find so satisfying is built into early childhood education, but as they grow, many children lose opportunities to create their own environment, bounded by a text-centric view of education and concerns for safety. Despite adults' desire to create a safer, softer child-centric world, something got lost in translation. Jane Jacobs said, of the child in the designed-for-childhood environment: "Their homes and playgrounds, so orderly looking, so buffered from the muddled, messy intrusions of the great world, may accidentally be ideally planned for children to concentrate on television, but for too

little else their hungry brains require." Our built environment is making kids less healthy, less independent, and less imaginative. What those hungry brains require is freedom. Treating children as citizens, rather than as consumers, can break that pattern, creating a shared spatial economy centered on public education, recreation, and transportation safe and open for all. Tracing the design of childhood back to its nineteenth-century origins shows how we came to this place, but it also reveals the building blocks of resistance to fenced-in fun.

They tore down my elementary school last week. The demolition of childhood memories is enough to make anyone nostalgic, but in this case, there was something more. My school, Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary School in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was designed by Josep Lluís Sert: modernist master, former Harvard Graduate School of Design dean, and architect of the superb Peabody Terrace apartments just across the street. I didn't know Sert designed my school until last year, but the building had its effects. When I started kindergarten in 1977, the building was just six years old. I may have lived in a Victorian house, but I learned and played in a thoroughly contemporary environment, with red Tectum walls, folding retractable partitions and clerestory light. —Alexandra Lange, "How Can You Learn About the World in Spaces Without Character?" (2014)

This story isn't fiction, though it is a little too perfect: Architecture critic finds that she was educated in a modernist landmark, minutes (poetic license) before its destruction. If this were a movie, I would run through Cambridge's residential streets arriving just in time to see the digger's claw bite into the King School's yellow concrete. Or, better, my passionate defense of the school's late modern architecture would have allowed the powers that be to see the light and preserve the school for future generations of kids. As I now know, the King School sat at the intersection between the midcentury schools built on the Crow Island model and the open-plan schools promoted in the 1970s. I had not been back inside since my family left Cambridge in 1981, but I could still draw a rough plan from memory. The kindergarten classrooms were lined up along Putnam Avenue to the right of the front door, and

each had its own outdoor courtyard, just like in Winnetka. But kindergarten and first grade, then second and third, were paired, and accordion doors allowed teachers to grow and shrink the daylit, linoleum-floored classrooms at will. I was enrolled in the open program, a mixed-age, hands-on, play-to-learn experiment in public education where math was taught with Cuisenaire rods (yet another type of educational block), and water and sand tables replaced the desks. The central hall, washed with light from above, formed an indoor thoroughfare between the street and the playground behind, a path that linked auditorium, gym, cafeteria, and classrooms on three levels. As you got older, your classroom was located farther and farther from the front door; having to go up the stairs to fourth grade felt like a graduation. The recessed, mouth-like entrance, echoing with noise before the doors opened in the morning, gave us a place to assemble, while the sprawling blacktop playground gave us a place to go wild. This was a building for children with a cast-in-place pedagogy and a concrete, modular frame that seemed adaptable for whatever educational innovation might come. It was also a city in miniature, à la Hertzberger, where the smallest citizens might feel comfortable as they began to explore the adult city on guided walks.

It was a shock, when I wrote my dissertation on postwar corporate design, to realize that the Gilbreths, whom I knew as the efficiency-obsessed characters from *Cheaper by the Dozen*, had a decisive effect on the arrangement of modern factories and production lines, not just on their own children's lives. It has been a similar shock, as I researched this book, to discover many objects of my own 1970s childhood in the pages of the history books. Our Cambridge backyard, for example, was kitted out with a geodesic dome—shaped metal climber, which my brother and I and a gaggle of neighborhood kids used as mountain, fort, and uneven bars, just like Aldo van Eyck's igloos. Such domes, popularized by Buckminster Fuller, were all the rage after Montreal's Expo 67, which inspired the similar sphere at EPCOT.2 My parents may even have ordered our dome kit from Creative Playthings. My blocks were unit blocks, and it was with them that I made my first

architectural forays. Eventually I graduated to LEGO. In the 1970s LEGO introduced its first sets for girls, called Homemaker, but my own working mother never whispered their name.' My brother and I happily deployed minifig astronauts in an ever-expanding zero-gravity space landscape, creating our own planet on which to play Star Wars. Even my preferred dress, OshKosh B'Gosh overalls in bright shades of green, blue, and orange, were a product of the design culture of the time, strikingly similar to the outfit worn by the redheaded girl in the 1981 LEGO ad. Books like In Christina's Toolbox were written for mothers like mine to give to daughters like me. My childhood coincided with a brief unisex interregnum between eras that divided children's clothing into racks of pink and racks of blue.

In other words, I was born during a decade-long revolution. Feminism, activism, environmentalism, movements typically associated with the young adults of 1968, percolated into the playroom, playground, and classroom. Parents feared for their children's future and wanted to offer them more freedom. I wasn't crazy that my children's options seemed different from my own, but my nostalgia was not for the neat and tidy midcentury lawn but for the often grubby Dana Park, just a few blocks from my house. I was nostalgic for the kids in the neighborhood, whose houses I never entered, whose last names I still don't know. Yes, I had objects that are now in museums, but what I mostly remember is all the things we made with them: sidewalk art shows; a slideshow film directed by my best friend's father, in which aliens invaded our neighborhood. Writer-director Mike Mills's 20th Century Women (2016) includes a scene in which unrelated adult housemates watch President Jimmy Carter's 1979 Crisis of Confidence speech:

In a nation that was proud of hard work, strong families, close-knit communities, and our faith in God, too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming things does not satisfy our longing for meaning. We've learned that piling up material goods

cannot fill the emptiness of lives which have no confidence or purpose.

In the film, as in reality, Carter's warning turns out not to be the beginning but the end. Reagan is elected, the 1981 report "A Nation at Risk" invokes panic about American children's "mediocre educational performance," the open classrooms get divided up and the desks march back in. The Federal Communications Commission deregulates children's television, allowing programs based on toy brands to flourish. Advances in science allow for earlier and earlier gender testing of babies, eliminating the need for gender-neutral clothing and clothes, even at birth. Pink becomes another overlay that one can add to a set of blocks. And yet, just as the child-development experts say, my early years proved formative. The reason I'm so attracted to the Hawkness table, or the 1960s playgrounds, is that I learned in environments that were their offspring. I sat out the conservatism of the 1980s in my open-plan middle school. Although I experienced the many problems of that model—the noise, the lack of heat, the disorganization—I learned what it is best at teaching: to think for yourself.

Descriptions of what happened in the 1980s remind me very much of what is happening today: retraction, commercialism, fear of freedom, and the invocation of "standards." And yet history shows us that the design of childhood is cyclical, and I think we are on the verge of another revolution. The makers of new toys, digital and physical, are building them out of blocks. Parents sick of stuff have created a sharing economy that has nothing to do with apps and everything to do with proximity. The Silicon Valley startups disrupting education have returned to desk-free classrooms and invoking John Dewey, though I still believe they need to invest in their environments. A frank discussion of risk has reentered playground design, and junk playgrounds are popping up in unexpected places. Some metropolises are welcoming families rather than pushing them out, and some families are choosing the communal green over the private island. I see signs everywhere that the 1970s, not to mention the 1910s, are not forgotten. They just went underground in the sea of stuff.

If I'm right, this book can be a guide to the dark as well as the light in previous progressive movements. I've always been uncomfortable telling other parents what to do: Kids are individuals, and abstracting from your child's individual potty-training, screen-time, learning-to-read experience seems to produce smugness, and then, with child number 2, comeuppance. This book is not a prescription but a description of things to look out for, with red flags for exclusion, green flags for progress. We need to think beyond our own offspring. The future design of childhood has to be public and accessible or it becomes just another product, traded among middle-class parents as a sign that they have given their children the best possible start on life, like the stocked suburban playrooms of the past. Schools built for project-based learning have better acoustics, and more built-in structure, than the circular satellites of the 1960s, and that's a good thing. If your child wants to learn coding and collaborative practice from Scratch blocks after she learns structure and cooperation from unit blocks, so be it. The best new technologies build on the past in specific, positive ways, acknowledge their debt, and ensure that spatial freedom is available to children of all races, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Innovators like to talk about networks, but what children need is a safety net: an environment designed to foster their development and growing independence and to provide a community for their family, step by step and brick by brick. Having a baby can feel like entering a new world, but it isn't one. For two centuries, protectors of childhood and promoters of products have told parents how to make their children better behaved, better citizens, more insightful, more social, more creative, more inquiring, more independent, and more active. Learn from them, and we make childhood a better place.

[Unequal and Unrepresented: Political Inequality and the People's Voice in the New Gilded Age](#) by Kay Lehman Schlozman, Henry E. Brady, Sidney Verba [Princeton University Press, 9780691180557]

How American political participation is increasingly being shaped by citizens who wield more resources

The Declaration of Independence proclaims equality as a foundational American value. However, *Unequal and Unrepresented* finds that political voice in America is not only unequal but also unrepresentative. Those who are well educated and affluent carry megaphones. The less privileged speak in a whisper. Relying on three decades of research and an enormous wealth of information about politically active individuals and organizations, Kay Schlozman, Henry Brady, and Sidney Verba offer a concise synthesis and update of their groundbreaking work on political participation.

The authors consider the many ways that citizens in American democracy can influence public outcomes through political voice: by voting, getting involved in campaigns, communicating directly with public officials, participating online or offline, acting alone and in organizations, and investing their time and money. Socioeconomic imbalances characterize every form of political voice, but the advantage to the advantaged is especially pronounced when it comes to any form of political expression—for example, lobbying legislators or making campaign donations—that relies on money as an input. With those at the top of the ladder increasingly able to spend lavishly in politics, political action anchored in financial investment weighs ever more heavily in what public officials hear.

Citing real-life examples and examining inequalities from multiple perspectives, [Unequal and Unrepresented](#) shows how disparities in political voice endanger American democracy today.

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Excerpt:

In the winter of 2015, one of us took a road trip on the California coast that included a visit to the immense, opulent Hearst Castle in San Simeon. When the obvious question arose, "Is this the biggest house in the United States?" curiosity led to a Wikipedia page titled "List of largest houses in the United States." Turns out that, according to Wikipedia, the Hearst Castle is not the largest house in the United States. At 175,000 square feet, that would be Biltmore House in Asheville, North Carolina, constructed during the 1890s in the "Châteauesque" style for George Washington Vanderbilt II. The Hearst Castle is not even in the top ten.

As social scientists, we could not help noticing a curious pattern in the listing in the Wikipedia article. Of the 110 houses on the list, more than three-quarters were finished during one of two relatively brief periods, 1891 through 1920 and 1991 through the present, eras that together account for less than one quarter of the years since 1776, when the first of the listed houses was completed. In contrast, only 6 percent of the mansions date from the six decades between the onset of the Great Depression and the end of the Reagan Administration.<sup>1</sup>

The recent construction of so many mega-dwellings lends concreteness to what economists have noted for some time. We live in a New Gilded Age, in which incomes for those at the top of the ladder have skyrocketed, while incomes for those in the middle class and below have languished. The result is greatly enhanced economic inequality. This increased concentration of income and wealth—at levels not seen since the late 1920s—has been accompanied by a heightened capacity of the

affluent and well educated to pass along their advantages to their offspring and growing inequalities in many domains of life, for example, widening class-based gaps in health outcomes and life expectancy, not to mention house sizes.

For more than thirty years, the three of us have considered a different aspect of inequality: political inequality—in particular, inequalities of political voice. We have explored whose voices are heard in American politics through the activity of individuals and organizations that seek to influence political outcomes—either directly through expressions aimed at shaping policy or indirectly through efforts to affect the results of elections. Over and over, we have demonstrated that some people have a megaphone while others speak in a whisper. Disparities in political voice have been a feature of the American political landscape for at least as long as we have had instruments to measure them, and they are not simply random but reflect underlying patterns of advantage based on income and, especially, education.

This book seeks to present in a brief, user-friendly format what we have learned. Old friends will note that we have drawn directly on two earlier works. The first, *Voice and Equality*<sup>1</sup> (a.k.a. "the big blue doorstep"), provided an explanation of how the preferences and interests of all citizens come to be represented unequally. We used a series of statistical analyses to show how differences in participatory resources such as time, money, and skills; in psychological orientations to politics such as political interest, information, and efficacy; and in being recruited to political activity help explain why some people get involved in politics and others remain quiescent. A subsidiary theme was the consequences of this explanatory model for the shape of political voice: how representative are those who do speak?

The second, *The Unheavenly Chorus*<sup>1</sup> (a.k.a. "the big red doorstep") picked up the theme of whose voices are heard and extended the analysis of inequalities in political voice in several directions. We investigated inequalities of political voice that result not only from the participation of individuals but also from the multiple activities of the organizations involved in politics; the extent to



which inequalities of political voice persist over decades; the possibility that political participation on the Internet might act as trip wire in breaking the patterns we had found; and the potential for reforms, ranging from procedural tinkering to broader social changes, to ameliorate the inequalities of political voice associated with inequalities in education and income.

In this volume, not only have we distilled two substantial books into a relatively short one, but we have also taken the opportunity to reflect and update. We have thrown into sharper relief the core themes of a larger body of work and considered the problem of unequal political voice in a changed environment shaped by increasing economic inequality and new rules of the political game. In the process, we cut away interesting but less essential material. Although there is no way to answer the questions we pose without engaging in systematic data analysis, we have tried to do the reader a favor by dispensing with complex statistical models and long explanations of our methods. As scholars, we have provided notes to aid the curious and the skeptical, but, in a departure from prior practice, we have relegated them to the back of the book.

Even though many of the fundamental concepts have been developed over a long history of scholarly inquiry and will thus be familiar to readers of *Voice and Equality* or *The Unheavenly Chorus*, much of the empirical material is new. We used more recent data wherever possible and even collected a new round of data about organized interests. The result is that more than three-quarters of the data in the tables and figures have been updated. Perhaps more importantly, we also take account of new scholarship and ongoing political developments. Since we published *The Unheavenly Chorus*, the consequences of the federal court decisions defining political contributions as a form of protected speech have become clearer. Furthermore, the Supreme Court subsequently decided *Shelby v. Holder* (2013), which declared unconstitutional the "preclearance" provisions of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, and the many state-level changes to voting procedures had either not yet been legislated or not yet implemented.

More recently, the insurgent candidacies of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump in 2016 tapped into the deep well of anger and fear among middle- and working-class voters who, responding to the political and economic inequalities we analyze in these pages, feel that the system is rigged against them. Those who felt the Bern emphasize progressive economic policies, such as breaking up big banks, raising the minimum wage, and taxing the very rich. Trump followers have a less economic and more nationalist focus and emphasize limiting immigration and confronting the threat of terrorism. Still, they agree with one another about the dangers of increasing inequality and the pernicious impact of money in our politics. Yet these strong issue concerns have not translated into political action for these groups in the past, and perhaps not even in the future. As students of political participation, we were not surprised by the finding in a January 2016 American National Election Studies Pilot Survey that supporters of these two candidates were less likely to have voted in 2012 than the supporters of all other primary candidates. All these aspects of the environment for the exercise of political voice have given even greater urgency to our intellectual concerns. It certainly seems like the right time to revisit our work on political inequality in America.

We hope that we have provided new readers a congenial format for encountering our sometimes discouraging findings and old friends with an updated refresher course in unequal political voice in America.

On February 9, Shep Melnick and Joanne Linden went to the polls in Amherst, New Hampshire, to cast their ballots in the first presidential primary of 2016.

During the same month, contributors were making donations in support of their favored candidates seeking the presidential nominations of the two parties. Travis Stanger, an Iowa high school student and part-time McDonald's cashier, made his monthly \$3 donation to his candidate of choice. Meanwhile, hedge fund managers Paul Singer and Kenneth Griffin each gave \$2.5 million to a candidate Super PAC.

Blaring their horns, dozens of trucks paraded around the Rhode Island state capitol to protest pending legislation imposing tolls on tractor trailers to fund road and bridge repairs.

In East Las Vegas, Laura Lozano was working a phone bank, urging Spanish-speaking voters to support her candidate's bid for the presidential nomination and explaining the complexities of how to take part in the upcoming caucuses.

Hundreds of supporters gathered during the annual Kentucky Right to Life Rally to watch Governor Matt Bevin sign the first piece of legislation of his administration, an informed consent abortion bill.

Outside the Twin Cities in Minnesota, a group of neighbors formed the Stockholm Township Concerned Citizens Group, hoping to force Forsman Farms to scale back or drop plans to build a new facility that would house more than a million chickens.

Resident leaders for Mitchell-Lama developments sent letters to New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio in support of affordable housing in the city.

More than fifty people signed up to speak at a packed Seattle City Council briefing to give policymakers their views on how to best fight homelessness.

Maple syrup producer groups from New England and the Upper Midwest as well as the International Maple Syrup Institute and the North American Maple Syrup Council lobbied the Food and Drug Administration to protest the mislabeling by major manufacturers of processed food containing imitation maple syrup.

Stephen J. Ubl, president of the heavy-hitting trade group, the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America or PhRMA, which spent \$18.4 million on lobbying in 2015, worked to counter increasing criticism from doctors, consumer advocates, and politicians about the soaring prices of name-brand drugs.

Democracies require mechanisms for the free expression of political voice so that members of the public can communicate information about their experiences, needs, and preferences and hold public officials accountable for their conduct in

office. Working individually or collectively, they can communicate their concerns and opinions to policymakers in order to have a direct effect on public policy, or they can attempt to affect policy indirectly by influencing electoral outcomes. They can donate their time or their money. They can use conventional techniques or protest tactics. They can work locally or nationally. They can even have political input when, for reasons having nothing to do with politics, they affiliate with an organization that is politically active. As shown by the examples above, during the short days of mid-winter, 2016, Americans exercised political voice in all these ways.

In this volume, we explore how Americans use political voice to let public officials know what is on their minds and to generate pressure to respond to what is being said. But we are concerned not just with political voice but with equal political voice. Robert Dahl famously said: "A key characteristic of a democracy is the continued responsiveness of the government to the preferences of its citizens, considered as equals." Later, in another context he argued that "all human beings are of equal intrinsic worth ... and that the good or interests of each person must be given equal consideration."

If citizens are not equally able or likely to make efforts to let public officials know what they want or need, then some people will wield a megaphone, and others will speak in a whisper. Inequality of political voice has been a persistent and growing aspect of American democracy.

We examine inequalities of political voice—in the participation of Americans as individuals and in the activities of organizations that represent their interests—from a variety of perspectives. Among other topics, we consider:

- Equal Political Voice in a Democracy: What we mean by political voice and whether equal political voice matters in a democracy (Chapter 2);
- The Civic Voluntarism Model: How inequalities in individual political activity are rooted in differences in such resources as time, money, and civic skills; in such psychological orientations to politics as political interest, knowledge, and efficacy;

and in the processes of recruitment by which friends, workmates, neighbors, and fellow organization and church members ask one another to take part politically (Chapter 3);

- Unequal Voice among Individuals: How active and inactive individuals differ with regard to their education and income, their race or ethnicity, and their gender (Chapter 4) as well as to their preferences, needs, and priorities for government action (Chapter 5);
- The Role of the Internet: How the possibilities for political participation on the Internet affect underrepresentation among the young or those of lower socioeconomic status (Chapter 6);
- Social Movements and Recruitment to Participation: How processes of political mobilization, whether rooted in protest movements or in ordinary interactions at work, in organizations, or religious institutions, affect inequalities of political voice (Chapter 7);
- Unequal Voice among Organizations: How inequalities of political voice among individuals are reinforced by the multiple forms of activity by organizations active in Washington politics (Chapters 8 and 9);
- Growth of Economic Inequality: How economic inequality has grown in the past thirty years, leaving some people with enormous resources and others with very few resources for the exercise political voice, and how public policies have contributed to those economic outcomes (Chapter 10);
- Changing Political Inequality: How inequalities of political voice have changed in an era of both increasing economic inequality and tinkering with procedural arrangements that govern politics (Chapter 11);
- Possibilities for Reform: Whether various procedural political reforms hold the potential to alleviate participatory inequalities (Chapter 12).

This book relies, in the main, on the analysis of participation by individuals and organized interests, but we place the subject in the broader context of the American political tradition and the contemporary increase in economic inequality.

### Political Voice, Equal Political Voice, and Democratic Accountability

The exercise of political voice includes any activity undertaken by individuals and organizations "that has the intent or effect of influencing government action—either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies."

Political acts vary in their capacity to convey information about what citizens want and need. The vote is a notably blunt instrument of communication. Although winning candidates often claim a "mandate," in truth they usually have only an imprecise understanding of what was on the minds of the voters who placed them in office. In contrast, the many forms of direct expression of preferences—a sign at a demonstration, an e-mail to a senator's office, a prepared statement at a meeting of the local zoning board—can communicate clear and, in some circumstances, quite specific messages. Organized interests are especially likely to communicate detailed information when they contact public officials, and this information frequently helps in the process of policy formation, although it presents a particular point of view.

Political acts also vary in the pressure they can bring to bear on policymakers to listen and respond favorably to what they are hearing. When individual or organizational activists command valued resources—for example, campaign contributions, blocs of voters, political intelligence, or access to other powerful political figures—targeted public officials usually feel less free to ignore the accompanying messages. The senator engaged in a tight campaign for reelection, the state legislator drafting a tax bill, and the mayor confronting protests over an incident of alleged police brutality all have incentives to pay attention to activist publics.

## The Level and Distribution of Political Voice

Public officials, journalists, and political scientists often worry about low levels of citizen participation in politics—especially if voter turnout is not high. We sympathize with these concerns. A vigorous civic life in which citizens are active as individuals and in organizations confers many benefits. For example, for individuals, political engagement can be educational—cultivating useful organizational and communications skills and broadening their understanding of their own and others' best interests. For the political system, citizens who have ample opportunities to express their political views are more likely to accept government actions as legitimate. Those concerned with well-functioning democracy have reason to monitor the level of individual and organized activity and to be uneasy if it decreases.

Still, we are primarily concerned with equality of political voice rather than with its quantity. Equal political voice does not require that everyone takes part. We know that scientific polls can provide a representative picture of public opinion by surveying only a small fraction of the population. Similarly, equal political voice follows if there is proportionate input from those with a variety of politically relevant characteristics and circumstances: for example, economic well-being; race or ethnicity; religious commitment; sexual orientation or identity; veteran status; immigrant status; or being a Medicare recipient, a student at a public university, or an employee of a defense contractor. Analogously, equal voice is achieved if varying attitudes on issues ranging from gay rights to the minimum wage to the regulation of coal mining to trade policy are expressed proportionately by political activists.

The individuals and organizations active in American politics are anything but representative in these ways. Those who are not affluent and well educated—that is, those of low socioeconomic status (SES)—are less likely to take part politically and are even less likely to be represented by organized interests. What is more, for as long as we have had the tools to measure political involvement, there has been continuity in the kinds

of individuals and organized interests represented in politics. Inequalities of political voice are deeply embedded in American politics. Although public issues and citizen concerns may come and go, the affluent and well educated are consistently overrepresented.

## Equal Voice-Equal Consideration

One of the hallmarks of democracy is that the concerns and interests of each citizen are given equal consideration in the process of making decisions that are binding on a political community. As we shall demonstrate repeatedly in the pages that follow, the disparities in political voice across various segments of society are so substantial and so persistent as to preclude the minimal democratic requirement of equal consideration by decision makers. Public officials cannot consider voices they do not hear, and it is more difficult to pay attention to voices that speak softly. If some stakeholders express themselves faintly and others say nothing at all, there is little or nothing for policymakers to consider. As Lindblom and Woodhouse comment: "If poorer, less educated minorities participate less, their judgments about what problems deserve government's attention will attain less than proportionate weight in the process of partisan mutual adjustment."

