

# The Long Outside, the Short Inside of History

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## [Atlas of a Lost World: Travels in Ice Age America](#)

by Craig Childs, Illustrations by Sarah Gilman  
[Pantheon, 9780307908650]

From the author of [Apocalyptic Planet: Field Guide to the Future of the Earth](#) comes a vivid travelogue through prehistory, that traces the arrival of the first people in North America at least twenty thousand years ago and the artifacts that tell of their lives and fates.

In [Atlas of a Lost World](#), Craig Childs upends our notions of where these people came from and who they were. How they got here, persevered, and ultimately thrived is a story that resonates from the Pleistocene to our modern era. The lower sea levels of the Ice Age exposed a vast land bridge between Asia and North America, but the land bridge was not the only way across. Different people arrived from different directions, and not all at the same time.

The first explorers of the New World were few, their encampments fleeting. The continent they reached had no people but was inhabited by megafauna—mastodons, giant bears, mammoths, saber-toothed cats, five-hundred-pound panthers, enormous bison, and sloths that stood one story tall. The first people were hunters—Paleolithic spear points are still encrusted with the proteins of their prey—but they were wildly outnumbered, and many would themselves have been prey to the much larger animals.

[Atlas of a Lost World](#) chronicles the last millennia of the Ice Age, the violent oscillations and retreat of glaciers, the clues and traces that document the first encounters of early humans, and the animals whose presence governed the humans' chances for survival. A blend of science and personal narrative reveals how much has changed since the time of mammoth hunters, and how little. Across unexplored landscapes yet to be peopled, readers will see the Ice Age, and their own age, in a whole new light.

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Excerpt: Nothing stirred in the bowels of the earth. Bones lay on bones in silence, a cave sealed shut, its entrance collapsed in the middle of the Pleistocene, the last geologic epoch before our own. Anything stuck inside never got out. The first inkling of new life was the white light of a headlamp and the scratch of small metal tools.

I lay on my side with my hard hat off, working on a camel that had died back here, an awkward place for anything to die, I thought. It was in a crack in the back side of a small chamber, which is why they gave the site to me. I was in my early thirties, base camp cook for a museum crew working on one of the most prolific Pleistocene bone-producing sites in the American West—Porcupine Cave in the mountains of south-central Colorado—churning out rodent bones for the most part, with the occasional hoorah of discovering skeletal cheetah kittens, the toe bones of horses, cores of bison horns. Elsewhere, a dozen excavators and screeners were pulling up a treasure trove of Pleistocene porcupines and squirrels, filling and labeling bags, while I was alone in a hole with *Camelops hesternus*. I imagined the camel crawling into the cave, its hindquarters slashed by sabertooths or hamstringed by dire wolves, trying to save itself, dying here.

When silver miners first blasted into the mountainside in the 1860s, they accidentally clipped one of the cave's chambers. So they propped up the tunnel with wooden posts and beams. Then they dropped into it with their oil-wick lamps and found passageways, crystals, and domed rooms—floors buried in dust, bones sealed in place three hundred thousand years ago. Now, a ladder brought paleontologists down through the hole the miners opened. They moved through the rotten molasses smell of woodrat urine into the dark, crawling through low spots, pushing gear ahead, headlamps shining on each other's boot soles. They went to their own trenches and pits, screens and vacuums, setting up grids, fingers picking through countless rodent bones. I went to the camel.

Animal bones had been dragged in by woodrats, though some skeletons, like that of the camel, were complete. The biggest mammals of the age were being found elsewhere, rock shelters and muddy pond bottoms holding the remains of mammoths, mastodons, giant bison, dire wolves, large fanged cats, sloths with foot-long claws, and a six-foot-tall beaver with incisors like medieval weapons. These creatures, including the camel, are known as Rancholabrean megafauna, named after copious Ice Age finds at the La Brea Tar Pits in Southern California, some of the largest mammals of the Pleistocene.

Gigantism among mammals is associated with cold. This is known as Bergmann's Rule, after the nineteenth-century German biologist Carl Bergmann, who noticed that the larger examples of most species tend to occupy colder climates, while the smaller tend to be found in warmer places. Warmth produces smaller bodies that expel heat, while cold encourages extra layers of big bones, muscle, fat, and fur, resulting in bodies with a smaller ratio of surface area to volume and a greater ability to hold in heat. Glacial periods—long cold spells that often lasted one hundred thousand years at a time—were frequent in the Pleistocene, when the earth on average dropped 10 to 15 degrees Fahrenheit below temperatures we experience today. This gave rise to animals with large bodies and Ice Age megafauna

weighing a ton or more. The largest American mammoths came in at around ten tons, three tons more than the largest African elephants.

I was drawing slow circles around the eye of an animal that had once weighed about seventeen hundred pounds, just shy of a ton. I picked out pieces of yellowish earth from where one of its eyeballs had once rotated in its socket, seeing big cats coming, watching sunsets on glaciers and wind blowing across the lush intermountain grasslands.

None of the animals found in this cave had encountered a human being. The scientists joked about finding an artifact, a stone projectile, but it wouldn't happen. This camel never knew spears or hunting dogs, or the smell of campfires. The land from Alaska to the tip of South America—nine thousand latitudinal miles of mountains, rivers, plains, and coastlines—had no humans, no deliberately sharpened rocks or bones flaked and polished to a point. This was the last large habitable part of the world that the human race discovered, nobody arriving until the tail end of what is known as the Wisconsin Ice Age, a glacial period that lasted about one hundred thousand years and ended ten thousand years ago at the close of the Pleistocene. Neighboring Eurasia had been foraged by tool-wielding hominids for a million years or more. Early human species from Spain to Indonesia were cutting meat and skins with stone knives, building fires, sometimes burying their dead in caves and rockshelters, and duking it out with other hominids. All the while, nobody made it this far around the globe.

The first humans, anatomically modern *Homo sapiens*, left Africa between one hundred thousand and seventy thousand years ago. These people were nearly identical to us. Give them a haircut and modern clothes, and they'd be hard to pick out in a crowd, their size, hairiness, and skin color easily within our own contemporary range. They left their home continent along the bottom of Saudi Arabia, jumping the Red Sea at the strait of Bab el-Mandeb at Djibouti, the same place baboon populations had already swum across to populate the Middle East. It is as if humans saw the baboons

and dived in after them, figuring they had to be going somewhere.

From there, the path of humans is marked by stone blanks called preforms. They appear to have been an invention of *Homo sapiens*, a stone worked down to carrying size, something that could be fashioned into whatever might be needed: blades, projectiles, scrapers, or the small hand-chisels called burins, pointed rocks gripped between fingers and thumb and used to sharpen and refinish weapons and tools. Instead of grabbing whatever rock could be found and working it into a sharp wedge, as early hominids were wont to do, this new people had the best resources in hand and ready to go. Their traveling tool kits allowed them farther and faster movement, and access to better weapons and tools as needed.

A weapon called a biface spread along with these preforms. Bifaces were stone points and blades knapped from both sides for lightness and efficiency. Our species was armed, mobile, and pushing rapidly into the world, going beyond the reach of anything before them, and the world kept opening to them.

By forty-eight thousand years ago, humans reached the unpopulated Pleistocene super-continent of Sahul, which consisted of Australia, Tasmania, and New Guinea fused together at lower sea levels. It is assumed that people used boats to get there. The minimum number of people needed for even a remote chance of long-term survival is forty, meaning at least that many had to cross open water to reach Sahul. They were not a desperate handful clinging to a log, adrift and without a plan, but a group making a concerted effort, a small and daring population deliberately taking to the water, convinced something worthwhile was out there.

Around the same time, other populations of *Homo sapiens* were pushing beyond their northern boundaries into lobes of ice and the mammoth-studded steppe of upper Siberia. A mammoth butchered by stone or bone tools forty-five thousand years ago was found in the Siberian North near the Arctic Sea. A forty-thousand-year-old human leg bone emerged from the banks of the

Irtysh River in western Siberia, its DNA half human and half Neanderthal.

There was never an easy way to get to this side of the planet. Hemmed in by the world's two largest oceans, the Pacific and Atlantic, and often capped with ice, the Americas seemed to be off-limits. The only land connection was exposed during glacial periods when an Arctic land bridge appeared between Siberia and Alaska. By twenty-four thousand years ago, there were game-hunting settlements within a season's walk of the Bering land bridge, though some believe people made it across by forty thousand years ago, or even earlier.

Scientists squabble over the locations and dates of human arrival in the New World. They shy away from words like earliest or first, knowing there will always be new and earlier discoveries. What is evidence, what is not? Is that a bone point or just a pointed bone? Were those mammoth and mastodon remains deliberately broken by tools and butchered, or is the damage a natural result of erosion and trampling and time? Age makes the Paleolithic record hard to read. There is no agreed-upon entry point or date. Artifacts were not left carpeting the ground, like souvenirs of a Moorish invasion. This was the farthest end of the world, the back door on human expansion. Numbers would have been few, and encampments would have been far between as the people found their way across the land bridge, kicking off one of the greatest experiments in global history.

This is a love story—boy meets girl, if you will. One partner is an unpeopled hemisphere, the other is our hungry, inquisitive species. Some might tell you that the encounter wasn't love at all, but domination, overkill, an invasive species hell-bent on spreading into a land that was doing just fine as it was, without us. Some scientists have called it blitzkrieg, mammoths felled like cordwood. Ours was no docile species, and the animals were not ready for us, or our weaponry. Archaeologists from Alaska to Florida have found Paleolithic spearpoints and stone blades still holding protein signatures from the meat of horse, camel, sloth, bison, bear, and the proboscideans, mammoths and

mastodons. Ice Age bones in the Americas have been found scribed with human butchering marks, blackened from fires. But humans didn't always win. Many died; some were eaten. First people, wildly outnumbered by animals, would have found themselves tossed and trampled by tusks and hooves or torn to pieces by the scissoring teeth of scimitar cats. No matter how well-armed they were, even with Eurasian wolf dogs at their sides, surviving among Rancholabrean megafauna would have been challenging. Nobody said love would be easy.

I apologized out loud when I accidentally peeled a sliver of damp bone from the camel's skull. It seemed only polite to say something. The animal said nothing in return, silent as always. Our engagement back here felt like a first encounter between human and American megafauna. By sleight of scientific hand, I had slipped in before the first people, and this camel would have been bewildered to see me; it would never have encountered an animal so pale or so oddly limbed, gathered at its wildly bulging eye like a fleshy crab.

At lunch, everyone else left the cave and shut down the generator up top so they could eat in peace. I stayed below because my days here had to be quick; I had to leave the cave early, run two miles back to camp to start dinner and get a campfire going. With the generator off, all the work chambers fell into darkness as I kept working, the only light in the pit of the earth. I heard the thunk of a mammoth tusk striking rock on the surface above, where it swept through snow with its tusks, looking for winter browse. A Columbian mammoth, the largest of its kind in the world, was thirteen feet tall at the shoulder. I kept digging and scratching as I felt the distant boom of its steps as it moved its tonnage forward. Big cats would have been quieter, and I strained to listen for them padding across the ground above me.

I did not imagine the sound of people, no crack of stone on stone, or swish of a wooden rod making fire. Instead, I imagined the country empty of us, long before human eyes. In my imagination I rose up through the original entrance of Porcupine Cave,

shielding my eyes from sunlight across glaciers, shaggy beasts of tusks and hooves grazing in the valley below. Continents would have been in the same positions, mountains and plains mostly unmoved, rivers in more or less the same places as they are now. More ice existed than we have today, storing water on land in the form of glaciers and ice caps, causing sea levels to drain by a few hundred feet, rewriting the coastlines.

Ten years ago is not hard to imagine. A hundred is well within grasp—you've probably known people who lived that long. A thousand years is ten lifetimes. Ten thousand years is one hundred lifetimes. It was around two hundred and fifty lifetimes ago that people began to arrive in North America into the teeth of Ice Age megafauna. I listened through the cave for the moment before this arrival, a time without time.

Under the pressing weight of limestone, no sign of light but my own, it became hard to tell which time was which. The skeleton was articulated, the animal had not moved from where it fell. Bones were in place like a time machine, the camel's head slumped into a low passageway. I was here like a seed blown into a cave, random, unexpected. How long would I last? How, without an atlas, would I find my place?

I listened for the Pleistocene, but all I heard was the scratch scratch of my fine metal pick, followed by the hush of the artist's brush I was using. In an ancient hole, only my headlamp shining through the blackness, I inhabited two worlds at once. One was an occupied continent streaming with freeways and lights. The other was this camel's land, a kingdom of animals, plants, and fungi. Eurasia would soon tip into the Americas. A land bridge with a navigable coast would be found.

I whispered to this camel, Your world is about to change...

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The picture that came across Alexander Rose's cell phone looked like a blackness within blackness, a hole within a hole. He said that excavators in West Texas had been blasting a tunnel into solid limestone when they came across a cavern never

before opened to outside air, a secret space within the earth. They'd taken a picture of their find and sent it to him.

Rose said this new void could hold up progress, or at least make the project more interesting. A giant clock was being built and it would be placed inside the chamber they were excavating, where it would tick-tock gently for the next ten thousand years. He said they didn't know how deep this new cave went, but workers told him when they shouted into it, it made their voices echo.

I think of Raven, of course, and the first crack of light that entered the clamshell at the beginning of time. Raven opened the darkness and out we poured.

Rose was the project manager for this mechanism being built of titanium, ceramic, and stone, materials chosen so that they would not rust or fuse together over time. He said it was not a time capsule per se. It was a clock, a message to the future and a way for us now to understand the larger time frames we're involved with, responsibilities that last beyond lifetimes. It would run off pressure bellows rising and falling with the sun, turning an array of gears, some large enough they could be running Big Ben. Its counterweights are five tons each and are the size of cars.

By ten thousand years ago, climates had turned toward a warm and rainy start of the Holocene. The Americas were fully occupied, nearly every decent rockshelter bearing toolstone and charcoal. Mammoths, sabertooth cats, and dire wolves had been gone for long enough they would have been myth, turned into tales of monsters that once ruled the world. Eating smaller game in the Holocene, in some places eating more grass seed and root than meat, and painting ghostly imagery on canyon walls with red ochre, these people came from the first people, the original ancestry, birth of Native America.

Rose and I were in a Northern California warehouse where clock parts were being built in an industrial district north of the Golden Gate Bridge. Mechanisms were separated, gears in clusters suspended from rafters where engineers had been

installing, then carefully aligning the components. The workspace hummed from stress tests on ball bearings sped up to match ten thousand years of rotations, seeing if they could withstand the wear. Designers were serious about the machine working that long. Once underground, the clock would have an entrance and exit for visitors to pass through. He said the idea isn't so much to have visitors anytime soon, but in the future—might be centuries from now, might be thousands of years.

Besides this new cave problem, he was working with artists and linguists, trying to come up with what to put on signs that would explain how the clock functions. The idea is that people would enter it, read the instructions, and calibrate the dates properly, causing the clock to chime like a giant music box.

Rose didn't think we'd be speaking English ten thousand years from now. In several hundred years, the word on the page would require translation. Definitions and spellings would change, new words brought in, altering the way sentences are spoken and ideas conveyed. The way we conceive time and space, the flow of events, is conceded into what we say, how we say it. The clock will reach beyond that. He waved his phone in the air, indicating how easy it is to become trapped in the small, digital box of now thinking this is all there is. He told me that a spiral staircase would rise through the interior of this giant clock. The staircase would be unlit, in near complete darkness. Rose sees people coming as a pilgrimage, torches or headlamps or whatever form of illumination might be used for winding into the well of the machine.

Rose's phone rang again, a call from the excavators. He said he had to take it, they'd be wondering if work should resume. As he walked away, I ran my fingers along the cool titanium teeth of a gear. Rose had welcomed my touching them, letting me give them a nudge.

Several inches of turn had budged the whole thing. So incredibly balanced was it all that as soon as I moved one, other wheels began moving across the contraption, action and instant reaction.

The largest assembly of gears hanging from the rafters was based on a star-shaped center known as a Geneva drive, a technology used originally in Swiss watches. This is a circle and square combined, a device that transfers continuous motion into incremental strokes. It is the effortless cruise of the sun broken down to the tick marks of seconds. You might say it's how we invented time.

The ten-thousand-year clock would be our artifact left in a cave. To understand who was here, you might dig it out and study its pieces. Another site in the Nevada desert was already being selected for a hypothetical second clock, as if we were seeding the land, adding our version of Clovis caches under boulders. It may be a message from an ineffable past for people in the future, their ear pressed into a can attached to a string where they listen for our lips to move.

I would tell them of the roaring overpasses around this warehouse, their stark shadows cast onto streets below, abandoned shopping carts, plastic drink cups smashed on asphalt, cars parked for so long their undercarriages are laced with spiderwebs. This is our atlas, a world that will be lost by the time this clock winds down. What kind of lost, I can't say. Whoever returns to this place might think it was a blink of the eye, or they might marvel at the ingenuity of the makers, wondering what ancient people had come this way.

I would tell them what was indelible in our time, the deeply forested hills above the city, sea crashing to mist on a rocky coast, rivers dancing through granite of the Sierra. These will remain, I pray.

I reached in, grasped the biggest gear, and gave it a good, hard spin. Cogs bit into each other. Wheels turned. The machine woke. As smooth as breathing, time began to tick. <>

[The Fair Chase: The Epic Story of Hunting in America](#) by Philip Dray [Basic Books, 9780465061723]

An award-winning historian tells the story of hunting in America, showing how this sport has shaped our national identity. From Daniel Boone to Teddy Roosevelt, hunting is one of America's most sacred-but also most

fraught-traditions. It was promoted in the 19th century as a way to reconnect "soft" urban Americans with nature and to the legacy of the country's pathfinding heroes. Fair chase, a hunting code of ethics emphasizing fairness, rugged independence, and restraint towards wildlife, emerged as a worldview and gave birth to the conservation movement. But the sport's popularity also caused class, ethnic, and racial divisions, and stirred debate about the treatment of Native Americans and the role of hunting in preparing young men for war.

This sweeping and balanced book offers a definitive account of hunting in America. It is essential reading for anyone interested in the evolution of our nation's foundational myths.

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Excerpt:

### The Nature of the Beast

It all began, as they say, long ago. In the mid-eighteenth century, Scottish economist Adam Smith put forward a historical perspective known as the four stages theory. Humanity, he said, had advanced initially through an age of hunting, followed by an age of herding and then one of

agriculture, before entering the age of commerce. Smith's theory was purely conjectural; but in 1925, Australian anatomist Raymond Dart informed the world that the fossil skull of a child with a combination of apish and human features, found in a cave in Taung, South Africa, belonged to an extinct species of hominid that "had walked upright, with its hands free for the manipulation of tools and weapons." Dart, who named the species *Australopithecus africanus*, noted that South Africa's open veldt country, where the Taung Child had been found, was inhabited by "dangerous beasts" and quite far from the forested areas that were usually the home of apes and chimpanzees. The challenges of survival in this semiarid plain had led *Australopithecus*, who had lived 2.5 million years ago, to develop bipedalism, a larger brain, and an active interest in new sources of food, the result a struggle involving "swiftness and stealth ... a fierce and bitter mammalian competition" and a "laboratory ... essential to this penultimate phase of human evolution."

Dart's claims about this missing link between man and ape, which he described in the February 7, 1925, issue of the British journal *Nature*, were not immediately accepted, but the idea that *Australopithecus africanus* had hunted and killed other animals would gain considerable credence and scientific consensus over time. Some of the baboon skulls he examined from the site had been bludgeoned, suggesting the animals were killed by a club—most likely, Dart speculated, the large leg bone of an antelope—and then butchered with other sharpened animal bones. "Man's predecessors differed from living apes in being confirmed killers," Dart wrote in a later series of papers (*The Predatory Transition from Ape to Man* [1953]). "Carnivorous creatures, [they] seized living quarries by violence, battered them to death, tore apart their broken bodies, dismembered them limb from limb, slaking their ravenous thirst with the hot blood of victims and greedily devouring livid writhing flesh."

Unpleasant stuff. Yet Dart's imaginative theories proved a starting point for an extensive conversation among anthropologists over what has become known as the hunting hypothesis, the belief

that early man's long experience as a hunter, said to have occupied at least 99 percent of his prehistory in contrast to his 1 percent as an agriculturalist, explains his physiological development as well as his social organization. The pursuit of ever-larger game would have necessitated not only greater individual physical and mental powers, but the ability to coordinate with others to manage the hunt itself as well as the eventual sharing and preservation of meat. The adaptation to hunting, "in its total social, biological, technical, and psychological dimensions, has dominated the course of human evolution for hundreds of thousands of years," anthropologists Sherwood Washburn and Chet Lancaster concluded in 1968. "In a very real sense our intellect, interests, emotions, and basic social life—all are evolutionary products of [this] success." Hunting not only developed civilization, Washburn and Lancaster posited, but its uniformity, for "the selection pressures of the hunting and gathering way of life were so similar and the result so successful that populations of *Homo sapiens* are still fundamentally the same everywhere."

Both the hunting hypothesis and the suggestion that, on account of this heritage, modern man is hard-wired as a killer, found full articulation in the aftermath of the Second World War and the beginnings of the atomic age. Playwright, screenwriter, and amateur anthropologist Robert Ardrey produced a series of articles on the topic for *Life* magazine, as well as several books, beginning with the influential *African Genesis* in 1961. Ardrey argued that violence had been so great a part of man's makeup through the eons that it remained his key behavioral constant, a proposition that seemed justified by the upheavals of the 1960s—protests, assassinations, a genocidal war—connections made explicit in *Why Are We in Vietnam* (1967), Norman Mailer's short, hallucinatory novel about sport hunting and American machismo. The subject of the human capacity for violence—its origins and too frequent casual commission in the modern world—would also be plumbed in Truman Capote's best-selling *In Cold Blood* (1966) and on-screen in such films as *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *2001: A Space Odyssey*

(1968), *Easy Rider* (1969), *Straw Dogs* (1971), and *Badlands* (1973). "Millions of moviegoers in 1968 absorbed Dart's whole theory in one stunning image from Stanley Kubrick's film '2001,'" notes anthropologist Matt Cartmill, "in which an australopithecine who has just used a zebra femur to commit the world's first murder hurls the bone gleefully into the air—and it turns into an orbiting spacecraft."

The hunting hypothesis has subsequently been challenged by those unwilling to ascribe modern man's violent tendencies wholly to hunting genetics while ignoring other possible explanations—social inequality, and desperation borne of injustice, hunger, or displacement. Some researchers have also rejected as overly simplistic that part of the hunting hypothesis that suggests man hunted, developing superior athletic and spatial reasoning skills, while woman cooked, gathered, and nurtured the young. If, as many believe, a large share of early man's diet was vegetable, then gathering, not hunting, was the primary activity and a major developmental aspect of our species, one in which women likely played a significant role.

The same biological and intellectual changes attributed to hunting, such as bipedalism, cooperation, and the crafting of better tools, would have also been required for the success of primitive gathering societies. Indeed, agriculture, some argue, is a greater challenge and likely a stronger civilizing force than seminomadic hunting. "It is the farmer, not the hunter," notes scholar Mary Zeiss Stange, "who approaches the world of nature as something over which he must seize control."

Yet the sense that hunting is something we are meant for remains an article of faith. Hunters characterize what they do as deeply instinctual—a way of being in and with nature that offers a connection to a life force so profound it defies articulation, a feeling of renewal found nowhere else, the "bliss that passes all understanding." For the liberal Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, one of hunting's patron thinkers, man's longing to return to the hunt stems from the fact that it was as a hunter that he initially awakened to his potential mastery of the world. Every subsequent

civilizing process has taken him away from that awakening, which the modern hunter reenters "by temporarily rehabilitating that part of himself which is still an animal." This can be experienced "only by placing himself in relation to another animal ... If we want to enjoy that intense and pure happiness, we have to seek the company of the surly beast, descend to his level, feel emulation toward him, pursue him. This subtle rite is the hunt."

It appears that humans very early on isolated from their need to hunt the intense thrill of pursuing live game; from antiquity through the Middle Ages, hunting evolved as sport. In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America, outside of a few Virginia gentlemen (such as George Washington) who rode to hounds, there was little sport hunting per se. Most was based on subsistence or profits. With the growth of cities and industry, however, the sporting impulse awoke. Promoted as a means of restoring virility and verve to urban men stuck in the doldrums of office, shop, or mill, and reflecting a new courage and curiosity about nature, American sport hunting drew on diverse influences—the "true sportsmanship" ethos of the British hunt, the deadeye heroics of frontiersmen Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett, and the forest knowledge and stealth of the Native American. Literary heroes, such as Natty Bumppo, inspired it as well, as did, eventually, such mountain men as Jim Bridger and the legendary buffalo hunter William "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Poet and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson, who took his first crack at a deer in the Adirondacks in 1858, termed the nation's new love of the invigorating outdoors "the joyous change."

One notable feature of the sport was its adherence to an evolving code of ethics that would eventually be known as fair chase, the idea that hunted animals must have a chance to evade or flee their pursuers, and that they were to be taken only under certain sporting rules and conditions. By the 1870s, the call of the gentlemanly hunt was something of a worldview, a faith endorsed by magazines, newspapers, and hundreds of new sportsmen's groups, and even preached from the nation's pulpits. Newly armed and outfitted Americans took to the woods.

Such editorial enthusiasm was matched by commerce. Along with sporting clubs and shooting societies came Pendleton, Abercrombie & Fitch, Remington, Smith & Wesson, and a bounty of sports-related items—from heavy boots and jackets (with deep pockets for shotgun shells) to canoes, drinking flasks, and wooden duck decoys. Also for sale were hunting excursions by rail or steamboat and the services of innkeepers, guides, and taxidermists. A robust literature of hunting stories, memoirs, and humorous tales appeared, accompanied by what would become known as "the hook and bullet press," sports-related periodicals whose news and advice covered everything from fishing lures to the kinds of retrievers best suited for grouse hunting.

Remarkably, even from the sport's earliest days in America, voices urged the need to respect and protect wildlife's seasons of procreation, and cautioned against the decimation of hunted species. In the 1880s, organized efforts coalesced through sportsmen's clubs and the advocacy of influential periodicals, most notably *Forest and Stream*, to safeguard wildlife and natural places, from which grew a broader application of restraint and stewardship—the conservation movement—as well as the political will to place limits on hunting and create America's first wildlife preserves and national parks.

The growth of the sport's popularity, its emergence as a subject in the arts—in literature, painting, and commercial applications, such as furniture carvings and wallpaper design—and the channeling of hunting's energies into a more genial "capturing" of the West through photography, paleontology, and conservation, belong to an eventful historical process. Yet hunting has largely been neglected as a topic of historical inquiry in America. This may reflect the reduced participation in the sport over the last half-century and its abandonment by elites, as well as evolving views of nature and people's changing values regarding diet, animal ethics, the use of firearms, and what constitutes recreation. Such cultural shifts allow what I call "the Age of Fair Chase," the decades between the post—Civil War era and the Eisenhower 1950s, in which sport

hunting was a widely accepted pastime and family tradition, to more readily come into focus.

This book introduces many of that story's leading protagonists and relates how they and the animals they pursued came to influence American society and imagination. It asks why the sport was promoted so assiduously and taken up by so many people; why it clicked so readily with journalists, artists, scientists, and clergy. It explores the ways hunting informed advances in weapons design and the natural sciences, and tells the parallel story of the growth of animal protection societies and changing public attitudes regarding extinction, evolution, and what historian William Cronon calls "the autonomy of nonhuman nature." Finally, it examines hunting's links to notions of manhood and self-reliance, while also weighing present-day cultural battles regarding guns and animal rights.