Because politics involves conflict among those with differing preferences and clashing interests, it is inevitable that politics will not leave all contenders equally satisfied with the outcomes. Yet it is not only feasible but desirable for all to be heard and for everyone's views to be considered on an equal basis.

Equal voice is not an absolute prerequisite for achieving equal consideration. Public officials have mechanisms besides participatory input from individuals and organizations for learning what is on the minds of citizens. They can, for example, consult polls or follow the media. And the influences on policy include many additional factors—ranging from an incumbent's values and ideology to partisan pressures to a desire to take a political career up a notch—other than policymakers' perceptions of what the public wants and needs. These other factors may substitute for equal voice. Still, if votes, campaign contributions, e-mails,

lobbying contacts, comments on proposed agency regulations, or amicus briefs come from an unrepresentative set of individuals and organizations, equal consideration will be compromised, and government policy will likely reflect the preferences and needs of the active part of the public.

### Measuring Inequalities of Political Voice

Equal voice seems essential for democracy, but because voice can be expressed in so many ways, there is no fully satisfactory way to assess degrees of inequality across acts measured in different metrics.<sup>1</sup> We can compare the political input from a small protest with only ten demonstrators to one that is a hundred times bigger. But how do we compare the weight of a protest that attracts a crowd of 1,000 to the weight of 1,000 votes or 1,000 e-mails?

To complicate matters further, political acts vary in the extent to which activists can multiply their volume. At one extreme, within limits, votes have equal weight. We are each allowed only one per election contest. But the principle of one person, one vote does not obtain for other kinds of participation. Individuals are free to write as many letters to public officials, work as many hours in campaigns, or join as many political organizations as their time and commitment allow. When it comes to the extent to which the volume of activity can be multiplied, contributions to political campaigns and causes present a special case. Although there are no legal constraints on the number of phone calls a citizen can make to public officials or the number of marches a protester can attend, the fact that there are only twenty-four hours in a day imposes an implicit ceiling. In contrast, some lingering campaign finance laws to the contrary, there is no upper limit on the number of dollars that a person with a big bank account can contribute.

**Individual and Collective Political Voice**  
Implicit in the concept of equal political voice is equality among individuals. In the vast political science literature concerned with public opinion and political participation, the individual is the main actor in the democratic system. However, the voice of a single individual is usually fairly weak. When individuals are coordinated within organizations,

they can be a more potent force. Political voice in America is often the voice of organized interests speaking loudly and clearly.

Political participation by the public and by organized interests are often studied separately from one another with different frameworks and methods. When it comes to inequalities of political voice, however, they are two faces of the same thing. We consider politically active organizations of many kinds:

- Membership associations of individuals: for example, unions like the Teamsters, professional associations like the American Medical Association, and citizen groups like the Sierra Club;
- Trade associations like the National Restaurant Association that bring together firms in an industry;
- State and local governments that have residents but not members;
- and Memberless organizations like corporations, hospitals, and even universities, which do not have members in the ordinary sense but have important sets of stakeholders.

In considering political voice through organizational activity, we ask the same questions about political organizations that we ask about individual citizens: What interests do they represent through what kinds of activity, and how equal or unequal is that representation? The results for organized interests parallel the findings for individuals and show the extent and durability of political inequality in America.

### Who is Speaking when an Organization Speaks?

When individuals exercise political voice, they are representing themselves, and there is no ambiguity as to who is speaking. However, questions about representation immediately arise with organizations. Individual membership associations presumably communicate the interests of their members. But whose interests? Those of the executives who run the organization? The staff that support them? The board to whom they are accountable? The rank and file membership? If so,

which ones among the rank and file? The old or the young? The most privileged or the least?

This problem is even knottier for the vast majority of politically active organizations that are not membership associations composed of individuals. Which of the various stakeholders are being represented when a corporation or a museum speaks in politics? In short, an organization may have a powerful voice in politics, but it may not be clear whose voice it really is.

### Measuring Unequal Voice When Organizations are Speaking

When we move from the political voice of individuals to that emanating from political organizations, the problem of how to measure inequalities of political voice is exacerbated. Because organizations that are active in politics have very different numbers of members, we cannot count each organization as an equivalent unit as we would with individual citizens. The nation's largest membership association, AARP (formerly the American Association of Retired Persons) has nearly 38 million members. In contrast, the professional association of skin cancer surgeons, the American College of Moh's Surgery, has fewer than 1,300. Indeed, the majority of politically active organizations—including some real heavy hitters like Boeing, which spent \$21.9 million on lobbying in 2015—have no members at all.<sup>1</sup> On a level playing field, how much voice would each of these organizations have?

We shall consider ways to think about this question. For all the limitations on our ability to measure political voice with precision, the differences we find across individuals, aggregations of individuals, and organizations are sufficiently striking that there can be no doubt about the existence and persistence of real inequalities of political voice in America.

### Who Exercises Political Voice? The Somewhat Level Playing Field of Democratic Citizenship

With some notable exceptions, the rights that inhere in citizenship place most members of the political community on an equal footing. The clearest and most basic requisite for equal political

voice is the right to express that voice. For most forms of political activity, the right to take part is very widely dispersed and is not restricted to those who are formally citizens of the United States and eligible for a U.S. passport. As we proceed, when we discuss "citizen" activity, we generally include under that umbrella all adult members of the mass public residing in the United States, including resident aliens whether or not legal.

Occasionally—for example, when we treat forms of activity such as voting that are restricted to those with formal citizenship status—we use the term "citizen" in its narrower legalistic sense.

As applied to the states through judicial interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment, the basic participatory rights of the First Amendment—freedom of speech and press, the rights of assembly and petition—are generally available to all within the borders of the United States, regardless of citizenship status. In fact, within limits, such rights may be available to non-citizens, even those who do not reside in the United States. The op-ed pages of major newspapers often feature opinion pieces by foreign commentators. Although their communications might not be heeded or even answered, non-Americans are free to get in touch with American public officials. Aware of the worldwide repercussions of American electoral outcomes, foreign visitors have been known to take part in presidential campaigns while visiting the United States.

The right to take part in particular ways is sometimes limited to sub-groups of the relevant political community. For example, although making campaign contributions has been interpreted as a form of protected speech a sufficient condition for political action. In Chapter 3, we focus on the participatory inequalities stemming from disparities in the factors that shape the activity levels of rights-bearing individuals. Among the factors that promote political activity are the motivation to take part; such resources as knowledge and skills, money, and time that provide the capacity to act; and location in the social networks that serve to stimulate activity and to mediate requests for participation.

## The Pervasive Role of Socioeconomic Status

The factors that foster political participation are not independent of one another. Those who have the skills and information to take part are more likely to want to do so. Reciprocally, those with a concern about politics are predisposed to make efforts to learn the relevant skills. Similarly, those embedded in social networks are more often asked to take political action and to get involved politically. Moreover, those with the capacity to participate effectively—those who are able to contribute generously to a campaign or to make a coherent statement at a school board meeting—are more likely to be the targets of such requests. Thus, the processes that nurture political voice interact to create unequal political voice.

At the root of these self-reinforcing processes is SES. The well-educated are likely to have a stockpile of a variety of other participatory factors: for example, to have the kinds of jobs that inculcate civic skills and generate high incomes; to be politically interested, knowledgeable, and efficacious; and to be connected to the networks that mediate requests for political activity. As we have continued our now decades-long investigation of unequal political voice, we have been surprised to uncover, under every intellectual rock we excavate, the deeply embedded and durable character of socioeconomic inequalities in political voice. Inequalities of political voice are found in every cross-sectional analysis, and they are linked to such politically relevant circumstances as living in dilapidated housing, needing Pell Grants, and suffering such problems of basic human need as having to cut back spending on groceries. They persist over time and flow across generations. The same biases apply to political voice expressed through organized interests—a fact that, over time, has consistently led to overrepresentation of the concerns and needs of business and other resource-endowed publics. However we look at the issue and however we analyze our wide-ranging data, SES always seems to return to the center of our explanation for differences in political voice.

## Other Bases of the Inequality of Political Voice

Our concern with inequalities of political voice extends to any politically relevant attribute—that is, to any characteristic that might become a source of conflict in politics. We emphasize how political voice varies with SES because it is not only significant for political conflict but also an important causal factor in the explanation of individual differences in political activity. Income and education are strongly associated with political participation. They also connect to many other attributes that, while not causal factors useful in explaining unequal political voice, are germane to political conflict in America.

Of particular concern is unequal voice on the basis of gender and race or ethnicity. In a statistical analysis that controls for differences in people's characteristics that are rooted in SES (that is, in what is commonly referred to as "multivariate analysis"), disparities in participation among non-Hispanic whites, African Americans, and Latinos or between men and women can be largely or fully understood in terms of these differences. That SES is behind racial or ethnic and gender differences in political participation does not justify the conclusion that these differences are all about SES and that race or ethnicity or gender is irrelevant. As long as there are politically relevant issues associated with policies that have a differential impact on men and women or on Latinos, African Americans, and non-Hispanic whites, it matters for politics that public officials hear disproportionately from members of some groups. If, for example, politicians hear less from African Americans because they are poorer and less well educated than whites, the fact remains that they have less voice, which is consequential for them as African Americans.

Furthermore, it is not exactly a coincidence that persons of color and women command fewer of the SES-based resources for political activity than do non-Hispanic whites or men. Indeed, these gaps in SES are intimately connected to the structures that sustain social and economic distinctions on the basis of race or ethnicity and gender in America. For these reasons, even though we give higher priority to SES in our analysis of inequalities of political

voice, it is essential not to dismiss inequalities of political voice anchored in other bases of political cleavage.

### Time and Money

A consistent theme throughout our investigation is the contrast between the roles of time and money in the exercise of political voice. Mark Hanna, President McKinley's highly successful campaign manager, supposedly remarked more than a century ago: "There are two things that are important in politics. The first is money, and I can't remember the second." We might not go quite as far as did Hanna—many factors do matter in politics—but money certainly deserves a place of honor among the factors that facilitate political activity. While individuals use money to make contributions to electoral campaigns and to political organizations and causes, organizations use financial resources for many political purposes—to staff an office, hire lobbyists and other experts, make donations from their political action committees, or engage in independent spending in elections.

When political voice is based on inputs of dollars rather than hours, the possibilities for inequality of political voice expand. In contrast to time, there is no ceiling on income and wealth, and individuals are much more unequal when it comes to money than when it comes to time. Individual activity in making financial donations is, not unexpectedly, highly stratified, with a substantial gap between the affluent and the less well off. Moreover, compared to inequalities in income, inequalities in spare time are much less likely to adhere to the boundaries of politically relevant categories—not only SES but also race, ethnicity, and gender. Instead, the unavailability of extra time results from such life circumstances as paid work and having children at home.

For several reasons, including the strength of First Amendment protections, the United States allows more freedom in using market resources to influence political outcomes than do other countries. Because financial resources are so unevenly distributed and because differences in income hew to the fault lines of important political conflicts, political money raises the dilemma of how to

reconcile inequalities of market resources with the desire to establish a level playing field for democracy.

### Equal Voice and the Dilemmas of Democratic Governance

Could a circumstance of equal political voice endanger the democratic process? Philosophers of public life going back to the ancient Greeks have differed in the extent to which they trust the judgment of the public and in the role they assign to ordinary people and to those who are deemed wiser and more experienced in the ideal democracy. At the Founding, James Madison expressed apprehension about those "particular moments in public affairs when the people, stimulated by some irregular passion ... or misled by the artful misrepresentations of interested men, may call for measures which they themselves will afterwards be the most ready to lament and condemn." Reflecting similar concerns about the lower classes, Alexander Hamilton argued: "The republican principle ... does not require an unqualified complaisance to every sudden breeze of passion, or to every transient impulse which the people may receive from the arts of men."

Distrust of the public is no longer as acute as it once was, but there is still reason for skepticism about the capacities of ordinary American citizens for enlightened self-government. Quantitative studies dating back at least to the 1950s demonstrate that many Americans have only limited commitment to civil liberties, tolerance for dissenting views, and command of political information—especially if they are not well educated.<sup>1</sup> Governing depends on expertise, on the capacity to understand and judge potential policies, and on the ability to make complex policy decisions that balance the concerns of many actors. The diverse members of the public, who have widely varied preferences and needs, devote limited attention to policy issues, making them ill equipped to judge among alternative policies. Equal voice for all—regardless of educational level, interest in and knowledge about politics, or relevant experience—might lead to government that is less effective, less efficient, and less prudent.



The institutional arrangement designed to resolve this tension is representative government. Representative democracy moves decisions away from the direct control of the citizens and into the hands of representatives who, relying on their own judgment and expertise, supposedly render politics more open and tolerant and policy more effective. Representative government thus ameliorates many democratic mischiefs: policy based on expertise would mitigate citizen incompetence; elected elites who are more committed to civil liberties would bolster support for the democratic process; the intermediation of representatives would reduce the danger of tyranny by a majority faction that squashes minority rights or by minority factions uninterested in the common good. Although there are plenty of episodes—the McCarthy era and Watergate come immediately to mind—suggesting that this characterization is idealized, more than two centuries later, American democracy remains based on representative government.

What is the role of political voice—and equal voice—in a democracy based on representative democracy? Within the American consensus on the wisdom of representative government as a compromise between rule from above and rule from below, there have been serious differences with regard to the extent to which public officials should defer to the expressed preferences of the public or exercise their own independent judgment in governing. The Progressives of the early twentieth century—who, in reaction to the corruption of party bosses, institutionalized such procedural arrangements as initiative, recall, and referendum—clearly believed in shifting the balance toward direct popular rule. In contrast, Joseph Schumpeter took a quite different view in his classic *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy!* In his rather restricted interpretation of the role of the people in representative democracy, the task of the citizenry is to elect officeholders. Given the limited capacities of the public and the need for expertise in policymaking, citizen participation should begin and end with electoral participation. After they elect leaders from the choices offered, citizens should then leave the more expert elites free to rule.

From our perspective, all versions of representative government require continuous information from a representative group of citizens about their problems and experiences that might otherwise be overlooked. However, none addresses the fact that political activity by individuals and organizations derives disproportionately from the affluent and well educated. We take no position on the eternal question of the extent to which public officials in American democracy should be guided by the preferences of the public or by their own good judgment. Still, we believe firmly that broad exposure and information about everyone's wants and needs will permit whoever rules to do so more wisely.

### Equal Voice, Majority Tyranny, and "Minorities Rule"

A related concern is reconciling support for equal voice with a concern about majority tyranny. For many issues in American politics, a relatively indifferent majority on one side is opposed by an intense but smaller public on the other. This pattern characterizes controversies as diverse as gun control, consumer product safety regulation, and community conflicts over the siting of facilities like sewage treatment plants or even new schools. That democratic procedures ordinarily provide for the majority to prevail raises no concerns about majority tyranny when the losers in the minority are not deeply invested in the outcome. However, if the losing minority has strong and intensely held views, majority rule may be more problematic—particularly if the triumphant majority compromises the basic rights of the minority or if the losing minority is defeated over and over on issue after issue.

How should a minority that cares deeply—especially a group that constitutes a more or less permanent minority—be treated in a democracy? Can equal voice be harmonized with deference to views that are intensely held? As Madison observed in "Federalist No. 10": "Measures are too often decided, not according to the rules of justice and the rights of the minor party, but by the superior force of an interested and overbearing majority." In fact, Madison makes clear later in the essay that American government was designed to ensure that

minority viewpoints have opportunities to block majority factions.

To ignore the fact that some people care deeply about a particular issue while the large and politically quiescent majority are more or less indifferent would seem unreasonable. Yet to allow an intense and active minority to prevail over and over again has other risks. The history of American political conflict demonstrates that majority tyranny is not the only danger and that an intense minority often carries the day in policy controversies, a circumstance sometimes dubbed "minorities rule." Indeed, later in life Madison expressed concern about the need for ordinary citizens to have a voice in politics and demonstrated greater congeniality to majority rule.

As they seek to navigate between tyranny by majorities and rule by intense minorities, policymakers will be better informed if they hear all perspectives instead of having some systematically shouted while others are whispered. However they balance majority rule and deference to intense minorities, decision makers will benefit from equal voice.

### Unequal Voice in the New Gilded Age

As we shall see in Chapter 10, systematic data substantiate that we do, indeed, live in a New Gilded Age. The concentration of income and wealth among the very rich has reached levels not witnessed since the 1920s. The minimum wage, which peaked in real terms in 1968, is now worth less than it was in the late 1970s, when wages for everyone below the top layer of earners began to stagnate. The proportion of those below the poverty line who are desperately poor has increased. These and related economic developments reflect such market forces as globalization and technological change. However, they are also influenced by, and reciprocally, have consequences for, politics. Not only is government policy part of the story of increasing economic inequality but the increase in economic inequality also has implications for unequal political voice in politics.

At the same time that economic inequality has increased, citizen politics in America has changed in ways that further enhance the long-standing

participatory advantage of the well educated and well-off. Reflecting the relationship between education and income, the affluent have always spoken loudly and clearly in politics. While the rich have been getting richer, forms of activity based on money are occupying more space in the bundle of participatory acts through which Americans express political voice. The great political money chase enhances the relative importance of money in electoral politics, giving very, very affluent donors greater access to candidates and rendering successful candidates increasingly indebted to their funders. There has been simultaneous growth in organized interest activity, where the availability of economic resources has made it possible to hire more and more experts and lobbyists.

Procedural changes to the rules governing politics over the past decade, discussed in Chapter 12, have exacerbated patterns of participatory inequality deeply rooted in social structure. A series of federal court decisions, the best known of which is the 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United vs FEC*, have effectively lifted many of the limits on campaign money. We now have sufficient experience with this new campaign finance regime to know that at the same time that money has become more important in electoral politics, those with the wherewithal to make substantial contributions have become more important as well.

Procedural changes in voting at the state level also threaten to magnify participatory inequalities. Some states have legislated new requirements—some of them quite strict—for producing identification in order to cast a ballot. The impact of these new rules is not yet fully clear, but there is concern that voters of limited income and education—in particular, persons of color—will be disproportionately affected by the new requirements. At the same time that voter ID laws threaten to make it harder to vote in many states, a less-noticed contrary trend has eased ballot access in a majority of states. Unfortunately, even when such reforms as election day registration, online registration, early voting, and no-excuse absentee voting raise turnout (and they do not always do so), such procedural changes do not necessarily democratize the electorate. Even if voters show up at the polls in larger numbers, the additional voters

mirror the characteristics of the core voters who show up without fail.

We were once asked whether what we were finding is an old disturbing pattern or a new disturbing trend to which we could only answer "Both."

Over and over in what follows, we demonstrate that pronounced inequalities of political voice are a longstanding feature of our politics and that such inequalities are anchored firmly in inequalities of education and income. However, both economic and political developments in the New Gilded Age are exacerbating the inequalities of political voice that have for so long characterized democracy in America. <>

[Secularism and Cosmopolitanism: Critical Hypotheses on Religion and Politics](#) by Étienne Balibar translated by G. M. Goshgarian [European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism, Columbia University Press, 9780231168601]

What is the relationship between cosmopolitanism and secularism—the worldwide and the worldly? While cosmopolitan politics may seem inherently secular, existing forms of secularism risk undermining the universality of cosmopolitanism because they privilege the European tradition over all others and transform particular historical norms into enunciations of truth, valid for all cultures and all epochs. In this book, the noted philosopher Étienne Balibar explores the tensions lurking at this troubled nexus in order to advance a truly democratic and emancipatory cosmopolitanism, which requires a secularization of secularism itself.

Balibar argues for the idea of the universal against its particular dominant institutions. He questions the assumptions that underlie popular ideas of secularism and religion and outlines the importance of a new critique for the contemporary world. Balibar holds that conflicts between religious and secular discourses need to be reframed from a point of view that takes into account the cultural hybridization, migration and mobility, and transformation of borders that have reshaped the postcolonial age. Among the topics discussed are the uses and misuses of the category of religion

and the religious, the paradoxical genealogy of monotheism, French laïcité's identitarian turn, and the implications of the responses to the Charlie Hebdo attacks for an extended definition of free speech. Going beyond circumscribed notions of religion and the public sphere, [Secularism and Cosmopolitanism](#) is a profound rethinking of identity and difference that seeks to make room for a renewed political imagination.

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Excerpt:

In this book, I have collected three groups of texts, to illustrate what I believe to be the importance of a new "critique of religion" in the contemporary world, to indicate some of its objects, highlight some of the reasons for its practical urgency, and contribute to its development.

The first part consists of the retranslation into English of my essay *Saeculum: Culture, Religion, Idéologie*, published as a book in France by Editions Galilee in 2012, itself an expanded and adapted version of the lecture on "Cosmopolitanism and Secularism" that I gave in November 2009 as the Anis Makdisi Memorial Lecture in Beirut. In this essay I argued, on two correlative planes, that current disputes concerning the uses and misuses of the concept of religion and the religious (clearly Euro-centric, but also deeply rooted in the legacy of rival Western monotheisms, which include Islam)<sup>1</sup>

would greatly benefit from the theoretical distinction between "religious" and "cultural" dimensions of social practice that a renewed concept of "ideology" in the post-Marxist sense makes possible; and, second, that confrontations between "religious" traditions and "secular" discourses and institutions must now become reframed from a cosmopolitan point of view that fully takes into account the relativization of borders, the hybridization of cultures, and the migrations of populations which have restructured our postcolonial world. I proposed that these phenomena intensify and redefine the perception of "anthropological differences" which are permanently at stake in symbolic differends, particularly among religions and between religions and secular discourses. These issues are intrinsically philosophical (if we understand philosophy as a discipline that continuously exchanges questions and notions with anthropology and other social sciences), but they are also immediately political, with highly conflictual or violent dimensions that verge on a state of endemic war of all against all, leaving us no intellectual or moral security. Because I wanted to overcome past shortcomings, introducing what I hoped was a better sense of the complexity and ambivalence of our historical, juridical, and hermeneutic categories, while not avoiding taking sides in the controversies about the universal in which some major intellectuals of our time have been involved—which also matter to every citizen—I tried to define a strategy through the somewhat utopian notion of the secularized secularism (or desacralized secularism). Borrowing Fredric Jameson's famous category and using it in my own way, I proposed that it could serve as a "vanishing mediator" in the multifaceted conflict of rival universalities. However elusive it may appear, this notion remains the guiding thread of all the subsequent parts of the volume, not as a "solution" or a "fixed" concept, but as an instrument to criticize existing rules, construct genealogies, and make room for political imagination.

As a complement to this principal essay, I have collected two groups of independent essays or texts. In the first group, titled "Essays," I put together three articles, all written before *Saeculum* (in 2005 and 2006), one of which had already

appeared in English, which can be said to highlight the continuity and pervasiveness of the "theologico-political complex" from a hermeneutic and institutional point of view. "Note on the Origin and Uses of the Word 'Monotheism'" explains in detail my discovery and personal interpretation (rather isolated at the time) of the fact that "monotheism," a category and a name without which there would have been no "history of religion" or understanding of the triangular relationship between the "revelations" of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in our culture, is a recent European invention linked to the ideological struggles involving reason and faith between the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, on the background of Europe's oriental expansion. It absorbed retrospectively the understanding of "idolatry" and "polytheism," and never acquired a perfectly stable meaning. It is not just the Greek name of Moses's revelation or its subsequent codification in the Biblical tradition, and it could be applied only retrospectively to the "Abrahamic legacy" in the course of modern interreligious dialogues. In my view, this does not lead to abandoning the category. On the contrary, I am convinced that it signals a fundamental reason why the three Western theologies and theocracies, with their internal divisions, are caught in a symbolic nexus of identity and difference,' but this certainly imposes a cautious attitude with respect to the possibility of "translations." The other two essays—" 'God Will Not Remain Silent': Zionism, Messianism, and Nationalism," a review article about recent critical works on Israeli official ideology and its internal tensions; and "What Future for Laïcité?", a contribution previously unpublished, written for a conference held in the United States on the centenary of the French legislation establishing secularism as a constitutional principle that remains so enigmatic for most of the "external" world,' although in Republican ideology it is supposed to be supremely universalistic—are both concerned with singular figures of the articulation of religion and nationalism, in which many of us find ourselves caught directly or indirectly. This is the core of the modern theologico-political complex, or better said: it was its core, before the cosmopolitical dimension discussed in *Saeculum* passed from margin to center. But, of course, it is an unfinished, perhaps interminable

transition, in which the issues of the "past" spectrally haunt the "present." Taken together, the three essays will hopefully help clarify a situation in which, as I explain in *Saeculum* and elsewhere, the crisis of modern civic, national, therefore secular universality has irreversibly begun while the crisis of traditional "monotheistic" religious universality is still in progress, without predictable end, creating something like a double bind for our ethical and political orientations.

In the second group, with the title "Statements," I collected three shorter writings, more recent and more directly interrelated (dated 2015 and 2016, revised in 2017), which are ordered in sequence. They follow the dramatic events that took place in France and some of their consequences on French society and politics, between the attack on the journal *Charlie Hebdo* and the mass killing on the Nice Riviera in the following year, each time perpetrated by organized or individual "Islamic terrorists." As a citizen and an intellectual, I reacted with a mixture of immediate sensitivity and *ex post factum* reflections. What I thought I could say, trying to influence the public debate in a modest way, was directly linked to my general problematic on religion, culture, and ideology—otherwise, what good could it be?—but it was not exactly an application of theoretical notions to a "concrete" situation in which we are caught ourselves. On the contrary, illustrating a concept of theory (and critique) as a conjectural and conjunctural science, I tried to use the situation, however tragic, to rectify my hypotheses (particularly on the issue of conflicting universalities on the global market, and the political ambivalence of "secular" discourses). There is no pretention here of offering a complete interpretation of "Islamic terrorism" as a geopolitical, social, and subjective phenomenon. Nevertheless, I make intellectual efforts to stand the middle ground between reductionist discourses of opposite tendencies. I reject the idea that terrorism is a product of Islam qua "violent religion" (or perhaps qua religion tout court, since religion for some intrinsically means violence, it is the "impolitical" factor par excellence): there are other determining causes, which must be accounted for in the first place. But I also reject the idea that such collective and individual causes could crystallize in

the same murderous and suicidal complex without the spiritual resources of Islam, or perhaps the rising to extremes of the "religious" (again, theologico-political) confrontation between Islamic fundamentalism and global islamophobia, in which secularism was never neutral. Everything said here, from my own point of view, is provisional, and offered for critique and objections, including the more elaborated central piece, a set of theses "On 'Freedom of Expression' and the Question of 'Blasphemy,'" revised in 2017 for inclusion in this book, where I struggle against the veil of ignorance protecting antithetic "expressions" about the essence and specificity of Islam on the global stage, and I return to the hypothesis of "secularized secularism," this time to examine its conceptual and ethical affinity with a notion of fearless speech that would enhance the civic dimension of freedom itself, as a cornerstone of democracy. I try to formulate the political and material conditions of reciprocity under which this fundamental "right" proclaimed by our constitutions could actually become unconditionally respected, because it would be treated as a public good on a transnational scale, and not a privilege of some "citizens of the world" only.

If the theologico-political is our past, well encrusted in the present, the secular-political in a radically transformed fashion could be our future, already at work, painfully, in the contradictions and tragedies (or comedies) of the same present. How to ground in a general problematic the idea of this aleatory transition (very different from the classical myth of the "disenchantment of the world" that has governed so much of the sociology and history of "religion" since the nineteenth century)? This should be the object of a "conclusion" which, normally, such a book must contain. I didn't want to offer that, because it would have meant that I believed I had come full circle, whereas on the contrary I want to create a space sufficiently indeterminate for others to "colonize" its ideas and reshape them. I dream of becoming the observer of reactions and refutations generated by what I wrote, if I am lucky enough to catch the reader's attention. Instead of a conclusion, I thought I should provide a more general introduction, where my hypothesis of a "new critique of the religious" would be formulated.

For this purpose, I seized the occasion of a workshop organized by the French-German research program on "critique" in contemporary philosophy and sociology, based in Paris and Frankfurt under the joint leadership of Gérard Raulet and Axel Honneth. In my essay on "Critique in the Twenty-First Century: Political Economy Still, Religion Again," I explained—once again in conversation with my own Marxist background—that criticism in the proper critical sense (an understanding of the origins, transformations, and contradictions of an institution or a social relation) should at the same time reestablish the question of the "society effect" (Althusser) produced by religious representations and practices in the center of the "ontology of ourselves" (Foucault). This is in a sense the reverse side of what I had argued in *Saeculum* in the vocabulary of "ideology." It was directed against the idea that the critique of political economy has superseded the critique of religion, just as capitalism has buried the traditional forms of theology (which certainly was Marx's conviction). It was also a break with the "positivist" legacy of the Enlightenment, for which we can install ourselves, intellectually and politically, outside the realm of religious interpellations. We are no more outside the religious modes of thought than we are outside the range of economic forms of subjectivation. *Homines economici, homines religiosi* (which should be written also in the feminine, a symptomatic "grammatical" difficulty indeed), even if it leaves room for dissent, heresy, resistance, and rebellions. This is what makes critique necessary and possible. There is more in my introduction, but why say it in advance? I will take the liberty of redirecting now the reader who is willing to examine my reasons to the text itself.

I want to express generic gratitude to all the institutions, friends, and colleagues who sponsored, commissioned, and commented on the following essays and interventions, as well as the journals and publishers in French and English where some of them appeared, and last not least to the translators (or first translators) of my French into English, particularly Michael Goshgarian, who translated or revised the greatest part. They are all referred to by name in the volume. <>

[The Plot to Destroy Democracy: How Putin and his Spies are Undermining America and Dismantling the West](#) by Malcolm Nance, Foreword by Rob Reiner [Hachette Books, 9780316484817]

A provocative, comprehensive analysis of Vladimir Putin and Russia's master plan to destroy democracy in the age of Donald Trump.

In the greatest intelligence operation in the history of the world, Donald Trump was made President of the United States with the assistance of a foreign power. For the first time, [The Plot to Destroy Democracy](#) reveals the dramatic story of how blackmail, espionage, assassination, and psychological warfare were used by Vladimir Putin and his spy agencies to steal the 2016 U.S. election--and attempted to bring about the fall of NATO, the European Union, and western democracy. It will show how Russia and its fifth column allies tried to flip the cornerstones of democracy in order to re-engineer the world political order that has kept most of the world free since 1945.

Career U.S. Intelligence officer Malcolm Nance will examine how Russia has used cyber warfare, political propaganda, and manipulation of our perception of reality--and will do so again--to weaponize American news, traditional media, social media, and the workings of the internet to attack and break apart democratic institutions from within, and what we can expect to come should we fail to stop their next attack.

Nance has utilized top secret Russian-sourced political and hybrid warfare strategy documents to demonstrate the master plan to undermine American institutions that has been in effect from the Cold War to the present day. Based on original research and countless interviews with espionage experts, Nance examines how Putin's recent hacking accomplished a crucial first step for destabilizing the West for Russia, and why Putin is just the man to do it.

Nance exposes how Russia has supported the campaigns of right-wing extremists throughout both the U.S. and Europe to leverage an axis of autocracy, and how Putin's agencies have worked

since 2010 to bring fringe candidate Donald Trump into elections.

Revelatory, insightful, and shocking, [The Plot To Destroy Democracy](#) puts a professional spy lens on Putin's plot and unravels it play-by-play. In the end, he provides a better understanding of why Putin's efforts are a serious threat to our national security and global alliances--in much more than one election--and a blistering indictment of Putin's puppet, President Donald J. Trump.

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Excerpt from Foreword and Introduction: In 2016 the United States was attacked by a foreign enemy power.

Unlike the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor or Al Qaeda's attack on the World Trade Center, the attack by the Russian Federation struck at the core of our democracy, our free and fair election system. The purpose was to destroy our system of self-governance that we have cherished and held up as an example to the world for over 240 years. Carried out in stealth, using state-run news media and intelligence agencies, Russia managed to influence the election with the express purpose of aiding their preferred candidate, Donald J. Trump. The Kremlin took advantage of our open society. And through social media and agents of influence they deployed ex-KBG spies to spread blackmail, forgery, and propaganda. Putin loyalists (neo-Nazis, fascists, and racist xenophobes) had and continue to have but one mission: Use the freedoms afforded to us to halt, attack, and destroy democracy from without and within.

With the election of a childish, self—dealing, autocratic narcissist, we see evidence of the Kremlin's success. Donald Trump's contemptuousness of our inclusive values, our norms, and the rule of law, along with his weak support of NATO and the European Union, has elevated Russia on the global stage.

One of our founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin, once wondered why Benedict Arnold would sell out 3 million Americans to King George for 20,000 pounds. Today we face another question: Why would a failing real estate developer turned reality show host cozy up to an autocrat who rules over a kleptocracy? Will we come to find that 320 million Americans have been sold out to the Kremlin for 20 billion rubles?

As of this writing, the United States and Europe have been standing up to the attacks on the pillars of democracy. But we the people must be the strongest pillar of all. And we must heed the warnings of the risks to our beloved system of government that continue to come. To that end, we can have no better Paul Revere than Malcolm Nance. —Rob Reiner

One of the greatest dreams of the old Soviet Union was to put a highly suggestible American ideologue into power who would do the bidding of the Kremlin. For nearly a century, Russia wanted to change American policy in such a way that its economy and alliances with NATO would be so damaged that the Soviet Union would become the preeminent superpower in the world. The idea of a Kremlin-controlled President would live on after the death of the Soviet Union.

In 2012, the plan to subject the 2016 United States election to a massive cyber influence operation, possibly in coordination with the Trump campaign, was launched. It ostensibly started with the hacking of the Democratic National Committees' servers in order to steal critical information to knock Hillary Clinton out of the running for President of the United States. The plan would eventually work to the benefit of Russia's chosen candidate, Donald Trump.

On November 8, 2016, the American presidential election culminated into what could arguably be

called the greatest intelligence operation in the history of the world. In the Russian attack on the American election, a strategic adversary influenced enough voters through manipulation of the internet to get their preferred candidate chosen—and convinced more than 40% of the American population that they had nothing whatsoever to do with it.

I was determined to track down other information to illustrate where Russian intelligence used cyber warfare to influence elections, referenda, and political opinion to their advantage. My investigation showed that Russian intelligence had been using these advanced malware suites to attack other nations for almost a decade. The 2016 election hacking was just window dressing on a larger goal. I found there were many activities where the Russian CYBER BEARS—a collective name for their national, criminal, and intelligence hackers—were involved in shifting the goalposts. The 2016 hacking was the start of a global campaign to imagine a "New World Order" and make it a "Russian World Order." The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) code named the Russian operation against the United States GRIZZLY STEPPE. In my last book, *The Plot to Hack America*, I referred to it as Operation LUCKY-7, considering the amount of luck the Russian spies would need.

The next phase of their campaign—the plot to destroy democracy—would be better described as GLOBAL GRIZZLY. The best plan would be to resort back to a goal from the Soviet era, discredit and destroy Western-style democracy all together. This time Americans would be carried through their hatred of Muslims (and their first African-American President, Barack Obama) to align themselves through cultural similarities, as opposed to Cold War politics. In the GLOBAL GRIZZLY plan, tribal commonalities among white ethno-nationalists would be cemented through a political order based on authoritarianism, anti-liberalism, and anti-globalism, and lever the success of the super-rich.

By 2016, Operation GLOBAL GRIZZLY was occurring right before our eyes. It was the full-scale implementation of a new form of asymmetric warfare. Although Russia was a military

superpower, it remained an economic dinosaur, with the exception of fossil fuel production. In order to defeat a superior economic entity like the United States, Russia embraced a new battlefield that could cripple a democratic adversary. It would exacerbate the domination of the information battle space.

In [\*The Plot to Destroy Democracy\*](#), I will reveal the strategy the Russian Federation put into effect to defeat the world's biggest democracies and challenge principal governance structures of the Western world. The singular beauty of this plan, which has roots far back into Stalin's Soviet Union, is that the Russian political chess players have harnessed the West's own technology and liberty as the dagger to be plunged into the heart of democratic governance. Russia saw opportunity to co-opt American and European political parties to destroy democracy itself.

At its heart, [\*The Plot to Destroy Democracy\*](#) is a fast-paced cross between a spy thriller and a National Intelligence estimate that provides a deep dive assessment of the dangers that surround the nation where the enemies are both foreign and domestic. However, the game remains in motion. All the pieces are still visible, and a bulldog of an investigator, former FBI Director Robert Mueller, is on the hunt. Make no mistake, democracy in the era of Trump and Putin is in retreat and has been targeted for extinction. With the right amount of public awareness, determination, and dedication to the principles we hold dear and love, it can be stopped. <>

[See You Again in Pyongyang: A Journey into Kim Jong Un's North Korea](#) by Travis Jeppesed [Hachette Books, 9780316509152]



A "close-up look at the cloistered country" (USA Today), [See You Again in Pyongyang](#) is American writer Travis Jeppesen's "probing" and "artful" (New York Times Book Review) chronicle of his travels in North Korea--an eye-opening portrait that goes behind the headlines about Trump and Kim, revealing North Koreans' "entrepreneurial spirit, and hidden love of foreign media, as well as their dreams and fears" (Los Angeles Times).

In [See You Again in Pyongyang](#), Travis Jeppesen, the first American to complete a university program in North Korea, culls from his experiences living, traveling, and studying in the country to create a multifaceted portrait of the country and its idiosyncratic capital city in the Kim Jong Un Era.

Anchored by the experience of his five trips to North Korea and his interactions with citizens from all walks of life, Jeppesen takes readers behind the propaganda, showing how the North Korean system actually works in daily life. He challenges the notion that Pyongyang is merely a "showcase capital" where everything is staged for the benefit of foreigners, as well as the idea that Pyongyangites are brainwashed robots. Jeppesen introduces readers to an array of fascinating North Koreans, from government ministers with a side hustle in black market Western products to young people enamored with American pop culture.

With unique personal insight and a rigorous historical grounding, Jeppesen goes beyond the media cliches, showing North Koreans in their full complexity. [See You Again in Pyongyang](#) is an essential addition to the literature about one of the world's most fascinating and mysterious places.

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Excerpt: Writing is a predatory activity; you're always stalking some amorphous ideals, often ones that cannot be named or readily summarized, in the attainment of truth and accuracy—hence the need to write. When human lives are involved, the process can become hazardous—an awareness that any writer who ventures into North Korean terrain should attain. North Korea throws into question the very nature of reality and reminded me, again and again, the ways in which "truth" is constantly being remolded by its surrounding context.

North Korea poses any number of daunting challenges to outside researchers. As I've been working on this book, one issue that has remained at the forefront of my thoughts is safety—less for myself and more for those I have met along the way. A compromise had to be reached in order to protect these sources. While everything in this book is truthful, in that it happened to either me or those I know well, many figures in the book are, in fact, composites of at least two or more people; and most names have been changed. Comrade Kim Nam Ryong, for instance, is a composite of men I have encountered, befriended, or otherwise learned about, some current and others former residents of Pyongyang, and the Korean State Travel Company he works for is a fictional hybrid based on knowledge I have gleaned about the operations at several of the country's state-owned tourism bureaus.

Among the North Korean defectors I have interviewed in the South and elsewhere, I have tried to seek out those who purposefully avoid speaking with the media. Certain defectors expect to be paid in exchange for an interview; I pointedly avoided those individuals. By being careful not to compromise people's safety but offering no cash incentive, I tried to create an interview scenario in which my sources had no motivation to mislead me about their experiences and perspectives.

In addition to the camouflaging devices outlined previously, I have employed other mechanisms from the writer's tool kit for clarity and brevity. Namely, I've shifted the order of some events and merged some conversations to improve the flow of the narrative. My intention is to present not a play-by-play accounting of my days in North Korea but rather a representation of the range of experiences I had over multiple trips. Although the narrative primarily centers on my 2016 study program, I have, in some cases, inserted a particularly vivid experience from an earlier trip or a subsequent visit in 2017 into the sequence of events.

I also had to grapple with the issue of sourcing and fact-checking. As anyone who has studied North Korea can confirm, the standard journalistic and academic requirements of conducting research are often impossible to fulfill in this context. Fact has to be distinguished from rumor and hearsay. (Ironically, this mirrors the lived experience of the average North Korean citizen, for whom most precious information is received via word of mouth.) As this conflict arose again and again throughout my work on the book, I felt that the honest thing to do would be to articulate these philosophical quandaries as I recall them occurring. Some of those moments have been rendered as dialogues between myself and my travel companions.

Other problems are linguistic in nature. Somewhat confusingly, there exist two systems for romanizing Korean words. A variant of the older McCune-Reischauer system is still used in North Korea, while in South Korea, a Revised Romanization system has been in official use since 2000. To add more confusion to the matter, most proper nouns retain the old McCune-Reischauer system in both Koreas (for example, the romanization of the common last name remains "Kim" rather than the Revised Romanized "Gim," and "Pyongyang" has still not shifted to the revised "Pyeongyang"). Given the predominance of this convention across most English-language literature and since it was in North Korea where I first began to learn the language, I have mostly retained the North's version of the McCune-Reischauer romanization system throughout the book, going so far as to retain the practice of de-hyphenating first names,

which are always written after the last name (in the South, it would be "Jong-un"; in the North, it's "Jong Un.")

Despite all these challenges, I have tried to put forth only things that I know and firmly believe to be true. Any mistakes are mine and mine alone.

Obsessions lead people on strange detours, and sometimes those detours come to define the entire geography of a person's existence. Watching the fall of the Berlin Wall as a ten-year-old in the living room of a suburban house in the American south, I could not have fathomed the immense significance of what I was seeing. Sure, I had been taught that communism was something bad, the polar opposite of the pristine democracy I had been raised in and programmed to cherish, and I could understand that this evil was now coming to an end. Everything was black and white, good and bad, rough and smooth. A ten-year-old growing up in those sheltered circumstances has no real cognizance of the actual texture of things, of ways of life that differ tremendously from one's own. A little more than a decade later, I'd be walking the streets of those same gray Central European cities my childhood eyes had witnessed coming undone on the evening news.

I've lived in two of those cities, Prague and Berlin, for most of my twenties and thirties. Whenever I'm asked what brought me to live in these capitals of some of the past century's darkest and most significant moments, I fail to offer a pithy reply. Something along that stretch of adolescence and early adulthood derailed me from the standard life trajectory that my southern suburban upbringing implied. A growing fascination with other ways of life led me first to New York City to study art, literature, and philosophy at a left-leaning university where nearly all subjects were viewed through the lens of a Marxist interpretation of history. I became fascinated with cultic systems of belief and their twistings of ideology, with the notion of escape, with revising my limited means of perception. The best way to do this, I discovered, was through constant movement—never staying in the same place for long. Shirking any scene that might come too close to resembling the dreaded "comfort zone." As my friends in Berlin, where I

have been lately based, will tell you, I spend a lot of my time escaping that city for others, the notion of a static, stable place called home being increasingly nebulous.

In short, I became a writer. My model the Baudelairean flâneur, Robert Walser's destinationless Spaziergänger, the wanderer whose ultimate allegiance is to no nation, no collective, and no ideology but to the City in the broadest sense—the chaotic and confused metropolis, the crazed church of constant motion where poetic creation is born. Unlike Baudelaire, who had to stick with Paris—the possibilities of travel being what they were in the nineteenth century—I am fortunate to live in an era when travel is easier and cheaper than ever before. The cities of the world, in all their rich plurality, have become my extended stomping ground.

Since my addiction to motion is what feeds my writing, the main purpose of travel for me is to get lost. Losing myself in the strangeness of new environs, marveling at the process each time as what is strange transforms into something familiar. I will go to great lengths, travel far distances, for the sole purpose of getting lost—of losing myself.

So it is strange that someone like me would be drawn to the one city on the planet where it is forbidden to get lost, a city with strange customs that is officially governed by an even stranger ideological system. The capital of a strange country with a strange leader, a country universally demonized, laughed at, feared, and generally misunderstood. The type of place that even a traveler like me, with my perennial search for freedom from all the trappings of a conventional existence via writing and constant movement, would be likely to shrug off. No flâneurs allowed in Pyongyang. You can't even wander around on your own without the supervision of a local, government-licensed guide, whose duty it is to lead you on a strict itinerary. What could such a place possibly offer someone like me?

Quite a lot, it turns out. Because the fuel for my wanderlust has perennially been a sense of intrigue, a need to gauge and decode the seemingly incomprehensible. To find the sense in the seemingly outlandish. My first novel, written when I

was twenty-three, was in part about a UFO religious cult. North Korea, from a distance, appeared like a cultish exaggeration in the present of the history I was forced to confront every day, living in two of the capitals of Europe's ill-fated experiments with communism. Over there, in North Korea, was a veritable other way of life. Like many, I didn't even know it was possible to go there. Then it happened to come up in conversation with my friend Tom Masters, a travel writer, that not only had he visited the country several times in the past, he would soon be returning to revise the North Korea chapter of a guidebook he was working on. Would I be interested in coming along?

We landed in Pyongyang in the spring of 2012, just a few months after the death of Kim Jong Il. The country was suddenly in the hands of his son, about whom the people of North Korea and the world knew next to nothing. An aura of uncertainty hovered over the streets of Pyongyang, where whispered gossip and rumor form the unofficial currency. There were other currents flowing through the air, of course—the omnipresent whiffs of paranoia and suspicion. But there was also a palpable sense of hopefulness, an optimism of the potential changes that the new young leader might bring.

I hadn't expected to find such a colorful place. I certainly didn't expect to be received with as much warmth as I was. Although I have spent the entirety of my adult life as an expatriate, I still hold a US passport, so in the eyes of the North Korean authorities and citizens alike, I am an American through and through. (In a country led by an ultra-nationalist ideology where international travel is forbidden for all but a chosen few, the notion of expatriation was and is perplexing for most North Koreans to fathom.) A citizen of the enemy state. Yet none of the hostilities typically directed toward the United States by the state media of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the country's official name, DPRK for short) were ever articulated toward me by any of the North Koreans I met on that trip. I was the only American in the delegation but was treated with as much graciousness as the others. As in other countries in East Asia, foreign visitors are considered honored guests and are treated with gratitude; hospitality is

intrinsic to the culture. A highly musical country, North Korea even has a song, "Pangap-sum-ni-da" ("Nice to Meet You"), which North Koreans delight in singing to all foreign visitors. Above all, North Koreans want you not only to feel welcome but to be impressed by their country, of which they are immensely proud.

I knew better than to be seduced by it all, but I couldn't help being charmed. I knew about the nukes, I knew about the concentration camps, I knew about the systematic injustices perpetrated by the regime against the populace. But is that really all there is to it? I knew going in that there would be limits to what I could find out. Somewhat perversely, not only was I able to accept the highly proscribed nature of North Korean tourism borrowed from the former Soviet Union, but I was quickly able to comprehend the reasons why. In a country where everyone, more or less, is being watched, why should I, a tourist and a citizen of an enemy state, be exempt from this?

After that initial visit in 2012, I returned to North Korea several times. The first was just a month later, to see the Arirang Mass Games, which I wrote about for Artforum. I returned again in 2014 for an architecture-themed tour that enabled me to see the extent to which the city had changed in just two years. That visit gave me further insight into the priorities of the country's new leadership beyond the headlines, the ways that the capital was being transformed and reshaped according to those goals.