America's love affair with sport hunting led to enhanced appreciation of the great outdoors, and to public acceptance of the need for management of wildlife populations and wilderness; but it also contributed to the wholesale slaughter of birds and animal species, and nourished the myth that the hunters' dominance over living prey prepared them uniquely to be also conquerors of other men. "We are a nation of hunters and frequenters of the forest, plains, and waters," President Theodore Roosevelt once declared. "No form of labor is harder than the chase, and none is so fascinating or so excellent a training-school for war." Some hunter-conservationists, most notoriously Boone and Crockett Club member Madison Grant, extended their nature stewardship to irresponsible pseudo-scientific speculation about the alleged inferiority of racial and ethnic categories of humans.

My approach has been to not only look back, but to see where this historically beloved form of recreation has brought us. Does the legacy of hunting have anything to say about current wildlife management issues, such as the government-funded eradication of animal pests, efforts to control deer populations, the designation of endangered species, or the controversial reintroduction of large animal predators? Can the moral compass of fair chase, forged in America's rustic past, offer any

direction now for environmental crises global in scale? What of the hunter himself? Has his sport been made an anachronism, replaced by newer forms of outdoor recreation? How did the respected weekend sportsman of a half-century ago become the reviled trophy hunter of today? And if hunting has moved from mainstream to marginal, what can be said of its devotees—the approximately 4 to 6 percent of Americans who are licensed hunters, as well as the upward of 70 percent of non-hunters who say they approve of it as a legitimate sport?

Ultimately, can we ever fully understand our nation's character if we do not begin to recognize the indelible mark left upon it by our love of the hunt? [The Fair Chase](#) explores possible answers as it relates the story of the country's most enduring romance.

In [The Fair Chase](#), Philip Dray presents a balanced and thought-provoking look at how hunting helped create the American character, shaping our approach to everything from wildlife conservation to animal rights to gun control.

### The history of hunting in America

- Hunting in the US was formed by a number of influences—the zeal of visiting British elites to enjoy the wild game and unlimited spaces of the American landscape; the tracking acumen of buckskin pathfinders like Daniel Boone and Davey Crockett; and whites' admiration for the hunting methods of Native Americans
- Much of the early promotion of hunting involved language critical of American men's dull life habits, which were attributed to their working in an office or a factory or lounging around with pipe and slippers in a feminized household. For their own good they were instructed to shuck such "Miss Nancyness" and get out in the woods, preferably with a gun or fishing rod.
- New York City was the hub of hunting promotion and enthusiasm in the nineteenth century—home to periodicals such as *Forest and Stream*, organizations like the Boone and Crockett Club and the many German-American shooting clubs, as well

as retail suppliers such as Abercrombie & Fitch.

### Conservation, Native Americans, and animal rights

- Conservation, the precursor to the environmental movement, was started in the 1890s by sport hunters concerned about the depletion of wildlife and natural habitat.
- The "fair chase" ethos that American hunters embraced in the nineteenth century was a refinement of the English hunt tradition of "true sportsmanship;" it also evinced the growing awareness that wildlife required protection.
- While never a stated policy, the US army in the West encouraged the market and tourist excursion killing of buffalo as a means of eradicating the Indians.
- The Audubon Society was founded in the late nineteenth century by sport hunters and conservationists concerned about the immensely profitable business of selling feathers, parts of birds, and even entire small birds to be worn on fashionable ladies' hats.
- The rise of sport hunting in America in the mid-nineteenth century coincided with the birth of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Animal protection and animal rights organizations have often targeted hunters and especially cruel hunting practices ever since.

### Hunting today

- In recent decades, hunting has become a divisive issue in America largely because of changing attitudes about animal welfare, the sanctity of all life, and debates about gun control. Only 4-6 percent of Americans hunt, but almost 70 percent of Americans say they recognize hunting as a legitimate recreation
- Many hunters describe their sport as a deeply reverent way to commune with nature.
- Women are the fastest-growing demographic in sport hunting today, and are often the stars of hunting videos or cable TV shows dedicated to hunting

technique which feature travel to exotic locations.

## Guns

- The NRA began in 1871 as an organization devoted to improving Americans' marksmanship. The two founders—a retired general and a news reporter—had noticed the distressing level of poor shooting (and wasted ammunition) on both sides during the Civil War.
- The NRA has always played up its connection to hunting, although in recent years, as the organization has become known for its paranoia and its unbending defense of Second Amendment rights, hunters, whose sport is based on stealth, quiet, gun safety, and adherence to game laws, have increasingly turned away.

[Daughters of the Winter Queen: Four Remarkable Sisters, the Crown of Bohemia, and the Enduring Legacy of Mary, Queen of Scots](#) by Nancy Goldstone [Little, Brown and Company, 9780316387910]

The captivating story of four unforgettable sisters and their glamorous mother, Elizabeth Stuart, granddaughter of Mary, Queen of Scots

Young Elizabeth Stuart was thrust into a life of wealth and splendor when her godmother, Queen Elizabeth I, died and her father, James I, ascended to the illustrious throne of England. At sixteen she was married to a dashing German count far below her rank, with the understanding that James would help her husband achieve the crown of Bohemia. Her father's terrible betrayal of this promise would ruin "the Winter Queen," as Elizabeth would forever be known, imperil the lives of those she loved, and launch a war that would last for thirty years.

Forced into exile, the Winter Queen and her growing family found refuge in Holland, where the glorious art and culture of the Dutch Golden Age formed the backdrop to her daughters' education. The eldest, Princess Elizabeth, was renowned as a scholar when women were all but excluded from serious study and counted the preeminent

philosopher René Descartes among her closest friends. Louise Hollandine, whose lively manner and appealing looks would provoke heartache and scandal, was a gifted painter. Shy, gentle Henrietta Maria, the beauty of the family, would achieve the dynastic ambition of marrying into royalty, although at great cost. But it would be the youngest, Sophia, a heroine in the tradition of Jane Austen, whose ready wit and good-natured common sense masked immense strength of character, who would fulfill the promise of her great-grandmother, a legacy that endures to this day.

Brilliantly researched and captivatingly written, Nancy Goldstone shows how these spirited, passionate women faced danger, tragic loss, and betrayal, and by refusing to surrender to adversity, changed the course of history.

Excerpt: The day had dawned incongruously fair, the soft rays of the winter sun gradually diffusing the darkness to illuminate the forbidding aspect of the vast medieval fortress, nearly five centuries old, that dominated the surrounding landscape. But the warming light did nothing to lift the spirits of those sequestered behind the citadel's impregnable walls, for on this morning, Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, was to be executed.

She had been convicted four months earlier of treason against her cousin the English queen Elizabeth I. At a trial eerily reminiscent of the inquisition of Joan of Arc, against all protocol, Mary had been denied counsel and forced to face her accusers alone. Her crime lay not so much in the details of the charges against her but in the unshakable constancy of her faith. In an effort to intimidate her, her interrogators, all men well versed in the complexities of English law, thundered their impatient questions at her so rowdily that it was impossible for her to answer them all. It was critical that Mary acknowledge her guilt, but her bold responses and repeated protestations of innocence denied her judges the confession they sought. In length alone did the queen's ordeal differ materially from the saint's. It had taken the inquisition months to condemn Joan, a simple peasant girl, to the stake. Mary, once queen of

France as well as Scotland, was convicted and sentenced to beheading in just ten days.

The delay between verdict and punishment was attributable to Elizabeth I's obvious reluctance to sign her cousin's death warrant. It was not simply a matter of weighing the probable consequences of the act on the kingdom's foreign policy. Elizabeth's ambassadors had already sounded out Mary's only child, James, king of Scotland, and confirmed that, provided his mother's execution in no way adversely influenced his own prospects of succeeding to the English throne, James would undertake no reprisals should Elizabeth decide on this final, irrevocable step. And although the Catholic kings of France and Spain protested vociferously through envoys against the brutality of the sentence, Elizabeth's ministers had concluded that their opposition did not extend to the point of armed intervention in Mary's favor. But still, Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, wavered. It was a grave matter to behead a fellow monarch. It set a sinister precedent. Mary herself recognized this. "Please do not accuse me of presumption if, about to abandon this world and preparing for a better one, I bring up to you that one day you will have to answer for your charge," she wrote keenly to Elizabeth from her cell at Fotheringhay.

But by degrees, the queen of England had allowed herself to be convinced of the necessity for ruthlessness by her Protestant councillors, and on February 1, 1587, she added the authority of the Crown to the judgment against Mary by signing the death warrant. Four days later, on February 5, this document was secretly dispatched to Fotheringhay by courier, and on the evening of February 7, as she prepared for bed, Mary was brusquely informed that she would meet her death the following morning at eight o'clock.

The Queen of Scots' reaction to the news of her imminent execution was tempered not only by the extreme duration of her captivity—she had been confined under house arrest for more than eighteen years—but by her profound belief that her martyrdom at Elizabeth's hands would benefit the Catholic cause in Europe. Consequently, she made no scene, not even when she was refused the

services of a priest and the solace of last rites. Rather, she was tranquil and dignified throughout. She spent her last hours composing her will, making bequests, and comforting her servants. She dispensed the few personal items that remained of her once magnificent equipage. She knelt in prayer. All the while, she and her attendants could hear the sound of the wooden platform that would hold the block on which she would lay her head in preparation for decapitation being noisily constructed in the castle's great hall.

She was summoned to her ordeal at a little after eight in the morning. She appeared in full court dress, accompanied by her small household, one of her manservants holding a crucifix aloft before her. Her flowing gown was of black satin and velvet, highlighted by hints of purple, symbol of royalty. Her trademark red-brown curls—a wig now, as the forty-four-year-old queen's real hair was gray—were draped by a floor-length white lace veil, signifying purity. A throng of people, both officials of the royal court and local gentry, crowded the hall, having been invited to witness the spectacle of the queen's beheading. They took their places around the raised dais as Mary, with quiet majesty, mounted the steps to her fate. A heavy stone ax, instrument of her death, "like those with which they cut wood," an eyewitness later reported, was displayed prominently on the stage.

The ceremony of state execution began. A Protestant clergyman who had been engaged to sermonize the queen began a lengthy discourse. Mary countered by praying aloud, first in Latin and then in English, for the protection and advancement of the Catholic Church. The competing religious devotions having concluded, the queen of Scotland was then divested of her veil and outer gown, as was customary. Her underskirt and bodice were of russet burgundy, another deliberate choice, representing the blood of martyrs. In this costume, she was led to the block and there knelt upon the pillows placed in front of it for that purpose. Weeping softly, her oldest and most loyal maidservant gently bound her mistress's eyes in white silk and arranged her hair so as to leave her neck bare. Then Mary laid her head upon the block.

Although horrifyingly gruesome by modern standards, decapitation was actually the elite method of execution in the sixteenth century. Because it was over in one quick stroke, suffering was assumed to be minimal, so only those of very high rank were granted the privilege of dying in this manner. Criminals and commoners, by contrast, were almost always hanged, which took much longer. If the offense committed was of sufficient gravity, a culprit might be subjected to the torture of being drawn and quartered. The most excruciating punishment—burning at the stake—was reserved for cases of witchcraft or heresy, as an effective means of discouraging others who might be tempted to follow the profane teachings of the condemned.

But however humanely intended, any diminution of pain was of course entirely dependent on the dexterity of the person wielding the ax, and Mary was not fortunate in her practitioner. The first stroke missed her neck completely and landed on the back of her head. Despite the presence of the blindfold, those spectators close to the stage could see the queen's expression change and her mouth open and close in shock, reportedly forming the words "Lord Jesus, receive my soul." The executioner was forced to extract his bloody instrument and raised his arms to try again. The second blow fell with more success—he hit her neck—but failed to cleave all the way through. Rather than lift the weapon a third time and admit his ineptitude, her killer simply hacked at the remaining tissue until at last the queen's head tumbled from her body. Her lips were still moving when he raised his ghastly prize high for all to see, and continued to move, as though struggling to speak, for ten minutes more, before finally coming to rest.

"Such be the end of all the Queen's, and all the Gospel's enemies" was the final verdict solemnly intoned by the presiding magistrate, and with that concluded the formal ritual of death. No witness present in the great hall of Fotheringhay that February morning doubted that Elizabeth had utterly vanquished her rival and that the name Mary Stuart would from that day forth pass into infamy.

But history has a way of confounding even the most seemingly infallible expectations. For it would not be the descendants of the renowned queen Elizabeth I who survived to rule England. Rather, through a series of astonishing twists and turns of fate, through danger, adventure, courage, heartbreak, and, ultimately, triumph, it was Mary's legacy that prevailed through the fearless person of her granddaughter Elizabeth Stuart, the Winter Queen, and her four daughters, Princess Elizabeth, Louise Hollandine, Henrietta Maria, and Sophia. It is from the female line of this family that every English monarch beginning with George I, including the memorable Victoria and the indomitable Elizabeth II, all the way down to the wildly popular children born to the present-day duke and duchess of Cambridge, Prince William and Kate Middleton, has sprung in an unbroken line.

But theirs is so much more than the legacy of a single realm. Together, these women formed the loom upon which the great tapestry of Europe was woven. The lives of Elizabeth Stuart and her daughters were intricately entwined with all the major events of their day, not only political contests, but also the religious, artistic, and philosophic movements that would dominate the period and set the stage for the Enlightenment to come. It is simply not possible to fully understand the seventeenth century in all of its exuberant, glorious complexity without this family.

This is their story.

[Francis I: The Maker of Modern France](#) by Leonie Frieda [Harper, 9780061563096]

The bestselling author of *Catherine de Medici* returns to sixteenth-century Europe in this evocative and entertaining biography that recreates a remarkable era of French history and brings to life a great monarch—Francis I—who turned France into a great nation.

Catherine de Medici's father-in-law, King Francis of France, was the perfect Renaissance knight, the movement's exemplar and its Gallic interpreter. An aesthete, diplomat par excellence, and contemporary of Machiavelli, Francis was the founder of modern France, whose sheer force of

will and personality molded his kingdom into the first European superpower. Arguably the man who introduced the Renaissance to France, Francis was also the prototype Frenchman—a national identity was modeled on his character. So great was his stamp, that few countries even now are quite so robustly patriotic as is France. Yet as Leonie Frieda reveals, Francis did not always live up to his ideal; a man of grand passions and vision, he was also a flawed husband, father, lover, and king.

With access to private archives that have never been used in a study of Francis I, Frieda explores the life of a man who was the most human of the monarchs of the period—and yet, remains the most elusive.

Excerpt: For all the sobriquets that Francis I collected, and is still known by, there is one that was never coined. 'The Maker of Modern France' was 'The Renaissance Warrior', 'The Father of the French Language', 'The First Gentleman of France' and 'Le Grand Nez' (big nose). What he was not was Francis the Great. It is no exaggeration to say that he viewed himself as a man of the same calibre as Alexander or Charlemagne, and expected to be treated as such by his people and posterity alike. On his deathbed in 1547 his own assessment was that he had never treated any man unfairly, and that his conscience was clear. In death, as in life, he offered an optimism that was not borne out by action.

Insofar as he is remembered today, it is largely for his least attractive traits. He was a king of fleeting enthusiasms, and a capricious and impetuous figure who displayed short-lived passion rather than tenacity. He was ridiculed even during his lifetime as a time-waster whose single main obsession, to rule Milan and the Italian peninsula, dominated his reign without consummation. Since his demise, greater and lesser monarchs have sat upon the French throne, but there are few whose reputations have suffered such a decline. This book will explore why posterity has much diminished his legacy.

When I began researching my biography of Catherine de Medici in the late 1990s, the figure of Francis, Catherine's father-in-law and the great king of the day, informed much of my

understanding of the period. He seemed to me to have been a vast and brilliant man, with a benign tendency that was frequently at odds with those of his contemporaries. Almost all the historic buildings that I visited during my research bore the mark of his personal emblem, the salamander: a recurring suggestion that this was a journey that I should take at greater length in due course.

Two decades later, Francis seems all but forgotten. The salamander remains the tantalising clue to the overwhelming impact he made during his reign. In England he is known, if at all, for being the other participant in the greatest Renaissance pageant between princes, the Field of the Cloth of Gold. For the more cosmopolitan, Victor Hugo's swingeing character assassination of him as a self-obsessed satyr in his 1832 play *Le Roi s'amuse*, banned after its first and only production, has mistakenly become his epitaph. His achievements and influence have faded into undeserved obscurity. If ever there was a king who warrants rehabilitation, it is Francis.

This is not to exonerate his many mistakes. In addition to his time-wasting and mutability, he was a deeply flawed figure. He cannot be seen as his own man, so closely was his rise and early success tied to the influence of his mother, Louise of Savoy. She both inspired and indulged him, and some of the blame for his later poor decisions must lie with her. Likewise, it was his sister Marguerite, a woman comfortably his intellectual superior, to whom he often turned for much-needed advice, if only to clarify his own thoughts. They were the only people who could speak frankly to the king about his failings without fear of provoking an astonished and furious response. He was not a monarch who encouraged debate.

Neither sadistic nor cruel in the manner of many other rulers, and even lenient by contemporary standards, he was no protodemocrat. Instead, absolutist rule provided his greatest conviction and his guiding principle. He met any suggestion that his power might be checked with a fury that belied his otherwise charming reputation. He was given to paranoia, jealousy and a fickle attitude towards his favourites. In one particular instance, this led to a dispute that threatened his life and the integrity of

France itself. His treatment of his wives, although unexceptional by the standards of the day, was technically correct but with occasional outrageous public lapses. A womaniser all his life, he was not the first or last king to be guided by his baser carnal appetites. Nonetheless, some of his judgements were amongst the poorest made by any ruler; they were invariably made under the influence of powerful mistresses.

His achievements were extraordinary — and I shall return to them in a moment — but they could have been even greater. Much of the second half of his reign was misspent in over-elaborate stratagems, the whimsical making and then breaking of alliances, as well as pointless and expensive conflicts caused by his grotesquely inflated pride. Had he acknowledged his errors, and devoted himself to furthering the interests of his country, there is no doubt that he would now be regarded as among France's greatest kings.

Yet it is Francis's extraordinary charm that is key to understanding this most complex of monarchs. He succeeded to the throne following a time of great dissent largely caused by the Hundred Years War and feudal infighting. The country stood on the verge of being carved up into its constituent parts, with powerful magnates permanently on the verge of civil war. Just as the Italian peninsula was in a constant state of flux, and ambitious men plotted each other's destruction with the same ease with which they made their subsequent confession, so only the strong rule of Louis XI had avoided a similar fate for France. The failure of Louis XII to maintain the country's standing in Europe by losing its Italian possessions and parts of the north meant that Francis inherited a compromised kingdom. It would take the most remarkable of men to unite the country. Against the odds, Francis succeeded in this. The single largest nation in Europe was a formidable enemy and ally if led to maximum advantage.

For a man who was easily bored, it is a credit to Francis that he was able to muster the patience and tenacity to understand the disparate regions that made up his realm. With their many languages and dialects, to say nothing of their different laws and

customs, it must at times have seemed as if he were attempting to rule Babel. Yet his response to the challenges he faced was an almost childlike enthusiasm for action. While many would have found the obstacles before him insurmountable, his belief in monarchical supremacy meant that he was unable to understand why things could not be done, for 'le Roi le veut', 'the king wills it', seemed quite sufficient.

This indomitable spirit permeated his reign both foreign and domestic. It was believed impossible that a French king could conquer the duchy of Milan, having successfully navigated one of the most treacherous passes in the Alps; Francis enjoyed proving the disbelievers wrong. When he faced his greatest downfall, his blithe willingness to behave in a dishonest and dishonourable fashion and abandon every treaty he had agreed shook Europe to its foundations, but also gave notice that his reign was cast in a new mould. For all his undoubted self-belief in his chivalric and gentlemanly qualities, he was prepared to break new ground in international relations that went against centuries of tradition and etiquette. And, in the most unlikely alliance that he eventually made, he forged an ecumenical sense of religious and social understanding, albeit for personal gain, that holds some valuable lessons for politicians and leaders today.

His aesthetic and artistic interests, again inspired by his mother, were genuine, and resulted in some of the most remarkable architecture, paintings and sculpture that his country had ever known. These remain an indisputable testament to him today. He wished to be a true Renaissance monarch in a way that his predecessors had not been, and the glorification of his own image through magnificent châteaux and splendid entertainments, exquisite and short-lived though they were, showed him to be unusually aware of the power of public manipulation. These great palaces included Fontainebleau, the inimitable Chambord and the refurbishment of the Louvre in Paris, which were worked upon by the likes of Primaticcio, Philibert de l'Orme and Giulio Romano. His recruitment of an aged Leonardo da Vinci did not produce the late masterpiece that Francis had hoped for, it

nonetheless proved to be a remarkable coup in terms of establishing his own credentials as a cultural patron for the nation. When da Vinci brought the Mona Lisa to France with him in 1516 it represented the imprimatur of the new French dominance of the international cultural scene. While an attempt to do the same with Cellini later in his reign was less successful, it had more to do with the growing factionalism at court, and the goldsmith's refusal to curry favour, than misplaced appreciation for talent.

Francis would rule as an absolute monarch, but he wanted to be loved and admired by his subjects; he made a point of travelling throughout his kingdom, showing himself to them. These royal progresses rarely comprised fewer than 10,000 people, with twice as many animals. The total expenditure was dramatic, costing both the locale visited and the nobles and royal exchequer a fortune. Although his final achievements did not match up to his giddy aims, few could have competed with him for showmanship. If his recruitment of an aged Leonardo da Vinci did not produce the late masterpiece that Francis had hoped for, it nonetheless proved to be a remarkable coup in terms of establishing his own credentials as a cultural patron for the nation. When da Vinci brought the Mona Lisa to France with him in 1516 it represented the imprimatur of the new French dominance of the international cultural scene. While an attempt to do the same with Cellini later in his reign was less successful, it had more to do with the growing factionalism at court, and the goldsmith's refusal to curry favour, than misplaced appreciation for talent.

Francis knew that he was a great bluffer rather than a great thinker. He surrounded himself with people more intelligent and adept than himself, and this paid dividends. Tellingly, most of the major failures of his reign took place when he placed an inappropriate faith in his own judgement and intelligence. His mother's death in 1531 can therefore be seen as a clear demarcation between his major achievements prior to it and the many blunders that occurred afterwards. Like many a little boy who has never quite grown up, it proved to be entirely true of Francis that 'Mummy knew

best'. She gave him sound counsel, and when he ignored it the consequences were almost invariably regrettable. Yet when he did listen to her, or heeded his sister's advice later in life, he acted with a Machiavellian skill that put his peers to shame with his decisive and effective results.

He was the king that his country needed, if not the one that it might have wished for. In an age in which European relations were characterised by the emergence of great nations from small independent states, his cheerily forthright attitude towards the expansion of French territories overseas came at precisely the right time. A century before, he would have faced a near-endless number of local magnates and powerful prelates, meaning that, whatever small conquests he managed, he would have had no scope to develop the glory of France. If his people had an ambivalent attitude towards their king, especially later in his reign, greater civil disobedience was checked by their knowledge that he acted in both their interest and his own, which he considered one and the same.

An intriguingly magnetic and contradictory figure emerges from a modern assessment of Francis. Perhaps the best point of comparison is with his contemporary and occasional ally-cum-enemy Henry VIII. Both men occupy an important symbolic position in their country's history, but for entirely different reasons. While Henry's influence was a destructive one, Francis furthered the glory of his kingdom. As Henry posed as a Renaissance man but without substance, Francis devoted his time and energy to the arts and to creativity. As men, their differences were as striking as their similarities. Despite his substantial nose, Francis was a handsome and dashing figure, as Henry had been in his youth, but the French monarch's acknowledged charm and accessibility endeared him to many. It was no wonder that he managed to seduce women, just as the blunter and more belligerent Henry executed them. Francis led his armies from the front, literally fighting until he was unable to do so any more; Henry's most notable military entanglement was the pointless accidental destruction of his flagship. It is not a comparison

from which the English monarch emerges with any credit.

This book is not a hagiography of Francis. I have taken pains to expose his failings and inconsistencies, and I have little doubt that many will frequently find him as exasperatingly flawed as I have often done myself. Instead, I have attempted to use the historical and biographical facts of his life and reign as the basis on which the reader can make up his or her own mind about a man who, for all his foibles and drawbacks, was undoubtedly one of the most significant rulers in French history. Without him, there can be little doubt that his country would have risked taking a different and far less modern direction. He prevented the hegemony of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, over the Continent, and reshaped territorial boundaries in a way that his successor and son Henri II would ultimately consolidate. Perhaps the most appropriate description of Francis, then, is as much 'The Maker of Modern Europe' as it is 'The Maker of Modern France'. This does credit to a king who, far from the obscurity in which he has undeservedly languished, merits a rigorous reassessment in our own, changeable, times. <>

[The Queen's Embroiderer: A True Story of Paris, Lovers, Swindlers, and the First Stock Market Crisis](#)  
by Joan DeJean [Bloomsbury Publishing, 9781632864741]

From the author of [How Paris Became Paris](#), a sweeping history of high finance, the origins of high fashion, and a pair of star-crossed lovers in 18th-century France. Paris, 1719. The stock market is surging and the world's first millionaires are buying everything in sight. Against this backdrop, two families, the Magoulets and the Chevrots, rose to prominence only to plummet in the first stock market crash. One family built its name on the burgeoning financial industry, the other as master embroiderers for Queen Marie-Thérèse and her husband, King Louis XIV. Both patriarchs were ruthless money-mongers, determined to strike it rich by arranging marriages for their children.

But in a Shakespearean twist, two of their children fell in love. To remain together, Louise Magoulet and Louis Chevrot fought their fathers' rage and abuse. A real-life heroine, Louise took on Magoulet, Chevrot, the police, an army regiment, and the French Indies Company to stay with the man she loved.

Following these families from 1600 until the Revolution of 1789, Joan DeJean recreates the larger-than-life personalities of Versailles, where displaying wealth was a power game; the sordid cells of the Bastille; the Louisiana territory, where Frenchwomen were forcibly sent to marry colonists; and the legendary "Wall Street of Paris," Rue Quincampoix, a world of high finance uncannily similar to what we know now. [The Queen's Embroiderer](#) is both a story of star-crossed love in the most beautiful city in the world and a cautionary tale of greed and the dangerous lure of windfall profits. And every bit of it is true.

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## How This Began

One August afternoon in France's National Archives, I found two documents listed under the name of Jean Magoulet, official embroiderer to Louis XIV's queen. The first, Magoulet's letter of appointment as the Queen's Embroiderer, was no surprise, but the second, a royal decree, stopped me in my tracks: "August 5, 1719. Lock Marie Louise Magoulet up in prison and ship her off to Louisiana."

In 1719, such an official pronouncement was unequivocal: Marie Louise Magoulet had been

accused of prostitution and was being deported to the newly founded city of New Orleans as an undesirable.

Minutes later, I was racing through the streets of Paris' Marais, bound for the Arsenal Library, where the records of the Bastille prison are housed. Before the afternoon was out, I had learned that Louise Magoulet was indeed, as I had suspected, the daughter of the Queen's Embroiderer. I had also learned that the charge of prostitution had been trumped up by her very own father. I had even glimpsed the outline of a great love affair, between Louise Magoulet and Louis Chevrot.

Well before I realized that various Magoulets and Chevrots would crisscross the globe and that this family saga would play out over two full centuries, I already knew that it would be no easy task to retrace the Magoulet family's path from Versailles' magnificence to prison squalor. I walked away from this project several times but always came back: I couldn't get Louise Magoulet's star-crossed love story out of my mind.

She and Louis Chevrot deserved so much more than life gave them.

## The Queen's Embroiderers

This is among the earliest surviving depictions of the interior of an authentic shop, the emporium of a known merchant, in this case, Jean Magoulet. Magoulet is identified in the caption printed below the handsomely etched image as "brodeur ordinaire," or official embroiderer in the service of the queen—that is, Queen Marie-Thérèse, the Spanish infanta who from the time of her marriage in 1660 to her death in 1683 ruled France as Louis XI V's wife. The caption adds that the queen is "deceased," so we know that the scene depicted took place after 1683.

Jean Magoulet, the Queen's Embroiderer, wears the accoutrements of everyday aristocratic dress—a perfectly curled periwig, fine muslin cuffs and cravat—and his younger assistant is similarly attired. But one element is missing, and that absence distinguishes the merchants' dress as infinitely less costly than the garments worn by the great aristocrat who is Magoulet's potential client.

The merchants' attire, while elegant, is unadorned, whereas the cuffs and the front panels of the nobleman's handsome justaucorps (the ancestor of today's suit jacket) are richly ornamented with the kind of embroidery for which Magoulet was famous.

Across the back wall hang official garments of various kinds: the cross of the Saint-Esprit, or Holy Spirit, the highest chivalric distinction that could be conferred on French noblemen; a chasuble, the principal vestment worn by a priest when celebrating mass; and a housse, the decorative cloth placed under the saddles of horses on ceremonial occasions. This housse, featuring a fleur-de-lis pattern, seems destined for the mount of a royal guard.

The noblewoman examines an embroidery pattern, more of which are scattered over the tablecloth. These were presentation designs, created by renowned embroiderers as samples of their work to be used just as Magoulet is doing, to generate custom. The shop assistant displays for the nobleman's perusal a panel destined to become part of either a waistcoat or a jacket similar to the one the client is wearing but embroidered in a style evidently so eye-catchingly different from everything already in his wardrobe that, leaning forward in his chair and hand on hip, the aristocrat is giving it his full and rapt attention.

The shopping scene conveys the message that Jean Magoulet's emporium featured a stock of embroidery fit for a queen—or a bishop, or a cavalry officer, or the highest nobles in the land. The image was designed as a promotional tool to entice anyone with the means to afford luxurious adornments to Magoulet's elegant boutique.

In the 1680s, when this etching first circulated, such a clientele would naturally have been drawn to Magoulet's work, for it had been rewarded with the ultimate seal of approval: that of the court at Versailles. At the center of the caption, the coat of arms of France's deceased queen is prominently featured, so no one could forget that Magoulet was an official purveyor to the French crown.

Today, Versailles has attained the status of a mythical court, probably the most famous court of all time. In the 1680s, that myth was just taking shape. Louis XI V's château was not yet complete when king and queen and courtiers moved to Versailles from the Louvre in May 1682. The palace's iconic space, the Galerie des Glaces, or Hall of Mirrors, was opened to the public the following December. From then on a great whirl of parties, receptions, and court festivities of all kinds began; those celebrations would transform the name Versailles into a European legend. And no space witnessed more of those brilliant displays of French style and magnificence than the Hall of Mirrors.

Modern tourists who marvel at this legendary space are dazzled above all by its vast expanse of mirrored glass. They also look up to admire the monumental vaulted ceiling covered with paintings depicting the high points of the Sun King's reign, produced by the workshop of royal artist Charles Le Brun.

The grand gallery is more than forty-one feet high, so it is hard to appreciate Le Brun's masterpieces, only dimly visible on the ceiling far above. This would have been all the more true in the seventeenth century, when evening festivities were only softly lit by candlelight. And in any event those magnificent paintings and the gallery's best-known feature, its mirrors, were not compatible in any way. Indeed, for what was in 1682 an inconceivably vast and wildly costly display of mirrored glass to pay off, the gallery had to be filled with bright and shiny things whose reflection would bounce off the mirrors to create an overall effect of brilliant shimmering. Rather than the mirrors in which they were reflected, those glittering surfaces were what the seventeenth-century precursors of today's tourists remembered from their visits to Versailles' grand gallery.

There was the legendary silver throne installed on a dais at one end of the gallery, used on ceremonial occasions to convince notable foreign visitors of France's supremacy. The steps leading up to the throne were literally dripping with embroidery; on the uppermost step the most

precious needlework was displayed, embroidery so delicate it was described as "lacework"—all of it executed with outrageously expensive metallic thread. Surrounding that storied throne were eight monumental panels, neither oil paintings nor tapestries, but paintings in needlework, masterpieces of French royal embroidery fifteen feet high. Each magnificent panel featured a pavilion embroidered in gold surrounded by figures worked in silver. With its blatant display of precious metal.

In January 1678, a Parisian newspaper, *Le Mercure galant* (The Gallant Mercury), included news never before seen in the periodical press: it discussed in detail the latest fashions for winter and included illustrations of the season's iconic garments. The paper ushered in modern fashion journalism with men's fashions, such as this "winter outfit"; women's garments followed. And the description of every outfit was focused on embroidery's central role.

The original male fashion plate was decked out in all the latest trends. His many stylish adornments—from his collar and his cloak to his jacket—owe their status as fashions of the moment to the fact that they were covered with embroidery in the kind of intricate patterns for which the Queen's Embroiderer was renowned, designs worked in gold and silver thread.

The Mercury's illustration is in a sense a royal affair—one design is even named "à la royale"—but the man of mode it features is not depicted wearing a sword as French nobles did. With this choice, the paper suggested that the new fashions for winter 1678 were trends not designed exclusively for members of the court but instead styles to be copied by anyone who could afford them.

At the moment when the French fashion industry was taking shape, Magoulet was producing for his clients embroidery so heavily encrusted with metallic thread that no creation produced by Chanel Haute Couture today can even begin to compare. A truly extravagant outfit of the time might require ten or more pounds of precious metal.

Famous embroiderers were gifted draftsmen, with exceptional skill at imagining and planning memorable patterns. Their work would thus make or break an important new garment. This explains why the nobleman in Magoulet's shop image is examining the sample so intently. This was where his sense of style would be on display: the cut of a man's jacket changed far less often and less radically than did embroidery motifs, and the kind of trendsetting whimsy evident in an embroidery pattern had no equivalent in tailoring. In the power dressing of Louis XI V's Versailles and the Paris fashion scene, the embroiderer was responsible for the glitz and glamour that made an outfit memorable.

And if you wanted embroidery fit for the king of France, you sought out Jean Magoulet. Magoulet had ready access to the secrets of the *Garderobe du Roi*, the King's Wardrobe, the name given to the extended machinery that made possible the lavish outfits and frequent costume changes that were the day-to-day stuff of life at the Sun King's court.

On August 3, 1679, the scion of the House of Lorraine, the Prince d'Harcourt, contacted the Queen's Embroiderer with an urgent request. The prince was so enamored of "the jacket with gold embroidery" that he had just seen the king wearing at Versailles that he was after a copy that would be "indistinguishable," perfect "down to the last stitch." Magoulet went straight to Etienne Cagnyé, *Sieur de La Greffe*, who served every July as the first valet of the King's Wardrobe; Cagnyé had thus handed that memorable jacket to the king on the day when it had caught the prince's eye. Cagnyé came through for his colleague and quickly turned over the embroidery pattern that had served for the royal garment, "sealed with his coat of arms" as proof of its accuracy. Magoulet assured the prince that "everything would be absolutely identical."

Naturally, that combination of insider information and remarkable skill came at a price, and a very high one indeed.

In 1690, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay, son of the elder Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the Sun King's most trusted adviser, decided it was

time to renew his collection of justaucorps. The monarch's valued collaborator in his own right, Seignelay served the crown as Secrétaire d'État ci la Marine, Navy Secretary. A man in Seignelay's position had his pick of luxury goods purveyors; only the finest received a contract to work for him.

The marquis ordered a first jacket from master tailor Jean de La Lande, in black velvet extensively trimmed with gold braid. Even with the added expense of the braid, Seignelay paid only 20 livres. (In 1690, a livre could buy ten pounds of good bread or four pounds of high-quality meat.) Seignelay also desired a second jacket. The marquis picked out a striped cotton textile in the newly fashionable shade of brown known as musk. On March 1, 1690, when Seignelay bought the cloth from fabric merchant Barbe Indienne, she charged 3 livres. He then turned the textile over to the Queen's Embroiderer. For Magoulet's creation, "an outfit fully embroidered in gold," France's navy secretary received a bill on April 20 for 580 livres—29 times more than the total outlay for the Marquis' velvet jacket, and 193 times the price paid for the cloth.

Purchases made that same year for the wardrobe of Seignelay's wife confirm this vast cost differential between the price of embroidery and all other expenditures in the acquisition of a high fashion garment. She acquired two aunes (a unit of measure equivalent to about 1.25 yards) of fine silk brocade for 33 livres. To transform the cloth with "embroidery in gold with flowers in a raised design in gold and silver," Magoulet charged 631 livres, more than nineteen times the cost of the sumptuous textile.

Royal artisans lived an elegant public life: they interacted on a regular basis with the court at Versailles; they had business dealings with members of France's first families; they created fabulous objects, veritable works of art, which they sold for major sums; they maintained luxurious shops in Paris' best neighborhoods; and they might even live nearby, as Magoulet did. In all these capacities, they had to dress and act the part, to own the right clothes and wigs and to wear them with just the right attitude.

Because of their proximity to king and court and as a recognition of their exceptional talent, royal artists also gained social status and erased many of the negative connotations of earning a living through sales and the work of their hands, and even to some extent their lack of a birthright. Look at Magoulet's self-depiction in his shop image: there's no stain of manual labor on this man, who appears more a trusted confidant than a simple merchant. Magoulet's art was a social anchor for him. His title "the Queen's Embroiderer" elevated him within the carefully nuanced ranks of the French middle classes.

In the Parisian luxury goods industry, success was defined as the ability to improve one's lot professionally, socially, and financially: Magoulet's story must have seemed a perfect example of the French dream.

But behind the glamorous façade that the depiction of Magoulet's shop was designed to promote was a dense web of lies. This was equally true of his eldest son, who also became a noted embroiderer and who also used the title the Queen's Embroiderer. Both these great artists were at the same time individuals with an elegant public image and men who devoted enormous energy to hiding their secret lives from those closest to them.

Both royal embroiderers appeared constitutionally incapable of living within their means, even when those means should have proved amply sufficient to maintain their households. They became poster children for a society increasingly addicted to credit. Whenever their wild overspending led them into a level of debt that they could not sustain, they tried to make a quick windfall. Then, as each risky venture fell through, they turned on their family.

Both royal embroiderers abused their familial duties: they spent money that belonged to their wives; they tapped into funds legally set aside as an inheritance for their children. And if a spouse or a child threatened to expose their mismanagement, they struck back—and they took no prisoners. Time and again, they lashed out with cold-blooded ruthlessness: abusive behavior seems to have come as naturally to them both as the ability to imagine gorgeously intricate designs. The story of the two

Queen's Embroiderers is thus equal parts nightmare and fairy tale, as much a saga of intimate violence as of needlework so exquisite and technically demanding that its cost would be prohibitive today.

In the course of their attempts both to get rich quickly and to save their skin when they got into bad straits, the Queen's Embroiderers became imposters, tricksters, con artists nonpareil. They lied about everything and to everyone: to the police, to notaries, to their in-laws. They lied about their ages and those of their children, about their professional accomplishments and their net worth. They caroused; they philandered; they made a mockery of the laws of church and state. The only truly authentic thing about them was their extraordinary talent and their ability to weave gold and silver thread into the kind of garments that seemed the stuff of dreams. In their lives and on an almost daily basis, haute couture crossed paths with high crime.

Savage beauty indeed. <>

[Murder in Renaissance Italy](#) by Trevor Dean and K. J. P. Lowe [Cambridge University Press, 9781107136649]

This invaluable collection explores the many faces of murder, and its cultural presences, across the Italian peninsula between 1350 and 1650. These shape the content in different ways: the faces of homicide range from the ordinary to the sensational, from the professional to the accidental, from the domestic to the public; while the cultural presence of homicide is revealed through new studies of sculpture, paintings, and popular literature. Dealing with a range of murders, and informed by the latest criminological research on homicide, it brings together new research by an international team of specialists on a broad range of themes: different kinds of killers (by gender, occupation, and situation); different kinds of victim (by ethnicity, gender, and status); and different kinds of evidence (legal, judicial, literary, and pictorial). It will be an indispensable resource for students of Renaissance Italy, late medieval/early modern crime and violence, and homicide studies.

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## Renaissance Killers

Homicide, the most serious of violent crimes, is simultaneously a fixed and finite act that transcends chronological specificity and an action

inseparably linked to the attitudes and mores of the time in which it takes place. It has always excited public attention and been a cause for comment and discussion. Multi-angled studies of single crimes remain rare, despite the huge growth of studies of historical crime in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This is the novelty of this volume. Our main aims are to uncover the many faces of murder, and its many cultural presences, across the Italian peninsula in a specific arc of time. These two aims inform the content in different ways: the faces of homicide range from the ordinary to the sensational, from the professional to the accidental, from the domestic to the public; while its cultural presence is revealed through new studies of sculptures, paintings and popular literature. The volume includes new research on a broad range of themes: different kinds of murders (planned or spontaneous, of family members or acquaintances or strangers, involving weapons and bloody wounds or bloodless violence such as strangulation or poison), different kinds of killers (by gender, occupation or situation), different kinds of victim (by age and status), and different kinds of evidence (legal, literary or pictorial). In planning the volume, we were interested in the various types of killing — judicial and criminal, political and religious — and in their modalities (location, weapons), as well as in the representation of murder in chronicles, news reports, literature and the visual arts. We were also concerned to examine how a Christian society that was supposedly taught to observe the biblical commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' came to terms with repeated failure, and accepted itself as a society in which killing was a part of 'normal' life.

Much of the public fascination with murder has always lain in its degree of transgression: taking away a life is the most transgressive personal act known to humans. It is at the same time a crime against those in power, part of whose mandate — if they hold power legitimately — is to guarantee public order and the safety of its citizens. Tracking down

those responsible for murders, and ensuring that they are punished in an appropriate manner, has also always been of interest to the governors and

to the governed. Hearing of the particular set of circumstances that led in each case to murder appears to have been a source of avid excitement in a society premised on the rule of Christian morality. Keen interest is reserved for especially bloody or unsavoury cases, and this kind of fascination is harder to explain. Shocking acts can — from a distance — be perceived as thrilling, and the presence of blood, with its myriad taboos and connotations, acts to intensify the thrill. Yet murder is a brutal act, however perpetrated, and it has brutal consequences, so perhaps interest is generated too by a mixture of dread and relief (on the part of the person hearing or reading of it, as they are not involved). When the murder contains a sexual element, news interest is further amplified. In this sense, public reaction and comment on acts of murder can be understood to play an equivalent role to the chorus in Greek tragedies, ensuring that the acts did not pass unnoticed and offering alternative readings to official pronouncements.

Another important feature is that some murders, such as tyrannicides or the execution of popular heroes, take on symbolic significance, amplifying their newsworthiness. Although all human life was supposed to be sacred, lives in the Renaissance were simultaneously believed to vary in worth, and news interest followed the norms of assigned value. Even if murder of slaves could in theory be prosecuted in the courts, it would not usually have been considered newsworthy. An argument retrieved from correspondence in the Datini archive over the paternity of a slave's unborn child in late-fourteenth-century Genoa involved a chaplain or cappellano saying that she could be thrown into the sea for all he cared, as he was not the father of her child.' This was bravado, of course. But slave-women were at the bottom of the hierarchical heap, so although they had a pecuniary value, they had no social value, and therefore murder of them would have counted for very little in terms of news. The lives of the rich and famous, by contrast, were endlessly worth following, and murder in their ranks always elicited comment. Lorenzo Tornabuoni in Florence wrote to the inveterate news-gatherer Benedetto Dei in Milan in November 1486, telling

him, amongst other pieces of news, of a rich Roman family blighted by two episodes of murder. The seven-month pregnant wife of Francesco del Buffalo was killed by two of her stepsons, sometime after two of his sons had killed each other.

This book is divided into five sections, reflecting the themes and concepts we wish to develop. Some of these sections overlap to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of murder as a social and cultural event. At all times attention is focused on the legal and moral positions on murder, what the act of murder meant to those who were affected and what they perceived the act to be. There is recurrent interest in literary and artistic depictions of murder, and on the perceived newsworthiness of certain types of murder, and the writing that they engendered. Note is taken of occasions when reference is made to classical precedent or the influence of the classical world. The first section starts, appropriately, with the first murder, that of Abel by Cain (Nethersole). This chapter is particularly interested in the meaning of murder, as is that of Bress. Bress and Cohen both consider domestic and familial killings more generally, such as those by husbands and fathers of their wives and daughters, which now can be deconstructed in important, genderinformed ways. The second section will consider the murderers, victims and spaces of 'ordinary' murders in a typical city, Bologna (Blanshei, Dean): these were so routine as to be commonplace in Renaissance Italy, and were not thought to require extended explanation. The third section addresses extraordinary or sensational murders (Leydi, Salzberg and Rospocher, Dall'Aglio), such as the alleged case of cannibalism in Renaissance Milan that grabbed the attention of the public but whose narrative outline now indicates the existence of a multitude of other social and religious problems. Prominent here will be the theme of the reporting of murder, showing how murder was constantly in the news, whether in the form of diplomatic reports, or chronicles, or private letters, and was a constant presence in the lives of Renaissance Italians. The newsworthiness of murder is particularly apparent with sensational murders, as some murders were considered more newsworthy than others. Murders

could start as high-profile — for instance, if the murdered person was a ruler or a prelate — but could also snowball in terms of public interest, as in the case presented by Leydi, where accusations of additional transgressions were tagged on to the primary charge. Some very specific types of murder and suicide will be analysed in the fourth section (Pastore, Lowe, Esposito), those involving particularly disadvantaged groups: poisoners (often women), slaves, nuns and Jews as well as political dissenters or the desperate. These groups were distinctive and many suffered from increased regulation and surveillance vis-à-vis the rest of the population, marking them out as victims and giving additional reason for their murder or self-murder. Murders dressed up to look like suicides offered killers the possibility of covering their tracks, even if public opinion at the time often alerted contemporaries to the crimes. The last section analyses murder by professional killers — soldiers, executioners and butchers (Bowd, Guerra, Dickerson) — trying to ascertain how it was possible for homicide under certain circumstances to be considered either morally justifiable or culturally acceptable. Inclusion here of a chapter on representations of murdered animals in the form of dead meat in butchers' shops allows a comparison between murdered humans and dead animals, sharpening lines of distinction not only between the living and the dead, but also between the human and the non-human. Why was it permissible not only to kill but also to eat the dead flesh of one category of previously living creature, but categorically forbidden across every type of written and unwritten law to kill or eat the other category? What does this tell us about the act of murder? And why was this boundary policed with such ferocity, so that killing someone to eat their flesh (cannibalism) — which was known about in the Renaissance but ascribed to non-European pagans — was considered so much worse, say, than killing a family member because of an argument? Attempting to sanctify both life and the dead body at a time when neither was held sacrosanct meant that much energy was expended in policing an essentially untenable situation.

In one sense, this volume constitutes a follow-on from our previous edited volume, *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy* (1994): though we had an image of homicide — in fact, assassination — on the cover, murder was not a major theme of the thirteen essays in the volume. Since the 1990s, other titles in English have touched on Renaissance homicide, without exploring it fully or in its complexities — a trait that history has shared with criminology.<sup>1</sup> Trevor Dean's own *Crime and Justice in Late Medieval Italy* deals only briefly with murder, in a chapter focused more broadly on physical violence, though wife killing is covered at some length. Pieter Spierenburg's *A History of Murder* covers a much broader time period and geographical area, and concentrates on the long-term fall in the murder rate and on the slow decline of medieval practices of feuding and vendetta. His typology of homicide is consequently limited, and the opportunity for nuanced analysis is small. Older titles that are relevant include Guido Ruggiero's *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice*, which examines fourteenth-century murders, distinguishing between passionate and self-interest killings, and between noble and non-noble modes (noblemen preferred hired killers). The collection of essays edited by Lauro Martines, *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200-1500*, included a chapter on one resounding political murder (of the duke of Milan, 1476), though focusing more on the diplomatic consequences than on the act itself, which had been closely studied by scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>2</sup> Murder was covered in that volume also by the essays of Werner Gundersheimer on the 'Book of the Executed' of the city of Ferrara (seventy executions for homicide 1441-1500, in an apparently rising trend), and of Stanley Chojnacki on trials in Venice in the fourteenth century (where he found popolani resorting to homicidal violence more than nobles, with domestic and neighbourly quarrels prominent as contexts and disputes over money and casual slights prominent as triggers). Lauro Martines has also written specifically about one of the most momentous of political killings of the Renaissance, the attempt on the life of Lorenzo de' Medici, which resulted in the death of his brother, Giuliano.<sup>3</sup> One of the contributors to the

present volume, Stefano Dall'Aglio, has recently dissected another crucial assassination, that of Duke Alessandro de' Medici by Lorenzino de' Medici in Florence in 1537, and the subsequent murder of the assassin in Venice in 1548. His book emphasises the interconnectedness of murders, the fact that a murder was often the beginning or middle of a process rather than the end.<sup>4</sup> The investigation of single murderous episodes, or single murderers, in fact seems very much a part of the Italian historiographical landscape, recent instances including, for example, a study of a murder in a cathedral — Reggio Emilia, at mass on 28 June 1517 — which skilfully explains the significance of the time and place, or an investigation into the nature and purpose — part judicial, part historical, part literary — of sources for the killing by a husband in Rome of his wife's noble lover in the 1530s.<sup>5</sup> As a genre, such case studies stretch back into the nineteenth century, in instances such as the death in a Neapolitan prison of the condottiere Jacopo Piccinino in 1465, or the poisoning of the count of Tenda by his own cook in 1475, or the cruel butchering of Ottaviano Manfredi in a narrow mountain pass in 1499. Such studies can provide deeply contextualised readings of single events. Conversely, in the broader study of homicide, the debate is focused more on long-term trends and macrohistorical explanations (see below the essays by Blanshei and Dean for the references to the work of Eisner, Roth, and Spierenburg). This volume aims to connect these two ends of the historical study of homicide.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Italian Renaissance murder is the extent to which it can be seen to foreshadow contemporary twenty-first-century murder. Or to phrase it in another way, we are interested in whatever is distinctive about murder in the culturally specific time and place of Renaissance Italy, but also in how closely aspects of murder in Renaissance Italy and twenty-first-century Europe and America are aligned. So, while trying to analyse what was new and distinctive about murder then, we also try to see what new twists have evolved — indeed what new types of murder have emerged — in the 500-year gap between the periods, in order to shed light on the

paradox with which we opened this introduction: murder is simultaneously time specific and yet has a core that is chronologically free floating. Two aspects assuredly have not changed: public fascination with murder, and murder's newsworthiness. Whether fascination came first and led to newsworthiness, or whether a constant media focus on murder fanned the flames of public fascination with it, is unclear even in the Renaissance.

Two of the most notorious forms of murder in the early twenty-first century are serial murder and mass murder. The first is often assumed to be a modern development, yet records relating to it exist from the Renaissance. For instance, the Venetian diarist Marin Sanudo in 1529 took note of a report from Brescia describing a woman called Malgarita, who cross-dressed as a man and was part of the company of Roberto da San Severino, the count of Caiazzo. Alleged to have murdered twelve boys ('ragazi') by luring them one by one to her quarters, and burying them under the house, she was arrested, tortured, and confessed before being hanged and burned. According to the report, she died heroically." In a trial in Bologna in 1340, a woman confessed to killing three of her own children over a period of six years. Whether these events took place as described, these cases are evidence that the phenomenon of serial murder existed. Mass murder is slightly different. It too undoubtedly existed in the Renaissance, especially murder of groups by other groups, for instance in war situations such as sacks (Bowd) or in religiously fraught situations such as pogroms (cf. Esposito). Yet spree murders such as family annihilations or high school massacres, whether random or focused, are more difficult to find. When one does find them, the perpetrators are often labelled as 'mad'. In 1549, Piera, the wife of Paolo da Falla, killed her seven-year-old daughter and her four-year-old nephew with a hatchet, but was restrained before she could kill a further child. Advances in weaponry and explosives since the Renaissance have made different sorts of murder, including spree murder, easier and more lethal, just as religious hatreds and an increased focus on the individual have augmented the urge to kill — or at the very least

whittled away at the reasons for not killing. Further twenty-first-century types of murder have evolved considerably since the Renaissance, again because of scientific advances, but the kernels of the types were known then. For instance, chemicals and infectious pathogens are now routinely used in some parts of the world as tools of mass or other murders, with a clear line of descent from poison (Pastore).

What can the law on homicide tell us about murder? In the mid-sixteenth century, the jurist Jacobus Novellus penned a treatise for lawyers defending suspects on murder charges. In it, he listed forty defences that could be used at least to excuse the culprit from the death penalty and in some cases to allow him or her to walk away without any penalty at all. The list needs to be discussed with care, as some of the arguments are of dubious validity and it is doubtful that they would have convinced a judge. However, enough of them are encountered in actual court practice, as extenuating or excusatory circumstances, for the list to be used as some indication of the conditions in which homicide was accepted or punished lightly. Though these justifications of homicide are listed without any apparent order, they clearly fall into three groups. First come the specific conditions of the killer, whether physical (young age), or psychological (insanity), emotional ('lascivia', fear, 'iustus dolor', provocation and anger), cognitive (ignorance, sleep, inebriation and error), or occupational (the 'public official exercising his office', those with a record of creative distinction or service to the prince). This range of characteristics, ranging from age, state of mind and emotional state to ability to comprehend actions at the moment of killing and broader function and utility, could serve as justifications for homicide. Second come the specific conditions of the victim: those involved in criminal action could be killed with impunity (thus traitors and rebels, pirates and nocturnal robbers, rapists and adulterers), as could those with a record of past criminal behaviour (bandits), while killers were not liable to punishment if their victims died from wounds having failed to follow medical advice for their treatment. Third, there are some specific conditions of the crime that

reduced culpability, either through absence of intent to kill (accidents and play), presence of a higher ulterior motive or value (defending a friend or partner from aggression, putting down a riot, escaping from prison if the 'innocent prisoner could not escape without killing the guards'), or a hierarchical relation in which violence was justified (a husband or master finding his wife or slave in flagrante crimine, a father killing his son who resists a 'correctional' beating). Two conclusions can be made from this sort of forensic rhetoric. The first is that the space for inexcusable or unjustifiable homicide seems to be small: unemotional actors, innocent victims in egalitarian relation to their killers, in insignificant contexts. The second is that homicide was conceived as potentially present in all social relations — in politics, sexual relations, families, prisons, employment, public office and play.