Over the years, I devoured every book on North Korea I could get my hands on, from best-selling defectors' narratives to academic treatises focused on art, film, sociology, and the economy. Anything to gain some insight into the realities of daily life beyond the multiple layers of propaganda and mythmaking. Then, in early 2016, I came upon an article on an online news site devoted to North Korea. It was about a new company, Tongil Tours. Unlike the other tourism companies offering three-to-eight-day package tours to North Korea with fairly uniform and standardized itineraries, Tongil intended to specialize in educational exchanges with the North. The brainchild of Alek Sigley, a young East Asian studies undergrad from Australia,

Tongil would be offering that summer, for the first time in North Korea's history, a month-long intensive Korean language course for foreigners at one of Pyongyang's foremost educational institutions, Kim Hyong Jik University of Education. I immediately clicked on the link to the Tongil Tours website and applied.

There wasn't a moment of hesitation on my part. I had just finished my PhD, shutting the book on a five-year chapter of my life, and needed to lose myself in a new adventure. And there it was, spelled out in front of me. To dive into, to partake in—albeit in a very minor observer's role—this "history of the present." At the same time, I've had a love of languages ever since a comparative literature professor in college instilled in me the idea that you can't properly come to understand a place until you have learned to speak the language. This, I immediately understood, was the opportunity I had long yearned for but never thought would be possible—to come to understand the DPRK inside out, through its lingo—through an immersion, albeit limited, in daily life over an extended period of time. A chance to spend an entire month there, rather than the paltry few days of the typical tourist, absorbing all of the nuances that evade most foreigners.

Some family and friends feared I might lose myself in a more literal way. Just months before, University of Virginia student Otto Warmbier had been arrested in Pyongyang for attempting to steal a propaganda banner. Some voices in the American media speculated that his detention was political and symbolic, that no American was truly safe to visit North Korea. But I had been in Pyongyang before when other American prisoners were being held. The media fury didn't faze me. By then, I was well aware of the rules one must submit to when journeying to the DPRK and had already debated the risks and rewards, both in my mind and in conversation with others.

I had also carefully considered the ethics of traveling to North Korea. Many are against it on principle—the old "torture porn" argument, which views travels to such dictatorships to be a cheap exercise in the lurid exploitation of "dark tourism," where all citizens one encounters should be viewed

as nothing more or less than prisoners of the regime, human propaganda posters. And: the possibility of providing financial aid to the development of nuclear weapons.

No one has ever been able to prove that tourism funds the DPRK's military operations. Given the country's refusal to publicly disclose statistics about budgets and spending, the truth will likely never be known. Yet that doesn't stop a number of Western media outlets from asserting tourism's financial contribution to the nuclear program as though it were a fact. The North Korean government, for all the terrible things it undeniably and inexcusably does, also builds housing, schools, and hospitals for its citizens. If you had concrete proof that your tourism money was being spent on the construction of an orphanage, would this be the deciding factor that would persuade you to travel there? Are there not aspects of every country one might object to—including your own? Once we begin to impose travel boycotts on ethical grounds, we quickly run out of places we can go.

The "torture porn" argument is harder to engage because it really comes down to the attitude and intentions of the individual traveler, which is the one thing no one can control. North Korea is an impoverished country whose people live under the ever-shifting whims of an oppressive police state. Since nearly anyone, save for South Korean passport holders, can legally visit, then it follows that anyone can go to gawk, if that is one's main intention. But the implication that this is the primary motive of everyone who goes to North Korea is ridiculous and groundless. On my earlier visits to the country, I had met people from all walks of life on my tours, from doctors to architectural historians to flight attendants, who were visiting the country for any number of reasons. Given the difficulty and expense of traveling to such a place, there is little logic that can be unearthed in the assertion that the few souls who venture there have cynical motives for doing so.

Actually, the travel companies comprising the tiny market of North Korean tourism tend to emphasize the eye-opening, mind-changing vitality of one-on-one engagement between foreigners and North Koreans on these admittedly proscribed tours. And

while I think it is right to be skeptical of any sales pitch, I have seen that this sort of engagement is effective. I have watched North Koreans, in conversing for the first time with an alien from the outside world, forced to alter and revise certain truisms they had been taught to believe. What's more surprising is that this process also happens in reverse. I've learned things from North Korea about the world I come from that I never would have figured out otherwise. I learned that a lot of what I had been taught to believe about North Korea is false, exaggerated, or distorted.

While I always dimly perceived that all media, no matter the degree of its asserted objectivity, is ideologically biased, I've come to understand that much of the reporting on North Korea in the West, reporting that shapes our understanding of North Korea, is especially ideological. The North Korean regime and its leaders have often been described as irrational. My experiences have made me question that contention and wonder if this "irrationality" is more often than not a label applied by those who do not wish to understand an opponent's worldview.

I believe there is a fundamental and flawed humanity that unites the people I have met there with those I have encountered elsewhere, a humanity that is often overlooked in the opportunistic pursuits of warspeak and political advantage. I have seen how agency continues to creep in and operate—even thrive—under conditions of top-down repression. My interactions with North Koreans have largely taken place in approved and monitored settings. But even in such situations, there are certain things that simply cannot be controlled—and the generation of new ideas is one of them. In that sense, travel to North Korea is actually a deeply subversive activity—one that has rich benefits for both parties. It is a fruitful substitute for the more consequential forms of diplomacy that should be taking place on a higher level but, as of this writing, are not.

The month I spent in Pyongyang made me realize that despite the frequency and reach of my peregrinations across the planet's surface, my foreignness, that ingrained sense of American privilege that is so unique and difficult to shake off,

had always enabled me to put a certain distance between myself and the worlds I was exploring. That I myself, as a writer, was somehow outside of everything I was observing, outside of history even; that writing somehow made me a ghosted presence, an invisible vehicle that might serve as a mediation filter. It is a distance, I now realize, that precludes true understanding. Getting there was the easy part; in order to really be there, to reach that point where I could begin to understand the seemingly incomprehensible, I had to dissolve that artificial distance within myself—that invisible wall that separates "us" from "them." I took a long walk, and in the end, despite all appearances to the contrary, it was unguided.

After five years, I ended up somewhere that looked a lot different from the place where I started off. That's the best kind of getting lost—where in the end, you find so much more than just your way. <>

[Why We Need Religion](#) by Stephen T. Asma  
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How we feel is as vital to our survival as how we think. This claim, based on the premise that emotions are largely adaptive, serves as the organizing theme of [Why We Need Religion](#). This book is a novel pathway in a well-trodden field of religious studies and philosophy of religion. Stephen Asma argues that, like art, religion has direct access to our emotional lives in ways that science does not. Yes, science can give us emotional feelings of wonder and the sublime--we can feel the sacred depths of nature--but there are many forms of human suffering and vulnerability that are beyond the reach of help from science. Different emotional stresses require different kinds of rescue. Unlike secular authors who praise religion's ethical and civilizing function, Asma argues that its core value lies in its emotionally therapeutic power.

No theorist of religion has failed to notice the importance of emotions in spiritual and ritual life, but truly systematic research has only recently delivered concrete data on the neurology, psychology, and anthropology of the emotional systems. This very recent "affective turn" has begun to map out a powerful territory of embodied cognition. [Why We Need Religion](#) incorporates

new data from these affective sciences into the philosophy of religion. It goes on to describe the way in which religion manages those systems--rage, play, lust, care, grief, and so on. Finally, it argues that religion is still the best cultural apparatus for doing this adaptive work. In short, the book is a Darwinian defense of religious emotions and the cultural systems that manage them.

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## Opiate for the Masses?

It's a tough time to defend religion. The respectability of religion, among intellectuals, has ebbed away over the last decade, and the next

generation of young people is the most unaffiliated demographic in memory. There are good reasons for this discontent, as a storm of bad behavior, bad press, and good criticism has marked the last decade.

On the negative side, abuse by priests and clerics, jihad campaigns against the infidels, and homegrown Christian hostility toward diversity and secular culture, have all converged into a tsunami of ignorance and violence. The convergence has led many intellectuals to echo E. O. Wilson's claim that "for the sake of human progress, the best thing we could possibly do would be to diminish, to the point of eliminating, religious faiths."

It's hard to disagree with Wilson when we consider some recent cases. The 9/11 terrorists famously shouted "Allahu Akbar"—or "God is great" as they hijacked the planes. In January 2015, gunmen arrived at the Charlie Hebdo magazine offices, went to the third floor, and shot dead eight journalists, a guest, and a police officer who had been assigned to protect workers. The gunmen were heard saying "We avenged the Prophet Muhammad! We killed Charlie Hebdo," in French, and also shouting "Allahu Akbar." And after the Islamic State (Daesh) attacked Paris on November 13, 2015, killing over 125 people, they released their "Statement about the Blessed Paris Invasion on the French Crusaders." In the statement, they quote the Qur'an repeatedly as a motivation and explanation of their violence, and also state, "In a blessed attack for which Allah facilitated the causes for success, a faithful group of the soldiers of the Caliphate, may Allah dignify it and make it victorious, launched out, targeting the capital of prostitution and obscenity, the carrier of the banner of the Cross in Europe, Paris."

In May of 2014, the Catholic Church revealed that it defrocked 848 priests for rape or child molestation, and sanctioned another 2,572 clerics for lesser violations. These dramatic figures represent only the ten years between 2004 and 2014. These kinds of negative cases lead many reflective people to question the sincerity of religious people (especially those in power), and the value of religion itself.

On the positive side of the antireligion trend, there has been a surge of important analyses coming from recent atheist and agnostic critics, and an arguable uptick in scientific literacy among the younger generation. For the first time in U.S. history, for example, the majority of young people believe that Darwinian evolution is a fact about the natural world.<sup>1</sup> I call these positive developments because they represent increases in critical thinking generally, although they've negatively impacted traditional religious belief.

These negative and positive developments, in turn, have generated a greater skepticism toward religion in the new millennium. It's a relative golden era for agnostics and atheists, and some of this is a welcome transformation.

On a personal note, it feels like the current zeitgeist has finally caught up with my own mindset of the 1990s. Most of my early publications were strenuously critical of religion, but it was a more credulous era then and the club of skeptics was tiny. I remember one of my mentors warning me in the early 1990s not to anger the gods and their servants too much before I secured tenure. It was good advice then, because I was scolded regularly in those days by Christians and New Age spiritualists for poking holes in Biblical literalism, mystical overreaches, and naïve supernaturalism. I wrote regularly for the *Skeptical Inquirer*, the *Humanist* magazine, *Skeptic* magazine, and my bestselling [Buddha for Beginners](#) (1996) exposed a wide audience to a demystified, nontheological Buddhism, long before it was standard. I even found myself listed as an entry in the reference work *Who's Who In Hell* (2000), and I'm still proud of my inclusion in that collection of august freethinkers and humanists. I'm relieved that the younger generation of skeptics has a smoother road now, and along with a generation of much better writers than myself, I take a sliver of credit for making skepticism more mainstream than ever.

So, now, it feels oddly familiar to be strangely out of step with my time, as I come around to write an appreciation of religion. But this will not be your typical, aging, return to religion, after a rebellious youth. I am not a religious apologist of that variety. Nor will this book use the old strategy of sweeping

religious irrationality under the reassuring rug of "faith." The fideism or faithism tradition, from Kierkegaard to C.S. Lewis, has defended religion on the grounds that its truths are above and beyond the regular faculties of knowledge. I have no such allegiance to faith, as a special ability, or power, or window to the light.

So, what is my appreciation of religion based upon? Why do I think we need religion? Perhaps a story is a good way to begin.

After pompously lecturing a class of undergraduates about the incoherence of monotheism, I was approached by a shy student. He nervously stuttered through a heartbreaking story, one that slowly unraveled my own convictions and assumptions about religion.

Five years ago, he explained, his older teenage brother had been brutally stabbed to death. He was viciously attacked and mutilated by a perpetrator who was never caught. My student and his whole family were utterly shattered by their loss and the manner of their loss. He explained to me that his mother went insane for a while afterward, and would have been institutionalized if it were not for the fact that she expected to see her slain son again. She expected to be reunited with him in the afterlife, and—she stressed—his body would be made whole again. A powerful motivational force, hope, and a set of bolstering beliefs dragged her back from the brink of debilitating sorrow, and gave her the strength to keep raising her other two children—my student and his sister.

For the more extreme atheist, all this looks irrational and therefore unacceptable. Beliefs, we are told, must align themselves to evidence and not to mere yearning. Without rational standards, like those entrenched in science, we will all slouch toward chaos and end up in pre-Enlightenment darkness.

Strangely enough, I still agree with some of this, and will not spend much time trying to rescue religion as reasonable. It isn't terribly reasonable. But therein lies its secret power. Contrary to the radical atheists, the irrationality of religion does not render it unacceptable or valueless. Why not? Because the human brain is a kludge of three major

operating systems; the ancient reptilian brain (motor functions, fight or flight types of instincts, etc.), the limbic or mammalian brain (emotions), and the most recent neocortex (rationality). Religion nourishes one of these operating systems, even while it irritates another.

In this book, I will argue that religion, like art, has direct access to our emotional lives in ways that science does not. Yes, science can give us emotional feelings of wonder and the majesty of nature (we can feel the sacred depths of nature), but there are many forms of human suffering that are beyond the reach of any scientific alleviation. Different emotional stresses require different kinds of rescue. Unlike previous secular paeans to religion that praise its ethical and civilizing function, I will be emphasizing its emotionally therapeutic power.

Of course, there is a well-documented dark side to spiritual emotions as well. Unlike scientific emotions of sublime interconnection (also still available in religion), the spiritual emotions tilt toward the melodramatic. Religion still trades readily in good-guy bad-guy narratives, and gives testosterone-fueled revenge fantasies every opportunity to vent aggression. But although much of this zealotry is undeniably dangerous, much of it is relatively harmless, and even the dreaded tribalism has some benign aspects. Moreover, I will argue (based on recent social science and psychology data) that the positive dimensions outweigh the negative. I will argue that traditional religion recruits and channels the mammalian emotions of fear and rage adaptively in premodern small group collectives, but in state-level global societies fresh challenges and obstacles arise. The lamentable story of religious zealotry is used by the enemies of religion to damn the whole enterprise, but this critique oversimplifies both the emotional palette (much of which is prosocial) and the religious modes of emotional management.

The New Atheists, like Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris, are evaluating religion at the neocortical level—their criteria for assessing it is the hypothetico-deductive method.<sup>1</sup> I agree with them that religion fails miserably at the bar of rational validity, but we're at the wrong bar. The older brain, built by natural selection for solving survival



challenges, was not built for rationality. Emotions like fear, love, rage, even hope or anticipation, were selected for because they helped early mammals flourish. Fear is a great prod to escape predators, for example, and aggression is useful in the defense of resources and offspring. Care or feelings of love (oxytocin and opioid based) strengthen bonds between mammal parents and offspring, and so on. In many cases, emotions offer quicker ways to solve problems than deliberative cognition. Moreover, our own human emotions are retained from our animal past and represent deep homologies with other mammals.

Of course, the tripartite brain is not a strict distribution of functions, and many systems interpenetrate one another, but affective neuroscience has located a subcortical headquarters of mammal emotion. This, I will argue, is where religion thrives. For us humans the interesting puzzle is how the old animal operating system interacts with the new operating system of cognition. How do our feelings and our thoughts blend together to compose our mental lives and our behaviors? Our cognitive ability to formulate representations of the external world, and manipulate them, is immersed in a sea of emotions. When I think about a heinous serial killer, for example, my blood runs cold. When I call up images of my loved ones in my mind's eye, I am flooded with warm emotions. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio has shown that emotions saturate even the seemingly pure information-processing aspects of rational deliberation.<sup>1</sup> So, something complicated is happening when my student's mother remembers and projects her deceased son, and further embeds him in a metaphysical narrative that helps her soldier on.

I will argue that religion helps people, rightly or wrongly, manage their emotional lives. No amount of scientific explanation or sociopolitical theorizing is going to console the mother of the stabbed boy. But the irrational hope that she would see her murdered son again sustained her, according to my student. If this emotionally grounded belief gave her the energy and vitality to continue caring for her other children, then we can envision a selective pressure for such emotional beliefs at the individual and kin levels of natural selection.

Those of us in the secular world who critique such emotional responses and strategies with the refrain, "But is it true?" are missing the point. Most religious beliefs are not true. But here's the crux. The emotional brain doesn't care. It doesn't operate on the grounds of true and false. An emotion is not a representation or a judgment, so it cannot be evaluated like a theory. Emotions are not true or false. Even a terrible fear inside a dream is still a terrible fear. This means that the criteria for measuring a healthy theory are not the criteria for measuring a healthy emotion. Unlike a healthy theory, which must correspond to empirical facts, a "healthy emotion" might be one that contributes to neurochemical homeostasis or other affective states that promote biological flourishing.

The definition of an emotion is almost as contentious as the definition of religion. For our purposes we will acknowledge that emotions involve complex combinations of (a) physiological sensations, (b) cognitive appraisals of situations, (c) cultural labels, and (d) expressions or behaviors of those feelings and appraisals. I will sometimes refer to the physiological aspect of emotions as "affects" to distinguish them from the more cognitive emotions of modern humans.

The intellectual life answers to the all-important criterion: Is this or that claim accurate? Do our views of the world carve nature at its joints? But the emotional life has a different master. It answers to the more ancient criterion: Does this or that feeling help the organism thrive? Often an accurate belief also produces thriving (how else could intelligence be selected for in *Homo sapiens*?). But frequently there is no such happy correlation. Mixing up these criteria is a common category mistake that fuels a lot of the theist/atheist debate.

Some skeptics suggest that my appreciation of emotional well-being (independent of questions of veracity and truth) is tantamount to "drinking the Kool-Aid" or "taking the blue pill" (from the Matrix scenario). But the real tension is not between delusion and truth—that's an easy one. And that easy debate dominates the conversation, preventing a more nuanced discussion. The real tension is between the needs of one part of the brain (limbic) and the needs of another (the

neocortical). Evolution shaped them both, and the older one does not get out of the way when the newbie comes on the scene.

William James understood this tension, long before we had a neurological way of framing it. And I will draw heavily on James's still powerful "middle way" between the excesses of both secularism and theism. James recognized that faith is not knowledge in the strict sense, but since it is deeply meaningful it is important to see how and why it might be justified. He also understood, long before Damasio, that secular reason is more feeling-laden than we usually admit—there is a sentiment of rationality. The recent debates about religion, like polarizing political rhetoric, have lacked James's refined understanding of the real stakes involved. John Dewey's pragmatic *A Common Faith* also tried to preserve aspects of religious experience, while jettisoning the troubling metaphysics. "The religious," Dewey explained, "is any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of its general and enduring value." In this more capacious definition, he laid down a template for both today's moderate skeptics and interfaith optimists.

I will build a case for religious tolerance and appreciation, without neutering metaphysical traditions entirely. I will argue that there are indicative metaphysical commitments of religion (e.g., "Jesus is God," "Shiva is destroyer," "the soul exists"). But these are not the primary elements of religion. Our indicative beliefs are derived instead from our imperative emotional social experiences. Adaptive emotions, folk psychology, and cultural transmission are enough to generate most religious life. The metaphysical beliefs become part of a feedback loop, but they are not the prime movers or motivators of religious life. Dewey's insight, that almost anything can be "religious" if we understand its unique blend of enthusiasm and existential scope, can be updated and revitalized with recent insights from social psychology, neuroscience, and cross-cultural philosophy.

I never had much use for magical thinking ... until, eventually, I did. In the years since my student told me of his slain brother and unbreakable mother,

my own troubles amplified in disturbing albeit illuminating ways. My personal suffering in the last decade, together with my experience living in Cambodia, strengthened my respect for religion, while leaving my agnosticism fully intact. There's no need to go into confessional mode here, except to express an emotional solidarity with believers who find meaning in the intellectually awkward domain of religion. The relationship between suffering and religion is old and obvious, but we now have new tools (philosophical and scientific) to assess the relationship better. Moreover, this book will couch the issue of suffering in the wider web of religious necessity, namely human vulnerability. The need for religion is frequently proportional to the stakes involved—the householder/parent, for example, has a level of high-stakes vulnerability largely unknown to the bohemian ascetic, or the teenager, or even the twenty-something citizen. And sure enough, their religious interests follow quite different paths. My book will offer an explanation of and modest justification for these religious impulses. It will be a respectful, rather than reductionist, psychologizing of religion. As Roger Scruton has pointed out, "consolation from imaginary things is not an imaginary consolation."

Importantly, this book is not just a defense of religion on the grounds that it comforts. It certainly has this function, and it is a crucial aspect of why we need religion. But many thinkers, from Lucretius and David Hume to Pascal Boyer, have noticed that religions inculcate some uncomfortable, harrowing psychological states. Sometimes religion creates more distress for believers than consolation. Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) famously set the bar for American religious horror, when he said, "The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours." I will endeavor to show that even these negative feelings are part of the larger therapeutic mission of religion to manage the emotional life.

How one feels is as vital to one's survival as how one thinks. This argument, premised on the view that emotions are largely adaptive, will be made throughout the chapters. Running through the text then will be two sets of data and argument. One will be the evidence and argument for adaptive lust, care, panic, fear, equanimity, rage, and so on. How exactly are these adaptive (from the Pleistocene to the present)? Secondly, how exactly do religions manage and modulate these affective powers? How do some of the religious universals (e.g., ritual, sacrifice, forgiveness, soteriology) regulate the emotions into successful survival resources?

Before we begin, we need to define some important terms, and also introduce the idea of the religious imagination. Not only are there many different global religions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, but there are also many definitions of religion. Some definitions are too narrow or provincial, and exclude religions from unfamiliar regions (e.g., monotheists frequently ignore animism). On the other hand, some definitions are so capacious as to include every kind of human endeavor, and do not successfully limit the domain (e.g., Dewey's definition may be too broad in this sense).

The etymology of the word "religion" is unclear. Some scholars claim it is derived from the Latin *religio*, a modification of *ligare*, "to bind." This makes sense, given that religion unites or binds people together into a cultural unit, and religion binds the believer with behavioral constraints. The ancient Roman philosopher Lucretius uses the term in this way, as does St. Augustine. But Cicero offers a slightly different etymology when he suggests that religion comes from *relegere*, "to read through" or "to go through again." And this suggests a crucial liturgical or ritual element of religion.

If we think of religion as a "family resemblance" of ideas, behaviors, feelings, and so on, then we find a general likeness in many features (like a family nose or forehead, for example) but not an exhaustive required set of properties. Most religions, for example, bind a social group together and provide a sense of identity. Most religions commit to a belief in supernatural beings.

Most religions have ritual or sacred objects and conduct ceremonies around those objects. Most religions promote an ethical or moral code. Religions engender rare feeling states, such as awe, reverence, guilt, and so on. Religions have a story about the origin of the cosmos or the origin of a people. They involve modes of communication to other divine realms, such as prayer, divination, or meditation. And although theologians might stress the scriptural notions of the gods, and anthropologists might stress the ritual ceremonies, religion is all of these things.

If a cultural system exemplifies many of the above features, then it is most likely a religion, even though some systems share few features and no systems are complete exemplifications. In addition to a list of defining features, religion also can be analyzed using two different approaches; namely, essential or functional methods. Crudely put, the essentialist approach to religion is concerned with what a particular religion is about, while the functionalist approach tracks what a religion does. If I'm analyzing the Christian idea of "original sin," for example, then I can investigate the scriptural story of Adam's rebellion in Eden, and examine St. Augustine's and Martin Luther's interpretation of original sin as an ongoing expression of human desire (concupiscence), and so on. These would be essentialist approaches to religion, because they examine the nature of the ideas and beliefs directly—taking them as explicit statements about the self, the world, and God. Essentialist approaches are deeply concerned with the content of religion, and track the variations of religious systems as constitutive (e.g., polytheism vs. monotheism or Catholicism vs. Protestantism).