Some of these categories listed by Jacobus Novellus clearly originated in the distinction made, more than two centuries earlier, between malice (*dolus*) and responsibility (*culpa*) by Albertus Gandinus, author of one of the early juristic treatises on criminal-law procedure, who insisted that the death penalty required *dolus*, and that this was absent in killings in accident, drunkenness, insanity, self-defence and so on. Consequently, they were also present in the laws and city statutes that were intended to determine penalties in the courts. Each city had its own extensive set of statutes, usually based on initial thirteenth-century codifications, then revised at politically significant moments in the fourteenth century, and printed in the fifteenth century. At Savona, for example, the punishment for 'wounding with death' was hanging or decapitation for anyone over fourteen, except for actions in self-defence or in defence of kinsmen, and for boys play-fighting. At Bergamo the death penalty did not apply if the victim were a bandit, the killing in self-defence or the killer 'furiosus' or under ten." The statutes of Ascoli Piceno having sternly prescribed dragging at an ass's tail and burial alive for killings with any metal pallocta, removed all penalty for killings by accident, in play, in moderate self-defence, or of a thief at night. Self-defence was a common statutory

exception, found, for example, in the statutes of Rome, Mantua, Genoa, Cesena and Alessandria. Bandits and enemies of the city were also an exception (Mantua, Asti), and jurists justified their killing on the grounds of benefit to the 'common good'. Some statutes distinguished between premeditated and involuntary homicide: for killing in a brawl, the penalty at Alessandria was a fine and banishment from the city, whereas the penalty for 'meditated' killing was decapitation. At Bergamo, there was a similar distinction between unplanned homicide ('*non tractatim facto*') and planned ('*tractatim facto*'), while at Ravenna it was between 'pure' and 'with forethought' ('*animo pensato*'). Cesena's statutes had three categories: 'malicious and voluntary' homicide ('*dolose voluntarieque*'), for which the penalty was death and confiscation of assets; homicide with 'blame but no malice' ('*non dolo sed culpa*'), for which the penalty was a discretionary fine; and accidental killing that could not be foreseen, for which there was no penalty.

By contrast, statutes also added aggravated penalties for heinous killings: assassination (hired killing) in particular, where dragging and hanging was specified, even for assassinations that failed (Rome), or pincering of the flesh with 'hot irons' and then hanging (Lucca), or dragging and hanging, with the culprit's sons to be banished (Florence). Counterhierarchical homicides also attracted this sort of increment. Penalties for patricide, for example: for a son killing his father at Fabriano, the statutory penalty was dragging at a horse's tail, beheading, and confiscation of assets. At Lucca, for sons or grandsons killing their fathers, mothers or grandparents, it was hanging: 'and his body is not to be let down from the gallows but is to lack burial forever'. Similar torments were appointed for servants who killed masters and their families: in a decree of 1393, the duke of Milan ordered that such murderers should be transported in a cart through the city, pincered, then placed on a wooden wheel and left to die.

Jacobus Novellus's treatise reflects the end point of an evolution during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: first, changing the penalty, from pecuniary to capital; second, removing the

role of the victim's kin from any sort of composition of the crime; and third, drawing on subjectivist ideas of Roman Law to distinguish among killings on the basis of the actor's intention and state of mind. Learned lawyers, who both taught in the law schools and provided legal opinions to prosecutors and defendants, counselled consistently on the importance of distinguishing between malice (*dolus*) and responsibility or blame (*culpa*), and of taking account of the criminal's state of mind. In doing so, they followed the influential teaching of Albertus Gandinus, in the early fourteenth century, that the death penalty required evidence of *dolus*, which was absent from some forms of killing."

How do these legal distinctions play out in the evidence of practice and non-legal representation? What did murder mean in terms of event and image? Something of the perceived rightfulness of killing can be seen in accounts of tyrannicide, as presented here by Dall'Aglia, or in discussions and narratives involving professional killing, by executioners (Guerra) and soldiers (Bowd); and the distinction between planned and spontaneous homicide is nowhere more visible than in the contrast between poisoning (Pastore) and a stabbing after a sudden, angry confrontation (Cohen). These distinctions were sometime not matched by differential penalties in the law courts (Blanshei). The perceived legitimacy of killing — although still heavily regulated to remove or contain its stigma — extended to the slaughter of animals for human consumption (Dickerson). *Dolus* or malice was undoubtedly present in murders disguised as suicides (Lowe) — rather an intensified and twisted form of malice as the murderer tried to shift the responsibility for the killing away from himself and onto the victim. But law's focus on the murderous event and the state of mind of the killer ignores other significant dimensions to homicide that other studies in the volume explore and analyse: the differentiation by gender and class (Brest) or by location (Dean). Meanwhile, images and stories of murder had cultural power that had both positive and negative force: an image of murder could acquire an extended, figurative meaning, related to site specificity (Nethersole on Cain and Abel), tales of domestic murders could resonate

with patriarchal anxieties (Salzberg and Rospocher), a real child killing could turn into a cannibalistic fable (Leydi), and Jewish blood libels both reflected and inflamed an undertow of antisemitism in Renaissance society (Esposito).

What can one take from this? Murder was normal in Renaissance Italy. The potential for murder was ever present and ever imminent. It took place everywhere, in every type of situation. Motives could be simple or complex. Anyone could be murdered, from the pope to an unborn baby. And anyone could murder, from a young wife to a hired assassin. The most strenuous efforts on the part of rulers or governments could only hope to reduce murder, not to eliminate it. Catholic teaching forbade it, but murderers chose to ignore moral rules. Gruesome public punishments were not a sufficient deterrent. Those not directly involved in or affected by the murder were still interested in it because of its transgressive aspects. Murder narratives can be found in all media and material forms. Murder in Renaissance Italy may have appeared to be one act because its outcome for the victim was always the same — death — but as these essays have shown, murder is an infinitely variable act, where nothing apart from a corpse can be taken for granted. <>

[Proust's Duchess: How Three Celebrated Women Captured the Imagination of Fin-De-Siècle Paris](#) by Caroline Weber [Knopf, 9780307961785]

From the author of the acclaimed [Queen of Fashion](#)--a brilliant look at the glittering world of turn-of-the-century Paris through the first in-depth study of the three women Proust used to create his supreme fictional character, the Duchesse de Guermantes. Geneviève Halévy Bizet Straus; Laure de Sade, Comtesse de Adhéaume de Cheigné; and Élisabeth de Riquet de Caraman-Chimay, the Comtesse Greffulhe--these were the three superstars of fin-de-siècle Parisian high society who, as Caroline Weber says, "transformed themselves, and were transformed by those around them, into living legends: paragons of elegance, nobility, and style." All well but unhappily married, these women sought freedom and fulfillment by

reinventing themselves, between the 1870s and 1890s, as icons. At their fabled salons, they inspired the creativity of several generations of writers, visual artists, composers, designers, and journalists. Against a rich historical backdrop, Weber takes the reader into these women's daily lives of masked balls, hunts, dinners, court visits, nights at the opera or theater. But we see as well the loneliness, rigid social rules, and loveless, arranged marriages that constricted these women's lives. Proust, as a twenty-year-old law student in 1892, would worship them from afar, and later meet them and create his celebrated composite character for *The Remembrance of Things Past*.

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## Like a Swan

Marcel Proust was never a morning person. But for a short while in the spring of 1892, he got out of bed early.

The routine was always the same. After quickly dressing he set out from his family's apartment near the place de la Madeleine—in one of the luxury residential buildings that had sprouted up along the Parisian boulevards a few decades prior—and headed west into the Faubourg Saint-Honoré, the most prestigious neighborhood on the Right Bank.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, this was the province of the flâneur, but Proust, then a twenty-year-old law student, was no dandy out for an idle stroll around town. He strode with purpose, in search of elegance, and while he didn't know her yet (for elegance was a woman), he did know where she lived. It was there that he hurried each morning, at some risk to his delicate health. As he would confess to her a quarter of a century later, "I used to have a heart attack every time I saw you."

To make this perilous trip, he took a path he had christened "my route of hope." It began with a sharp right out of the Prousts' apartment building, a seven-story limestone wedge that cleaved the surging traffic of the boulevard Malesherbes like a ship's prow slicing through choppy waters. This turn brought him straightaway into the funereal hush of the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque, a short side street that led past a row of single-family mansions, or hôtels particuliers, as big as ocean liners and still as tombs. Approaching the Ministry of the Interior,

Proust veered left down the block-long rue des Saussaies and into the place Beauvau, where he paused just long enough to take in the titles on display in the windows of the Émile Paul bookstore. Then he made another right turn into quiet. Five more minutes of brisk walking led him to his destination: a narrow, four-story residential building at 34, rue de Miromesnil.

With its cheap stucco façade and its sooty dormered roof, this structure had nothing visibly special about it. Built a century earlier, it lacked the modern amenities Proust and his family enjoyed at home: an elevator, efficient ventilation, bathrooms with running water. But to him, the shabby sliver of a building was the Promised Land, holy because inhabited by the goddess whose exit he now, stationed on the sidewalk across from the front door, anxiously awaited.

Most mornings, he didn't have to linger for long before she stepped outside. A petite blond countess in her early thirties, she would give no indication that she had spotted the dark-eyed, dark-haired youth gawking at her from across the street, though the rue de Miromesnil being neither busy nor wide, he would have been hard to miss. As she made her habitual left turn toward the place Beauvau, Proust afforded her a brief head start before taking off at a trot behind her. Luckily for him, she tended on these jaunts to eschew the company of a liveried footman—an indispensable chaperone for most women of her class and a deterrent to precisely the sort of behavior in which Proust was engaging.

Dogging his lady's brisk, athletic steps around the quarter (she had a trim figure and liked to keep it that way), he loitered outside the imposing hôtels where she stopped to leave her calling cards, outside the boutiques where she did her shopping, and outside a ducal palace off the place de la Concorde where she paid two visits a day, the first and last stops on her busy social round. He jogged up and down her favorite promenade, the Champs-Élysées, in her wake, dodging carriages and pedestrians so as not to lose the trail. From a discreet distance, he strained for glimpses of her aquiline profile and her "bright, blue eyes, the

color of the sky of France"—also the color of the cornflowers on her hat. Committing every last detail of her face and dress to memory, he marveled at the alchemy whereby she "turned a simple morning walk ... into a whole poem of elegance, the finest adornment, the rarest flower under the sun."

Quite obviously, a creature this transfixing couldn't be just anyone, and indeed she was not. The object of Proust's obsession was a celebrity mondaine (society woman):\* a friend to royals, a muse to artists, a cynosure of the nobility, the darling of the social columns, a fantasy to strangers, and the quintessence, he wrote, of the singular "elevating glory" otherwise found solely in "white peacocks, black swans, ... queens in captivity." But these qualities also made her maddeningly inaccessible to her young admirer, for while he and his mondaine lived in the same part of town, their social milieux—hers the haute noblesse, his the haute bourgeoisie—lay worlds apart.

Still, Proust nurtured the hope that one day she would take him under her wing and bear him aloft to a realm of pure, ineffable glamour. And so he trailed along behind her each morning, a stray puppy imprinting on a swan.

As the biographer George Painter points out, this was "an absurd form [of] wooing"—a conclusion Proust himself would reach only in middle age, when he waxed rueful about his boyish efforts "to catch a bird of paradise beneath the trees of the avenue Gabriel." But at the time, the futility of the hunt was a lesson he would have to learn the hard way. One spring morning, several weeks into his stalking campaign, the countess stunned him by whirling about to face him and issuing a sharp rebuke: *Feetjahm is waiting for me!*"

The first words she had ever addressed to Proust, they demoralized him for two reasons. Comte Robert de Fitz-James was everything Proust was not: a dashing former naval officer and Bourbon courtier whose family and friends filled the pages of the *Almanach de Gotha*, a social register for royalty and the high nobility. (The head of the comte's family, the Duke of Alba, Berwick, and Fitz-James, was said to be the most titled man in Europe, more heraldically laden than even the

queen of England.) An accomplished horseman and shot, Fitz-James, whose surname only bluebloods knew to pronounce "Feetjahm," was a pillar of Paris's sportiest, most selective men's club, the Jockey, famously closed to commoners and Jews. As rivals for his damsel's favor went, the young man could not have conceived of a more daunting opponent than Comte Robert de Feetjahm.

Even more discouragingly, the voice of Proust's divinity did not fit with the sublime image he had formed of her. When she finally spoke to him, he should have heard the music of the spheres. Instead, he heard the squawk of a hoarse, cantankerous parrot. So much for his *rara avis*. "Perhaps the most real thing about her beauty lay in my desire," he reflected in an essay he wrote the following year. "She has lived her life, but I alone, perhaps, have dreamed her."

This conclusion was only partially correct. Yes, Proust had dreamed his rare bird into being. But by the time he came along, countless others had dreamed her too, reimagining her as a poem and a queen, an exquisite flower and a mythic swan. More than he knew, perhaps, their dreams suffused and shaped his own.

So did the dreams of the lady herself. She had lived her life, but in two registers, fact and fiction, and like those countless others who had dreamed her too, she strongly favored fiction. Not just in their dreams but in her own, she had seen herself reborn as a poem and a queen, an exquisite flower and a mythic swan. Not just in their eyes but in her own, she had become, in fact, a fiction. And she had undergone this change long before she ever crossed paths with a nobody named Marcel Proust.

This is a book about real people turning into fictions, in the context of a class—the French aristocracy—which at the end of the nineteenth century was dying as a political force while resurrecting itself as a myth. Central to that symbolic revival were three doyennes of Parisian high society who transformed themselves, and were transformed by those around them, into living legends: paragons of nobility, elegance, and style. Their names were Geneviève Halévy Bizet Straus (1849-1926); Laure de Sade, Comtesse Adhéaume

de Cheigné (1859-1936); and Elisabeth de Riquet de Caraman-Chimay, Vicomtesse (later Comtesse) Greffulhe (1860-1952).

Proust's *Duchess* is a triple biography of these women. It traces the interweaving paths they took in their rise to social stardom and studies the inventive strategies they used to get there. It relates their conquest of a world where projecting an image was the precondition, and the price, of belonging. It considers what was lost and what won, what was hidden and what laid bare, when selves became characters and lives became stories. It recounts their most dazzling triumphs; it unveils their darkest secrets. It follows them into the heady glare of mass adulation and finds them again in the dim precincts of loneliness. It presents them as they wanted the world to see them and as they were when they thought no one was looking.

Hemmed in by unhappy marriages and restrictive gender norms, the three protagonists of this book sought a measure of freedom and fulfillment by recasting themselves as icons. They reinvented themselves as archetypes of a storied Parisian fiefdom made up of visiting crowned heads and local aristocrats and known variously as the "monde" (short for *le grand monde*, "the great world"), the "gratin" (or "crust") and the Faubourg (short for *le noble Faubourg*).

This society was an anachronism, founded on traditions of hereditary privilege and courtly elegance left over from the defunct *ancien régime*. These traditions ran counter to the egalitarian principles in the name of which leaders of the French Revolution (1789-1799) had toppled the monarchy and eradicated the nobility a century earlier, and which the government of the Third Republic (1870-1940) continued to promulgate at those institutions' expense.

Paradoxically, however, the social and cultural authority of the Faubourg remained absolute throughout the *fin de siècle*; democratic though France had become, noble rank endured as the ultimate status symbol. None other than the Third Republic's first president, bourgeois statesman Adolphe Thiers, made a candid admission to this effect. In 1871, when the highest-ranked nobleman

in France, the Duc d'Uzès, congratulated him on his election to the presidency, Thiers blurted out, "Oh, but Mme Thiers would much rather be a duchess!"

The president's wife was far from alone in her craving for noble glamour. As novelist Jules Renard wrote in 1898, Since the Revolution, our republic hasn't made a single step toward [equality] or liberty. It's a republic where all people care about is being invited to [Mme] Greffulhe's.

Described by still another commentator as "the triumph of the duchesses," this contradictory state of affairs persisted for as long as mondain society did, only to collapse along with it in the chaos of the First World War.

As the goddesses of this valhalla, Mmes de Chevigné, Greffulhe, and Straus held inexhaustible fascination for their compatriots both inside and outside their privileged sphere. However, none of the three was a duchess, and one, Mme Straus, was not titled at all. This fact highlighted the singularity and the novelty of their achievement. In the monde, the intrinsic superiority of duchesses to countesses (let alone commoners) had traditionally been beyond question. If these three women come to eclipse the duchesses in their milieu, it was not by refuting the time-tested values of hierarchy and rank but by reworking those values in forward-thinking ways. At a moment in history when, with the rise of mass media, popular opinion was emerging in France as a force of unprecedented and unreckoned power, these women infused the snob appeal of class-based privilege with a thoroughly modern knack for publicity and self-promotion.

Bridging history and modernity, Mmes Greffulhe, Straus, and de Chevigné played to two different audiences at once: the gratin on the one hand, and the general public on the other. To establish and maintain their stature within the noblesse, they adopted its time-honored creed of elegance and exclusivity, perfected its flair for luxurious patrician style, and surrounded themselves with friends to the grandest manner born. At the same time, to appeal to a broader public, they cultivated influential reporters, editors, painters, sculptors, composers, novelists, playwrights, poets, fashion designers, and photographers. Harbingers of a world where

celebrity alone suffices to confer social importance and ordain cultural worth, they offered themselves up as "fodder for sonnets and flesh for novels," in the words of one of the many writers who used them in this way.

By the same token, Mmes Straus, de Chevigné, and Greffulhe did not rely solely on others to craft their public images. With the poses they struck and the tales they spun, they played an active, even capital role in shaping their unforgettable personae. In so doing, they engaged in a complex negotiation between creativity and social cachet. Over and above its aesthetic value, the work of the imagination functioned for all three women variously as an escape hatch and a self-marketing gambit, a coping mechanism and a seduction technique, a revision of history and an affirmation of self. It lured them all by turns as a flight from reality, an antidote to loss, a substitute for love. Artistic endeavor, narrowly and broadly defined, allowed them to enact a fantasy of noble distinction, even as the political order that had historically upheld that distinction crumbled around them.

Charting this trio's ascent to the pinnacle of a soon-to-be-extinct society, this book tells the true prehistory of a semi-true story that Proust would go on to recount in his seven-volume, loosely autobiographical novel, *In Search of Lost Time* (1913-1927): the decline and fall of an aristocratic ideal.

### Before a swan dies, it sings.

Marcel proust knew a thing or two about people turning into fictions. In the opening paragraph of the *Search*, the first-person narrator, later identified as Marcel, remembers reading in bed as a child. As he drifted off to sleep, the adult Marcel recalls of his younger self, "It seemed to me that I myself had become the subject of the book I was reading." This immersion in fantasy saturates the novel, which chronicles the narrator's gradual development into a writer.

The hero of the *Search* grows up in a family that views the world in terms of literature and art. In one of his defining childhood memories, his mother reads to him aloud from George Sand's *The*

Country Waif (François le champi, 1848). Although she skips over the more suggestive passages in Sand's novel—a love story between the titular waif and the older woman who raised him—the quasi-incestuous passion at its core echoes the intensely close bond between her and Marcel.

Between the narrator's mother and maternal grandmother, the written word is just as important; the two women share a tender private language rooted in the mother-daughter correspondence of Mme de Sévigné (1626-1696), a chronicler of Louis XIV's rule. Sardonic lines from another memoirist of that king's long reign, the Duc de Saint-Simon (1675-1755), pepper the badinage between Marcel's grandfather and a character called Charles Swann, an old family friend. When the former suspects that a schoolmate of his grandson's might be Jewish, he quotes slyly from Fromental Halévy's *La Juive* (The Jewess, 1835). The narrator himself recollects an aria from this same opera, "Rachel, when of the Lord," years later, when the madam of a brothel offers him an "exotic" Jewish moll by that name.

For Marcel, the tragedies of playwright Jean Racine (1639-1699) serve as a constant point of reference, whether he is bewailing the fussy outfit his parents make him wear to have his picture taken or noting the prurient interest two closeted gay noblemen take in a bevy of young foreign diplomats at a party. Paintings furnish another rich trove of analogies. Stunned to learn that a venerable marquise has heard of his father—a bourgeois civil servant with no apparent connection to her social set—Marcel likens her to the supersized king of the gods in Gustave Moreau's *Jupiter and Semele* (1895) and envisions his father as one of the antlike figures clustered at the base of Jupiter's throne. A baron in white tie suggests "a 'Harmony in Black and White' by 'Whistler.'" At a beach resort in Normandy, seagulls dotting a pastel sky resemble "the water lilies in a ... canvas by Monet."

Conditioned to see life through the lens of art, the protagonist of the Search conceives of love, too, as above all an exercise of the imagination. The earliest object of his affection is his family's

neighbor, Oriane de Guermantes, Duchesse de Guermantes, a grande dame who is closer in age to his mother than to him and whom he has never met. The narrator's infatuation originates with his rapturous study of images of Mme de Guermantes's ancestors, scions of France's oldest and greatest noble dynasty. As a child, he moons over magic-lantern slides depicting the legend of Geneviève de Brabant, a medieval chatelaine from whom the duchesse claims descent, and he admires the likenesses of other feudal-age Guermantes in the stained-glass windows and tapestries of his family's local church.

Based on these representations, Marcel comes to think of the duchesse as an emblem of France's romantic, chivalric, quintessentially noble past. "When I thought of Mme de Guermantes," he explains, "I was picturing her to myself in the colors of a tapestry or a stained-glass window, as a being from another century, made of different stuff from ordinary people." Even the "name of Guermantes" conjures up "fairy-tales, Geneviève de Brabant, ... a tapestry depicting King Charles VIII," or as scholar Dominique Jullien has noted, "the mythic bird Garamantes," a creature in medieval bestiaries.

As he enters adulthood, the narrator's interest in the duchesse shifts from the Middle Ages to modern times but preserves its basis in fantasy. Having learned from her friend Swann that Mme de Guermantes is "one of the noblest creatures in Paris, the cream of the choicest, most refined society," Marcel now regards her as the gatekeeper and queen of an enchanted kingdom from which his own low birth, he fears, will forever bar him: a realm where history and myth live on, overlain with a gloss of contemporary chic. From the society pages he gleans details of her sensational appearance at a costume ball hosted by the Princesse de Léon (a real-life maven of the fin-de-siècle gratin). At the Opéra, gazing from afar at the duchesse and one of her cousins, the Princesse de Guermantes, the narrator compares "these two poetic creatures" to goddesses from classical myth: "beautiful and ethereal Diana" and "Minerva [with] her glittering fringed shield." The duchesse's understated yet stylish garb looks to him

like "a bird's plumage: not just a beautiful ornament, but an actual extension of her body."

For a few months, he even stalks Mme de Guermantes on her daily promenades around the Right Bank. On these outings, Marcel fuels his own excitement by imagining he is on the trail of "a mythological god that has been turned into a laurel or a swan." One day, however, he spots the duchesse anxiously tugging at her veil and coat, fussing over her appearance "as if she were a woman like any other." Unnerved by the ordinarieness of this vignette, he ironically reworks his mythological conceit, likening her to "a divine swan that evinces the behavior of its animal species ... by suddenly pecking at a button or an umbrella as a swan would, not remembering that it was a god."

The narrator's alarm at Mme de Guermantes's lapse in divinity betrays his reflexive habit of overwriting fact with fiction. To him, the unvarnished truth never looks as good as the embellished alternative; reality always lets him down. In the case of the duchesse, all it takes is one dinner party at her house for Marcel to determine that his dream girl is actually a nightmare. Egotistical, cold, pretentious, and shallow, she cares only for trivialities that enhance her fabulous image: paintings and books acquired not for their own sake but as tokens of her self-proclaimed intellectualism; similarly decorative "friendships" with famous artists, about whose work she proves alternately dismissive and ignorant, despite her pompous avowals that "for her, talent is all that matters"; family ties proudly invoked yet devoid of genuine affection; "benevolence" toward her servants, whom she covertly mistreats. Even her wit, which her fellow mondains uniformly praise, "turn[s] out to consist mostly of fat jokes, put-downs, and flat-footed, sophomoric puns." Her titled friends prove disappointing as well—superficial like their hostess but lacking even her thin veneer of culture and charm.

Studying the duchesse and her peers up close, the narrator realizes that in their milieu, "through a topsy-turvy inversion left over from the etiquette of the royal court, ... it is the surface that [has] become

essential and profound." Although he continues to frequent the Guermantes crowd for years to come—having been miraculously (and improbably) welcomed into their midst, he is not about to forfeit the privilege—Marcel ceases to venerate them as "an assembly of gods" on earth.

This disenchantment is of a piece with the many other disillusionments that attend his four-thousand-page search for meaning. While "the Guermantes way" falls far short of his expectations, so does everything else in which the narrator serially seeks his purpose: family, friendship, love, sex, cathedrals, recitals, sleuthing, sloth, tourism, journalism, Impressionism, voyeurism, young girls in flower, young men in uniform, and on and on. Only in the Search's final volume, *Time Regained* (*Le Temps retrouvé*, 1927), does Marcel resolve his conundrum in a eureka moment that, tellingly, echoes his boyhood dream of merging into his bedtime stories.

The scene unfolds at a party at the Paris mansion of the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes, shortly after the end of World War I. Now middle-aged and ailing, the narrator has just returned from a sanatorium outside the city, where he spent the final years of the war. Arriving at the fête, he discovers that during his absence, the grandees of his youth have aged almost beyond recognition. So drastically have they deteriorated that for a moment he wonders if he has overlooked a morbid dress code for the event: Come as your own death mask. This *bal de têtes* (death-masks' ball), as he wryly dubs it, again gives the lie to his former reverence for the gratin's "beautiful people," beautiful no longer. Even Mme de Guermantes has lost her looks, and then some, as she has mutated from a swan goddess into "an old sacred fish," submerged in the primordial goop of lost and wasted time. (*Temps perdu* carries both meanings in French.) Old age has wrought havoc on her appearance, even as war has swept away her world of frivolity and privilege, rendering her obsolete.

After a brief, banal exchange with the duchesse, Marcel withdraws into his hosts' library, where, her peculiarly gruff, raspy voice still ringing in his ears

"like the trumpets of the Last Judgment," he has his epiphany at last: "The only life worth living" is one that is "illuminated and ... realized in a book." Spotting *The Country Waif* on a bookshelf, he suddenly realizes that all the time he feared he had lost or wasted in the past can be redeemed if he transposes it—fleeting pleasures, false hopes, and everything in between—into literature. By mining his experiences for artistic truth, he can infuse them with the significance they seemed to lack the first time around. This resolution knits art and life together in a tight Gordian knot, positioning the book the reader of the Search holds in her hands as the book the narrator of the Search is just gearing up to write as he concludes his tale. The end. And the beginning.

Proust further blurred the boundaries between writing and reality by peopling his narrative, set among the pampered classes of turn-of-the-century Paris, with characters markedly similar to well-known individuals from that time and place (which happened to be his own time and place). While the resemblances between Proust's characters and his acquaintances were often glaringly obvious, he insisted his magnum opus was not a roman à clef—a novel that cloaks recognizable contemporary personalities in nominally fictive disguises. To Céleste Albaret, the housekeeper who ministered to him while he was working on the Search, he groused about a friend who "asked me for the 'keys' to my book.... It is impossible for me to give them to him. Not that I am afraid and want to hide them. But there are too many keys for each character."

At the same time, Proust courted speculation that he was writing from life by endowing his narrator, Marcel, with many of his own identifying traits: his haut-bourgeois family; his functionary father (Dr. Adrien Proust was a respected epidemiologist and public health official); his overweening attachment to his mother, an ardent reader of Racine, Sévigné, and Sand; his own dreamy, bookish disposition; his chronic health problems; his disinclination to work for a living; his unluckiness in love; and his keen interest in high society. (Proust did exempt his narrator from two of his own supposed flaws: his Jewishness on his mother's side and his sexual

attraction to men. He also made his alter ego an only child, thereby doing away with the existence of his younger brother, Robert.) Proust claimed these points of convergence between his hero and himself were merely effects of his own laziness: "I have spared myself the trouble of inventing my hero [by] giv[ing] him traits that really are mine." Laziness being yet another trait he shared with the fictional Marcel.

To portray the titans of tout-Paris, Proust borrowed liberally from beings of flesh and blood. The character of Charles Swann, an urbane swell embraced by the monde despite his middle-class, German-Jewish heritage, Proust modeled on a well-liked gadabout called Charles Haas (1833-1902). Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac (1855-1921) unwittingly imparted his high birth, his homosexuality, his erudition, his mean streak, his Whistler-worthy evening dress, and his spectacularly belligerent haughtiness to Marcel's would-be mentor, the Baron de Charlus. Henry, Comte Greffulhe (1848-1932), a cousin of Montesquiou's by marriage, furnished the template for Charlus's rich, smug, and callous brother, Basin, Duc de Guermantes, whose compulsive philandering makes his wife, Oriane, "the most cheated-on, if the most beautiful, woman in Paris," and whose blustering rages earn him a nickname that also belonged to the tantrum-prone Greffulhe: "Thundering Jove" (Jupiter Tonnant).

With the Duchesse de Guermantes, finally, Proust created a composite based on the three grandes dames who together constituted his dream of patrician elegance and grace. He confirmed this triple connection in letters to and about all three women and in many other well-documented exchanges. His friend Fernand Gregh put it the most succinctly: "The Duchesse de Guermantes was Mme Straus combined with Mme de Cheigné, ... and with a bit of Mme Greffulhe as well."

So famous were these women in their time that even strangers readily pegged them as the models for Mme de Guermantes. Idolized both by their fellow patricians and by the general public, they inspired much the same blend of awe, fascination, and inchoate longing that twenty-first-century

American society accords to media personalities, sports stars, and billionaires. Elisabeth Greffulhe received so much fan mail throughout her life that her archives contain a large file marked "Homages and Appreciations from People I Don't Know." (Folders within this file bear such tantalizing labels as "Verses from a Lovelorn Stranger" and "Anonymous Adorations—1888.") Neither Geneviève Straus nor Laure de Cheigné was this scrupulous about preserving personal records, but both women elicited their share of adoration, anonymous and otherwise. They, too, captured the imagination of an era.

It is one of the paradoxes of history that three individuals who enjoyed such outsized celebrity in their lifetimes should today be seat in her box at the opera or function at her dinner parties as a "toothpick": a person brought in after the meal for the amusement of the more important invitees. She never really warmed to him, though; in old age, she remembered Proust to her grandchildren as "a displeasing little man who was forever skulking about in doorways." When asked about him by an American author, Mme Greffulhe said, "I didn't like him.... He was tiresome."

Unsurprisingly, given this history, Proust's perspective on these women retained throughout his lifetime the quality of fan-boy worship that had defined it from the start. The air of unreality that envelops the duchesse in his novel also characterized the three mondaines who obsessed him in real life. For decades before he set to work on the *Search*, celestial and avian metaphors foreshadowing the narrator's praise for Mme de Guermantes abounded in Proust's (mostly nonfictional) writing about this society troika. Mme Straus is an "angel [who] drives mortals to distraction." Mme de Cheigné "belongs to a special breed, a cross between a goddess and a bird. She is ... a peacock with wings of snow, a sparrow with jewels for eyes." Mme Greffulhe is "a 'great golden bird'\* about to take flight"; her radiance is "like a blessing from on high, like the mysterious and transparent sweetness of the stars." (These last lines are drawn from an unpublished essay Proust wrote about Mme Greffulhe's salon in 1902; long believed to be lost, it is reproduced in

translation at the end of this volume.)\* Like their variants in the *Search*, these figures of speech describe otherworldly creatures, enshrined in a paradise the earthbound Proust can never hope to enter.

Further presaging the narrator's attitude toward Mme de Guermantes, Proust's idealizing vision of his ladies changed over time into something darker, if no less fantastical and no more human. In the manuscript of *Jean Santeuil*, a disjointed autobiographical novel Proust began writing in 1896 and jettisoned a few years later, he wrote scathingly, "Mme S. has never been to the Louvre, because she doesn't like painting. But because she is rich, she collects drawings by Watteau and the early work of Gustave Moreau." Unabashedly shallow, she values these works only insofar as they advertise her elegant taste. Elsewhere in *Jean Santeuil*, Proust lampoons Mme Straus as "Mme Marmet," a phony middle-class striver whose very name—French for "marmot"—marks her as a nasty critter scrabbling her way up the social food chain.

While he refrained from comparing Mme Greffulhe to a rodent, Proust turned on her with just as much vitriol. In 1907, he scoffed that her much-touted "passion for interesting things" (namely literature and art) was "disagreeable for those interesting things" because it was an act, "enhancing not the woman herself, only her reputation." "Like rouge," he noted, her cultural pretensions allowed her to "look good from across the room," but they would never qualify her to be "a real friend to a man of genius."

By and by, Comtesse Adhéaume de Cheigné, too, lost her luster in Proust's imagination. Although this process began when she first snapped at him about Fitz-James, she continued to disappoint him in the years that followed, as Proust got to know her better and her limitations came more sharply into focus. One of the most vicious letters he ever wrote he addressed to her toward the end of his life; it began: "When what one used to love turns out to be very, very stupid ... "

At around the same time, he griped to Céleste Albaret that whereas the comtesse used to be so beautiful, ... now she is just an old woman with a

hooked nose and a cracked voice." To another confidant, he disparaged her as "a tough old bird I mistook, long ago, for a bird of paradise." Admitting that he had used Mme de Cheigné as a template for Mme de Guermantes, he added, "By making her into a fearsome vulture, at least I have kept others from mistaking her for a mean old hen."

In relation to Proust's "divine swan" encomia, these epithets conform to a pattern the French critic Roland Barthes has identified as the key structuring principle of the *Search* as a whole: "the inversion of essences." Marcel is forever learning to his surprise that people are not as they appear: time after time, he finds that a known self (x) conceals an unknown, opposite self (not x). "Inversion" also being Proust's preferred term for homosexuality, his narrator's discoveries more often than not expose the sexual double lives of gay characters who have been passing as straight. Schoolgirl or widower, diplomat or demimondaine, decorated war hero or ultra-Catholic prince—no matter how seemingly incompatible with "inversion," heterosexual identity (x) invariably turns out to mask homosexual identity (not x).

But the dynamic of inversion operates outside the bedroom as well—in particular when it comes to Mme de Guermantes, one of the few major characters in the *Search* who does not harbor hidden gay proclivities (or any other sexual secrets, for that matter).<sup>\*</sup> With the duchesse what gets inverted is an abstract, aesthetic ideal, bound up with a fantasy about aristocratic glamour, exclusivity, and "class." By the end of the book, the woman whom Marcel once glorified as a bird goddess, a being doubly born for the empyrean, degenerates into a hideous creature from the deep. Her fellow grandees meet with an analogous fate, devolving from an assembly of the gods into the night of the living dead.

For all Proust's objections that he and his narrator were not the same person, one point where the two Marceles absolutely coincide is in the belief that the society belle, the personification of a noble élite, can only be a goddess or a monster. She is either too sacred or too debased to occupy the dull middle ground where regular folks spend their

lives, muddling through with the usual messy assortment of good and not so good attributes. In both her idealized and her devalued forms, Mme de Guermantes's dearth of humanity makes her a convenient screen for Marcel's own projections—about the romance of France's feudal history and hereditary gentry; about modern Parisian society and his place in it; about a hazy wonderland where dreams really do come true.

In Marcel's last conversation with the duchesse in *Time Regained*, she remarks in passing, "People think they know me, but they don't." I like to read this comment as a subtle acknowledgment by Proust of both his and his narrator's incapacity to view their exemplary mondaines in three dimensions. For better or worse, these women are always ciphers, never people.

It is my hope that Proust's Duchess will amend this characterization, a reductive fiction that has for too long been taken as fact. Without question, Mmes de Cheigné, Straus, and Greffulhe did, like their fictional counterpart, embrace a worldview that held the surface to be essential and profound. Yet as I discovered from six years' worth of exhaustive archival research, their commitment to surface elegance belied tremendous human complexity. So rich and engaging did I find their stories to be, in fact, that I have not been able to recount them in their totality here. Though all three women lived well into the twentieth century, enjoying colorful, high-profile careers to the last, I have chosen to focus in this book on a relatively short span of time between the late 1870s and the early 1890s. For all the noteworthy directions their lives went on to take, starting with the eruption of the Dreyfus affair as a national political scandal in the fall of 1897, it was during this earlier period that their biographical chronology turned out to be the densest, as it was then that they became the brightest stars in the

Parisian social firmament.

From the age of Louis XIV onward, the French aristocracy upheld a tradition that favored appearance and form (x) over authenticity and substance (not x). This cult of appearances remained a shibboleth in the fin-de-siècle

Faubourg, and while Mmes Straus, Greffulhe, and de Cheigné hewed to it in a broad sense, they modified its particulars in unorthodox and far-reaching ways. By taking an age-old, court-based model of elegant surfaces and fusing it with a burgeoning media culture, they presented themselves as new and improved avatars of nobility. They pioneered the by-now-familiar phenomenon of the individual as an image or a "brand" and of public adulation as the ultimate prize.

Crucial to this development was the remarkable creative output the three women fomented among their generation's major and minor talents. Only a few of these artists—Georges Bizet, Guy de Maupassant, Edgar Degas, Gustave Moreau—are still well-known today. But almost all of them were celebrities in their time, their stardom enhancing that of their muses (and vice versa). Like the women who inspired them, these artists were for the most part a good ten to twenty years older than Proust, and many enjoyed a reputation for genius that he himself would begin to attain only a few years before his death at fifty-one in 1922. These men's portrayals of his idols saturated the cultural climate in which Proust came of age, enriching the soil where his hothouse mondaine, "the rarest flower under the sun," would eventually take root.

All three of this book's heroines faced real-world challenges that no amount of glamour, fame, or fantasy could dispel. Their loved ones died prematurely, often without warning. They had difficult relatives and false friends. They ignored their children. Their husbands betrayed their trust. They worried about status and money and growing old. They battled insecurity and scandal; they grappled with mental illness and drug addiction. They had unrequited crushes and unhappy love affairs. They confronted issues of "inversion." Their hearts got broken; one of their noses did, too.

These women bet on the wrong horses not only in love but in other domains, from art to politics to actual horse racing (a pastime dear to Mmes Straus and de Cheigné, both avid gamblers). As an art collector, Mme Straus preferred Jules-Élie Delaunay to Edgar Degas and Alexandre

Falguière to Auguste Rodin. Similarly, Mmes de Cheigné and Greffulhe patronized fashionable society portraitists like Federico de Madrazo and Paul César Helleu, overlooking such superior talents as John Singer Sargent and Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Mme de Cheigné aligned herself with an exiled royal claimant who never took the throne and backed a royalist military coup that never took place. Mme Greffulhe harbored grandiose ambitions for her husband's political career, which fizzled after sorry, scandal-ridden beginnings. Mme Straus's salon drew visitors of every ideological stripe, including several virulent anti-Semites. But their bigotry only became a problem for her during the Dreyfus affair, when, seeing her take the side of the unjustly persecuted Jewish army captain Alfred Dreyfus, they abandoned and shunned her as a trouble-making Jew.

Alone of the trio, Mme Greffulhe dreamed of becoming a writer, a goal she pursued tirelessly, if secretly, throughout her life, composing hundreds of literary texts, most of them autobiographical. But she published only a handful of these works and none under her own name. As a result, Proust had no way of knowing that the woman he construed as a literary character habitually construed herself as a literary character. He never found out that among the numerous writings in which she gave herself a starring role, several were attempts at a roman à clef set in the contemporary gratin. The inversion would have delighted him, though: aristocrat (x) disguises artist (not x).

Had he really known them, Proust would have seen that like everyone, his three muses wore many different masks. He would have seen that like everyone, they were fathomless tangles of secrets and longings, sorrows and fears. Above all, he would have seen that if not like everyone, then at least very much like himself, they wanted reality to be other than it was and countered it with a dream of their own transcendence. And however hollow or misguided or doomed, it was that dream that drove them to soar and to sing, and to keep on soaring and singing even as their wings and their voices faltered, even as the darkness gathered, even as extinction loomed. For those with ears to

hear, their melody said: I die as a swan would, but remember that I was a god.

#### SWAN SONG

A crown, a swan, a kiss never given. And so much wasted time.

We all want to mean something in this world. We all want to matter.

Every life a solar system in miniature, a whorl of planets moons comets undetected by outside eyes; every self a star burning fiercely at its center. I am a sun, we say. The galaxies in their vastness cannot dwarf me, the gods in their mystery negate me. You, singular or plural—you will see me, and know my light. You will remember my name.

Strewing our minutes like pennies, we spend with kingly abandon. Out pockets empty, we plead hardship, pining for riches we never knew we had. We gather talismans: a crown, a swan, a kiss never given. We chase fairy favors, line our nests with fools' gold. If we can and as we can, we build sanctuaries in the void, bulwarks against forgetting.

Time wasted, replenish what we have squandered. Time lost, and by each sur mourned, redeem us. Let us live again.

[The Mirage Factory: Illusion, Imagination, and the Invention of Los Angeles](#) by Gary Krist [Crown, 9780451496386]

From bestselling author Gary Krist, the story of the metropolis that never should have been and the visionaries who dreamed it into reality

Little more than a century ago, the southern coast of California—bone-dry, harbor-less, isolated by deserts and mountain ranges—seemed destined to remain scrappy farmland. Then, as if overnight, one of the world's iconic cities emerged. At the heart of Los Angeles' meteoric rise were three flawed visionaries: William Mulholland, an immigrant ditch-digger turned self-taught engineer, designed the massive aqueduct that would make urban life here possible. D.W. Griffith, who transformed the motion picture from a vaudeville-house novelty into a cornerstone of American

culture, gave L.A. its signature industry. And Aimee Semple McPherson, a charismatic evangelist who founded a religion, cemented the city's identity as a center for spiritual exploration.

All were masters of their craft, but also illusionists, of a kind. The images they conjured up—of a blossoming city in the desert, of a factory of celluloid dreamworks, of a community of seekers finding personal salvation under the California sun—were like mirages liable to evaporate on closer inspection. All three would pay a steep price to realize these dreams, in a crescendo of hubris, scandal, and catastrophic failure of design that threatened to topple each of their personal empires. Yet when the dust settled, the mirage that was LA remained.

Spanning the years from 1900 to 1930, [The Mirage Factory](#) is the enthralling tale of an improbable city and the people who willed it into existence by pushing the limits of human engineering and imagination.

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Excerpt:

An Echo of Dynamite

LONE PINE, CALIFORNIA  
SEPTEMBER 15, 1976

The gatehouse blew shortly after one a.m.—a powerful blast that ricocheted off the wall of mountains to the west and resounded across the dark, lonely valley. Another sound followed a moment later. It was less violent but more ominous: the low, rolling, slowly deepening roar of rushing water.

Someone had bombed the Los Angeles Aqueduct. A case of stolen dynamite, fitted out with a blasting cap and a makeshift fuse, had exploded under the Alabama Gatehouse, located about 210 miles north of the city, near the remote town of Lone Pine in the Owens Valley. One of the building's five spillgates—thick metal doors designed to release excess water from the aqueduct after heavy storms—had been ripped apart, allowing two hundred cubic feet of water per second to pour uselessly down a spillway and out across the parched valley floor. By the time the aqueduct's flow could be shut off at another gate some twenty miles north of the breach, over one hundred million gallons would be wasted—in one of the driest corners of the country, in the middle of one of the worst droughts in years.

By the time Detective Jim Bilyeu of the Inyo County Sheriff's Department arrived on the scene, a small crowd of Lone Pine residents had gathered near the still-smoking gatehouse. Some were actually applauding the destruction, pounding each other on the back in celebration. Hostility toward the aqueduct—and toward the distant, insatiably thirsty city that had built it—was widespread across the sparsely populated Owens Valley in 1976, and many locals felt that the L.A. Department of Water and Power (LADWP) had been dealt a well-deserved blow. "If I ever find out who bombed the gates," one man allegedly remarked, "I'll buy him a steak dinner."

This resentment was not new. Ever since the city built the aqueduct in the early 1900s, tensions between Los Angeles and the Owens Valley had been high. Many in the valley felt that the city had stolen their water, acquiring property and water use rights under false pretenses and then greedily drawing off the flow of the Owens River, allowing L.A. to flourish while the local economy languished. This valley—despite being a "Land of Little Rain," as a local writer had famously called it—was at one time an aspiring agricultural region. In the decades around the turn of the century, plentiful water from the Owens River, which gathered the runoff of forty mountain streams in the nearby high Sierra Nevada and channeled it through the otherwise arid region, had sustained livestock and irrigated fields all up and down the hundred-mile-long valley. At its southern end, the river had even broadened out into a large, shallow lake, where local residents could go boating and migrating waterfowl could cavort among the swaying reeds.

Then in 1913, the aqueduct had come, and most of that water had been taken away to nurture the growth of far-off Los Angeles. The people of the Owens Valley had rebelled. Several times during the drought-stricken 1920s, they had responded with dynamite, bombing the aqueduct at various points along its 233-mile path. Relations between city and valley remained poisonous for years. Eventually, though, the parties came to a compromise, declaring an uneasy truce, and the bombings stopped.

Now, decades later, the LADWP was trying to wring yet more water from the valley. To meet the city's needs during this latest drought, they had begun intensive pumping of the valley's groundwater basin, threatening to destroy what was left of the region's vegetation and turning the lower Owens River into nothing more than a dry ditch, winding down the valley to a barren alkaline plain that had once been a lake. No wonder, then, that those people standing around the ruined gatehouse were applauding the bombers. As one valley resident later admitted, "We'd all thought about doing something like that—but they actually hauled off and did it. So we ... clinked beer bottles in their honor."

Not that this latter-day echo of the 1920s bombing campaign caused Los Angeles much harm. A series of reservoirs much closer to the city held enough water in reserve to ensure that Angelenos suffered no shortages or interruptions in their service. Within a few days of the sabotage, the shattered spillgate was already repaired and the aqueduct was flowing again. County and federal authorities lost no time in ferreting out the perpetrators: two young locals who, after a few beers, had decided that they were fed up with the city's water-grabbing and decided to do something about it. For the bombing of the Alabama Gatehouse, they were eventually indicted, tried, and sentenced to minor jail terms. After doing their time, they were allowed to fade into obscurity.

It was a pattern that had developed over many years: Los Angeles siphoning off resources, industry, and population from elsewhere to satisfy its insatiable desire for growth. The city's leaders had turned this process into something of an art form, getting what was needed to prosper by whatever means necessary. Water was only one of the city's requirements, and the stagnation of the Owens Valley only one of the consequences of this voracity.

The Owens Valley, meanwhile, just grew drier, and—as it had for decades—the great megalopolis to the south just grew bigger and thirstier.

### Implausible City

It struck me as an odd thing that here, alone of all the cities in America, there was no plausible answer to the question, "Why did a town spring up here and why has it grown so big?" —Morris Markey, journalist and California historian

#### LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 1900-1930

It was no sensible place to build a great city. This corner of southern California—often bone dry, lacking a natural harbor, and isolated from the rest of the country by expansive deserts and rugged mountain ranges—offered few of the inducements

to settlement and growth found near major cities in other places. The Spaniards, who first explored the region in 1542, declined to put down roots here for over two centuries; even then, in the 1700s, they sent mainly soldiers and Franciscan friars to establish missions and convert the local Indians to Christianity. When the Mexicans took over in 1821, they settled the area a little more heavily but still regarded it as a province, a hinterland, a backwater without the water.

Only after the Mexican War of 1846-48, when southern California became American, did anyone really start to postulate a grand metropolis in this desert, centered on a narrow, unreliable waterway known optimistically as the Los Angeles River. Only Americans, it seems, could dream of something so unlikely, so contrary to simple common sense. Of necessity, the place would have to be forced, like an amaryllis out of season. A certain amount of contrivance, or even trickery, would be required to bring resources, population, and industry to a place that lacked them all. But eventually the implausible became actual. By the end of the 1920s, the world city of Los Angeles, California, was a reality—an urban giant grown up in a place where no city should rightly be.

This book is the story of that extraordinary transformation. It begins in 1900, when Los Angeles was still a largely agricultural town of some 100,000 residents (and one that the National Irrigation Congress regarded as having "no future" as anything larger). The explosive growth that followed over the next three decades had nothing natural or inevitable about it. Each step in the city's evolution had to be conceived, engineered, and then sold to an often-skeptical public. And as with any evolutionary process, not all visions of the city's future survived this test. Some would die quickly and fruitlessly; others would prove unsustainable over the long term, pushed aside by the interests of richer and more powerful elements in the population. But a few would leave an outsize mark on the city, taking root and giving rise to a metropolis unlike any other in the world. The pivotal period from 1900 to 1930 would witness, most notably, the realization of one of the largest and most controversial public works projects in history,

second in magnitude only to the Panama Canal at the time; the invention of an entirely new form of entertainment—and of a new kind of industry to produce and sell it; and the flowering of a seductive urban ethos—arguably the birth of the whole idea of a "lifestyle"—based on utopian notions of leisure, physical wellness, and spiritual fulfillment. This combination of urban growth factors was unique, and it proved to be uniquely effective. By 1930, for better or worse, Los Angeles emerged as a major city of over 1.2 million people, and one with a distinctive identity: as an obscenely wasteful but alluring garden in the desert, as the focus of the entire world's movie dreams (and often its moral censure), and as the heliocentric mecca of spiritual seekers across the country. Every city can be regarded as an artificial construct, an audacious projection of human will, imagination, and vanity onto the natural landscape; but none was more artificial—or more audacious—than this one.

Single individuals do not build cities, but three L.A. icons—an engineer, an artist, and an evangelist—both embodied and, to a unique extent, drove the three major engines of the city's rise from provincial player to world-class star. William Mulholland (the engineer) was L.A.'s fabled water czar, whose wildly ambitious vision of a 233-mile aqueduct brought water to the desert and allowed the city to grow far beyond its natural capacity to support urban life. David Wark Griffith (the artist) was the seminal film director of the silent era, the man who almost single-handedly transformed the motion picture from a vaudeville-house novelty into a major creative (and fabulously lucrative) industry, important enough to help build a city. And Aimee Semple McPherson (the evangelist) was the charismatic faith healer and pioneering radio preacher who, courting both scandal and fanatical devotion, founded her own religion and cemented southern California's reputation as a national hub for seekers of unorthodox spirituality and self-realization.

In this marginal and unfinished corner of the country, each of these three innovators discovered a kind of tabula rasa, an environment offering enough physical and mental space to permit their

ideas to develop and ultimately flourish. Far from the entrenched attitudes and rigid power hierarchies of the hidebound East, each was free to create a distinctive vision of the city's future and do the hard creative work to give it concrete form.

The images they conjured up—of a blossoming city in the desert, of a thriving factory of celluloid dreamworks, of a community of seekers finding personal salvation under God's good sunshine—all had elements of the swindle about them, like mirages whose heady promises could evaporate on closer inspection. Each was tested by strong counter-currents of opposition, as scandals and accusations of corruption and malfeasance erupted continually to threaten their chances of realization. But the images proved resilient. More important, they succeeded in bringing the Los Angeles we know into being: people were enticed by the images; they came to live and work here; the city grew.

In the end, Mulholland, Griffith, and McPherson all paid a price for their ambitions. Each self-destructed in the late 1920s in spectacular fashion, finally succumbing to shifting tides of popular morality and technological change. All three found themselves humiliated and reviled as a fickle public turned against them. But while these individuals fell, the city they had worked to build barely registered their loss, entering the 1930s as the largest and fastest-growing U.S. city west of the Mississippi.

Few people could have imagined it all back at the turn of the century, when the dusty town of Los Angeles seemed destined to remain the thirty-sixth largest in the nation, behind places like Indianapolis, Toledo, and even Fall River, Massachusetts. What made the difference for L.A. was a combination of many different acts of imagination and engineering, supported by a great deal of sometimes deceptive advertising. But these efforts, large and small, gave the city what it needed to thrive: a source of water to sustain it, an industry to support its growth, and an ethos to bring it fame and notoriety. And in the process, this improbable place—the grand metropolis that never should have been—moved inexorably from

the margins to the center of American life and consciousness.

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**Q. In your last two books, the acclaimed bestsellers *City of Scoundrels* and *Empire of Sin*, you explored the cities Chicago and New Orleans as the foundations of their modern identities were being laid; in *THE MIRAGE FACTORY* you've turned your attention to Los Angeles. What drew you to the "City of Angels"?**

A. I've always been attracted to cities because they are, to my mind, the principal generators of creative energy and technological innovation in the world today. Cities bring people of all different backgrounds, races, religions, and ethnicities into close contact, and while that proximity often creates conflict (a LOT of what I write about is conflict), it also serves as a catalyst for new ways of thinking and solving problems. As for why I chose Los Angeles this time, I can only say that I was intrigued by the fact that it was an entirely unique phenomenon in history—a city that developed unlike any other. Chicago, the subject of my first city book, was the prototypical American metropolis, its growth spurred by those common factors—a strategic location for trade, proximity to natural resources, the capacity to support heavy industry, etc.—that shaped many of the other major cities in the country. New Orleans was exceptional in some ways, with its uniquely cosmopolitan Franco-Caribbean history and ethos, but it still followed this basic growth logic. Los Angeles, though, was an exception of a very different kind. There was no compelling reason for a large city to grow up where L.A. took root. It required real imagination and lots of out-of-the-box thinking to make that happen. And the city that resulted was just as extraordinary as the process that created it.

**Q. Is it a coincidence that all three cities "came of age" at the dawn of the twentieth century? What was happening at the time that allowed for the rapid evolution of these places into the metropolises we know today?**

A. The rise of industrialization in the second half of the nineteenth century really laid the groundwork for urban growth in the early twentieth century. The advent of heavy industry created factory jobs, which brought in successive waves of foreign immigrants, while the spread of the railroad network made even distant markets easily accessible, allowing production to be concentrated in strategically located urban centers. So it's not surprising that so many American cities had their adolescent growth spurts at around this time. What's unusual about Los Angeles is that its heavy-industry/foreign immigrant growth stage came later. Its initial growth spurts drew on domestic immigrants, largely from the Midwest, who came with a certain amount of money and a desire to live the lifestyle that the city boosters were promoting.

**Q. The narrative of *THE MIRAGE FACTORY* unfolds through an examination of three central characters. Can you tell us about these individuals and why you found them so representative of the story of Los Angeles's beginnings?**

A. I see the figures of William Mulholland, D. W. Griffith, and Aimee Semple McPherson as representatives—avatars, you might call them—of the three main factors allowing L.A. to develop in such an unlikely place. Mulholland made a major metropolis possible in this arid region by imagining and then building the aqueduct that brought water here from a distant part of the state. Even with enough water, though, L.A. still lacked the kind of major industries that fostered growth in other places. The discovery of oil reserves helped, but it took the creation of an entirely new industry—the movies, represented by the so-called Father of Film, D. W. Griffith—to give it its signature growth engine. And McPherson embodies the image of Los Angeles—as a place of healing and unorthodox spirituality under the endless sunshine—that was sold to would-be residents escaping less alluring parts of the country.

**Q. Los Angeles has gone through many changes, many times over. Would you say their presence can still be felt today? What would you say**

**remains from the Los Angeles you wrote about in THE MIRAGE FACTORY?**

A. Certainly Mulholland's presence survives, not only in names like Mulholland Drive and the Mulholland Dam, but in the city's voraciously needy relationship to water. Insofar as Hollywood still defines the image of L.A. for both residents and visitors, the influence of Griffith can still be felt here (but no, Griffith Park and Observatory are named for a different Griffith!). And McPherson lives on in the continuing relevance of her Angelus Temple in Echo Park, as well as in the phenomenal success of her Church of the Foursquare Gospel, which now numbers six million members worldwide. Physically, traces of the L.A. I write about can still be found in the older neighborhoods, like Downtown (which has been experiencing an intense revival in recent years), Silver Lake, Echo Park, Boyle Heights, and many parts of South Central. I always encourage visitors to get beyond the glitzy L.A. of West Hollywood and the beach towns, which to me are the least interesting parts of the city.