By contrast, functionalist approaches to religion tend to look beyond the specific doctrines and unique rituals, to focus on the social uses or purposes of religious behavior. One might take a functionalist approach to original sin, for example, by arguing that the doctrine helps believers take a cautious or pejorative attitude toward their own desires and appetites, which in turn reduces selfish behavior. Or one might take a functionalist approach to religious sacrifice on the grounds that such activity signals group membership and solidarity. Notice, however, that it's not just

anthropologists who are functionalists about religion. Even the growing interfaith movement, like what one finds in the Interfaith Youth Core, looks beyond the specific essentials of denominational religion to find underlying purposes in all religions. For example, it is common for interfaith proponents to identify "love your neighbor" as an underlying function beneath specific Christian, Jewish, and Muslim doctrines. One needs some functionalism in order to find some of the common or shared goals and values in diverse religions. But most functionalists, like psychologists and social scientists, are examining beliefs and practices as extrinsically valuable or useful.

I will be making many functionalist arguments about religion, because I will be arguing that it is part of a broader adaptive strategy for human beings. But the division between essential and functional should not be overstated. In reality, there is no function or use of religion without the essential or substantive ideas and behaviors. We can abstract the deeper functions from the specific rituals or scriptures, but this is an analytical move that comes from a metalevel of detachment and does not represent the lived experience of the believer. We will discuss both the essential beliefs and behaviors of specific religions, as well as their functions and uses.

Human beings are meaning-seeking animals. And from this perspective we see the marriage of form and content, or religious function and substance. The religious imagination is a broad field that contains the various methods of religious analysis within it, and then some. Religion is about making and finding meaning, in the sense that it's about issues of ultimate

concern, existential exploration, or what philosopher Bernard Williams called our "ground projects." The religious imagination is a way of understanding the world and ourselves, that draws upon our visual and narrative capacities (underwritten by perceptual and cognitive faculties). The religious imagination sees the world as it is, but also a second universe, infusing the facts.

Philosopher Charles Taylor broadened the definition of religion to the larger project—the system of meaning. He suggested that religion is

not really about supernatural beings and big sacrifices, but about frameworks that give us values. These values give us norms, and ways of behaving that define us as a social group, and thereby increase cohesion. Such value frameworks are inescapable for humans, and even our Western secular framework is just another one (Western secular liberalism is a religion that doesn't know it's a religion, according to this view). The main reason for thinking of contemporary liberalism (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democracy) as "religious" is because it has certain fundamental values (e.g., individual rights) that are not demonstrable, or derivable, or provable. Our values are not obviously derived from scientific investigation, Taylor points out, and therefore they are similar to the faith-based first principles of traditional religions (e.g., God made nature).

Although I'm sympathetic to Taylor's emphasis on meaningful value systems, I think he has broadened the notion of religion too much. The frameworks that give meaningful values for Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists, for example, are intimately metaphysical (and often tend toward the supernatural). The values and the meanings flow from the metaphysics. The belief in a God, or a soul, or karma, or an afterlife, makes up the foundational content that anchors the values.

I take it as obvious that we can have values, and very good values, without religion. It's time to acknowledge that although this was once a pressing point of contention, it is thankfully now a no-brainer. Human reason and sentiment, properly cultivated, are sufficient to provide us the golden rule, and many other ethical norms. I will not waste time rehashing this tired debate. We will be focusing on the relationship between religion and values, because that is one of the key elements of the book, but it's a given that nonreligious people can be, and are, deeply ethical.

The relation between secular and sacred values is not a purely academic issue, because we need a social world that appreciates the multicultural diversity of different religions in the United States or Europe, but also limits and constrains those beliefs/practices when they occasionally contradict the values of Western liberalism (e.g., polygamy,

honor killings, or no education for females). Competing value systems and their metaphysical assumptions are difficult to reconcile, even in a pluralistic culture.

For now, we only want to acknowledge the importance of imagination as a force of religious life. We're wrong to think that the imagination is only a fantasy fabricator. I will argue throughout this book that the imagination has epistemic power—that is to say, power to construct knowledge and also change behavior. Yes, there is an aspect of imagination that spins unreality, but there is another aspect that investigates. And another aspect that synthesizes or composes from disparate parts. And yet another aspect of imagination motivates behavior, conduct, and even conversion. The religious imagination is a mediating faculty between facts and values on the one hand, and cognition and affect on the other. The nature of this imagination has been misunderstood by both proponents and detractors of religion.

Mark Twain tells of the fascinating case of Reverend Thomas Beecher (brother of Henry Ward Beecher), who came from Connecticut to Elmira, New York, (Twain's summer hometown) to take charge of a Congregational church. Beecher served as pastor there for many decades, and became Twain's friend.

"He had a fine mind," Twain reports in his *Autobiography*. When he came to Elmira to take over the parish, Beecher was a "strenuous and decided unbeliever." But, he reported to Twain, his upbringing required him eventually to come to believe in Christian doctrine, or he would never be happy or free from terrors. So, the atheist Beecher had accepted the parish confidently, knowing that he had made up his mind to compel himself to become a believer. Twain says that he was astonished by this strange confession, and found it stranger still that Beecher managed to pull it off. Beecher claimed that within twelve months of coming to Elmira, he had "perfectly succeeded in his extraordinary enterprise, and that thence forth he was as complete and as thorough a believer as any Christian that ever lived. He was one of the best men I've ever known. Also he was one of the best citizens I've ever known."

It's hard to interpret this credulous compulsion, this self-imposed conversion. If we take Twain and Beecher at face value, then the conversion represents a kind of tour de force of the will-to-believe. But belief on demand seems, forgive the irony, hard to believe. This is an important issue for us, because we will be considering the possibility of religious belief or commitment, without satisfaction of truth requirements, and even in the face of truth failure.

There is full-on belief, without doubt. And there is complete disbelief. But there are also many fine-grained intermediate positions that need more exploration. The religious imagination has a powerful role in the construction of an unseen, meaningful world—one that structures life, even as it fails to deliver on its literal promissory notes.

Philosopher Jean Kazez writes, "I am a religious fictionalist. I don't just banish all religious sentences to the flames. I make believe some of them are true, and I think that's all to the good." At her family's religious feast, the Seder, she pretends there is a deity to be praised for various things. "I like pretending the Passover story is true," she explains, "because of the continuity it creates—it ties me to the other people at the table, past years that I've celebrated Passover (in many different ways, with different people). I like feeling tied to Jews over the centuries and across the world. I also like the themes of liberation and freedom that can be tied to the basic story."

Many people take a fictionalist approach to God. They accept the existence of God, but they do not really believe God exists. As philosopher William Irwin puts it, "They accept that God is love and that (the concept of) God has shaped human history and guides human lives, but when pinned down they admit that they do not really believe in the actual existence of such a God. Their considered judgment is that the existence of God is not literally true but is mythologically true."

Many nonbelievers dismiss this kind of fictionalism as bad thinking, but many of these same nonbelievers accept the moral power of imagination. In his song *Imagine*, John Lennon famously entreated us to imagine "no countries," "no religion," "no possessions," and a subsequent

"brotherhood of man." And Martin Luther King, Jr. invited us to project a "dream" into future reality, and make it so.

Imagination helps us find empathy for other people, by putting us in their shoes. It helps us envision an alternative reality where greater social justice exists. Dreaming our ideals helps us organize our daily lives and institutions to bring about those ideals. But, of course, the imagination is not intrinsically positive and affirmative. Nightmares are also dreams, after all. In contrast to the egalitarian dreams of liberalism, imagination-based xenophobia drives cultures to imagine the worst, and fear tears apart communities and fosters "us versus them" dynamics. So, the religious imagination is a double-edged sword, and we must try to ascertain which direction it is cutting throughout the specific cases of this book.

Finally, we need just a word or two about opiates. The modern condemnation of religion has followed the Marxian rebuke that religion is an opiate administered indirectly by State power in order to secure a docile populace—one that accommodates poverty and political powerlessness, in hopes of posthumous supernatural rewards. "Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature," Marx claimed, "the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

Marx, Mao, and even Malcolm X leveled this critique against traditional religion, and the critique lives on as a disdainful last insult to be hurled at the believer. I hurled it myself many times, thinking that it was a decisive weapon. In recent years, however, I've changed my mind about this criticism.

First, the opiate critique was born during the rise of industrial urban culture, and it trades on a particular image of "the masses"—an image that doesn't really hold up. Yes, the State can use religion to anesthetize the disenfranchised, but we need to rethink the role of religion for the "elemental social unit"—the family. Nineteenth-century theories, such as Friedrich Engels's, suggested that the nuclear family was a product of industrialization, but more recent anthropology reverses this order and suggests that industrialization was so successful in Europe because nuclear families facilitated it.

Anthropologists Timothy Earl and Allen W. Johnson studied hundreds of human societies, in their *Evolution of Human Societies*, and discovered that the nuclear family is the default form of human organization, because it allows for maximally flexible management of resources, limited demands on those resources, and trustworthy social ties. Religion, then, may be analgesic, but it is managed more by the family, not a faceless bourgeois State or even a centralized Vatican or other power hub. When the family unit is making selective use of the images, stories, and rituals of the local religious culture, then insidious Big-Brother interpretations are politically expedient but inaccurate.

Secondly, religion is energizing as often as it is anesthetizing. As often as it numbs or sedates, religion also riles-up and invigorates the believer. Indeed, one might argue that this animating quality of religion makes it more dangerous than any tranquilizing property.

Finally, what's so bad about some opiates, anyway? If my view of religion is primarily therapeutic, then I can hardly despair when some of that therapy takes the form of palliative pain management. If atheists think it's enough to dismiss the believer on the grounds that he should never buffer the pains of life, then I'll assume the atheist has no recourse to any pain management in his own life. In which case, I envy his remarkably good fortune. For the rest of us, there is aspirin, alcohol, religion, hobbies, work, love, friendship, and other analgesic therapies. After all, opioids—like endorphins—are innate chemical ingredients in the human brain and body, and they evolved, in part, to occasionally relieve the organism from misery. Freud, in his *Civilization and Its Discontents*, quotes the well-known phrase, "He who has cares, has brandy too."

We need a more clear-eyed appreciation of the role of cultural analgesics. It is not enough to dismiss religion on the grounds of some puritanical moral judgment about the weakness of the devotee. The irony is too rich. In this book, I will endeavor a charitable interpretation of the believer and religion, one that couches such convictions in the universal emotional life that connects us all.

Religion is Promethean. Like fire, it is capable of great good and also destruction. At this moment in history, its destructive power may seem dominant—flashing out like bright yellow flames. But I've been showing the value of religion—burning blue flame at the core of the fire.

As we've seen repeatedly in this book, the duality of religious convictions and cultures—at one time, egalitarian and peaceful, at another time tribal and belligerent—flows from the fact that two hearts beat within our breasts. We are that duality. But this is not the juvenile duality of the devil on one shoulder and the angel on the other. Rather, we are each endowed with a handful of adaptive emotional systems (e.g., anger, fear, play/joy, lust), and these are neither good nor bad, but helpful as the specific conditions require. We have anywhere from four to seven "hearts" beating within our breasts. Religion, I've shown, is one of the main coordinators of all that passion.

Religion modulates many of our emotions and behaviors, but who or what will modulate religion when it gets stuck? Sometimes a religion gets caught in a sclerotic mode, unable to adapt to an environmental or social change. Sometimes a religious community becomes terminally aggressive or ascetic, or fearful. In these cases, religions reform or go extinct.

Because I've been arguing that emotions are smarter than we thought, it might seem surprising for me to endorse reason as a good moderator of religious excesses. But evolution built a powerful neocortex, with impressive executive functions and impulse control. So, of course, cold cognition (from the frontal cortex) can help slow down the intensity and immediacy of hot cognition (from the limbic system). Unlike most other mammals that share our same affective systems, we can detach enough from our feelings to consider them.

However, I want to be very clear here. Unlike the contemporary rationalists, who see rationality as a cost-benefit calculator that churns out "effective altruism," I think ethical and religious improvement requires "practical reason." When philosophers try to make ethics into geometry or physics, they do so with the best intentions (i.e., objectivity, they assume, reduces squabbles). But they make a

terrible error in thinking that mathematical or theoretical rationality is the only true reasonable approach to problems. Subjective experiences, biases, personal histories, emotions, and even friendship and kin-ties, are not compliant in a grid of universally binding rules. But my family, friends, and community members are not variables in a hedonic calculus or coordinates on a Cartesian lattice. Practical reason, originally formulated by Aristotle, is more capacious and capable of handling the realities of our local environment, our social hierarchies, and even our familial preferences.

Practical reason is the best way to analyze and reorient your religious community, because it does not pursue theoretical mathematical certainty, but probable, fallible, and context-dependent problem solving. Newtonian inspired universalist rationality tries to make all people fungible, and quickly becomes incoherent when real-life values such as favoritism and love crash the grid. Kantians see all persons as idealized equals, guided by logical consistency. And the utilitarians see pleasure itself as an equal and transposable element or variable in the system. Aristotle, however, starts from real life and acknowledges that people are already in a value hierarchy—and the good comes in many qualitatively distinct forms.

Aristotle sees ethics as an inexact art, but that is a good perspective for regulating the complex cultural system of religion. For example, Aristotle recognizes that family and friendships are not utilitarian cost-benefit relations. There are some important inequalities.<sup>1</sup> Parents, he explains, are responsible for their children—responsible for their existence, their nurture, and their upbringing. He considers this to be a case of positive unequal friendship, and thinks there are many forms of friendship (e.g., teachers and students) that imply the "superiority of one party over the other." Now, this talk of superiority rings strange to our egalitarian ear, but his general point is not very controversial. "The justice," he continues, "that exists between persons so related is not the same on both sides, but is in every case apportioned" to merit, to excellence, to usefulness, and to proximity (emotional and blood). Justice is not "the same on both sides"—it is not the commutative relation of

secular egalitarianism. We ought, he says, to render different things to parents, brothers, comrades, and benefactors. Religious reformation requires this kind of situated reasoning.

Reforming religion, or moderating it, is not like geometry, but it is like medicine and other practical sciences (e.g., engineering). A good doctor does not diagnose simply by applying universal rules to particular cases, nor does she treat all bodies alike. Clinical knowledge is acquired by taking a case history. Philosopher Stephen Toulmin characterizes some typical questions in a patient's case history: "To what extent is a patient's condition a result of earlier diseases, accidents, or other misadventures? To what extent must we explain it, rather, by the patient's family background, upbringing, and experience in life? And what pointers do we need to attend to, if we are to see just what the patient's problem is, and how it can best be remedied?"

These techniques are concerned with the particulars of the patient. Health, like the good, is not an abstraction that exists independently of patients or people—the actual contingent history of the person will explain the condition, and perhaps even suggest the medical way forward. An applied science like medicine is a good analogy with reasonable religion, because the more particular detail we get—or the more concrete complexity—the more likely we are to resolve decisions wisely. As Toulmin puts it, "Set against any fully described problem, abstract principles do not measure up." Rationality is not a policeman for religion. And Aristotle reminds us that "we must not expect more precision than the subject matter admits."

Although reason can help to catch and redirect wayward religious cul-tures, it is ultimately a weak and unreliable solution. The answer is not more book learning and science, but better childhoods—in the sense of emotional maturity. Children who don't learn to manage their emotions (via parental discipline and cultural conditioning) are not going to be emotionally mature as adults. No increase in secularism or science literacy will turn emotional extremists into emotional moderates. The best way to reduce religious extremism is to provide children with more stable, nurtur-ing, social environments.

They will be less prone to cruelty later in life, and religion will speak to their higher natures.

Some critics of religion have suggested that scientific literacy will prevent the dark machinations of the passions, while others have suggested that we need an alternative adventure narrative—dedicated to heroic liberalism—to capture the teetering hearts of disgruntled teens. This latter option has the advantage of engaging the emotional systems through imagination—something ISIS is good at, for example—but I doubt whether anything generates emotional maturity as well as a childhood of secure attachment with caregivers. There's no panacea, but being loved comes close.

Religion, even the wacky, superstitious stuff, is an analgesic survival mechanism and sanctuary in the developing world and wherever people are suffering. I'm an agnostic and a citizen of a wealthy nation, but when my own son was in the emergency room with an illness, I prayed spontaneously. I'm not naive—I don't think it did a damn thing to heal him. But when people have their backs against the wall, when they are truly helpless and hopeless, then groveling and negotiating with anything more powerful than themselves is a very human response. It is a response that will not go away, and that should not go away if it provides genuine relief for anxiety and anguish.

We might be inclined to remove the supernatural magic of religion and arrive at an enlightened Deism, on the grounds that it is more reasonable and consistent with science. If you can attain this level of wisdom, then no one will be happier than I, but do not mistake it for religious progress. Many of the consoling and therapeutic aspects of religion that I've been praising in this book flow from the magical stuff—God hears my prayers, for example, or the spirits intervene. In mainstream religion, God helps me in real time, not as an indirect Deist lawmaker. We cannot get rid of magical thinking, and in most cases don't want to.

In 2017, I spent some time in the Kingdom of Bhutan, studying the unique Vajrayana Buddhism of the region. My guide, Namgay, who is a very devout Buddhist, often cited the maxim, "If you cannot help, then at least do no harm." This idea, "do no harm" (Sanskrit, ahimsa) is an important



feature of Indian religion generally, and it persists in the far-flung regions, like Bhutan, where Buddhism eventually landed. Principles such as "do no harm" and "increase compassion" (karuna) form an ethical umbrella over all manner of metaphysical and supernatural beliefs—forming a protective layer of humanism around some otherwise magical thinking.

Culture doesn't get much more magical than Vajrayana Buddhism, practiced in Tibet, Bhutan, and the Himalayan regions of India: Carved phalluses spout holy water; dreams contain real visitations of the dead; mermaids live at the bottom of some lakes; Buddha statues speak; deities and special monks fly; and astrologers are consulted on most major life events. In fact, Bhutanese people believe that the founder of Bhutanese Buddhism, Guru Rimpoche (8th century cE), is a second Buddha, who brought a more magical tradition because his predecessor's rationalist approach was not effective on the stupid human race. His predecessor, Gautama Siddhartha or Shakyamuni (563-483 BCE), taught a naturalistic psychological dharma of mental training, but the second Buddha brings mystery, magic, and authority. The Vajrayana practitioner is untroubled by the shift to magic, because the best "medicine" for increasing compassion and enlightenment is simply the one that works. Like a bell on a giant mountainside prayer-wheel that dings every revolution in order to bring your meditating mind back to the present, so, too, the magical stories and practices indirectly return the mind to the cosmic project of increasing liberation for all sentient beings.

How does it do this? A simple example might suffice to reveal the chain. And it can easily extrapolate to most other religions. My friend in Bhutan told me that his mother-in-law needed an operation to remove a tumor. She consulted with the local Buddhist astrologer who told her that the best way to build up good karma for the impending surgery was to practice more compassion for sentient beings. She was instructed to decrease the suffering of those less fortunate than she. She donated money to help poor children acquire craftsman skills, and she released some captive fish and birds into the wild. By these merit-making techniques she supposedly improved her

chances for a successful surgery (which any skeptic can legitimately doubt), but it's also clear that she slightly diminished the suffering of other sentient beings (which even the skeptic cannot doubt).

My point in this discussion is to show that even the most supernatural religious beliefs can coexist with and even underscore the goals of tolerant humanism. Principles such as "do no harm" and "increase compassion" (karuna), form a kind of virtue canopy over all manner of metaphysical and supernatural beliefs. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and other religions also have such a virtue canopy, but it usually only unfurls when cultural threats abate.

I have argued throughout this book that religion's primary function is not to provide a path to morality or to substitute for a scientific understanding of nature. Its chief virtues are as a "coping mechanism" for our troubles, and as social glue for our community. I am not simply rehearsing the adage "reason for the few, magic for the many." Instead, the slogan should be revised to the less catchy but more accurate, "Reason for the surmountable problems, and magic for the insurmountable."

Critic of religion Sam Harris, in his book [The Moral Landscape](#), thinks he sees my argument coming. "Because there are no easy remedies for social inequality," he states, "many scientists and public intellectuals also believe that the great masses of humanity are best kept sedated by pious delusions. Many assert that, while they can get along just fine without an imaginary friend, most human beings will always need to believe in God." He considers this position to be "condescending" and "pessimistic." But my argument—that religion soothes emotional vulnerability—can't be "condescending" if I'm also applying it to myself. I, too, get religious when I hit the insurmountable troubles. Besides, even if it is condescending—and I don't think it is—so what? Many true arguments have been condescending.

Like Sam Harris, I know a fair share of neuroscience, but that didn't alleviate my anguish and desperation in the emergency room with my son.

The old saw "there are no atheists in foxholes" obviously doesn't prove that there is a God. It just proves that highly emotional beings (i.e., humans) are also highly vulnerable beings. Our emotional limbic system seeks homeostasis—it tries to reset to calmer functional defaults when it's been riled up. There are aspects of religion, detailed throughout this book, that go straight into the limbic system and quell the adrenalin-based metabolic overdrive of stress.

How do we discriminate between dangerous and benign religions? That is a fruitful question, because it invites all world religions into the discussion. Both the developed and the developing worlds can profitably examine their unique belief systems in light of larger human values. We should employ a broad base of anthropological experience and a healthy dose of practical reason to make the necessary discriminations. Religious ideas that encourage dehumanization, violence, and factionalism should be reformed or diminished, while those that humanize, console, and inspire should be fostered. But as a historian of religion and an evolutionist, I have argued that some of the more quarrelsome emotions will inevitably remain in the adaptive reservoir. David Hume, trying to sift the good from the bad, said, "The proper office of religion is to regulate the hearts of men, humanize their conduct, infuse the spirit of temperance, order, and obedience". I have argued that this "proper office" is maintained not by top-down cultural policing, but by natural forces of familial affection, small group cooperation, and the demands of domestic life. These forces create the mainstream of religiosity.

In 2009, in Brazil, the archbishop excommunicated doctors for performing an abortion on a nine-year-old girl who had been repeatedly raped by her stepfather. The stepfather had impregnated her with twins. The girl's mother, too, was kicked out of the church, but the rapist was not. That is the kind of dehumanizing and dogmatic religion that should be reformed. Catholics deserve a better religion than that, and they seem to have gotten one with the election of Pope Francis in 2013. Pope Francis appears to be recalibrating Catholicism back toward its humanizing, consoling, and inspirational dimensions. In large part he does this by his own

emotional example, not by didactic doctrine. Are there Catholic extremists? Of course there are. But the natural piety of the mainstream practitioner lives well below the corrupt levels of big church institutions, and below the arid inflexibility of theology. It has always been so, and always will be. Whether it is Catholicism, Protestantism, Islam, Buddhism, or animism, the adaptive virtues can be intensified while the maladaptive vices are reduced. In short, the reduction of human suffering should be the standard by which we measure every religion. Oftentimes, that is the same standard most religions adopt for themselves, but when occasionally it isn't, then we will need vigilance, and a mix of charity, skepticism, and possibly cultural intervention.

The phrase "cultural intervention" is fraught, but the future of interreligious interaction need not be like the past. Although there is still a great deal of religious illiteracy, most of us know far more about one another's religions than generations past. How religion goes forward and how it embraces its "proper office" will depend a great deal on the development of globalization. Religious ideologies will certainly struggle with one another—as they always have. But if globalism could reveal the deeper shared project of diverse practitioners, then mainstream religious believers—householders and stakeholders in emotional communities—might find remarkable solidarity.

When I lived in Cambodia many Christian missionaries had recently come to the country to try to win it over for Christ. Cambodia, like other war-torn developing countries, had lost a generation to violence and with that human loss came a cultural loss. Buddhism was targeted as an "outmoded tradition" by the Khmer Rouge, and it was almost completely stamped out. This left a huge ideological hole in the Cambodian psyche. Aggressive Protestant Evangelicals, from the West, explicitly target such vulnerable communities and descend, as soon as it's safe, to convert the "heathen." In developing countries, they go to poor communities and offer the starving locals a bag of rice if they come to church and get baptized as Christians. These rice bribes are common in Southeast Asia, and demonstrate the state of religious "warfare" in a globalized world.

Granted, this kind of "warfare" is much better than the old bloody versions, but it's still repugnant.