**Q. The lives of Mulholland, Griffith, and Sempé McPherson seem almost cautionary tales of what happens when one "flies too close to the sun." Would you agree? Are there lessons to be learned from the ways in which their lives would rise and fall?**

A. I don't want to sound like a life coach, but I do believe that if you're ever going to do anything worthwhile, you've got to risk failure. And the problem with risking failure is that sometimes you actually do fail! And that's what happened to all three of my principal characters. What's interesting, though, is that their life arcs each played out a little differently. Mulholland had an unrelenting rise over decades, followed by a sudden, devastating fall caused by the St. Francis Dam failure, which essentially destroyed his career overnight. D. W. Griffith had a more gradual decline; his time of industry dominance ended not with a bang but with a whimper of bad, out-of-touch films. And the collapse of Aimee Sempé McPherson's reputation proved to be temporary; to some extent, she rehabilitated herself in the public eye in the 1930s through her good works during the Depression and

during World War II, though there were many Angelenos who never took her seriously again after the alleged kidnapping debacle.

**Q. Is there another city that has captured your attention in the same way Chicago, New Orleans, and Los Angeles has?**

A. After spending so much time in California over the past several years, I've become very interested in San Francisco and how it evolved. Of course, thanks to the 1848 gold rush, San Francisco had an enormous head start on L.A., only to be bypassed by the explosive growth of its southern rival in the early twentieth century. Meanwhile, the two cities couldn't be any more different (as any resident of either will vehemently insist!). I'm not sure yet whether I have another big city book in me, but I'm seriously considering turning my trilogy of urban histories into a quartet.

[How to Make Disease Disappear](#) by Rangan Chatterjee [HarperOne, 9780062846341]

A much-needed program to prevent and reverse disease, and discover a path to sustainable, long-term health from an acclaimed international doctor and star of the BBC program Doctor in the House.

[How to Make Disease Disappear](#) is Dr. Rangan Chatterjee's revolutionary, yet simple guide to better health—a much-needed, accessible plan that will help you take back control of your health and your life.

A physician dedicated to finding the root cause of ill health rather than simply suppressing symptoms with drugs, Dr. Chatterjee passionately advocates and follows a philosophy that lifestyle and nutrition are first-line medicine and the cornerstone of good health. Drawing on cutting edge research and his own experiences as a doctor, he argues that the secret to preventing disease and achieving wellness revolves around four critical pillars: food, relaxation, sleep, and movement. By making small, incremental changes in each of these key areas, you can create and maintain good health—and alleviate and prevent illness. As Dr. Chatterjee, reveals we can reverse and make disease

disappear without a complete overhaul of our lifestyle.

His dynamic, user-friendly approach is not about excelling at any one pillar. What matters is balance in every area of your life, which includes:

- Me-time every day
- An electronic-free Sabbath once a week
- Retraining your taste buds
- Daily micro-fasts
- Movement snacking
- A bedtime routine

Practical and life-changing, [How to Make Disease Disappear](#) is an inspiring and easy-to-follow guide to better health and happiness.

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For Your Notes

#### Excerpt:

We are sick and getting sicker. In the United States today, a new generation of children has been born that has a lower life expectancy than the generation before it. This is shocking and extraordinary. To understand why it's happening, we first have to grasp the terrible epidemic of chronic disease that's currently laying waste to millions.

Chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and dementia are today the nation's leading causes of death and disability. Half of all American adults currently suffer from a chronic disease, with one in four people suffering from two or more. Chronic disease is, by a wide margin, now the deadliest problem facing America. Despite the statistics and the suffering, so much confusion exists about what we can do in our own lives to protect ourselves and live long, healthy lives. I have seen this firsthand as I have lived and worked with many families.

The good news is that I can make these diseases disappear. That's right. This probably sounds like an extraordinary claim, but the reason I can make them disappear is that they're an illusion. These diseases are not the inevitable result of aging. They are not simply our genetic fate or our destiny. We do not have to suffer needlessly. The truth is these diseases don't really exist, at least not in the way we think they do.

To come to this conclusion, I first had to travel down a long, hard road. Seventeen years ago, I graduated from medical school full of enthusiasm and passion, ready to go out and help people. But I always felt there was something missing. I started off as a specialist and then became a generalist, as an MD, but I always had this nagging sense that I was just managing disease or simply suppressing people's symptoms. And then on December 28, 2010, a turning point came. That was the day my son nearly died.

I was on a skiing vacation with my family in the stunning snowy landscape of Chamonix, France. My son had been a little phlegmy and quiet all day,

but I wasn't too worried. It was just a cold and I felt sure it would pass without issue. That evening my wife, Vidh, sat on the sofa watching TV while I was in the kitchen. I was watching the kettle, waiting for the water to boil, when I heard her shout: "Rangan! He's not moving!" I rushed in. "He must be choking!" I said. "It's the phlegm." I lifted him out of Vidh's arms, turned him over and slapped him over the back in an attempt to clear his airway. But nothing happened. "Rangan, he's not choking," said Vidh. "We need to go to the hospital." My son's arms were stretched out, his body was rigid, his eyes stared vacantly.

After a panicked rush down a snowy road that almost ended in my turning the car over, we found ourselves standing in the resuscitation room of the emergency room of the tiny Les Hôpitaux du Pays du Mont-Blanc. As I watched the doctors take his temperature and try to get an intravenous line into his neck, I ran through the possibilities of what might be wrong with him. Was it epilepsy? Was it something more serious? I couldn't think. I felt numb. The truth was, I didn't have a clue. In that moment, I was no longer the doctor with nearly ten years' experience who'd graduated from the prestigious University of Edinburgh's medical school. I was a terrified dad.

Five long, agonizing hours later, the doctor came in to see us, waiting by our son's bed. "Dr. Chatterjee, we have an update," he said.

"What is it?" I asked.

"Dr. Chatterjee, your son's calcium levels are very low. In fact, he has almost no calcium in his body at all. He experienced a hypocalcemic convulsion. We're going to give him some intravenous calcium."

My reaction was utter confusion. How had this happened? What did it mean? But my confusion in that moment was nothing compared with the shock I felt when I did finally discover the root cause of what happened. It was an entirely preventable vitamin D deficiency. This was as unbelievable as it was serious. Untreated—especially in children—vitamin D deficiency can lead to painful and permanent damage including deformities to the bones, a condition known as rickets. I was

devastated. And I swore that I would never allow anything like it to happen again.

The crisis of my son's illness forced me to ask some honest and uncomfortable questions. Why had I not been made sufficiently aware of vitamin and other nutritional deficiencies during my supposedly top-of-the-line medical training? And why wasn't that training proving more effective in my practice? As an MD, my days were filled with seeing patients with chronic conditions such as joint pain, headaches, type 2 diabetes, insomnia, depression, weight gain and fatigue. I hated to admit it, but the fact was, I reckoned I was helping maybe 20 percent of these people. The approach to consultations I'd been taught in medical school simply wasn't working. And if my medical training was failing me so badly for so many of my patients, what else could I do but embark on my own course of re-education?

And so began an incredible journey through many new worlds of knowledge that, I'm sad to say, the majority of doctors still have relatively little idea about. I immersed myself in research, especially around nutrition, movement science, stress reduction, ancestral health and functional medicine. I also came across research that allowed me to see afresh what I'd learned while completing my BSc honors degree in immunology, gaining valuable insight into the rapidly developing field of gut health and the microbiome. I started applying the science, first with my family and then with my patients. Do you know what happened? People started getting better—really better. I'd finally learned to resolve the root cause of their problems, rather than simply suppressing their symptoms.

What I'd learned, in a way that I hadn't fully grasped before, was that acute disease and chronic disease are entirely different things. Acute disease is something that, as doctors, we're pretty good at. It's relatively simple. You have something like pneumonia, a severe lung infection—so in your lung you have the overgrowth of some bugs, typically a type of bacteria. We identify the bacteria and we give you a treatment, typically an antibiotic that kills it. The bacteria die and, hey presto, you no longer have your pneumonia. The

problem is, we apply that same thinking to chronic disease, and it simply doesn't work.

Chronic disease doesn't just happen like this. Chronic disease has many different causes. You don't just wake up some day suffering from one; by the time we give you the diagnosis, things have already been going wrong for a long, long time.

Let me tell you about one patient I met whom I found to be struggling with an all-too-common chronic disease. Thirty-five-year-old Mary was struggling with weight problems, joint problems, sleep problems and fatigue. I did some blood tests and diagnosed her with type 2 diabetes. This is one of the most harmful chronic diseases the world is currently facing. One in ten Americans currently has type 2 diabetes, and one in four has its precursor, pre-diabetes. The vast majority of sufferers don't even know they've got it. Between 1990 and 2013, rates of the disease shot up by an incredible 71 percent in the United States—one of the most dramatic increases of any nation. It currently costs the US alone more than \$245 billion a year. Within thirty days of treating Mary, I'd made her diabetes disappear. Two years on, her "disease" is nowhere to be seen!

Most cases of type 2 diabetes are caused by something called insulin resistance. Insulin is a very important hormone, and one of its key functions is to keep your blood sugar tightly controlled in your body. Say you have a sugary bowl of cereal for breakfast. What happens is your blood sugar goes up, but your body releases a little bit of insulin and that helps it come back down to normal. The problem is, after years of dietary abuse with sugary foods, the insulin begins

to lose its power. As you become more insulin resistant, you need more and more insulin to do the same job. You can think of it as a little like alcohol. The very first time you have a drink, what happens? Let's say some wine—one or two sips, or maybe half a glass—you feel tipsy, you feel a bit drunk. As you become a more seasoned and accustomed drinker, you need more and more alcohol to have the same effect, and that's what's going on with insulin. You need more and more insulin to have the same effect. When the insulin can no longer keep

your sugar under control, despite its best efforts, we say you've got a disease, type 2 diabetes. However, things will have been going wrong in your body for many years before that.

But what causes insulin resistance in the first place? Actually, it's not just diet. It could also be that you're chronically stressed: work stress, emotional stress, physical stress. They can all raise levels of cortisol in your body, which raises your sugar, which in turn can contribute to insulin resistance. It could also be sleep deprivation. In some, losing one night of sleep can trigger as much insulin resistance as six months on a junk food diet. It could be age. The muscle mass we naturally lose as we get older can also cause insulin resistance. The problem is, there are many different causes of insulin resistance, and if we don't address all the causes for that particular patient, we'll never get rid of their disease. For Mary, I addressed the causes for her, and a few weeks later, she no longer had her "disease." That's right. In just a few weeks, no symptoms and no type 2 diabetes.

What about another chronic disease? As we live longer, many of us will have to face the devastating consequences of Alzheimer's. It's a heart-wrenching condition, and doctors and researchers are scrambling around trying to find the cure. It might surprise you to learn that one expert, Dr. Dale Bredesen, has successfully reversed early cognitive decline in some of his dementia patients. He's done that by working out what the various triggers have been in his individual patients and correcting them, reversing their symptoms. And which triggers is he looking at? He's examining many different factors including diet, stress levels and sleep quality as well as physical activity levels. Other prominent researchers in the field are applying similar strategies and are getting encouraging results.

Is this sounding a little bit familiar? These are some of the same causes of the insulin resistance that gives us type 2 diabetes. What if these, as well as many other seemingly separate chronic diseases, share common root causes? I believe they do.

The problem with the way we think about health and practice medicine is this: we forget that the

human body is one big connected system. If it starts being treated poorly in one area, by bad diet or lack of sleep, problems can emerge in another part of it, often emerging as a so-called chronic disease. Then, if a patient presents with depression, we'll prescribe an antidepressant. But depression can just as easily be driven by poor diet or high stress levels—or, even more likely, both. It's the same with a condition like eczema. Doctors all too often just prescribe a steroid cream for the rash, but the rash is only a symptom. There's very little awareness that the causes of eczema are many, and that it may be triggered by an overreactive immune system that may itself be caused by food choices or abnormalities with gut bacteria. A human being is a highly evolved biological mechanism that's completely, what I call "massively," interconnected. Because of this, a symptom in one domain might actually have a cause way upstream, in an area of the body that our medical training just doesn't tell us to look in.

Because everything in our bodies affects, to a

**"The benefits will happen immediately, and the results last a lifetime. This is a radical health journey that's designed for everyone."**

greater or lesser degree, pretty much everything else, we need to take a much more global view of treatment, one that considers every aspect of the way the patient is living their life. How are they sleeping? How are they eating? Do they sit behind a desk for hours a day not moving? Are they constantly on their phones? I call this the "threshold effect." The massively connected system that is in the human body can deal with multiple insults in various places—up to a point. And then the system breaks down, often with a new problem in some distant part

of the system. That point at which it breaks down is our own, unique, personal threshold. When talking to patients, I liken it to juggling. We can often

juggle one ball, two balls, even three or four. But when we throw that fifth one in, all the balls fall down. We get sick. That sickness might manifest as a skin complaint or a blood sugar problem or a mood disorder or difficulty sleeping. These complaints are all downstream signals that things—usually more than one—are going wrong upstream. Unlike many other doctors, I start upstream, not down.

I'm not a scientist, I'm a doctor, and they are not the same things at all. My job is to read the science, then interpret it in the context of the patient who's with me. The science doesn't tell me everything I need to know. Something essential also comes from hearing a patient's individual story. I believe the most skilled and effective healers are the ones who listen. I also believe that medicine is art and science. It's the blending of the two. We too often forget this and are then surprised by all the discrepancies there are between what lab trials show and what we find happening in real life. Science doesn't do everything. I don't give two hoots if there's a study to show reducing our exposure to social media makes us less stressed. You can get data to show black is white and white is black. You can manipulate trials and data to say what you want. What I'm giving you is my seventeen years of experience as an MD seeing tens of thousands of patients, but this is my belief. It's based on science, but it's also based on my own experience. If you disagree with me, I'm OK with that. I believe my decade and a half of practice qualifies me to make simple recommendations that, as long as they do no harm, don't need to wait for all the science to catch up. By practicing this way, I've managed to avoid sending hundreds of patients down the road of medicalization, and cured many hundreds more.

I have written this book to provide a simple, actionable plan to help you take control of your health. There's nothing in here that's got any downside. No confusion. No bad science. Just practical solutions, based on seventeen years of clinical experience, to help disease disappear. The benefits will happen immediately and the results last a lifetime. This is a radical health journey that's designed for everyone. The worst thing that's going

to happen (and I don't think it will) is you end up feeling the same. The best? You'll completely transform your life—and have a lot more of it to live.

The tools in this book may seem simple and even somehow "unmedical," but don't be fooled—they will have a profound impact on your biology. They'll make a difference—to your hormones, to your inflammatory cytokines, to the level of reactive oxygen species in your blood, and on and on. These are not soft interventions. This is not soft medicine. This is real medicine that is targeted especially to our unprecedented epidemic of lifestyle illnesses; you can't expect to avoid the deadly diseases that have taken so many millions of lives if you continue living without it.

Let's go beyond the typical health advice we've been reading about for so long—beyond the fad diets and quick-fix programs. We have overcomplicated health—and I want to simplify it. This book is the practical, achievable approach you have been waiting for. Everything you need to know about starting or continuing a radical health journey is in these pages. Join me as we make disease disappear. <>

[Our Story: A Memoir of Love and Life in China](#) by Rao Pingru, translated from the Chinese by Nicky Harman [Pantheon Graphic Novels, Pantheon Books, 978110187149]

(With gorgeous full-color illustrations throughout, and a distinctive exposed spine emulating the original Chinese design.)

Begun by the author when he was eighty-seven years old and mourning the loss of his wife, [Our Story](#) is a graphic memoir like no other: a celebration of a marriage that spanned the twentieth century in China, told in vibrant, original paintings and prose.

Rao Pingru was twenty-four-year-old soldier when he was reintroduced to Mao Meitang, a girl he'd known in childhood and now the woman his father had arranged for him to marry. One glimpse of her through a window as she put on lipstick was enough to capture Pingru's heart: a moment that sparked a union that would last almost sixty years.

[Our Story](#) is Pingru and Meitang's epic but unassuming romance. It follows the couple through the decades, in both poverty and good fortune—looking for work, opening a restaurant, moving cities, mending shoes, raising their children, and being separated for seventeen years by the government when Pingru is sent to a labor camp. As the pair ages, China undergoes extraordinary growth, political turmoil, and cultural change. When Meitang passes away in 2008, Pingru memorializes his wife and their relationship the only way he knows how: through painting. In an outpouring of love and grief, he puts it all on paper. Spanning 1922 through 2008, [Our Story](#) is a tale of enduring love and simple values that is at once tragic and inspiring: an old-fashioned story that unfolds in a nation undergoing cataclysmic change.

Excerpt:



At some point in the 1950s, I had bought a small lightweight table, at which the family ate their meals, Meitang did her sewing, and the children their homework.

Nearly twenty years sped by, and the children were all grown up. The table was ready for retirement, but they kept it usable with a nail here or a piece of wire there, though it was unsteady on its feet and the paint was flaking off.

In Guobin's commune, labor and timber were cheap, so he had a set of furniture made and sent it to Shanghai. It included an Eight Immortals table,

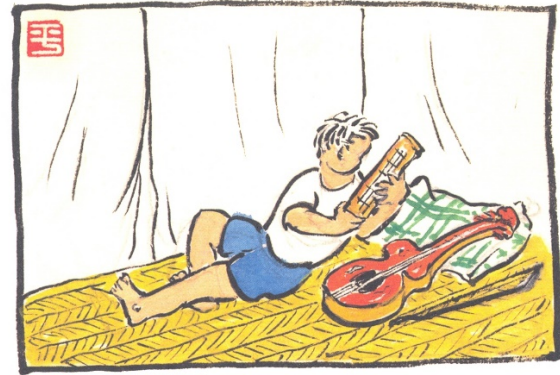
so called because it was square and seated eight. There was nowhere to put the old table, and Meitang told Lezeng to try to get a bit of cash for it. Lezeng took it to the secondhand store and asked for two yuan. He handed it over to the storekeeper, who chucked it into a corner. The table landed on the floor and lay there, the frame askew. Lezeng, a sensitive child, felt so sorry for it that he cried.



为了不让脑子过于“清闲”，我一边劳动，一边读书。

I studied in order to keep my brain working.

During my first ten years in Anhui, I was assigned to a Huai River containment project. The labor was unskilled and primitive, and did not occupy my mind at all. In order to keep my brain working, I copied some sentences from an English textbook Meitang had sent me onto scraps of paper. During the winter, I kept these scraps in my jacket pocket, and in summer, in my straw hat. When we took a break from our labors, I would take them out and recite them. At least this provided a pleasant distraction from the relentless toil.



蚊帐里面练指法

"Practicing" under the mosquito net

Later on, I borrowed a violin from my brother-in-law for a while and started to learn to play it. But the noise disturbed people I shared the dormitory with, so I made myself a rectangular piece of wood and marked on it the positions of the strings and the frets. Then, in the evening, I got under my mosquito net and "practiced" on this pretend violin. On Sunday, a rest day, I could leave the work site and find somewhere to practice on the real thing.



快到家了，我挑着重担快步前进

Almost home, I hurried along, carrying the heavy bags on a shoulder pole.

The Chinese New Year was always the high point of the year. This was the one time I could visit home. These trips back were my most exciting and busiest time, and I started making preparations a good two weeks beforehand. First, I arranged

holiday leave, then I borrowed money, around three hundred yuan, to spend on things to take to the family. Some things were hard to find or very expensive in Shanghai, so I had endless discussions with Meitang about what to get: glutinous rice, peanuts, sesame seeds, soybeans, melon seeds, vegetable oil, sesame oil, eggs, salted duck, and so on.

The day of my departure, I would set off at the crack of dawn, carrying my bags on a shoulder pole to Liu An bus station, five or six li distant. The bus took me to Hefei city, where I boarded a train. From Shanghai station, I put on a final spurt for the two-hour walk along Henan Road, to my home.



快要过年喽! 多么开心呀!.....

The New Year will soon be here. How happy we are!

lyrics (left to right): "Plunging through immense forests, striding undaunted over snowy plains!"<sup>18</sup> "Graceful birch standing tall, remote blue skies.... Ah, spring is coming to the country of the north!"<sup>19</sup>

The whole family was thrilled to see me. It was always evening by the time I arrived, and my mother-in-law would be at the stove on the walkway where we did our cooking, steaming a salted duck. Meitang and Yunhong would be frying melon seeds and peanuts over a coal briquette stove indoors, filling the room with a delicious smell. The children sang at the top of their voices, and I got out my harmonica and accompanied them. Our neighbor, old Mrs. Wu, would sigh as she passed our door: "Such a lovely family!" The two weeks of the Spring Festival holiday passed all too quickly.

[Failure Is an Option: An Attempted Memoir](#) by H. Jon Benjamin [Dutton, 9781524742164]

From the stand-up comedian and lead voice behind Archer and Bob's Burgers; H. Jon Benjamin

H. Jon Benjamin--the lead voice behind Archer and Bob's Burgers--helps us all feel a little better about our own failures by sharing his own in a hilarious memoir-ish chronicle of failure.

Most people would consider H. Jon Benjamin a comedy show business success. But he'd like to remind everyone that as great as success can be, failure is also an option. And maybe the best option. In this book, he tells stories from his own life, from his early days ("wherein I'm unable to deliver a sizzling fajita") to his romantic life ("how I failed to quantify a threesome") to family ("wherein a trip to P.F. Chang's fractures a family") to career ("how I failed at launching a kid's show").

As Jon himself says, breaking down one's natural ability to succeed is not an easy task, but also not an insurmountable one. Society as we know it is, sadly, failure averse. But more acceptance of failure, as Jon sees it, will go a long way to making this world a different place . . . a kinder, gentler place, where gardens are overgrown and most people stay home with their pets. A vision of failure, but also a vision of freedom.

With stories, examples of artistic and literary failure, and a powerful can't-do attitude, *Failure Is an Option* is the book the world doesn't need right now but will get regardless.

You may not immediately recognize his face, but you've almost certainly heard his voice. H. Jon Benjamin, the voice behind some of today's most popular and iconic animated characters, including the titular characters in hit TV series Archer and Bob's Burgers, has found a level of success that many would envy. But Jon isn't interested in telling the world about his successes. Instead, he would like to remind us all that failure is also an option.

In [Failure Is an Option: An Attempted Memoir](#), Jon invites readers to embrace their own missteps and the freedom that comes along with letting go of the constant grind towards success. With stories, examples of artistic and literary failings, and a powerful "can't-do" attitude, this is the book the

world doesn't need right now but will get regardless.

[Failure Is an Option](#) explores a wide variety of things that H. Jon Benjamin has failed at, including:

- Learning to play any instrument he has ever picked up (though that didn't stop him from creating a full jazz album).
- Stopping a robbery at the age of eleven.
- Wowing his peers at his disco-themed Bar Mitzvah party.
- Delivering a sizzling fajita.
- Romance—Jon even provides examples of pickup lines and sex positions (complete with unforgettable illustrations) that are sure to put a damper on any romantic evening.
- Stopping his son from eating a horrifying snack at a local playground.
- Securing an impressive "celebrity favors" to dazzle his friends.
- Differentiating the voices of two of his most well-known characters, Bob Belcher and Sterling Archer.

All joking aside, H. Jon Benjamin has crafted a delightful and unique memoir that is sure to please fans of his work, lovers of absurdist humor, and anyone willing to consider the idea that FAILURE IS AN OPTION. As Jon points out, our society is largely failure averse - but more acceptance of failure would go a long way to making the world a better place.

With Archer: Danger Island premiering in late April on FXX, Jon's fans will be clamoring for more of his signature wit, which they have come to love from his work as an actor, voice actor and stand-up comedian.

[Failure Is an Option: An Attempted Memoir](#) provides the fresh, unconventional perspective that we all need, allowing readers to embrace the beauty and humor to be found in life's many mishaps.

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EPILOGUE My Failure Is an Option

Excerpt:

Prologue: (the Preliminary Failure Before  
the Main Failure)

Everything I didn't do has gotten me to where I am.  
—H. Jon Benjamin

All right! Here we go! My third sentence of my first book and I'm already really tired of writing, but I promise you, this will be worth it. And let's face it—you probably paid very little for this. Based on how much you paid, this book might be one of the best bargains you have ever pulled off in your life and with no real negotiation. That's what I did for you. I let the market decide, and that empowers you. A classic objectivist proposition. It is what makes America great again and again and again. And that isn't just a cheap saying peddled by some psychotic charlatan with weird hair (but having said all that, it may be a good campaign slogan for Donald Trump Jr.—"Make America great again, AGAIN." Thank me later, Donny Jr.), but, in my case a real promise. When I was saddled with the task of writing a book, I had to dig shallow to think about what it is I had to say to you, my gentle reader ... and also you, my rough reader. Not enough attention has been given to all you rough readers out there. But I can assure you, I'm no Charlotte Brontë or Miss Manners. I'm gonna go for it, without any real sense of literary consequence. A true path paver. A pioneer, armed with a keyboard and a keen eye for "taking it to the limit." Many will be confounded by what they read, many or all will be disappointed, but all of you will be part of this most exhilarating experiment in textual synergy. You and I together forever, locked in eternal struggle—writer and reader forever entwined. A twisted commingling of semiconsensual, transmodal logical consequence. I write, you read. A self-contained system, like a less scatological human caterpillar (I say less, because you may read this on the toilet).

On that note, let me guide you, and I will try and take you to the end of the rainbow. A place that is cold but cordial. A place that is waiting for you, with faceless determination. The end. That is what we are here for—the end. Together till the end.

What I am doing right now is single-handedly providing you with the means to a literal end. And I will give it, like a lightning bolt. And you will rejoice! And then you will rest in the afterglow all flushed and enervated, realizing that I fulfilled my promise to you: to end this book.

*(In French) Oh, darkness I wait for your embrace*

*The death before death*

*words choke my breath*

*But the end is sweet relief*

*Jon Benjamin's book*

*(Sorry, couldn't afford a French translator)*

Anyway, what is this book? Well, in the simplest terms, all I have is my story. But looking at it with a critical eye, my story is something of a cautionary tale. It is the story of a failure. But by the same token, it is an aspirational tale, in that most failures never get to tell their tales. Who would listen? You know the old saying "History is written by the victors." It's like that. Failures are a voiceless mass of unrealized promise. Where would we be if this world was solely composed of failures? By nature, survival itself is a narrative imbued with a success imperative. I mean, science itself compels that argument. It's survival of the fittest, not survival of the fattest. But that would be a good name for a game show: Survival of the Fattest. By no means, though, am I connecting fat with fail, it just happened to work as an alliterative.

To be clear, this is a polemic in favor of failure. It's an assertion that failure is an option and even, at times, a viable prescription for a better life, despite its long-standing stigmatization. Failure can be incredibly freeing and an end in itself, not just that tired platitude that it is a necessary step on the road to success. Despite my own success, I maintain that failure is my prevailing life force and my success has been a parallel and unrelated condition, not a consequence of my failure(s). If you're not following, that's because I'm a failure.

Or because you're a failure. But either way, that's a good thing.

Hopefully, this book will serve to give people prone to seek success more reason to pull back, and for those who already are failing, a reason to continue to do so with a sense of purpose. That said, unbridled failure can be a pretty overwhelming thing, and people do need mechanisms in place to use their will to fail reasonably and in good taste. There are limits, even with failure, and I don't want to set any of you on a path toward sitting in a dark room with cardboard covering your windows and feces (yours) smeared on the walls and the floor—unless it is a clever version of a surprise party. The task at hand is to bring failure into your life, accept it, and then find the right amount that suits you. A failure balance, or an FB, if you will.

I can't claim this is the manual of failure, but maybe this is the story or stories that some future civilization will look at and use as the example of how civilization started to embrace failure—like a new bible for the inevitable dystopian future. If you think of this book in those terms, we are really onto something special here. Let me give you a quick example and then I'll get to how I personally failed and how I represent all of us. It is a classic story of failure and it comes from the Bible, but my interpretation is more useful (sorry, Athanasius Kircher). It is the story of Noah and the Flood.

As the story goes, humankind had become self-absorbed and wicked and turned their backs on the word of God, except for Noah and his family, who remained annoyingly righteous. God chose Noah as his emissary, to tell the people to repent or face the wrath of God. The people laughed hard at Noah (because they were wicked and most probably drunk) and his do-goody attitude. God then told Noah that, because the people failed to heed his warning, he would bring upon them a flood that would destroy humanity, only sparing Noah, his family, and a collection of animals. Noah sent the message, to which the people laughed hard in his face. And you know the outcome—God instructed the building of the ark, and Noah and his

family were spared, to carry forward human civilization.

Here's the basic problem. As Noah failed to convince the people to bow to the will of God, God failed us by choosing Noah to get the word out. And here we are today, the product of a failed guy and, to a greater degree, a failed God, who trusted the wrong person to do his bidding and then punished humanity for his own faulty methodology. Basically, God was way too needy. This kind of attitude is all over the Bible: God always being mad at his creations and doling out disproportional punishment. It's certainly not a fair fight, pitting humans against omnipotence.

So here's my assessment based on little to no research: basically "just wingin' it" (great name for an airline, by the way) but in a thoughtful way. Humanity is now made up of primarily people driven by a complete repudiation of failure and, ipso facto, are compelled psychologically and sociologically to succeed. But because only a tiny majority can fulfill this due to the simple fact that more than 98 percent of the population are not qualified to achieve real success, we need to come to a general understanding that failure is good for society.

Let's take any simple job as an example: carpenter (since Noah was mentioned). It is my contention that more than 98 percent of carpenters are subpar at their craft. There are approximately one million carpenters in the United States, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, so, based on my theory, there are only about twenty thousand decent carpenters. The rest, whether they know it or not, are bad but are likely pretending to be good (just wingin' it). This theory can be applied to everyone: doctors, lawyers, bankers, cooks, therapists, personal trainers...

Widespread self-knowledge and acceptance of one's own biological inadequacies would set off a chain reaction that would help the successful be more successful and relieve those who outreach their given capacities, creating a huge uptick in happiness. In simple terms, be less driven.

Soon enough, the path to failure would become a viable option. If a person doesn't feel the need to succeed, then they won't try so hard, creating a quasi utopia. And this would move our success-oriented culture toward a more natural lazy state for humankind. It's like that old syrupy proverb "Teach a man to fish ..." In my version, it would be "Give a man a fish, and he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish, and he'll eat for a lifetime, but he'll probably come to really hate fishing, so just give him a fish and teach him to fish."

With that, I will now regale you with some personal stories of failure in my life. I have failed in so many ways; it's hard to tell all the stories. Failure is enmeshed in my DNA. For every single action taken, there are multiple, sometimes thousands of micro failures. And what might appear inconsequential to the naked eye, like a brief stammer or a quick sniffle, in my mind is a cascading and ever-expanding sandstorm of self-doubt and self-recrimination. Talk to me for even a minute and you'll think, "Wow, nice guy," but in my mind, the cobwebs of failure are spinning and proliferating like a cotton candy machine.

It may be too late for little old me, but you, YOU! You can fail and be happy. <>

[Mothers: An Essay on Love and Cruelty](#) by Jacqueline Rose [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 978-0374213794]

A simple argument guides this book: motherhood is the place in our culture where we lodge, or rather bury, the reality of our own conflicts. By making mothers the objects of both licensed idealization and cruelty, we blind ourselves to the world's iniquities and shut down the portals of the heart.

Mothers are the ultimate scapegoat for our personal and political failings, for everything that is wrong with the world, which becomes their task (unrealizable, of course) to repair. Moving commandingly between pop cultural references such as Roald Dahl's *Matilda* to insights on motherhood in the ancient world and the contemporary stigmatization of single mothers, Jacqueline Rose delivers a groundbreaking report into something so prevalent we hardly notice.

[Mothers: An Essay on Love and Cruelty](#) is an incisive, rousing call to action from one of our most important contemporary thinkers.

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## Opening

A simple argument guides this book: that motherhood is, in Western discourse, the place in our culture where we lodge, or rather bury, the reality of our own conflicts, of what it means to be fully human. It is the ultimate scapegoat for our personal and political failings, for everything that is wrong with the world, which it becomes the task — unrealisable, of course — of mothers to repair. To the familiar claim that too much is demanded of mothers, which has been a long-standing feminist plaint, this book will add a further dimension, or question. What are we doing — what aspects of our social arrangements and of our inner lives, what forms of historic injustice, do we turn our backs on; above all, what are we doing to mothers — when we expect them to carry the burden of everything that is hardest to contemplate about our society and ourselves? Mothers cannot help but be in touch with the most difficult aspects of any fully lived life. Along with the passion and pleasure, it is the secret knowledge they share. Why on earth should it fall to them to paint things bright and innocent and safe? Running through the book is a central contention: that by making mothers the objects of licensed cruelty, we blind ourselves to the world's iniquities and shut down the portals of the heart. Unless we recognise what we are asking mothers to perform in the world — and for the

world — we will continue to tear both the world and mothers to pieces.

## Coda

When I was preparing to adopt my daughter, I would try to seduce my social worker with obscenely large red cherries, which would sit in their bowl, I liked to think, as a flagrant riposte to and distraction from her steely, relentless inquisition (the adoption process raises the idea of a fault-finding mission to a new height). I remember thinking later that the two things the whole process could never prepare you for, and which made it as useless as it was invasive, were first, the worry — the OMG of every scratch and fall, at once absurd and wholly in tune with the fragility of life — and second, the joy. In the famous story, Tiresias is struck blind by Hera, in some versions by Athena, for having revealed that a woman's sexual pleasure is greater than a man's. As I was thinking about motherhood in our time and reading all the outpourings on the subject, past and present, that story came to mind. We need a version for mothers, one in which the acute pleasure of being a mother, without any need for denial of everything else talked about here, would be neither a guilty secret, nor something enviously co-opted by bullies — 'You will be happy!' Instead, it could be left to get on quietly with its work of making the experience of motherhood more than worth it. <>

[From Cold War to Hot Peace: An American Ambassador in Putin's Russia](#) by Michael McFaul  
Michael McFaul [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 9780544716247]

From one of America's leading scholars of Russia who served as U.S. ambassador to Russia during the Obama administration, a revelatory, inside account of U.S.-Russia relations from 1989 to the present  
In 2008, when Michael McFaul was asked to leave his perch at Stanford and join an unlikely presidential campaign, he had no idea that he would find himself at the beating heart of one of today's most contentious and consequential international relationships. As President Barack Obama's adviser on Russian affairs, McFaul helped craft the United States' policy known as "reset" that

fostered new and unprecedented collaboration between the two countries. And then, as U.S. ambassador to Russia from 2012 to 2014, he had a front-row seat when this fleeting, hopeful moment crumbled with Vladimir Putin's return to the presidency. This riveting inside account combines history and memoir to tell the full story of U.S.-Russia relations from the fall of the Soviet Union to the new rise of the hostile, paranoid Russian president. From the first days of McFaul's ambassadorship, the Kremlin actively sought to discredit and undermine him, hassling him with tactics that included dispatching protesters to his front gates, slandering him on state media, and tightly surveilling him, his staff, and his family.

[From Cold War to Hot Peace](#) is an essential account of the most consequential global confrontation of our time.

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Excerpt: As Air Force One began its initial descent into Prague on a clear, sunny day in April 2010, President Obama asked Gary Samore and me to join him in his office at the front of the plane to run over the final talking points for his meeting with Russian president Dmitry Medvedev later that day. The president was in an ebullient mood. In the same city a year earlier, Obama had given what may have been his most important foreign policy speech to date, calling for a nuclear-free world. Now, just a year later, he was delivering a major piece of business toward his Prague Agenda, as we called it. With his Russian partner, he was about to sign the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), reducing by 30 percent the number of nuclear weapons allowed in the two countries. Samore, our special assistant to the president for weapons of mass destruction at the National Security Council, was our lead at the White House in getting this treaty done; I was his wingman. So this quick trip to Prague was a day of celebration for the two of us as well.

On the tarmac, Obama asked Gary and me to ride with him in his limousine — "the Beast" — to the majestic Prague Castle, where the signing ceremony would take place. For a while, we discussed our game plan for pushing Medvedev to support sanctions on Iran, but mostly the drive was a victory lap. Obama waved to the crowds on the streets, flashing his broad smile through the tinted bulletproof glass. We all felt good about getting something concrete done, always a challenge in government work. We also allowed ourselves that day to imagine even deeper cooperation between the United States and Russia on issues beyond arms control. Maybe we truly had come to a turning point in the bumpy road of U.S.-Russia relations since the collapse of the Soviet Union, a turn toward genuine strategic cooperation that had eluded previous American and Russian leaders.

With new young presidents in the White House and in the Kremlin, the Cold War felt distant. We were signing the first major arms control treaty in

decades, working together to stop Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, joined in efforts to fight the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, and increasing trade and investment between our two countries. We seemed to have put contentious issues such as NATO expansion and the Iraq War behind us, and were now digging deeper into areas of mutual interest. That year, for instance, Russian and American paratroopers were jumping out of airplanes together in Colorado, conducting joint counterterrorist-training operations, at the same time that American and Russian entrepreneurs were working together to develop Skolkovo, Russia's aspirational Silicon Valley. We were even discussing the possibilities of cooperating on missile defense. These were breakthroughs unimaginable just two years earlier. Medvedev seemed like a pro-Western modernizer, albeit a cautious one. On that celebratory drive through the cobblestone streets of Prague, the Reset — the bumper sticker for Obama's Russia policy — appeared to be working.

Later that afternoon, Medvedev and Obama signed the New START treaty, drank champagne together, and spoke glowingly about possibilities for further cooperation. At the time, solid majorities in both countries were convinced of such possibilities. Russia was popular in America, and America was popular in Russia. I flew home the next day in a great mood, convinced that we were making history.

Only two years later, on a cold, dark day in January 2012, I arrived in Moscow as the new U.S. ambassador to the Russian Federation, charged with continuing the Reset. I had thought about, written about, and worked toward closer relations with the Soviet Union and then Russia since my high school debating days, so this new mission should have been a crowning achievement of my career: an opportunity of a lifetime to further my ideas about American-Russian relations. It was not. On my first day of work at the embassy, the Russian state-controlled media accused President Obama of sending me to Russia to foment revolution. On his evening commentary show, Odnako, broadcast on the most popular television network in Russia, Mikhail Leontiev warned his viewers that I was

neither a Russia expert nor a traditional diplomat, but a professional revolutionary whose assignment was to finance and organize Russia's political opposition as it plotted to overthrow the Russian government; to finish Russia's Unfinished Revolution, the title of one of my books written a decade earlier. This portrayal of my mission to Moscow would haunt me for the rest of my days as ambassador.

A few months later, in May 2012, I accompanied my former boss at the White House, National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, to his meeting with President-elect Putin. This was the first meeting between a senior Obama official and Putin since Putin's reelection in March 2012. We met at Novo-Ogaryovo, Putin's country estate, the same place where Obama had enjoyed a cordial, constructive, three-hour breakfast with the then prime minister four years earlier. Putin listened politely to Tom's arguments for continued cooperation. At some point in their dialogue, however, he turned away from Tom to stare intensely at me with his steely blue eyes and stern scowl to accuse me of purposely seeking to ruin U.S.-Russia relations. Putin seemed genuinely angry with me; I was genuinely alarmed. The hair on the back of my neck stood on end and sweat covered my brow as I endured this tongue-lashing from one of the most powerful people in the world.

In Prague, I had been the author of the Reset, the driver of closer relations with Russia. In Moscow, I was now a revolutionary, a usurper, and Vladimir Putin's personal foe.

What happened? How did we go from toasting the Reset in Prague in 2010 to lamenting its end in Moscow just two years later? Nothing fundamental had changed in our policy toward Russia. Nor had Russia done anything abroad that might trigger new animosity—that would come later. The one obvious change between these two meetings was Russia's leadership. Medvedev was president when we were in Prague to sign New START; Putin was elected president soon after my arrival in Moscow as U.S. ambassador. But that seemed too simple an explanation. After all, Putin was prime minister

during the heyday of the Reset, and most people thought he was calling the shots during that time.

And then things became even worse. Two years into his third term as Russian president, in February 2014, Putin invaded Ukraine, annexing Crimea and supporting separatist militias in the eastern part of the country. Not since World War II had a European country violated the sovereignty of another country in this way. Putin's outrageous and shocking actions reaffirmed the end of the Reset, and with it, three decades of American and Russian leaders' efforts to build a more cooperative relationship after the end of the Cold War. The project of Russian integration into the West — started by Ronald Reagan and sustained to varying degrees by all post-Cold War presidents — was over.

Sometime between the Obama-Medvedev summit in Prague in 2010 and Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, public opinion in both countries also flipped: solid majorities in both Russia and the United States now perceived each other as enemies.

This new era of confrontation did not mark a return to the Cold War, exactly, but most certainly could be described as a hot peace. Unlike during the Cold War, the Kremlin today no longer promotes an ideology with worldwide appeal. Russian economic and military power is growing, but Russia has not obtained superpower status like the Soviet Union. And the entire globe is not divided between red and blue states — the communist bloc versus the free world — reinforced by opposing alliance structures. Russia today has very few allies. And yet, our new era of hot peace has resurrected some features eerily reminiscent of the Cold War, while also adding new dimensions of confrontation. A new ideological struggle has emerged between Russia and the West, not between communism and capitalism but between democracy and autocracy. Putin also has championed a new set of populist, nationalist, conservative ideas antithetical to the liberal, international order anchored by the United States. Putinism now has admirers in Western democracies, just as communism did during the Cold War. Europe is divided again between East and West; the line has just moved farther east. Russia's

military, economic, cyber, and informational capabilities to project power and ideas have also grown considerably in the last several years. And sometimes, this hot peace has morphed into hot wars, not directly between the United States and Russia but between proxies in Ukraine and Syria. And then there are some acts of Russian aggression that Soviet leaders during the Cold War never dared to attempt, including annexing territory in Ukraine and intervening in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Khrushchev and Brezhnev confronted the United States around the world, even at times using military force as an instrument to fight the Cold War, but never annexed land or audaciously violated American sovereignty. As Putin's Russia has amassed new capabilities and greater intent to challenge the United States and the West more generally, America's standing as the leader of the free world and anchor of the liberal international order has waned. Compared to the Cold War, that's new too. Today's hot peace is not as dangerous as the worst moments of the Cold War, but most certainly is tenser than some of the more cooperative periods of the Cold War.

What went wrong? Why did the end of the Cold War not produce closer relations between our two countries? Could this new, tragic era of confrontation have been avoided?

And what had I gotten wrong? From my days as a high school debater in Bozeman, Montana, in 1979 to my years as ambassador to Russia ending in 2014, I had argued that closer relations with Moscow served American national interests. As a college student, I'd been so eager to deepen engagement with the Russians — or the Soviets, back then — that I enrolled in first-year Russian in the fall quarter of my freshman year at Stanford University and then traveled to what Ronald Reagan called "the evil empire," against the wishes of my mother, on my first trip abroad, to study in Leningrad in the summer of 1983. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, I again packed my bags and moved to Russia to help support market and democratic reforms there, believing that those changes would help bring our two countries closer together. Beginning on January 21, 2009, I worked for President Obama at the National Security

Council, and in 2012, I became his ambassador, animated by the belief that a more cooperative relationship served American national interests. I have spent the greater part of my life trying to deepen relations between Russia and the United States. But in 2014 all these efforts seemed for naught. Heightening my sense of frustration, I was banned by Putin from traveling to Russia — the first U.S. ambassador since George Kennan, in 1952, to be barred entry to the country. What had I personally done wrong? Had I pursued the wrong strategies? Or had I embraced the wrong goals in the first place?

[From Cold War to Hot Peace](#) seeks to answer these big, hard questions about Russian-American relations over the last thirty years, from my perspective as both analyst and participant. The story begins with the first reset in U.S.-Soviet relations, in the Reagan-Gorbachev era, and ends with the last, failed attempt initiated by President Obama. It's a complex story, shaped by Cold War legacies, punctuated by economic depression and civil wars, and interrupted by popular uprisings and foreign interventions. I will address all of these factors as potential causes of cooperation and confrontation. However, in my account, individuals — their ideas and their decisions — drive the narrative of U.S.-Russia relations over the last three decades. Real people made decisions that sometimes produced cooperation and other times led to confrontation. Relations between the United States and Russia were not determined by the balance of power between our two countries, or by innate forces such as economic development, culture, history, or geography. Where others see destiny, determinism, and inevitability, I see choices, contingency, and opportunities, realized and missed.' In this book, I evaluate both American and Russian leaders — their ideas, decisions, and behavior — by how well they succeeded in achieving what in my view were desirable and attainable objectives. I try to evaluate my own work through the same critical lens.

U.S. leaders have certainly pursued policies that by turns nurtured and undermined cooperation with Russia. I will discuss how and why. I personally made some mistakes in both analysis and actions.

Those are not glossed over here. But in my account, decisions and actions by Russian leaders — shaped in large part by their domestic politics — drive most of the drama in American-Russian relations, sometimes in a positive direction, other times in a negative direction.

[From Cold War to Hot Peace](#) is one participant's recollections, not a dispassionate history of U.S.-Russian relations over the last thirty years. As I have learned from writing other scholarly books, memories are imperfect sources for the writing of history. It is too soon to draft the definitive account of these events, especially those that occurred in the Obama era, because almost none of the important documents — including ones that I wrote — have been declassified. Few of the central decision makers, in Russia or the United States, have been interviewed. Only a handful of the central policymakers in the United States have written memoirs. The memoir literature from Russian decision makers is even thinner. On some big policy issues during the Obama era, such as Iran and Syria, I also recognize that I participated in only a portion of the policymaking — that which had to do with Russia. Others in our government will have to write their accounts to complete the picture. And as this book goes to press, the role of Russia in the 2016 U.S. presidential election is a story still unfolding. This book is an early, interpretative take — my take — on this era in U.S.-Russia relations hope it will stimulate and inform other scholars in the writing of more definitive studies in the future.

By design, [From Cold War to Hot Peace](#) is a mix of abstract analysis, historical narrative, and personal anecdote. I hope that President Obama, my fellow policy wonks in government, my colleagues at Stanford, and my mother in Montana will all read it. That's a tall order. My mom will tire when reading about telemetry, and my academic colleagues may not be that intrigued by the two-step. Therefore, I give all readers license to skip those passages not of interest to them, which I trust can be done without losing the arc of the story. Scholars will quickly identify the social science theories that shaped both the analysis in this book and my thinking about policy while in government. But I deliberately hid, rather than highlighted, the

academic scaffolding and academic references to allow for better storytelling. I also wrote this book from the sometimes competing perspectives of scholar, policymaker, diplomat, and Montanan. Rather than try to maintain one voice, I deliberately deployed these multiple standpoints because I am all of these things, and therefore my understanding of and engagement in Russian-American relations was shaped by these multiple dimensions. These tensions in the book accurately reflect those tensions in my life.

[The Aviator](#) by Eugene Vodolazkin, translated from Russian by Lisa Hayden [Oneworld Publications, 9781786072719]

From award-winning author Eugene Vodolazkin comes this poignant story of memory, love and loss spanning twentieth-century Russia. A man wakes up in a hospital bed, with no idea who he is or how he came to be there. The only information the doctor shares with his patient is his name: Innokenty Petrovich Platonov. As memories slowly resurface, Innokenty begins to build a vivid picture of his former life as a young man in Russia in the early twentieth century, living through the turbulence of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. But soon, only one question remains: how can he remember the start of the twentieth century, when the pills by his bedside were made in 1999? Reminiscent of the great works of twentieth-century Russian literature, with nods to Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Bulgakov's *The White Guard*, [The Aviator](#) cements Vodolazkin's position as the rising star of Russia's literary scene.

A man wakes up in a hospital bed. He has no idea who he is, where he is, or how he came to be there. The only information that the doctor shares with his patient before urging him to write down every thought and feeling that comes to mind is the young man's name: Innokenty Petrovich Platonov.

As Innokenty starts to write, out pours a kaleidoscope of images, faces and events, weaving the story of a young man in Russia in the early twentieth century, through the turbulence of the Russian Revolution and its aftermath. From childhood memories of summers in the family dacha playing aviators with his cousin to the family's

compulsory move to a communal flat in the city and his imprisonment in the Soviet gulag, Innokenty gradually builds up a vivid picture of his former life.

There is just one question remaining: how is he able to remember the start of the twentieth century, when the pills by his bedside were made in 1999?

### Q&A with Eugene Vodolazkin, author of [The Aviator](#)

*Who is Innokenty Petrovich Platonov, and where does he think he is when he awakens in a hospital in Russia in 1999?*

The hero of the novel, Innokenty Petrovich Platonov (born in 1900) is a student of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts, repressed by the Soviet authorities in 1923. Waking up in the hospital ward in 1999, he realizes that he has lost his memory and does not understand who he is or where he is. This is a person deprived of personal history, and therefore, experience, which is actually the result of life lived.

Innokenty's memories are from another era, pre-Soviet Russia. He gradually remembers the Revolution and his subsequent imprisonment in the gulag, where he chose to participate in the camp doctor's Lazarus project, where prisoners were cryogenically frozen. Was this a real scientific experiment?

No, the camp doctor, Muromtsev, is a wholly invented person, as are the cryogenic experiments he conducts. But, if you read the memoirs of the prisoners of the Solovki camp, you can feel confident that there could have been a Lazarus Project like what Innokenty participates in. At the time, the Solovki camp was the Soviet Union in miniature. Along with torture and murder, normal things from daily Russian life happened there — magazines were published, scientific experiments were put in place, and there was even a theater. At one time, I published the memoirs of Solovki prisoners in a book called *A Piece of Land, Surrounded by the Heaven*. This book informed my description of the Solovki camp in the novel.

*Time runs differently for Innokenty - he's technically 99 years old, but he looks only 30. What was it like to write from his perspective?*

Innokenty is not only a 100-year-old man with a 30-year-old body; he also has only the experience of a 30-year-old. In fact, in 1999, Innokenty's consciousness initially does not differ from what it was at the moment he was cryogenically frozen - his exit from life. Was it difficult to write about such a person? Not so much. Yes, I, the author of this book, am no longer 30 years old, but, on the other hand, I am not 99 yet, so I remember being 30 well enough!

Innokenty added nothing to his life experiences during the decades that he spent in liquid nitrogen. But after he awakens, his mind does begin to change. With these changes, the author also changes. I emphasize: it's not the author who changes the hero, but rather the hero who changes the author, since the hero sometimes shows an unexpected independence. Well, the author changes something in his characters, not without it. So, the work of creating Innokenty Platonov was a complex interaction between the author and the hero.

*Talk about your interest in time - you've said before that time is a spiral - can you explain? How does that affect the characters in The Aviator?*

The spiral is a model, first of all, of the history of mankind. It is the union of a circle (absolute repeatability) and a line (continuous updating). Yes, the spiral describes also the life of an individual, which consists of repetitions. These repetitions are obvious — otherwise the human experience would be useless, and we would meet with each emerging situation as the first time. On the other hand, there cannot be absolute repetitions, because the same circumstances have never completely repeated.

*Innokenty remembers an aviator he saw at an air show when he was a child - the aviator was debonair, dashing, daring - but he also died in an accident at the show. Can you explain why the aviator is a symbol for this novel? Is it because aviators, as people and also as an archetype, no longer exist?*

I chose this title for the novel, because the aviator is a person whose sight is extremely wide. We in Russia have a song in which the pilot tells his beloved: "I can see everything from above, you should know that!" You are right: this type has already largely left, and with him, apparently, the word has also gone. That's why I used this word as a reflection of a bygone life. Now people have become less romantic, and even airplanes are run not so much by pilots as by computers.

*So many of Innokenty's memories are blurry - he wonders if he's misremembering things - what is the role of memory in our lives? Is it more important than fact?*

Eventually, disappearing, the facts remain only in someone's memory. They stop their "real" existence forever (and was it even at all?). In the memory of different people, events are reflected in different ways — otherwise why would people argue so fiercely about history?

*The whole of the Russian 20th century is in this novel, from 1900 when Innokenty is born, until 1999 when he is "reborn" into a society that is almost unrecognizable (he has to be told what a TV is, what a computer is, etc.). Did you write about Russian history, or about an individual's life? Can you separate the two?*

I wrote first of all about personal history. It seems to me that this is the most important thing that a person has. The history of the country and, more broadly, of the world is also, of course, important, but by and large it is part of personal history as its small part — say, the beginning.

Did anything surprise you while writing *The Aviator*? Yes, I did not expect that Nastya would be much simpler than her grandmother. Innokenty did not expect this, either. And I, together with him, realized that there is no substitute for a person, and there are never the same two people. In addition, Innokenty surprised me by refusing to be treated in Germany and returning to Russia. I still cannot understand why he did it.

*Throughout the novel there is commentary about the importance of writing, of words, of remembering and conveying details through description both*

*written and spoken - is this novel also a love letter to history and preserving it?*

In the history of Russian culture (Brodsky, Akhmatova), the Latin phrase *Deus conservat omnia* — "God saves everything" — is significant. This is a very optimistic phrase. It seems to me that some part of the events He preserves through us. The world is so beautiful that we must preserve every particle of it. To do this, you should train your eye and ear and reflect everything in the word. Literature is the naming of an unnamed, description of the undisclosed. In a broad sense, literature is history, but the history not only of wars, cataclysms and upheavals, but also the history of a quiet Christmas evening, the ant crawling along the path, echoes of a distant song. What do we actually have besides history? <>

[\*A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership\*](#) by James Comey [Flatiron Books, 9781250192455]

In his book, former FBI director James Comey shares his never-before-told experiences from some of the highest-stakes situations of his career in the past two decades of American government, exploring what good, ethical leadership looks like, and how it drives sound decisions. His journey provides an unprecedented entry into the corridors of power, and a remarkable lesson in what makes an effective leader.

Mr. Comey served as director of the FBI from 2013 to 2017, appointed to the post by President Barack Obama. He previously served as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, and the U.S. deputy attorney general in the administration of President George W. Bush. From prosecuting the Mafia and Martha Stewart to helping change the Bush administration's policies on torture and electronic surveillance, overseeing the Hillary Clinton e-mail investigation as well as ties between the Trump campaign and Russia, Comey has been involved in some of the most consequential cases and policies of recent history.

Excerpt: I am writing in A time of great anxiety in my country. I understand the anxiety, but also

believe America is going to be fine. I choose to see opportunity as well as danger.