Evangelicals who want to supplant Buddha with Jesus are convinced that Buddhism is simply false, whereas Christianity is true. The Evangelical missionaries I met in Cambodia were confident that Jesus was God incarnate, whereas Buddha was a mere man—and why would anybody prefer a man to God himself?

A refreshing alternative to this myopic form of religious intervention can be seen in the Catholic missions, particularly the Jesuits in Southeast Asia. Unlike Evangelical missionaries who give food with the ulterior motive of winning conversions, the Catholics just give food because people are starving. There is no means/end negotiation, just charity.

French priest Francois Ponchaud has been a strong humanitarian force in Cambodia since the 1970s, and he opened Western eyes to the tragedies that were occurring under Pol Pot with his famous book, *Cambodge Anee Zero*.<sup>1</sup> Father Ponchaud and many Catholics worked tirelessly in the refugee camps during the 1980s, and today continue to bring relief and support to poor Khmer people. But their conversion policy is very clear, and very different from the rice Christian fundamentalists. The Catholics say that they only wish to "evangelize" through their humanitarian actions—not through preaching, or Bible thumping, or offering rice bribes.

The Catholics don't want to convert the Buddhists, they just want to help them with food, clean water, housing, education, and so forth. The Catholics have a great deal of respect for Buddhism, and they work within those ancient spiritual/social structures, not against them. In fact, some overly polite Cambodians, who are already familiar with rice Christian conversions, occasionally ask Father Ponchaud if they should convert to Catholicism—now that they are receiving Catholic charity. Ponchaud responds by asking them, "First, can you tell me what you know about Buddhism?" And if the Khmer do not know much, Ponchaud tells them to go learn more about Buddhism first. In fact, the Catholic Church makes the rare convert go through a rigorous three-year catechism before they will

baptize them. Criticizing the rushed baptisms by the Mormon Elders, Ponchaud says, "They make pressure, pressure, pressure. Christ liberated us. [Mormon conversion] is not liberation; they make more slaves."

It remains to be seen how these religious competitions will play out. Religions meet each other like tectonic plates. They can press against each other interminably, building up a mountain of strain—with neither side giving an inch; or, the meeting can become a subduction zone, where one tradition folds under the other and slowly melts away. This century promises to bring many such seismic shifts. At the core, however—even below the ideological plates—churns the white-hot emotional sources of all religion. Those volcanic forces will continue to sometimes rupture and explode in hot spots, but they will also build new formations. <>

[Political Demonology: On Modern Marcionism](#) by Richard Faber, translated and edited by Therese Feiler and Michael Mayo [Cascade Books, 9781498285872]

The structural core problem of the Gnostic dualism between the god of creation and the god of redemption governs not only every religion of salvation and redemption. It is immanently given in every world in need of change and renewal, inescapably and ineradicably. The lord of a world in need of change, that is, a misconceived world and the liberator, the creator of a transformed, new world cannot be good friends. They are, so to speak, enemies by definition."<sup>2</sup> Whether Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, or Erich Auerbach and Hans Blumenberg, Ernst Bloch and Jacob Taubes, or Carl Schmitt (cited above)—all of them have been more or less fascinated or awed by the dualistic theology of St. Paul's disciple Marcion, and have as prominently and as differently referred to him. Already Adolf von Harnack, author of the Marcion monograph that even today sets the standard, was aware of the timeliness of his research object, in view of a modern Marcionism, right after the First World War. "<sup>3</sup>Richard Faber's book on Political Demonology is a classic account of modern Marcionism within the German philosophical

heritage of Auerbach, Bloch, Schmitt, and others that manages to both deal with the issues in depth but also to make them comprehensible. This is not an easy task in political theology and this version, a translation by Therese Feiler and Michael Mayo, casts light into the darkness of demonology." -- Peter Thompson, Research Associate at the School of Advanced Studies, University of London Richard Faber is Senior Lecturer (Privatdozent) and Honorary Professor of Sociology, especially the Sociology of (Literary) Religion, at the Freie Universitat Berlin. He has published widely on the occidental movement, humanism, political theology, atheism, fascism, and the 1968 cultural revolution.

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Excerpt: Political demonology has traditionally related to the "experience of evil principalities and powers (of a personal kind) in the world," as the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner explains, but is "not in itself primarily a real revelation."

Demonology allows us to seek out and determine the nature of evil, but, despite whatever satisfactions it may bring, does not concern revelation in itself. Instead, as Rahner argues, a powerful yet not real experience of political evil could form "part of the critical context of the real revelation of the living God in Christ and his power to redeem man." So for Christian theology, demons—political or otherwise—are made meaningful in the context of Christ's revelation, which allows this experience of evil to be defined, delimited, and understood.

Most of the thinkers appearing in this volume are hardly regarded as theologians. Carl Schmitt, Ernst Bloch, Theodor Adorno, and Hans Blumenberg, for example, reflected on and critically intervened in the "demonic" experiences of twentieth-century Germany as political, philosophical, legal thinkers. Richard Faber's study, however, reconstructs their thought in light of what he sees as its implicit "demonological" dimensions. No matter how unorthodox, implicit, or marginal the theology they imply, Faber is acutely aware of its practical, political significance. Nothing less than the nature of the political order, and therefore also the dynamics of good and evil, is at stake. Is this order dualistic, marked by enmity? If so, who stands opposed to whom? Is it monistic, implying a single leader or "Führer"? Or does it resolve into the pluralism of the many, to the point of competitive

oligarchy, or perhaps into late-capitalist, atomistic competition?

For Faber, all political constellations and events—the Roman Empire, Christendom, the French and American revolutions, postwar Europe—are also irreducibly religious constellations. And as such they pervade culture and politics today. As Faber's multidisciplinary approach recalls and reinterprets these constellations in the tradition of the Frankfurt Institut für Sozialforschung, he uses his objects "like spotlights" to critically illuminate the present.

### Harnack's Marcion

But what is the role of Marcion here, the second-century arch-heretic? The study of gnosis,<sup>1</sup> Faber's teacher Jacob Taubes once remarked, has primarily referred to the gnosis of late antiquity. "[But] palimpsestically," he wrote, "it can also be read as the self-localization of the present." And when Adolf von Harnack published his study of Marcion in 1921, it was not merely a work of church history. Understood as instrumental in the very foundation of the Catholic Church—as Harnack's subtitle, "The Gospel of the Alien God," suggests—Marcion was a figura to locate liberal Protestant faith after the First World War.<sup>5</sup> Like few other figures in the history of the church, Marcion articulated the possibility of dualism—of total otherness—within Christianity itself.<sup>6</sup> He taught an altogether new God revealed by Christ, one that negated the old god of the Jews—and with him all creation. At the same time, this new god was nothing but goodness itself, all-merciful love, indeed unspeakably so: "Oh what wonder above wonder, what delight, power, and astonishment it is that nothing can be said about the gospel, nor thought about it, nor can it be compared to anything." Faith sprung from a great Beyond, the altogether New that denied a world in shell shock. As Harnack's daughter and biographer Agnes von Zahn-Harnack explained,

Marcion preached "the alien God," i.e., the God that has nothing in common with creation, this miserable, misconceived, and stained creation, and the whole course of earthly events, because he belongs to a wholly different sphere. This was bound to deeply move readers for whom, through war and revolution, the cruelty, the counter-divine

meaninglessness of fate, had become a horrific experience. Yet at the same time Marcion taught the coming of the Redeemer, who is perfect love and nothing but love; no more punitive justice, no more legality!

The unbridgeable division between the old creator and that new, pure god of love implied an irreconcilable fissure—for good or ill.

As Harnack told it, Marcion (ca. 85-160) was a bishop's son in the Pontus, born into a lively Christian community. His own father excommunicated him, though probably not because he had seduced a virgin. Christianity at the time was still in its formative years, so only severely deviant doctrines would have led to excommunication. Marcion's unforgivable teaching of two gods, Harnack argued, must have been quite developed when he left the Pontus for a "propaganda tour" of Asia Minor.<sup>7</sup> It was most likely here that he encountered Polycarp, who, as Irenaeus of Lyon writes, said to Marcion, "I recognize you as the first-born of Satan"—indeed, a demon.

The merchant Marcion headed on to Rome, the epicenter from which new ideas would ripple throughout the empire. Here he collated an Evangelion, a version of Luke's Gospel the early church came to regard as a mutilation (a view recently revised, albeit only on the grounds of historical accuracy). Marcion's Apostolikon was comprised of ten letters of Paul, though now stripped of all Jewish material. The collation served one purpose: to show that the new god of pure love had overthrown the old. The Old Testament was obsolete. Around AD 144, still in Rome, Marcion composed his infamous Antitheses, surviving only within the scathing polemics written against him. As the title suggests, the Antitheses are a sharp juxtaposition of the inferior world-creator and the good God, or rather his Christ.<sup>8</sup>

The Roman presbyters met Marcion's Antitheses with hostility. Their "pluralistic tolerance scheme," as Sebastian Moll has called it, could absorb all diversities—except those questioning that tolerance scheme itself. For founding his "anti-movement" Marcion was once again excommunicated. But this time, "with monstrous energy, Marcion suffered the

consequence, and began his Reformatory propaganda at the grandest scale," and his church spread throughout the empire. Even a generation later, Tertullian, his fiercest theological opponent, warned, "Marcion's heretical tradition has filled the whole world" (*Adversus Marcionem* V, 19). Long after his church had disappeared, "Marcion" signified a taboo, an abyss within the church. As Catholic orthodoxy took shape in response to Marcion, this abyssal logic—a logic of opposition, of antithesis and internal contradiction—persisted, not just as a theological possibility, but as political and cultural possibilities as well.

### Modern Marcionism

For Harnack, in his first, prize-winning study of the subject in 1871, Marcion's absolutized dichotomy between law and gospel prefigured the Reformation's irreversible breakup of the church. "Christ stood against a demiurgic creator and his world, a "bad tree" that produced nothing but bad fruit. The new, revealed God set Christ against Yahweh, the gospel against Judaism, and—in Harnack's analogy—the Reformation against the Roman Catholic Church. Marcion was Luther. This "emphasis on Marcion's `undogmatic way of thinking'" could then be extended into the twentieth century. For one thing, it allowed Harnack to subtly resist "the dogmatism of the Prussian state church." But Harnack also saw in Marcion a genuine dimension of orthodoxy. In a letter to Martin Rade just after the publication of *Marcion*, Harnack wrote, "... it was my intention to pay what is due to Marcion in church history at last ... The place he deserves should become clear: Between Paul and Augustine he was the most important Christian." For Harnack, dualism and orthodoxy could come together in one Christian heart.

A prolific church historian and editor since his early days in Estonia, Harnack had risen to the highest ranks of the Wilhelmine Reich's academic elite. A member of the Prussian Academy of Science, he became general director of the Prussian State Library in 1905. Six years later he cofounded the Kaiser Wilhelm Society for the Advancement of the Sciences. The subliminal dualism that fascinated Harnack's enlightened, liberal Protestantism also echoed in his advocacy of Germany's foreign

policy. In August 1914 he shared in the national enthusiasm of the "August Experience" as Germany declared war against France and Russia. He did not only perceive it as a *bellum iustum*. He was not shy about attaching the title "Prince of Peace" to the sovereign. The whole German populace, he wrote, "gives its last drop of blood [to Your Majesty]; the furor teutonicus breaks loose with all its might, and not a single one will stay behind!" This was a "war of minds," a *Kulturkampf*, indeed a clash of civilizations. As one of the signatories of the so-called Manifesto of the Ninety-Three in October 1914, Harnack defended Germany's invasion of Belgium, the country's "hard struggle for existence in a struggle which has been forced upon her."

As a religious-philosophical constellation, Marcionism entailed a remarkable dialectic of liberalism and anti-Judaism. Harnack concluded that "[to] discard the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake that the great Church was right to reject; to hold on to it in the sixteenth century was a fate the Reformation could not yet escape; but to keep on conserving it as a canonical work in Protestantism since the nineteenth century is the result of a religious and ecclesial paralysis." This last consequence darkly foreshadowed statements such as Cardinal Faulhaber's in 1933 that a "Christianity which still clings to the Old Testament is a Jewish religion, irreconcilable with the spirit of the German people." Harnack's theological influence waned during the 1920s, so the later rise of anti-Semitism cannot be laid at his feet. In 1924, in fact, he had warned, "One ought not to imagine that the ravages of our time can be healed with parades, swastikas, and steel-helmets." It would be difficult and anachronistic to draw a straight line from his study of Marcion to the *völkisch* German Church of the Nazi era. Nonetheless, Harnack's challenge, Marcion's question—what to do with the Old Testament, and therefore with the world and with the political—continues to blight liberal Protestantism to this day.

### Richard Faber's Project

The key date for Political Demonology is 1968, the height of the German postwar generation's autopsy of their parents' totalitarianism. As a child of this

"protest generation," Richard Faber has pursued two interrelated lines of enquiry: the dissection of fascism and the unmasking of theocracy in its various forms and intellectual trajectories. Fascism and theocracy are, for Faber, conceptually inseparable. Whenever it invokes unity or the whole, the amalgamation of politics and religion can always only birth immanent, ultimately collectivist institutions. But such institutions necessarily also produce a historical, logical excess: the survivors of totalitarianism, the militant resistance, the traumatized, the melancholics—and not least: religio-political heretics. It was also in 1968 that a Marcionite constellation seemed to have re-emerged in West Germany. On the one hand stood the activists inspired by the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno, who spoke from the self-defeating movement of critique, the only negative truth left to utter in this "damaged life." On the other hand stood the establishment with its various ties to the fascist era, but also to anti-revolutionary traditions, conservative stability, and at times monarchist ideas of order.

### Theocracy—Imperialism—Fascism

This German constellation forms the background to Faber's critical fascination with Carl Schmitt, whom he has aptly called "the theologian of jurisprudence and the jurist of theology." Faber argues that Schmitt's Prussian heritage had far less of an influence on his political theology than did his Roman Catholicism. Yet Schmitt was a Roman before he was a Catholic. The Roman emperors served as a lens for his political Catholicism, not vice versa: as the divinely guaranteed juridical form; a singular divine leader holding back the dissolutions of republican anarchy, or indeed any threats associated with divided power. In other words, what is at stake is not whether Schmitt was a theologian or not, but rather: Which theo-political order did he proclaim? Schmitt knew Harnack's study of Marcion well and revived the theological heritage once again as a lever to distribute the powers of the present. In Schmitt's reading, a pagan but effective monotheism governed the imperial cult of Augustus, then found a seamless continuation

in the Christianization of the Roman Empire (which Faber for his part interprets as the imperialization and paganization of Christianity). Finally, the katechontic constellation returns in the strictly "monotheistic" order of a Führer, as Faber frequently emphasizes. As late as 1970 in *Political Theology II*, Schmitt explained—with reference to the imperial theologian Eusebius and the rebellious monks in the Eastern Roman Empire—that the static nature of monotheism simultaneously implies stasis and therefore upheaval. The in-breaking messianic harbors the dissolution of "all that stands and all the estates," to translate Marx correctly here. Political Christology for Schmitt, in Faber's reading, thus implied routing out dissent—political demonology.

So the total, even totalitarian religious-political "wholes" of Western modernity find their original image in the Roman Empire, this ancient prototype of "Euro-American empire?" Rome is the mother of the Occident and its ideology: "Whoever says Occident is searching for the inheritance deed of the Roman Empire." It is also no coincidence, Faber points out, that the *novus ordo seclorum* announced on the Great Seal of the U.S. draws on the imperial Roman poet Vergil's fourth Eclogue. An essential line of enquiry into the study of political religion thus also has to examine the modern reception of Roman antiquity.

Distinctions need to be made here as well, Faber has argued: a Neo-Kantian, liberating humanism can be harnessed to an emancipatory project, unlike what he calls a Caesarist, aristocratic, effectively anti-humanist humanism. (The nineteenth-century bourgeois middle class reading Greek and Latin could very well produce a Heinrich Himmler, after all.) Notably, this anti-humanist tradition continues well into the postmodern era: for example, in Foucault's idea of the subject that truly becomes himself only by virtue of his own disappearance.

The "Demonic" and Revolutionary Hope  
Interpreting Christ as a political revolutionary has always been a heady possibility, as old as the gospels themselves. In the modern age of revolutions, Christ the revolutionary reappeared. Whether as a sans-culotte, as the Promethean

thought of the Enlightenment, or as the silent force of subversion in Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor"—such insurgents challenged both material politics and a particular notion of orthodox, Trinitarian Christianity, subjecting them to a logic of opposition between Two. In its most radical expression, this insurgency becomes an exodus from religion itself, as Faber reconstructs it in Ernst Bloch (see Part II of this volume). Bloch's chief argument is one of immanence—of utopia within the material world. His utopia places human non-finitude and human material reality at the center. In the very loss of the transcendent possibilities offered by traditional religion, the non-finality of the human allows us to nonetheless hope for a Marcionite Other, a "transcending without transcendence?" Christianity contains within itself the means of its own overcoming: it extends the Exodus, its earthly demand for justice for the poor and oppressed, its anti-authoritarianism. A non-transcendent Christianity that has such "atheism" within it is heretical, of course, and Bloch embraces this fact. ("The best thing about religion is that it creates heretics," he writes.) But Christianity is required nonetheless. It saves atheism from becoming a brute materialism (Klotzmaterialismus), nihilism, and despondent boredom.

Reading the New Testament alongside Marx, Bloch accepted the "metaphysical anti-Semitism" his anti-theocratic quest implied. An underlying current of the ongoing debate around the figure of Marcion thus also concerns the religio-political interpretation of Israel. Another dualist Either/Or can emerge here: either one has to embrace a "theocratic" connection of Judaism and nationalism, or an exodus to the point of atheism, albeit with Haredi Judaism as a (negativized) possibility. The emphatic Israeli then paradoxically finds himself without a home. Jewish contemporaries such as Will Self and Shlomo Sand engage in this debate. An Israeli with a universalist horizon, Sand scourges Judaism as much as nationalism, which he thinks are inextricably, inescapably intertwined—to the detriment of peace in Israel. But neither does he give a break to secular Judaism. And in denying that such a thing exists, the atheist Sand even more emphatically embraces a deeply orthodox notion of Judaism.

A curious dialectic also underlies the coherence of Faber's essays in this volume. Marcion(ism)'s dualistic mode of existence leaves the Old and New as open, interchangeable, though always inimical spaces. Judaism could stand for the Old, indeed all worldly existence, to be abandoned, ascetically or violently; it could be the dangerous "New" flying the flags of revolution. "Judaeo-Christianity" could threaten an anti-Marcionite paganism; Jesus could be the Jewish insurgent against a Jewish establishment aligned with Roman imperialism. In this sense Schmitt always argued that the "right" and "left" are two sides of the same coin. But while Jacob Taubes pressed Schmitt on his connection with Walter Benjamin, Faber for his part has emphasized their significant distance: "Schmitt was a Christologist in the sense of Th. Hobbes: 'Jesus is the Christ,' i.e.: the Messiah is (and has long been) here; hence every messianism (no matter which form) is heresy/ revolution, which must be fought. Benjamin, in contrast, was a messianic par excellence, the very opposite of a 'catechontic: His 'Antichrist' is not to be restrained, but rather to be fought and vanquished—for the sake of the Messiah ..."

The first chapter of [Political Demonology](#), a study of the Jewish literary critic Erich Auerbach (1892-1957), perhaps surprises with its reference to Marcionism. Auerbach, as Faber admits, mentions Harnack, but never Marcion. What counts is rather the constellation, the ache and longing for something alien, unreachable—a god, a home—that imbues Auerbach's work with existential intensity. For the Jewish Auerbach, to put it "christologically," the divine is incarnate in historical and above all literary reality. In this religious intensity, literary reality combines the tragic and the comic, the most quotidian and the sublime. It is a living reality throughout the ages, and hence includes biblical as well as "profane" literature. As Arthur Krystal puts it, "For Auerbach, a philologist by training, but a historian-philosopher by temperament, literature is always bounded by the writer's sense of reality, which, at its deepest level, depicts everyday life in all its seriousness." Although monumental in its own right, Auerbach's work was also a spotlight on his political context. In



1938 he writes to Traugott Fuchs with a view to fascist Germany:

The challenge is not to grasp and digest all the evil that's happening—that's not too difficult—but much more to find a point of departure for those historical forces that can be set against it ... To seek for them in myself, to track them down in the world, completely absorbs me. The old forces of resistance—churches, democracies, education, economic laws—are useful and effective only if they are renewed and activated through a new force not yet visible to me.

As Krystal further notes, "[that] new force never emerged, and Auerbach could never take solace in the future?" He remained an exile in more than one sense, "a Jew outside of Judaism and a German ousted from Germany." Apart from the bond of friendship between Auerbach and Ernst Bloch, this background further adds to the "neo-marcionite" dimension Faber explores in his first chapter.

Auerbach's fate as an exile in the U.S. is then echoed in the Excursuses, two earlier publications Faber has included in this volume with a view to an American audience. The first is a rejection of the "poly-theological" solution to theodicy suggested by Hans Blumenberg and others against Carl Schmitt; Faber defends once again a Blochian, utopian-revolutionary position. This chapter in particular participates in contemporary debates, as it asks us to critically examine whether the argument for pluralism is actually a mask to promote oligarchic and plutocratic interests.

The second Excursus retraces the Marcionite dimension in Herman Melville as it moved between revolutionary hope and its disappointment in the face of reality; of particular note will be its introductory poem "The Cock" by Christian Morgenstern, translated into English here for the first time.

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Auerbach's fate as an exile in the U.S. is then echoed in the Excursuses, two earlier publications Faber has included in this volume with a view to an American audience. The first is a rejection of the "poly-theological" solution to theodicy suggested by Hans Blumenberg and others against Carl Schmitt; Faber defends once again a Blochian, utopian-revolutionary position. This chapter in particular participates in contemporary debates, as it asks us to critically examine whether the argument for pluralism is actually a mask to promote oligarchic and plutocratic interests.

The second Excursus retraces the Marcionite dimension in Herman Melville as it moved between revolutionary hope and its disappointment in the face of reality; of particular note will be its introductory poem "The Cock" by Christian Morgenstern, translated into English here for the first time. <>

[Production of the 'Self' in the Digital Age](#) by Yasmin Ibrahim [Palgrave Macmillan, 9783319744353]

This book investigates the relationship between the self and screen in the digital age, and examines how the notion of the self is re-negotiated and curated online. The chapters examine the production of the self in postmodernity through digital platforms by employing key concepts of ubiquity, the everyday, disembodiment and mortality. It locates self-production through ubiquitous imaging of the self and our environments with and through mobile technologies and in terms of its 'embeddedness' in our everyday lives. In this innovative text, Yasmin Ibrahim explores technology's co-location on our corporeal body, our

notions of domesticity and banality, our renewed relationship with the screen and our enterprise with capital as well as the role of desire in the formation of the self. The result is a richly interdisciplinary volume that seeks to examine the formation of the self online, through its renewed negotiations with personalised technologies and with the emergence of social networking sites.

Excerpt: The story of the self entwined with digital media platforms and imaging technologies in the digital age is one that is still unfolding in all its nuanced complexities. The self as a form of value entangled with the back operations of the web is implicated in both value creation and as content and commodity for mass and niche consuming audiences. Amidst these opportunities to be part of value creation and commodification, the self remains deeply aestheticized and consumed in its everyday settings. In the banal richness of the everyday, it performs to new forms of gaze and consuming publics curious of the other and curious in the other. The desire to see ourselves being validated and consumed by others facilitates a whole new economy where the self is rebirthed through new mediated platforms where sharing and community endorsements make the solitary self a form of transaction. New vulnerabilities emerge as do new forms of self-expression. The objectification of the self in the digital age invites a whole array of introspection into self-production through immaterial platforms where the self acquires new means to be exchanged and to acquire value. These are intrinsic to the digital age where self-production entails renewed engagement with everyday technologies that claim the body as a site for-embedding. The corporealisation of technology in our everyday lives means that ubiquitous computing and imaging constantly graze the body inviting it to be part of the landscape of production in the digital age. In these technological engagements, the self is expressed through the sharing platforms that aestheticize the self and its everyday life as means to diarise its journeys, validate its presence and to review its deep seated anxieties with mortality and find mechanisms for immortality. The currency of the 'selfie' isn't just a story about convergence of technologies or the incorporation of these in our smartphones or indeed

the extension of our senses through wearable technologies. The 'selfie' is about our strategies to reenact the self through new modes of expression, new modes of living and new modes of co-presence with others while enabling a means to view ourselves through the screen. This re-imagination of the self through modes of immateriality while seeking to extend our mortality through the virality and immortality of the screen conveys the complex interplay of tensions in the digital age where our disembodied presence online and its constant anxieties with death and elongation of mortality carve out strategies to commodify and aestheticize the self through and with the screen. The self on the screen will remain a primal moment of fascination today and for time to come.

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#### Producing the 'Self' Online. Self and Its Relationship with the Screen and Mirror

The insertion of our lives into the screen and fascination with the screen represent moments of extreme curiosity and primal interest with this self-as-part-of-the-human condition. This introductory chapter argues that this 'infantile' moment of self-discovery with the screen is equivalent to the mirror moment of self-identification. In the digital age, the screen performs a multitude of functions from self-discovery to voyeurism, encapsulating our renewed ubiquitous fascination with the mirror as the starting point of self-discovery. Our obsession with the screen in the digital age needs to be located as a cultural artefact associated with news, celebrity and the spectacular. In the digital age, the screen and mirror become interchangeable as they become part of the project to perform, project and consume the self. This introductory chapter examines the production of the self in the digital

age through its troubled and unsettling relationship with the mirror and the screen as artefacts of self-production.

#### Anchoring the Self Through the Banal, the Everyday and the Familiar

This chapter examines the production of the self through digital technologies and the domesticity of the everyday, in terms of its pace, rituals and familiarity. Photo- and video-sharing sites draw on everyday domesticity as a space for communion. The aestheticization of the self through its domesticity is therapeutic in enabling a connection with others and equally as a site of cultural production where the self is transacted and commodified. The consumption of the everyday through digital platforms and technologies whether it be food diaries, consumption patterns or everyday chores is important, as it draws on the familiar and perfunctory. The banal offers codes of communication that are instantly recognisable and resonant with distant strangers, but in also anchoring imaging technologies as 'tamed' through its domestication within the everyday. In an age of anxiety, the anchoring of the self through the everyday presents the 'self' as being intact and renewed through the familiar.

#### Self-Love and Self-Curation Online

The self is constantly curated through an image-laden economy from the narcissistic turn to 'lifecasting' online. This chapter examines the notion of self-love and how our image-saturated worlds induce new modes of sociality that centre the transaction and curation of the self online. The coalescing of the mirror and screen produce a new-found fascination with a self which is aestheticized and constantly curated for others but most importantly validated through this gaze. This notion explores the concept of glass-house society where the act of watching defines new modes of self-curation and sociality.

#### Self-Commodification and Value

The self confronts capital directly in the online environment. While the self is a constant source of data, revenue and content for capital, it would be too limiting to imagine the self solely as an entity to create value online. This chapter examines the relationship between self and capital and how the

politics of self-production feeds numerous strands of e-commerce online while enabling therapeutic and empowering elements for the self. The relationship between the self and capital enters a complicit arrangement where the insatiable appetite for non-events and non-news drives an economy of attention seeking and deriving pleasure from the banal.

### Self and Its 'Strategies for Immortality'

The online self is one that is acutely aware of the transience of its moral life and its limitations on this earth. Through its disembodied presence online and its ineradicable qualities, the virtual world offers strategies to extend its mortality. Our pull towards the virtual reveals our deep-seated fear of death and the need to place fragments of ourselves to float infinitum as data. Throughout human civilisation, we have sought to retain ourselves on earth through cultural artefacts and, historically, the rich have had more opportunities to do this. The Internet, often envisaged as a democratic platform for the masses, offers new ways for recording memory and for renegotiating our ephemeral mortal lives. This chapter discusses our historical anxiety about our morality and mechanisms to sustain our presence in the online environment. <>

### [Exploring the Selfie: Historical, Theoretical, and Analytical Approaches to Digital Self-Photography](#)

edited by Julia Eckel, Jens Ruchatz, Sabine Wirth [Palgrave Macmillan, 9783319579481]

This volume explores the selfie not only as a specific photographic practice that is deeply rooted in digital culture, but also how it is understood in relation to other media of self-portrayal. Unlike the public debate about the dangers of 'selfie-narcissism', this anthology discusses what the practice of taking and sharing selfies can tell us about media culture today: can the selfie be critiqued as an image or rather as a social practice? What are the technological conditions of this form of vernacular photography? By gathering articles from the fields of media studies; art history; cultural studies; visual studies; philosophy; sociology and ethnography, this book provides a media archaeological perspective that highlights the relevance of the selfie as a

stereotypical as well as creative practice of dealing with ourselves in relation to technology.

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Excerpt:

### The Selfie as Image (and) Practice: Approaching Digital Self-Photography by Julia Eckel, Jens Ruchatz, and Sabine Wirth

Selfies are ubiquitous in online culture: Every frequent user of photo-sharing platforms, social network sites, or smartphone apps such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, Photobucket, Instagram, Snapfish, WhatsApp, or Snapchat is familiar with these particular photographic images and most likely has already produced a selfie (or many selfies) herself/himself. Since the term "selfie" was chosen Word of the Year by the Oxford Dictionaries in 2013, it has become evident that taking and sharing selfies is not just some temporary hype of web culture. Selfie pictures are apparently here to stay and have taken their place among established photographic practices. The prevalence of self-images among the pictures taken with mobile phone cameras and subsequently uploaded on social media platforms had been accounted for before the popularization of the term "selfie", at least occasionally. In this context those pictures were generally referred to as "self-portraits," even though the term "selfie" had already been coined. The first documented use of the word goes back to 2002. The rapid implementation of the new term took place in media critical discourse, taking off in 2012 and culminating in it becoming 2013's Word of the Year. This discursive event is not just an arbitrary exchange of one word for another (selfie instead of self-portrait) but indicates the public awareness of an image practice that had long gone mostly unnoticed. In addition, it seems to indicate that selfie images taken with mobile phones differ so much from traditional self-portraits as to merit a proper name. It can be argued that with the success of the new nomenclature, the picture practice has turned from an emerging genre into a full-fledged genre that is recognized as particular to online

culture. The general adoption of the term "selfie" has been instrumental in the popularization of digital self-images—as a photographic practice taken up by a majority of mobile phone users and as a topic of discourses about photography and online media.

### In Search for a Selfie Definition

Despite the prevalence of the word and the ubiquitous presence of selfie pictures, it is not so easy to pinpoint what a selfie actually is and what the practice of taking and sharing selfies tells us about today's media use and media culture. Therefore, it may be helpful to start by focusing on a phenomenon that calls attention to some of the specifics of the selfie by challenging them at the same time: animal selfies. At the peak of the selfie hype around 2012, so-called cat selfies and dog selfies started to appear. A number of books and calendars containing such photos even were published. These pictures usually show the animal extending its paw toward the lens of the camera, but just a bit off as if it is pressing the release button of a camera phone. Some animal owners claim that their cats or dogs are indeed capable of taking veritable selfies themselves. What qualifies these pictures as selfies is, however, that they show the gesture that is familiar from "human" selfies, a gesture that indicates that the subject controlling the shutter release button of the camera is also the object of the picture. Animal selfies can be considered as a self-reflexive pictorial form insofar as they lay bare what visibly defines the typical selfie photograph. They take recourse to the clearest generic marker that is needed to render a photograph recognizable, even readable, as a selfie. Animal selfies highlight the status of the selfie as a "gestural picture," to use Paul Frosh's words: The gesture "is simultaneously mediating (the outstretched arm executes the taking of the selfie) and mediated (the outstretched arm becomes a legible sign within selfies of, among other things, the selfiness of the image)".

Thus, the question of what constitutes a selfie is a crucial one and, at the same time, is not easy to answer. While images like animal selfies contribute to the phenomenon on a practical and pictorial level, there seems to be an urge to define the selfie

on a terminological/discursive level as well. The most common and most frequently cited definition found in the selfie discourse is the one quoted in the press release of the Oxford Dictionaries: "a photograph that one has taken of oneself, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website." Since this definition repeatedly serves as a reference point within this volume and therefore offers a starting point to analyze the basic ambiguity that troubles selfie research, we will have a closer look at its different components in the next subsections.

### "A photograph that one has taken of oneself"

The definition leaves no doubt: Only photographs can count as selfies; drawings or paintings as well as moving pictures are ruled out. Among the plethora of photographs, selfies are those where the photographed subject controls the photograph: Subject/author and object of the image coincide. I myself have taken this photo of me, this is exactly what the gesture of the extended arm in the selfie designates: "If both your hands are in the picture and it's not a mirror shot, technically, it's not a selfie". The definition is vague and very extensive in another respect, however: Any photographic picture that someone has taken of herself/ himself may be named a selfie, which includes analog as well as digital photographs. It further encompasses photographs that do not show the face' of the photographer but, for instance, their backside (a bum selfie, or belfie) or feet (a foot selfie, felfie or footfie). Likewise, a selfie may—and often does—stage more people than just the photographer (and consequently might be specified as *usie*, *ussie*, *wefie*, or *groupfie*). In this respect, it is significant that the definition avoids the art historical terminology of the self-portrait. A portrait in the strict sense is meant to not only show parts of the bodily surface of a person at a certain point in time but to pictorially express or capture the individual's personal identity. Still, according to the first part of the definition, a self-portrait would also count as a selfie as long as it is photographic.

### "taken with a smartphone or a webcam"

This part of the definition specifies the selfie as a form of digital imaging. It is a qualification that

certainly has to do with the fact that specific kinds of digital devices—smartphones or webcams—are expressly built to picture their users. Especially front-facing cameras in smart-phones that were introduced in 2003 with Sony Ericsson's Z1010 and incorporated into Apple's iPhone in 2010 serve as an infrastructure for self-imaging. Both were developed with a view to videotelephony, that is, in order to transmit (and not record) moving (instead of static) images of the user. The significantly inferior quality of these cameras is due to the projected use. Thus, the remarkable improvement of the rear-facing camera, reaching 7 megapixels with the iPhone 7 in 2016, can be considered a reaction to its now-prevalent use as a photographic camera rather than a videotelephonic interface. Today's smartphones have therefore technologically implemented and materially stabilized the photographic practice of the selfie. By including specific image technologies, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definition moreover stresses the particular form in which the "photograph that one has taken of oneself" nowadays operates. The exposure is not started by a remote shutter release or a self-timer but is consciously initiated by a camera operator who is controlling his/her image on the display.

### "uploaded to a social media website"

The final part of the definition testifies to the fundamental communicative function of the selfie as a "connected" and "conversational" image: Social media sites link shared photos of one user to photos of many others and even invite them to react to an uploaded selfie by posting a selfie of their own. Hence, the practice of sharing selfies is at the core of a new form of personal photography that is not private anymore, as family snapshots stored in a photo album used to be, but a form that is directed toward sharing pictures with others from the outset. The selfie may be considered as, in the words of André Gunthert, "perhaps the oldest identifiable use of connected image[s]." Often selfies are taken with anticipation of being shared on social media or via online messaging services. Anja Dinhopf and Ulrike Gretzel even declare the practice the principal criterion, when they decide to understand selfies as "not confined to one specific type of technology or a specific genre of photograph or

video, but as characterized by the desire to frame the self in a picture taken to be shared with an online audience." Within networked culture, digital images are made and meant to be shared. The fact that selfies are technologically tied to communication devices such as the webcam and the smartphone underlines the nexus of camera phone pictures and communicative exchange.<sup>6</sup> This bias toward communication has brought about transformations in the temporality of photography. Once, personal photographs were directed toward the past with the object of inducing and anchoring memories. On social media platforms, where the material basis of photography has changed from photochemistry to digital code and electronic signals, it has developed into a kind of "'live' medium". "A conventional photograph mediates [...] from there-then to here-now," Mikko Villi points out: "By, contrast, a photograph sent from a camera phone immediately after capture can form a connection between there-now and here-now."

### "typically"

This seemingly marginal adverb of partial revocation is relevant because it renders all subsequent specifications secondary and reduces the requirements for a selfie to the minimum of a self-photographic picture. Apart from the "ideal type"—a selfie shot, taken with a smartphone/webcam and shared online—there do exist a range of photographic self-representations that nevertheless claim to be selfies. From this point of view, a picture that is stored for memory purposes only and never shown to others can be seen as a selfie too; as well as a cat selfie or dog selfie, a robot or drone selfie, a video or time-lapse selfie, a felfie or belfie, et cetera—all the images that are named and labeled selfies may be taken into account as not typical but still eligible selfies.

Furthermore, the hashtag or the term "selfie" is frequently applied to portraits that are posted online but have obviously not been taken by the person shown in the photograph. A good example for this wide reach, which has been discussed by Matthew Bellinger, is the photo of former UK Prime Minister David Cameron that he shared on his Twitter account on March 5, 2014, showing him on

the phone while the posted text is referring to a phone conversation with Barack Obama about Russia's annexation of Ukraine. Although the picture was obviously not a selfie, it was labeled as such in various articles of mainstream news media. Like this example, the hashtag #selfie is frequently used on social media platforms for photographs that are not selfies in the stricter sense of the OED definition. This form of tagging places the self-communicating self above the self-picturing self: In this respect, a selfie is a photograph showing myself that I have decided to share.

The opposite emphasis on the pictorial aspect of the definition comes to the fore when "cat selfies" that could by no means have been uploaded by the animal are designated as selfies, not just as their parody. The label "selfie" has become so popular that its use has turned very vague. A thin volume teaching the *mise-en-scène* of self-portraits with a digital camera has changed its title from *Shooting Yourself* in 2013 to *Selfie* in 2014. With regard to the labeling of portraits as selfies, this case may look the same as using the hashtag #selfie, but the underlying logic differs: On one hand, the communicative use of the picture

gives a reason for labeling a picture a selfie; on the other hand, the self-photographic quality of the picture "taken by oneself" justifies the label selfie. These two aspects—communicative practice and aesthetic features—intersect in the practice of the selfie. "Its logic," Daniel Rubinstein contends, "does not distinguish between the act of 'taking,' 'making' or 'snapping' and the act of uploading and sharing." Yet there is disagreement in selfie research as to which aspect is most important. Rubinstein, for example, singles out "its instant shareability" as "the defining quality of the selfie", and Gunthert equates the conversational with a "[v]ictory of use over content" and reasons that the "new visual practices cannot be analyzed only through the grid of aesthetics." Edgar Gómez Cruz and Helen Thornham insist likewise that the perfect pictorial representation of the individual is not the point of the selfie—it is "the practices and contexts" that matter "rather than the image 'itself.'" Villi's perspective emanates more from the technology of the smartphone but nevertheless pleads that "selfie culture, therefore[,] should be understood

specifically by focusing on communication, social media, instant messaging services and camera phones rather than studying it in the context of photography." In contrast, Theresa Senft and Nancy Baym, editors of the special section "Selfies" in the *International Journal of Communication*, conceptualize the selfie as "a way of speaking" and conclude that "although there is no denying the role technology has played in the rise of the selfie phenomenon, as communications theorists, we are more interested in the selfie as cultural artifact and social practice." And finally, Alise Tifentale stresses the connection of both levels again when she develops her concept of the "networked camera" with regard to technological conditions but at the same time suggests "to understand the selfie as a hybrid phenomenon that merges the aesthetics of photographic self-portraiture with the social functions of online interpersonal communication."

Up to now, one can conclude, selfie research is shaped by these two sometimes conflicting but often just as well complementary approaches of focusing on the image (i.e., the technological and aesthetic dimensions of the selfie) as opposed to focusing on image practices (i.e., the communicative and social dimensions of the selfie). To give another example, this tension can also be traced in the first two monographs explicitly dealing with selfies, both published in 2014: Brooke Wendt's *The Allure of the Selfie: Instagram and the New Self-Portrait* reflects the changing function of snapshot photography and how the notion of "self-perfection" is historically conveyed in camera ads. Selfie practices are contextualized as part of a networked culture, and the issue of identity formation, which seems to be the key question of the book, is accompanied by an analysis of aesthetic practices like the use of filters and patterns of facial expression in the history of photographic self-portraiture. Jill Walker Rettberg's *Seeing Ourselves Through Technology: How We Use Selfies, Blogs and Wearable Devices to See and Shape Ourselves* contextualizes selfies among other modes of self-presentation and self-quantification in online media and offers a more critical view on the issue of big data and surveillance. Similar to Wendt's approach, Rettberg stresses the question of identity formation and

locates selfies within the longer history of media of self-representation.

In contrast to all these academic attempts to localize selfie practice within the history of photography and web culture, the public debate in print and online media was (and is) strongly driven by an interpretation of the selfie as a symptom of narcissism and selfishness and is thus more oriented toward the questions why people take selfies, what these photos (are allowed to) depict, and how the sheer quantity of selfies is to be understood. From the beginning, the public debate has been fueled by fears of the presumed dangers of selfie culture: Popular books like *UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World* even attest the selfie a somewhat monstrous status, converting it into a nonword that is used as a *pars pro toto* to summarize all problematic aspects of children's life in a digital media world. The "Selfie Syndrome," as Borba calls it, "is all about self-promotion, personal branding, and self-interest at the exclusion of others' feelings, needs, and concerns." News articles claiming to prove a connection between selfie culture and mental illness by referring to supposedly scientific or medical/therapeutic statements have pushed this debate toward supporting a pathologization of selfie culture. But as Senft and Baym point out, "to date, we have not seen a single peer-reviewed piece of scientific literature that convincingly demonstrates that selfie production and mental illness are correlated." Rather, they oppose the discourses of pathology surrounding the selfie phenomenon by suggesting a scholarly and activist understanding of selfie practices. Until now most of the publications that have worked against the simplification of the selfie as a symptom of narcissism and (most often female) self-exposure are counted among the fields of Cultural Studies, Cultural Anthropology, and Sociology with a strong emphasis on topics such as gender and self-empowerment, subjectivity and identity, class, teen culture, social regulation and repressive normativity, or political action. A critical stance locates the selfie among practices of self-improvement, self-marketing, and self-branding that are imposed on the individual under the conditions of neoliberalism. From this perspective, posting selfies looks less like a form of



empowerment than a form of commodification of the self. Whereas the first scholarly publications about selfies were anchored in the question of self-representation, the focus has quickly shifted toward a description of the diverse practices selfie snappers are engaged in so as to counter the interpretation of selfies as isolated images. Ethnographic research projects have highlighted that the selfie is to be understood not only as a means of self-representation or a representational image but rather as a form of communication that is bound to specific social as well as technological conditions. The focus on users and practices is continued in publications that contextualize selfies in network culture, for instance, describing selfies as a genre within the broader context of meme culture. Yet it has become increasingly clear that studies about selfies as social practice equally need to reflect the technological conditions of these forms of media use, such as the parameters of apps, computing devices like smartphones, and (big) data flows. As the Selficity project, initiated by Lev Manovich and his team in 2013, has demonstrated, the sheer mass of pictures challenges established approaches in the humanities and social sciences and calls for methodological extensions toward Software Studies, big data analysis, and new visualization tools.

During the conference on which this volume is based, these opposing views regarding what constitutes a selfie and which of its aspects have to be taken into account when researching it were intensely debated: Is it possible to understand the selfie as a visual entity, a picture, a pictorial genre, or even a subgenre of the photographic self-portrait? And can the selfie therefore be put to an image critique? Or is the pictorial aspect always secondary to the conversational use, to the contextualization of the picture in a communicative context?

In order to cover this controversy and further the understanding of the selfie, this collection follows different objectives. First, the chapters strive to establish a historical context for an evaluation of the specifics of the selfie as a picture and a particular phenomenon of network culture; second, they offer theoretical concepts and models in order to understand the selfie as a representation of an

individual and a pictorial artifact, on one hand, and as a practice of communication and the social production of the self, on the other. Finally, the chapters provide analytical insights into selected fields in the vast space of selfie practices, like selfies taken by kids and teenagers, in different countries and social contexts.

In order to provide systematic orientation, the chapters have been arranged in four sections.

The aim of Section 1 is to situate the selfie within the field of media history and theory, debating to what extent the selfie can be understood as a (re-)iteration or transformation of established forms of self-portraiture and self-photography. André Gunthert traces a social history of the selfie and discusses the reasons for its belated recognition as an important and widespread, but at the same time supposedly socially and psychologically harmful image practice. Jens Ruchatz focuses on the self-reflexive potentials of the selfie by dealing with a phenomenon that seems to be strongly connected and even accountable for the selfie hype: not the selfie itself but photographs of people taking selfies. Kris Belden-Adams addresses the selfie from an art history perspective by searching for potential predecessors in the field of self-portraiture and self-photography. This art historical focus is widened in Angela Krewani's chapter by connecting the selfie to the self-monitoring features of video technology and especially its use in video art and installations.

The next three sections pay special attention to the aforementioned tension between approaches focusing on the selfie as image and on its technological conditions and those addressing it as practice and social habit. All three sections incorporate both aspects by—in slightly differing ways—focusing on the selfie as a relation between a concept of the "self" (understood as a dynamic discursive construct) and its appearance on/through displays (understood as technical devices as well as processes of showing). This differentiation is not to be interpreted as a (nother) clearcut separation of rivaling stances but rather as a vibrant field of argumentative positions that are (as the review of current selfie research has shown) always intermingled and therefore inseparable

when it comes to selfie culture. The variations in the connection of self and display in the section titles point to these different dimensions of relationality: Section 2, "The Displayed Self," focuses on the selfie as an aesthetic object and networked image, which is characterized by a self being displayed, constituted, and dealt with through a photographic image and additionally through its social media contexts. Section 3, "The Self on Display," shifts the focus a bit more toward the technological conditions of selfie culture, the dispositif that it stems from and that is invoked by it, since it is (typically) a digital image that is bound to the factual display of a technological device in order to be visible and operable for users. The final section, "Displaying the Self," addresses the processuality of the selfie as an act of displaying, thus pointing to its subjective, social, and cultural dimensions and its relevance as a stereotypical as well as creative and playful practice of dealing with (our)selves and technologies.

Section 2—"The Displayed Self"—starts with a chapter by Hagi Kanaan, who explores the connection between selfie and face from a philosophical perspective, raising questions of how the changes in the visibility of the face induced by the selfie—as a contemporary mode of inter-facing and facing oneself—may lead to changes in concepts of identity. Julia Eckel's contribution deals with the topic of identity as well: By discussing the "displayed authorship" of the selfie, which seems to be essential for its definition, and by connecting it to the Foucauldian concept of the "author function," she outlines the potential of the selfie to visually negotiate ideas of "the subject" in digital, networked societies. The authorial gesture of the selfie is also the focus of Alise Tifentale and Lev Manovich, who discuss the aesthetics and usage of self-photographs on Instagram by applying the concept of competitive versus noncompetitive photography to them (in contrast to the more widespread professional/amateur distinction). These terms allow to identify different "photographic habits" that are inscribed in the images themselves and their contextualization—for example, with the phenomenon of the antiselfie. Bernd Leiendecker likewise addresses the contexts of selfies by consulting different theories of genre.

Dealing with the genre categorization not only of the selfie as such but of its subgenres (e.g., belfie, felfie, etc.) opens a possibility for better understanding what selfies are and how their own logics of production, distribution, and reception work.

In Section 3—"The Self on Display"—Sabine Wirth highlights how the process of taking a selfie is always entangled in the dispositif of (personal) computer interfaces and how specific types of temporality evolve from this embeddedness, suggesting that the selfie as a processual/procedural image always oscillates between seriality and singularity. The temporality of the selfie becomes relevant again when Florian Krautkrämer and Matthias Thiele take a closer look at video recording and the "selfie modes" that the moving image of film and television has developed, thus challenging and shaping the borders of the typical selfie definition. The same applies to the contribution of Winfried Gerling, who focuses on the GoPro, a special camera type, and the historical as well as contemporary aesthetics associated with the "body bound camera." Another selfie phenomenon that inevitably points to the role of technology—on both sides of the camera—is the robot selfie, which is discussed by Lisa Gotto. By dealing with Google's museum robot Gigapan and NASA's Mars rover Curiosity and the images they produce—in a strange and automated, purely techno/self-centered manner—Gotto reflects on the embeddedness of the selfie into contexts of self-knowledge within a machine age.

The questioning of the self(ie)-potential of robots as—maybe—humanlike agents thus leads to Section 4—"Displaying the Self"—which pays special attention to social, cultural, and political implications of selfie practice. Mette Sandbye takes the purikura phenomenon, a photo booth practice especially established in Japan, as a model to explore the seemingly stereotypical and mainstreaming structures of selfie production on one hand and their potential for creative and playful negotiations of these conformities on the other. Alexandra Schneider and Wanda Strauven focus on the visual and acoustical self-recording practices of children, which are productively challenging the definition of the selfie again by being used and

shared only in more self- and family-centered contexts and which are in some cases produced without the self-awareness normally ascribed to the selfie. Selfies as tools of a growing self-awareness and for conceptualizing and building one's identity (in a digital and networked society) are relevant not only for children but for teenagers especially. Stefan Wellgraf addresses the photographic self-images of German "Hauptschüler," pupils who often grow up in socially and financially disadvantaged families, from an ethnographic perspective and highlights how the self-images produced in these contexts are intertwined with questions of class, race, and gender.

In summary, the chapters in this volume clearly point out that exploring selfies and selfie culture requires an interdisciplinary approach. The book therefore gathers contributions from the fields of Media Studies, Art History, Cultural Studies, Visual Studies, Philosophy, Sociology, and Ethnography, providing an overview of the different positions between the two main approaches of selfie research (focusing on the image as well as aesthetic and technological questions versus focusing on practices and sociocultural dimensions) and attempts to reconcile them. Although the methodology of the selected chapters differs, their compilation in one volume produces insights that could be summarized under the term "media archaeology": most articles try to grasp the selfie—as a phenomenon of contemporary digital culture—by taking media history into consideration and contextualizing the current practice within various media genealogies of pictorial self-representation as well as of practices of communication, sharing, and participation. The aim is to provide a theoretical as well as a media-historical framework for investigating the selfie as an image practice—understood literally as image and practice at the same time—and to develop a more specific theoretical and analytic terminology. The challenge here is to describe the specifics of the selfie and its exceptional status as well as the traits it shares with practices within "old" and "new" media. We neither want to posit that the selfie is all new and can be understood only in relation to today's network culture nor to claim that everything the selfie is and does has been there before. Selfie practices shall

be compared to as well as differentiated from older media practices of self-portraiture or technologies of the self and can serve as a starting point for exploring recent developments of web culture and the history of snapshot photography on a broader scale. <>

[Detox Kitchen Vegetables](#) by Lily Simpson  
[Bloomsbury, 9781408884461]

One hundred fifty delicious feel-good recipes (all free from wheat, dairy, and refined sugar) that celebrate the versatility of tasty, nutritious and abundant vegetables.

[Detox Kitchen Vegetables](#) removes the fear of cooking with vegetables--fear that they will be plain and boring, that they will be overcooked--and instead shows you how truly delicious they can be. Inside this book are 150 exquisite recipes for 35 different varieties of vegetables that are packed full of flavor. All wheat-, dairy- and refined-sugar-free, you'll find inventive and exciting dishes such as Spiced aubergine fritters with coconut tzatziki, Roast butternut squash with tahini dressing and tamari seeds, and Cauliflower pizza with lemon infused tomatoes.

With a sleek, contemporary design and glorious photography throughout, this bright new book is packed with everything you need to maximize the benefits of vegetables and refresh your everyday cooking.

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Stocking your larder  
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Cabbage  
Brussels sprouts  
Broccoli

Cauliflower  
Okra

Excerpt:

### Joyfulness and good health

First and foremost, I want to clarify that this book is not just for vegetarians. It is a book about vegetables, to show how versatile and delicious they can be.

In 2012 I launched Detox Kitchen, a food business with natural ingredients at its core. Since then, I have had the pleasure of creating and sharing hundreds of vegetable-based dishes with thousands of customers and have seen first-hand how moving towards a diet that is abundant in good-quality, predominantly plant-based foods can have a truly beneficial impact on your health and well-being.

Over the years I have also mastered the art of cooking without wheat, dairy or refined sugar. While these are not necessarily foods that we all should avoid or completely eliminate — I believe that there is a place for every type of food in a well-balanced diet — I do think that we tend to over-consume them. Through the recipes in this book, I hope to show you how easy it can be to eat in a more balanced way.

At home and at work I want to create food that makes you feel good and that makes you feel nurtured; I also want to celebrate the fact that we are able to enjoy three meals a day. From breakfast-time, sitting on the rug with my kids — a hot cup of tea carefully placed out of their reach — to the dinner I rush home to prepare (at home even chefs have to wing it sometimes!), it all culminates in total calmness once I am settled at the table with the people I love most.

My way of cooking and eating is guided by two clear principles: everyday joyfulness and good health. When both of them are in balance you'll find that you're enjoying a nutritious diet that can make you feel truly happy.

The food that we put into our bodies has a huge effect on our overall health and well-being. Ultimately, we all know that fresh, 'real' food is much better for us than food that has been over-sprayed with chemicals and industrially processed. Eating well can be very easy and inexpensive as

well as entirely delicious. Enjoying an abundance of vegetables will ensure that you consume a wide variety of the nutrients that play such an important role in your body's health. This is because vegetables contain a huge array of essential vitamins and minerals.

When I started to write this book I was not a vegetarian. I was raised in a meat-eating household where no main meal was complete if chicken, lamb, beef or pork didn't feature. But over the past few years, because of a growing concern for animal welfare and the environmental impact of rearing animals for meat, I have taken the personal decision that I don't want to make the problem worse and would stop eating meat. I believe that anyone can cook their way to a delicious diet by eating less meat generally, even without becoming a full-time vegetarian.

The thirty-three vegetables in this book are the ones that are always in my kitchen, that I like to grow in my garden and that I look forward to when they are about to come into season. But what is a vegetable, when you get right down to it? The general rule, botanically speaking, is that an edible plant is a fruit if it has seeds; if it is seedless, then it is a vegetable. The culinary classifications, however, sometimes differ. I have followed the basic principle that if you use something like a vegetable, then that's what it is - so tomato, cucumber and squash, for example, have made the cut. I have snuck rhubarb in because technically it is a vegetable that just happens to be treated like a fruit.

In this book you'll see that the only frozen vegetables I use are peas, broad beans and sweetcorn. These often contain as many nutrients as freshly picked peas, broad beans or sweetcorn as they will have been prepared and frozen within a few hours of being harvested. As a general rule, however, fresh vegetables in season have the best flavour and texture, and are likely to be the most nutritious.

Today we are lucky enough to have a fabulous variety of vegetables to cook with, from beautifully coloured heirloom tomatoes and heritage carrots to knobbly little Jerusalem artichokes, architectural 'Romanesco' cauliflowers and perfect podded

peas. With this cornucopia comes a great opportunity to play with flavours and textures.

By pairing vegetables with carefully chosen grains, herbs and spices, I hope to encourage you in a bolder approach to cooking with them. My recipes can be adapted and developed to suit your own palate (and store cupboard or fridge contents). If you don't have all the ingredients for a recipe, don't be afraid to experiment and throw other things in - you might end up creating a new dish!

[Cold-Pressed Beverages: Health and Well-being in a Glass Photographs and Recipes](#) by Cinzia Trenchi, Project Editor: Valeria Manfredi de Fabianis, Graphic Layout: Valentina Giammarinaro [White Star Publishers, 9788854412415]

Drink to your health, with these delicious cold-pressed beverages made from fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains!

Thanks to the extractor, it's possible to turn all types of food, even leafy vegetables, barley, oats, and soy, into nutrient-filled drinks. Soft and creamy in texture, they can be diluted with water or mixed with ice to make a sorbet—and they're perfect for anyone who wants to eat healthily, detox, or lose weight. Packed with recipes both sweet and savory, this attractive book offers preparations with just fruit, like the one with cherries and plums; with fruit and vegetables combined, such as the Kiwi and Chicory; with veggies alone, including a mix of tomatoes, basil, and oregano; and with cereals and seeds. So drink up—it's good for you!

#### INTRODUCTION

#### FRUIT-BASED PREPARATIONS

Peach Cream with Cocoa Powder and Hazelnuts  
Coconut, Pineapple and Winter Cherry Cream  
Apricot, Peach and Berry Cold-Pressed Juice  
Melon and Pineapple Cold-Pressed Juice  
Plum, Banana and Currant Cold-Pressed Juice  
Grapefruit and Orange Juice with Spices  
Watermelon, Pineapple, Apricot and Lemon Juice  
Cherry and Plum Juice  
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#### PREPARATIONS WITH VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Sweet Pepper, Carrot, Orange and Apple Cream  
Avocado, Lemon and Mango Cream  
Beet, Corn and Lemon Cold-Pressed Juice  
Blueberry, Raspberry, Carrot and Lemon Cold-Pressed Juice  
Blackberry, Apple, Carrot and Lemon Cold-Pressed Juice  
Coconut, Apple and Endive Juice  
Seasoned Cauliflower and Pomegranate Juice  
Watermelon and Cucumber Juice  
Chicory, Cucumber, Pineapple and Lemon Juice  
Kiwi, Chicory and Lime Juice  
Apple and Celery Juice  
Pear, Orange and Ginger Juice  
Pomegranate, Blackberry and Ginger Juice

#### VEGETABLE-BASED PREPARATIONS

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Broccoli Juice with Sweet Bell and Chili Peppers  
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Pistachio, Coconut and Banana Cream  
Seasoned Corn Milk with Apples  
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Rice, Cauliflower and Chili Pepper Cream  
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 Cream  
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 Juice with Almond Milk  
 Soy Milk with Cold-Pressed Raspberry  
 Juice  
 Soy and Pine Nut Milk with Chili Peppers  
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 with Pumpkin Seeds and Chili Pepper  
 Pomegranate, Grape and Hazelnut Juice  
 Green Tea with Rice Cream  
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[Buddha Bowls: 100 Nourishing One-Bowl Meals](#) by  
 Kelli Foster [Harvard Common Press,  
 9781558329157]

Beautiful and inspiring one-dish meals in a  
 bowl!

Buddha bowls, occasionally called “bliss bowls,”  
 “nourish bowls,” or “power bowls,” are the ultimate  
 in one-dish meals. You start with a base of whole  
 grains, rice, noodles, or legumes. Then you layer on  
 a generous assortment of cooked or raw  
 vegetables. Finally, you top the veggies with a  
 boost of protein and then a dressing, sauce, or  
 broth. Buddha bowls are an easy, healthy meal  
 that can be ready in minutes and that you can have  
 for breakfast, lunch, or dinner—or, if you like, all  
 three!

The Buddha bowl concept is loosely based on  
 guidance from Chinese medicine: a meal should  
 have vegetables, protein, and grain. Typically, in a  
 Buddha bowl there is a high ratio of ingredients to  
 broth or sauce and the ingredients are left whole  
 or in large pieces, and not blended, minced, or  
 pureed. Although it is Asian in inspiration, a Buddha  
 bowl can be made with a variety of ingredients  
 from just about anywhere on the planet.

Kelli Foster, who writes about food for the popular  
 website *The Kitchn*, serves up in these pages an  
 amazing variety of Buddha bowl ideas, each one  
 vibrant with color, alive with flavor, and oh-so-

comforting to eat. Can you think of a heartier way  
 to start the day than with a Blackberry Millet  
 Breakfast Bowl, a Coconut Quinoa Breakfast Bowl,  
 or a Chai-Spiced Multigrain Porridge Bowl, just  
 three among many breakfast bowl ideas?

Later in the day, for cozy meals with loved ones,  
 how about Warm Autumn Chicken and Wild Rice  
 Bowls, Sesame Tuna Bowls, or Lamb Kebab Bowls?  
 For company, Lentil and Smoked Salmon Nicoise  
 Bowls or Miso Noodle Bowls with Stir-Fried Beef  
 will delight your guests. There are many vegan  
 recipes, too, from Cauliflower Falafel Power Bowls  
 to Spicy Sesame Tofu and Rice Bowls and beyond.  
 A special chapter on fruit bowls has ideas for  
 power-snacking, as well as for meals.

Buddha bowls are elegant in appearance and  
 flavor, but surprisingly easy to make—a perfect  
 marriage of convenience and good taste. If you  
 haven't tried them yet, now you have a great  
 reason!

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Beautiful Buddha Bowls: A Cook's  
 Introduction

What Are Buddha Bowls?

First things first—what exactly are Buddha bowls?  
 To me, they are one of the easiest ways to eat  
 healthy and nourish my body with a wholesome,  
 balanced meal any time of day.

You might know them as power bowls, bliss bowls,  
 nourish bowls, or hippie bowls, but no matter what  
 name they go by, Buddha bowls are a wholesome  
 one-bowl meal packed with an assortment of  
 nourishing, real-food ingredients. It's the kind of  
 meal you feel really good about eating.

Buddha bowls are a well-balanced mix of protein, vegetables, and good fats that nourish you with a hearty, satisfying meal. Each bowl starts with a base typically made up of whole grains, rice, noodles, or legumes, or even a combination of those ingredients. Then it gets loaded with a generous assortment of cooked or raw vegetables, often a handful or two of fresh greens, and a boost of protein, from meat, fish, eggs, tofu, or beans, before getting finished off with a dressing, sauce, or broth. It all comes together in a big bowl, for an easy, healthy meal.

In the pages of this book, you'll find a versatile mix of easy, healthy Buddha bowl recipes for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even dessert. Each Buddha bowl has a little bit of the familiar mixed with fresh—and sometimes unexpected—ingredients to keep every bowl feeling new and exciting, and always deeply nourishing. My hope is that these recipes delight and inspire you to create your own unique bowls.

There are a lot of theories about how these stuffed bowls got their name, though there really isn't one that's universally agreed upon. One of the most common explanations is that these overstuffed bowls are named for the likeness to the rounded belly of the Buddha.

### Building a Buddha Bowl

Building a Buddha bowl is like one of those choose-your-own-adventure books. There are no strict rules and creativity is highly encouraged. In fact, Buddha bowls require more of a template and some inspiration rather than recipes that are set in stone. It's a meal that's incredibly versatile and highly adaptable, which means swapping different ingredients in or out of any recipe is always easy. Get the foundation for building a Buddha bowl down and you'll see endless possibilities for how easy it is to make them your own.

When building Buddha bowls, I like to break the meal down into four basic components: grains, a protein, vegetables and fruit, and sauce, plus an extra finishing touch.

### Grains, Noodles, and Beyond

Quinoa and brown rice are two of the most common bowl food bases, but they only scratch the

surface of the realm of possibilities. Whole grains—including barley, buckwheat, freekeh, millet, and wild rice, just to name a few—are all fair game. These are high-fiber foods that provide carbohydrates, and in some cases a punch of protein.

But grains are just one option! Remember, versatility reigns supreme, so noodles like soba or rice noodles, even vegetable noodles and alternative "grains," like riced cauliflower or broccoli, are also great choices for your bowl base.

In the next section you'll find a helpful guide for cooking each type of bowl base, and a few tricks for making even more flavorful grains, rice, and noodles.

### Protein

A wholesome source of protein is what gives this one-bowl meal substance and plays an important roll in filling you up. Regardless of whether you're cooking up a Buddha bowl for breakfast, lunch, or dinner, protein is a must. Some bowls will include meat, chicken, fish, or eggs while vegetarian and vegan bowls rely on tofu, tempeh, beans, and legumes as the main protein source. Even nuts, seeds, certain grains, or a spoonful of Greek yogurt can make a bowl more filling.

### Vegetables and Fruit

Vegetables are the heart and soul of any Buddha bowl, and make up about half of the bowl. This is where anything goes: All types of produce—cooked, raw, or a mix of the two—are fair game. A variety of vegetables not only makes for a more colorful meal, but it also means a variety of tastes and textures that instantly creates a more interesting bowl.

### Dressing, Sauce, or Broth

No Buddha bowl is complete without something saucy to top it off! This is the final element that takes a Buddha bowl from good to great. It doesn't matter if it's a creamy sauce or pesto, a tangy dressing, or a savory broth—any one will do. It's the finishing touch that adds another dimension of flavor and ties all the ingredients together. When made with healthy oils, nut butter, yogurt, or avocado, sauces and dressings are a source of

good fats, which also aid in making your bowl more filling.

### Bonus! Toppings and Garnishes

I know I mentioned that Buddha bowls have just four components, and they do—but a little something extra in the way of a topping or garnish is always a good idea. Finishing off your Buddha bowl with some toasted nuts or seeds, kimchi or sauerkraut, or fresh herbs is optional but highly recommended. Not only does it make any bowl look great, but it also adds texture, crunch, a tangy twist, or a pop of freshness that makes your bowl feel more special.

Each recipe includes suggested toppings and garnishes that complement the bowl, though you'll notice that unlike the other ingredients in the recipe, the amount is not specified. Use a little or use a lot—this part is entirely up to you.

### Embrace the Meanwhile

"Embrace the meanwhile" is one of my favorite mantras in the kitchen, and it's particularly useful when making Buddha bowls. It is a smart and helpful tactic that helps you maximize your time in the kitchen, work more efficiently, and get your bowls on the table faster. Sounds good, right?

It takes advantage of those hands-off minutes that so often show up in recipes—like when a pot of grains are cooking or vegetables are roasting—and allows you to work on something else, like whisking together the sauce or dressing for your bowl.

Instead of prepping all the ingredients for a recipe at the outset, prep just what you need to start, then work as you go. This will look different from recipe to recipe, though the idea remains the same.

### The Best Bowl for The Job

Just as important as the wholesome ingredients you pile into your Buddha bowl is the bowl you serve them in. The very first step in making any Buddha bowl is choosing the best bowl for the job. Some bowls are better than others for this type of meal.

So, what is the best bowl for the job? Rule number one when reaching for a bowl to build your meal: Bigger is always better. Remember, this is a meal that piles the grains, protein, and veggies into a

single bowl. I always choose a bowl that's big enough to fit all the components so that my food is not spilling over the sides, but not so big that my food gets lost.

There's also the bowl shape to consider: Do you go with wide and shallow, or deep and narrow? Large, wide, shallow bowls are my go-to for non-brothy Buddha bowls, most dinner bowls, and any recipes that include bigger ingredients, like a salmon fillet, wide-cut wedges of tofu, sprawling fried eggs, or big piles of veggies. Deeper, narrow bowls are a great choice of most breakfast bowls, brothy bowls, and sweet dessert bowls. <>

[The Kefir Cookbook: An Ancient Healing Superfood for Modern Life, Recipes from My Family Table and Around the World](#) by Julie Smolyansky [HarperOne, 9780062651303]

Over 100 globally-inspired sweet and savory recipes made with one of the most probiotic-rich and nutrient-dense superfoods on the planet

Derived from the Turkish word "keif" meaning "feeling good," kefir is a tart, tangy cultured milk, low in sugar and lactose free, and an excellent source of protein, calcium, and B vitamins.

Originating from a grain that dates back two thousand years to the Caucasus Mountains of Europe, it is also one of the healthiest natural foods available—scientifically shown to help boost immunity, improve gut health, build bone density, fight allergies, and aid the body's natural detoxification.

In 1986, ten years after they emigrated from Kiev, Michael and Ludmila Smolyansky introduced kefir to America. Today their children, Julie and Edward, lead Lifeway Foods Inc., the Smolyansky family company and the top-selling kefir brand in America. In [The Kefir Cookbook](#), Julie shares her family's abiding love of kefir through treasured family stories and innovative recipes. From Ludmila's Borscht, a staple of life behind the Iron Curtain, to Nutella Smoothies, a homage to the Rome that welcomed them as refugees, and Kefir Jerk Chicken, a celebration of friendship experienced with her young daughters, these dishes showcase the versatility of this ancient healing food.



While kefir can be drunk straight from the bottle, whipped into smoothies, or used in parfaits and smoothie bowls, Julie reveals in more than 100 recipes—including contributions by Christy Turlington Burns, Seamus Mullen, and Katrina Markoff—how it can also be blended with your favorite comfort foods to add tang, boost creaminess, and elevate their nutritional properties. Deeply personal, *The Kefir Cookbook* offers unique spins on classic recipes, while introducing contemporary flavors and textures to inspire you in the kitchen every day.

Excerpt:

### From Russia, With Love: How My Family Brought Kefir to America

My parents and I settled in Chicago in 1976, having escaped the USSR through a small slit in the Iron Curtain. They left to escape religious and political persecution, and to follow their entrepreneurial dreams. We were one of the first forty-eight Soviet Jewish families granted permission to relocate to Chicago. Michael and Ludmila didn't know a word of English, but they possessed an entrepreneurial drive and an appetite for the American Dream. My dad would make his way through Chicago alley dumpsters, hunting for broken electronics that he could fix up and sell; or he would buy a box of books from a church for a dollar, then unload it for \$10. My mom taught herself English by watching *General Hospital* and *Dynasty* and once she had mastered a few basic phrases, she moved up from hair washer to nail technician at a salon. They worked hard and they knew how to hustle.

My mother had come to America with one true possession, a small soup pan that she used when she cooked for me—mostly homemade chicken soup as well as farina, a creamy, hot wheat cereal, with lots of butter. For her, cooking was a way to help us all feel at home. She quickly realized that the food here was quite different from the traditional Russian staples we knew and loved. Recognizing the mass exodus of Soviet Jews arriving in the US, she spotted an opportunity to start her own business, and in 1978, at age twenty-eight, she used the money she and my father had saved in their first two years in America to open

*Globus*, Chicago's first Russian delicatessen. (*Globus* being my parents' interpretation of "around the world.") My mother went on to open four more delis and became an international food importer and distributor. In 1979, the same year she gave birth to my brother in Chicago's Edgewater Hospital, she became the first person to bring Nutella from Italy into the United States, with exclusive importing rights, a huge and successful business venture. *Globus* transformed into the top destination for all new Soviet Jews living in Chicago; customers gathered there for company, gossip, and potato pierogi.

My parents missed drinking their beloved kefir, but it simply did not exist in the US. In 1985, my parents were attending a trade show in Germany, Thirsty for a taste of his childhood, Michael stopped into a local grocery store and picked up three bottles of kefir. After a few swigs of the cold, creamy reminder of home, he turned to my mother and said, "In America, we have everything but we don't have kefir."

"Well," my mother replied, "you're an engineer—you know how to build plants and machinery. I am in the food business. You make the kefir and I will sell it." As soon as they returned home, my father obtained some kefir grains by asking relatives in Kiev to hide them in Russian children's books and send them to us in the States. Using this smuggled bit of culture, he promptly turned our basement into a test kitchen and, soon thereafter, himself into the CEO of Lifeway Foods.

Tragically, our father, Michael, passed away suddenly on June 9, 2002, just a few years after Lifeway really began to take off. Overnight, I was thrust into the position of CEO and my brother, Edward, CFO. It was one of the most devastating times of my life, but we were determined to carry on his tradition of innovation and entrepreneurship.

To my parents, kefir represented comfort, wellness, and a sense of home. Little did we know that thirty years later, we would become known as the family responsible for bringing kefir mainstream in America, where probiotics enjoy a cult-like status and everyone is eager to fortify their systems with healthy bacteria. <>

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