Donald Trump's presidency threatens much of what is good in this nation. We all bear responsibility for the deeply flawed choices put before voters during the 2016 election, and our country is paying a high price: this president is unethical and untethered to truth and institutional values. His leadership is transactional, ego driven, and about personal loyalty. We are fortunate some ethical leaders have chosen to serve and to stay at senior levels of government, but they cannot prevent all of the damage from the forest fire that is the Trump presidency. Their task is to try to contain it.

I see many so-called conservative commentators, including some faith leaders, focusing on favorable policy initiatives or court appointments to justify their acceptance of this damage, while deemphasizing the impact of this president on basic norms and ethics. That strikes me as both hypocritical and morally wrong. The hypocrisy is evident if you simply switch the names and imagine that a President Hillary Clinton had conducted herself in a similar fashion in office. I've said this earlier but it's worth repeating: close your eyes and imagine these same voices if President Hillary Clinton had told the FBI director, "I hope you will let it go," about the investigation of a senior aide, or told casual, easily disprovable lies nearly every day and then demanded we believe them. The hypocrisy is so thick as to almost be darkly funny. I say this as someone who has worked in law enforcement for most of my life, and served presidents of both parties. What is happening now is not normal. It is not fake news. It is not okay.

Whatever your politics, it is wrong to dismiss the damage to the norms and traditions that have guided the presidency and our public life for decades or, in many cases, since the republic was founded. It is also wrong to stand idly by, or worse, to stay silent when you know better, while a president brazenly seeks to undermine public confidence in law enforcement institutions that were established to keep our leaders in check. Every organization has its flaws, but the career prosecutors and agents at the Justice Department

and the FBI are there for a reason—to rise above partisanship and do what's right for the country, regardless of their own political views. Without these checks on our leaders, without those institutions vigorously standing against abuses of power, our country cannot sustain itself as a functioning democracy. I know there are men and women of good conscience in the United States Congress on both sides of the aisle who understand this. But not enough of them are speaking out. They must ask themselves to what, or to whom, they hold a higher loyalty: to partisan interests or to the pillars of democracy? Their silence is complicity—it is a choice—and somewhere deep down they must know that.

Policies come and go. Supreme Court justices come and go. But the core of our nation is our commitment to a set of shared values that began with George Washington—to restraint and integrity and balance and transparency and truth. If that slides away from us, only a fool would be consoled by a tax cut or a different immigration policy.

But I choose to be optimistic. Yes, the current president will do significant damage in the short term. Important norms and traditions will be damaged by the flames. But forest fires, as painful as they can be, bring growth. They spur growth that was impossible before the fire, when old trees crowded out new plants on the forest floor. In the midst of this fire, I already see new life—young people engaged as never before, and the media, the courts, academics, nonprofits, and all other parts of civil society finding reason to bloom.

This fire also offers an opportunity to rebalance power among the three branches of our government, closer to the model the founders intended. There is reason to believe this fire will leave the presidency weaker and Congress and the courts stronger, just as the forest fire of Watergate did. There is a lot of good in that.

Thoughtful people are staring at the vicious partisanship that has grown all around us. Far from creating a new norm where lying is widely accepted, the Trump presidency has ignited a focus on truth and ethics. Parents are talking to their

children about truth-telling, about respect for all people, about rejecting prejudice and hate. Schools and religious institutions are talking about values-driven leadership.

The next president, no matter the party, will surely emphasize values—truth, integrity, respect, and tolerance—in ways an American leader hasn't needed to for more than forty years. The fire will make something good grow.

I wrote this book because I hope it will be useful to people living among the flames who are thinking about what comes next. I also hope it will be useful to readers long after the flames are doused, by inspiring them to choose a higher loyalty, to find truth among lies, and to pursue ethical leadership.  
<>

[Compulsory Games](#) by Robert Aickman, edited and with an introduction by Victoria Nelson [New York Review Books Classics, NYRB Classics, 9781681371894]

The best and most interesting stories by Robert Aickman, a master of the supernatural tale, the uncanny, and the truly weird.

Robert Aickman's self-described "strange stories" are confoundingly and uniquely his own. These superbly written tales terrify not with standard thrills and gore but through a radical overturning of the laws of nature and everyday life. His territory of the strange, of the "void behind the face of order," is a surreal region that grotesquely mimics the quotidian: Is that river the Thames, or is it even a river? What does it mean when a prospective lover removes one dress, and then another—and then another? Does a herd of cows in a peaceful churchyard contain the souls of jilted women preparing to trample a cruel lover to death? Published for the first time under one cover, the stories in this collection offer an unequalled introduction to a profoundly original modern master of the uncanny.

*"Reading Robert Aickman is like watching a magician work, and very often I'm not even sure what the trick was, AU I know is that he did it beautifully."* —NEIL GAIMAN

"Robert Aickman is one of the twentieth century's finest practitioners of the short story and his name should be placed among the greats—Flannery O'Connor, Irwin Shaw, Raymond Carver. Aickman wrote what he called 'strange stories'—the sort of thing that gets the dreaded genre fiction tag attached to you, so it's mainly horror fans who know his work. But make no mistake. The number of shortstory writers in English who are or were Aickman's equal is a low single digit. You will never forget the first Aickman story you read, nor be satisfied when you've read them all. May this new collection unnerve an entire generation of readers the way I got permanently unnerved when I first read 'Le Miroir' in *Whispers* magazine in 1977." —John Darnielle

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A comfortable experience it's not reading a Robert Aickman story.

Disturbing, persistent noise—of trains, bells, cuckoo clocks, watches, iron shutters, too-loud wind, whistling, small aircraft—assaults your inner ear. Substances that proliferate unpleasantly—lichen, soot, mist, dust, wet straw, mushrooms—rise off the

page to envelop you. Squirming, you find yourself embarked on a journey to an unknown destination that once reached proves even less comprehensible than the events along the way. When, baffled, you set the book down, you brush your arm reflexively to remove the dust that lingers—oh, that unsettling dust!—but it doesn't go away, not ever, because now the dust is in you. An Aickman story is a dream you never wake up from.

It's also a dream unshaped by the procrustean bed of genre. Just as he will disappoint the reader who believes realism or a genteel modernism to be the prerequisite of a high literary work, Aickman is likely to disappoint the reader who demands the thrills and chills of traditional supernatural fiction. There is never the comforting frame of the traditional horror story that attaches definite causes to uncanny events—causes that explain everything even when the explanation turns out to be supernatural. In the classic formula such stories follow, the irrational is safely unleashed within the boundaries of the quasi-rational, generating a reassuring feeling of closure after the climactic scare. Right, that scholar in M. R. James's "Casting the Runes" is being stalked by an unknown creature because an amateur researcher smarting at the scholar's unfavorable review slipped him a paper with a runic curse on it! Return the slip of paper to its writer, the creature kills the perpetrator instead of the scholar, and the world is restored to order.

Don't expect this kind of normalizing closure from Aickman, whose "unheimlich maneuver," in John J. Miller's very apt phrase, is impossible to nail down and remains unique to this author. (The term "Aickmanish," as accurately evocative a label as "Kafkaesque," was already being used by one of Robert's Highgate School teachers to describe a student essay of his.) An Aickman story typically opens with a quotidian character leading a humdrum life—a minor bureaucratic functionary or low-level bank employee, a middle-class wife with a conventional husband and home. But daily life, Aickman cautions us, "is entirely a matter of the pattern men and women impose upon it." Reality, which is far more dangerous than these easy patterns, "lies far behind, and is unchangeable." So the narrative builds slowly, almost magisterially,

until the first highly unpredictable moment—"the moment that, of its nature, can never be quite examined, quite elucidated, or quite extinguished," as Aickman puts it in "The Strangers"—when events take a sharp left turn and then another, and another, and nobody ever quite finds their way home.

Confounding to some readers but never overplayed for cheap thrills, these left turns can sometimes be classified, inadequately, as supernatural, sometimes not. (The best word is possibly unnatural.) More often than not, they involve a shifting of dimensional zones, a rejiggering of the laws of time and space within overlapping but noncontiguous perspectives. In literary terms, they are something like what happens in the interstices between sentences in a Henry Green novel. Sometimes the main character escapes the uncanny predicament, sometimes not, but either way his or her life never quite gets back on track, at least not in the usual way. How, for example, after a bewildering series of logic-defying shifts, is the protagonist of "Compulsory Games" able to see himself at story's end as a separate figure standing in a field, about to be crushed (maybe) by a small airplane piloted by his wife and her female lover (or are they, maybe, the two other figures standing in the field)?

To be crude where Aickman is not, these are the kinds of questions that lay eggs under your skin. No satisfactory answers are available, either in the stories themselves or in the reader's head. More precisely, any answer that might be proffered will be (to echo an Aickman title) insufficient.

This trail of maddening loose ends is no careless mistake on the author's part; it is a calculated tactic that serves to collapse the premises of the material world far more effectively than any number of invented hauntings shaped by genre tradition. Aickman is a subtle minimalist who means to set us on a Jabberwockian path into a different plane of reality. "The essential quality of a ghost story is that it gives form to the unanswerable," he wrote in his graceful introduction to the third of the eight Fontana Great Ghost Stories collections he edited. Dubbing them "stories not concerned with

appearance and consistency, but with the spirit behind appearance, the void behind the face of order," he proposed the word *geist*, or spirit, instead of ghost as the best descriptor for this genre. "In the end," runs a pronouncement by Sacheverell Sitwell that Aickman used as an epigram to one of his collections, "it is the mystery that lasts and not the explanation."

Of no stories is this truer than of Aickman's own, for which he preferred the enigmatic label "strange." That is an apt word for these nuanced tales of characters in settings that are irreconcilable with received notions of what is real. Aickman's territory of strange—that "void behind the face of order"—draws neither on the constricted Protestant Christian—inflected tradition of the evil satanic supernatural or (with one or two exceptions) the folkloric faux-pagan conventions of Victorian fantasy. Morally neutral and utterly original to him, it is a region ruled by the unconscious logic of dreams. No stranger to the surrealist tactic of radical juxtaposition, Aickman employed it with great and unobtrusive skill. As one of his characters, an amateur painter confounded by the constantly changing prospect from his holiday hotel room, exclaims, "Did his imagination in some way have to embrace everything or nothing?"

Some defining features of Aickman country, in no particular order:

- **Time and space.** If we are no longer situated in linear time or three-dimensional space, that means any sense of cause and effect dissolves, too, and all happenings become synchronous. In "Hand in Glove," time functions on different tracks for timid Millicent and her bossy friend Winifred: Thursday for one, Wednesday for the other, with crucial consequences for the story. When the suburbanite Delbert in "No Time Is Passing" returns from hobnobbing with a sinister but unidentified entity on the other side of the (previously unnoticed) river below his house, he finds that no time has passed, in the usual sense; it has gotten all twisted up instead. Not only has the house been vandalized but his wife, Hesper, returns wearing a different

dress than the one she wore when she left that morning, she either is or isn't unfaithful this day or at some future time, and the child she was pregnant with that morning has maybe already been born. In the face of all this, Delbert can only respond with the equivalent of a doomed shrug: "Tomorrow is always another day, take it or leave it."

- **The natural order.** What is supernatural (or unnatural) in an Aickman story is not always horrifying in itself, it's the casual positioning of this element that terrifies. He loves oblique, corner-of-the-eye effects, throwaway asides that don't bear directly on the narrative, and the fact that the uncanny lurks in the margins instead of being front and center makes it doubly unsettling. In his great story "The Stains," Aickman tells us of a "curious serpentine rabbit-run" in the woods, adding the chilling caveat, "except that rabbits do not run like serpents." The creature that made this trail, however, never figures in the story. A glimpse of the inside of a country church in "Hand in Glove" shakes two characters to their core, but we readers never lay eyes on it. When the hero of "Laura" enters a room with "rotting woodwork, and huge worms, and soiled rags on the floor," we almost miss those worms tucked between the woodwork and the rags, and they are never mentioned again. A character in "Residents Only" notes in passing that he spent a week every summer in childhood at a certain coastal town and "would remember the Strange Things on the cliff until the day he died"—but not a word more do we hear of town, cliff, or Strange Things. In some ineffably Aickmanish way, this kind of omission feels scarier than a whole story devoted to Strange Things.
- **Men and women.** Aickman's male characters tend to be ordinary citizens with ordinary jobs, lives, and prospects. Many of the females they run up against, however, turn out to be one version or another of Lady Death and share the

interesting traits of being both physically powerful and strangely costumed. Of the innumerable loving descriptions of the clothes his female characters wear ("The blouse was in narrow honey and petunia stripes, with a still narrower white stripe at intervals"), a reliable marker of dangerous female feyness is "oddly dressed," and this description is often not elaborated on. Moreover, these dangerous objects of his heroes' desires—such as the title character of "Laura," a revenant whom he does dress in sixties-style short skirts and white mod boots as she tries to lure the hero into her modernist underworld—are rarely linked with any preexisting mythos. They remain ciphers, too much their own creatures to be pinned to the wall with the label "fairy" or "fata morgana."

Aickman's female protagonists, in contrast, are nuanced, sophisticated, and sensitively drawn. He seems to like them better than his men, actually. Where his male characters get ensnared in a downward spiral, his women transform in a way that recalls the alchemical tales of Leonora Carrington. Both types, the Lady Deaths his men chase and the housewife pupae soon to be butterflies, experience a more expansive trajectory than the men, and their startling metamorphoses confound and sometimes threaten the very existence of their more conventional husbands and lovers. In some cases the daring break with predictable routines catapults them into a very ambiguous future indeed. While Grace and her female lover of "Compulsory Games" are liberated to a presumably more adventurous existence, Millicent of "Hand in Glove" is not: after succeeding, in classic passive-aggressive fashion, in getting her sadistic former lover trampled to death by the wraiths of jilted women (incarnated for this purpose in a herd of cows), she gets hunted down in turn by his vengeful spirit.

- **Sex and sensuality.** As a rule, sex is notable by its displaced absence in the horror genre, where fear trumps lust as the

overriding emotion. Here Aickman is unusual on two counts. Sexual desire is often a driving force in his stories, and when the act is represented, his descriptions are more provocative than those of his mainstream realist contemporaries, including Kingsley Amis, his rival for the novelist Elizabeth Jane Howard's affections. In "Marriage," a man seesawing between two women who share a disturbingly fluid identity finds himself having sex with one of them on a divan: "Clinging together, he and she were drowning in it, down, down, down, down. As they dropped, all the way, she showed him small, wonderful things, which tied him in fetters, clogged him with weights." In the last outrageous left turn of this story, the diffident protagonist's offbeat sexual experiences with the enigmatic Helen Black and Ellen Brown send him home to bed with his mother, an act that produces this final consoling reflection: "He knew that she would never change, never disappoint. She did not even need to be thought about."

- **Black humor.** Like sex, this element, and its prerequisite of a sophisticated sensibility, is usually absent in the horror genre. Aickman's own voice, invisible to his narrators but not to us, drips with satire; like Saki's, it constitutes the default subtext of every story. (Sample: "Local councillors have this in common with African kings: at first they are popularly voted in and on all sides pampered with sweetmeats; but it is upon the unmentionable understanding that ultimately they are to be maltreated and slain.")

He often read his stories aloud, laughing, to one of his young companions, Leslie Gardner, and told her they ought to be read that way, for their humor. In the same dark spirit, it's reported that Franz Kafka laughed so hard when he read his stories to his friend Max Brod that the tears rolled down his cheeks.

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Robert Fordyce Aickman was born in 1914, the son of a London architect and a much younger woman who fought bitterly during their marriage and separated when Robert was seventeen. So mismatched a couple were they that he would doubtless have endorsed the narrator's sentiments in Delmore Schwartz's classic story "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," who dreams he is watching a newsreel of his parents' courtship and, burdened with full knowledge of the impending debacle, stands up in the theater and shouts warnings at the screen, begging them to go no further. Both of Aickman's parents sought the love they missed in each other in Robert and treated their son as a fellow adult even as each had passionate friendships with people of the same sex. Robert's father in particular seemed fixated on (as opposed to being genuinely affectionate with) his son. Sociable but disorganized, William Arthur Aickman also painted (he showed regularly at the Royal Academy) and delighted in taking young Robert on long walks in the country. It was on one of those rambles that Aickman remembers his first glimpse of the canals that were to figure prominently in his adult life but in surprisingly few of his stories.

[Though rivers do—rivers named Waste, rivers that were never there before, the Avon, all kinds of rivers. In *The River Runs Uphill: A Story of Success and Failure*, Aickman describes being hoisted up on his father's shoulders to view the lock at Cassiobury Park. Though he declares he cut all things personal from this second volume of his autobiography, which focuses on his cofounding of the Inland Waterways Association with L.T. C. Rolt, he cannot resist detailing the dire real-life events that led to the haunting of the lock cottage.]

By his own account, Robert filled the vacuum of parental neglect by retreating into Brontësque fantasies of imaginary nations in East Africa and an alternate-reality Venice, both manageable worlds that could be satisfactorily controlled by a solitary child. Admirers of the magnificent story "The Trains" will not be surprised to learn that transport systems, including elaborate train and tram schedules, were prominent in these invented principalities.

Fantastic tales were already a tradition in his family. Aickman's mother's father was Richard Bernard Heldmann, the son of a German Jewish émigré merchant and a prolific author; under the pen name Richard Marsh he was most notorious for the best-selling Victorian Gothic horror novel *The Beetle*, about an Egyptian scarab come to sinister life. Like his grandson, Heldmann also tried his hand at being a literary agent. As a child Aickman visited his grandfather's mansion, Heldmann Close. In correspondence with the psychic Harry Price, however, he confessed he did not share others' high opinion of *The Beetle* and considered it merely a "period piece."

Aickman did not attend university. Supported by a small inheritance, his mostly bachelor adult existence (engaged in art, theater, and opera reviewing, and literary agenting as well as his passion, the inland waterways of England) holds echoes of an earlier era and the bachelor lives of two Edwardian writers of ghost stories who preceded him, both surnamed James: Montague Rhodes, the Eton headmaster, and Henry, the popular London dinner guest from America. Now it is no contradiction to be both an introvert and a convivial man-about-town since group interaction, for one thing, carries little threat of emotional intimacy. A frequent guest of married couples and a cultured, handsome escort to the many young women he squired platonically in his later years, this socially adept Isolato (to use Melville's term) was also married for a time and was a gracious host himself. Though Aickman states that he was always drawn to "ethereal and nonattainable" women (who coalesce as a recurring character in his stories), his wife, Ray, was outgoing and vivacious, as was the writer Elizabeth Jane Howard, his lover and collaborator in the early days of the Inland Waterways Association. Aickman and Ray also served as Howard's literary agents for her first novel, and as she chronicles in her memoir, *Slipstream* (a more unflattering portrait of Aickman features in her novel *Casting Off*), Howard encouraged him to write his first stories as he in turn encouraged her to write ghost stories. Their joint collection, *We Are For the Dark*, was published in 1951. "Raising the Wind" in this volume is his

counterpart to her magnificent waterways story "Three Miles Up" in that collection.

Aickman's longtime friend Graham Smith mentions his "administrative skills" cofounding and leading the conservationist Inland Waterways Association and his "ability to inspire hundreds of volunteers." Yet Aickman also alienated many in the organization with his need to impose his own views unilaterally. His own mordant opinions on the tedious business of committee work are memorably set forth in "Residents Only," a meticulously detailed account of bureaucratic incompetence around a neglected cemetery whose discreet sidebar of disturbing peripheral phenomena gradually surrounds and eventually swallows up the sober narrative like the profane marginalia in a medieval manuscript. The story builds inexorably to a bravura double-left-turn finale in which the dead, seemingly, complete their task of merging with the living.

Aickman was sixty-seven when he died of stomach cancer in 1981.

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This volume contains eleven stories from his eight original collections that are not included in the Faber four-volume set issued in 1974, along with four stories unpublished during Aickman's lifetime. ["The Strangers," "The Coffin House," "A Disciple of Plato," and "The Fully-Conducted Tour."]

Commissioned and recorded by the BBC Radio Four's Morning Story in 1976, "The Fully-Conducted Tour" was never broadcast. The reason given to Aickman by the program's producer, Barbara Crowther ("I'm sure you appreciate that this kind of script is very difficult indeed to put over") suggests some of the difficulties his works faced in gaining public acceptance during his lifetime.]

Superlatively written and psychologically acute, these sophisticated modernist tales merit a much higher ranking in the literary canon than the genre ghetto they currently occupy—a ranking at least as high, I believe, as the supernatural stories of that second James, first name Henry, or the works of Ronald Firbank, both respectably situated in the "Literature" section of your local bookstore.

Yet Aickman's centenary in 2014 was an occasion celebrated almost exclusively in the fantasy fandom world. The few nods it received in the mainstream press (sample headline, from *The Guardian*: "Cult Horror Stories Resurrected for Centenary") were hardly likely to attract the more literary reader. Nor were the gentle children's fantasy covers gracing the Faber reissues, found only under "Horror/Fantasy" in that same bookstore.

"The successful ghost story," Aickman once said, "does not close a door and leave inside it still another definition, a still further solution. On the contrary, it must open a door, preferably where no one had previously noticed a door to exist; and, at the end, leave it open, or, possibly, ajar."

This is the very door Henry James's hero Spencer Brydon uses in "The Jolly Corner" to frame a "quaint analogy" that will become literally true in the course of the story: "that of his opening a door behind which he would have made sure of finding nothing, a door into a room shuttered and void, and yet so coming, with a great suppressed start, on some quite erect confronting presence, something planted in the middle of the place and facing him through the dusk." Brydon is actively summoning a ghost, the specter of the man he might have been, in the empty house of his youth. Eventually a real door stands ajar, the apparition does appear (described with delicate Jamesian indirection), and all is beautifully, as James would say (perhaps too beautifully?), explained: By confronting his abhorrent alter ego, Brydon finds his true self at last, along with the love that's been patiently waiting for him. With this happy solution James firmly shuts the door again.

Aickman has his own style of indirection, or more precisely misdirection, and I do love imagining the kind of mind-bending coda, the sheer aesthetic disjuncture, he would have added to this very proper ghost story.

Speaking of codas, what happens after the centenary? Books have their own fates, Horace reminds us. Will the Aickman tales stay locked in the Gothic cellar, or will they be allowed to tiptoe up to the parlor? Or will they simply be

"reforgotten," in Iain Sinclair's not to be forgotten phrase?

The best answer, I think, is another question: If the reception of Robert Aickman's works were the subject of one of his own stories, how would it end?

Most likely, with the door left confoundingly ajar. - VICTORIA NELSON

[The Land Breakers](#) by John Ehle, introduction by Linda Spalding [New York Review Books classics, NYRB Classics, 9781590177631]

Set deep in the Appalachian wilderness between the years of 1779 and 1784, *The Land Breakers* is a saga like the Norse sagas or the book of Genesis, a story of first and last things, of the violence of birth and death, of inescapable sacrifice and the faltering emergence of community.

Mooney and Imy Wright, twenty-one, former indentured servants, long habituated to backbreaking work but not long married, are traveling west. They arrive in a no-account settlement in North Carolina and, on impulse, part with all their savings to acquire a patch of land high in the mountains. With a little livestock and a handful of crude tools, they enter the mountain world—one of transcendent beauty and cruel necessity—and begin to make a world of their own.

Mooney and Imy are the first to confront an unsettled country that is sometimes paradise and sometimes hell. They will soon be followed by others.

John Ehle is a master of the American language. He has an ear for dialogue and an eye for nature and a grasp of character that have established *The Land Breakers* as one of the great fictional reckonings with the making of America.

"[The Land Breakers](#) broke fresh ground and opened a new world for Southern and Appalachian fiction when it was first published in 1964. The land that is broken is itself a major, unforgettable character in this vivid, memorable story. Four decades later, John Ehle's novel still

delights, still inspires, still leaves its spell on the reader." —ROBERT MORGAN

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John Ehle, born in Asheville, North Carolina, in 1925, can trace his ancestry, through his mother, back to one of the first three families to settle the western mountains of North Carolina in the eighteenth century. The eldest of five children, he was expected to become a preacher and has vivid recollections of his grandmother on her porch swing discussing this with the local preacher. But after fighting in both Germany and Japan during World War II, he came home to enroll at the University of Chapel Hill, where, while working toward a master's degree in drama, he began to write radio plays, half-hour programs about adventurers or heroes for the American Adventure series, which was broadcast on NBC and Radio Europe. Ehle's apprenticeship in drama is evident throughout his subsequent work, in which character emerges most powerfully through the spoken word.

A sixth-generation North Carolinian, highly-acclaimed author John Ehle grew up on former Cherokee hunting grounds. His experience as an accomplished novelist, combined with his extensive, meticulous research, culminates in this moving tragedy rich with historical detail. Ehle is the author of seventeen books, perhaps the best known of which is the 1988 nonfiction work, [Trail of Tears: The Rise and Fall of the Cherokee Nation](#) [Anchor Books Doubleday, 9780385239547], which tells the searing story of the Cherokee Nation and its eventual removal from North Carolina to Oklahoma.

The Cherokee are a proud, ancient civilization. For hundreds of years they believed themselves to be the "Principle People" residing at the center of the earth. But by the 18th century, some of their leaders believed it was necessary to adapt to European ways in order to survive. Those chiefs sealed the fate of their tribes in 1875 when they signed a treaty relinquishing their land east of the Mississippi in return for promises of wealth and better land. The U.S. government used the treaty to justify the eviction of the Cherokee nation in an exodus that the Cherokee will forever remember as

the "trail where they cried." The heroism and nobility of the Cherokee shine through this intricate story of American politics, ambition, and greed.

But it wasn't until Ehle embraced the historical novel that he found the subject of his heart and his indelible characters. This cycle of seven novels, dubbed by Ehle the Mountain Novels, follows the lives of several families who settle in the steep mountains of North Carolina, families with names like Wright and Harrison and King, while exploring various eras of Appalachian history, from the first mountain settlement to the Civil War, the building of the first railroad, and the 1920s and '30s.

The first in that series, [The Land Breakers](#), was written fifty years ago and stands absolutely on its own. It begins in 1779 with a man and a woman, hungry and young. They have been walking for two or three years looking for land on which to make a home, working their way down the continent, north to south. They were sent from Ireland as children, bonded servants, and now they are married and free with some money saved. When a storekeeper in Morganton, North Carolina, offers them foothold on a faraway mountain, he adds, "I don't want to sell a tiny piece of it, though you look so needful. Have you come far?"

They have come far.

They have come to an almost nonexistent town and they stand looking into the distance at a mountain covered by trees and clouds and the narrow trails of ancient beasts. Nothing lives up there but wolves and panthers and a great, wanton bear. No person has ever made settlement in that high place. But with a horse and a cow, two sows, a boar, four chickens, and a she-dog, Mooney and Imy Wright climb for days, sleeping on the ground at night, until at last they find themselves enraptured and alone above the clouds. Choosing a spot on which to live their lives, they fell trees for a cabin, clear space for a garden, and carry water to make a fireplace of clay. The world is vast and empty around them but, by winter's end, the darkly ambitious Tinkler Harrison arrives with a retinue of slaves and horses and cattle and a new young wife. With him is his daughter, Lorry, who brings two growing sons along with a load of resentment

against her controlling father. Lorry's husband has left to find a piece of land in Kentucky. He's been gone two years, but Lorry believes he will return to their old homeplace in Virginia and wonders how he will ever find her now when she's been forced to follow her father to this unknown, wild place.

When Tinkler calls a halt to his kingly procession, he sees Mooney behind a stand of trees digging a narrow grave: Imy has become the mountain's victim. Survival is Ehle's theme. Survival is the constant challenge that each settler must meet. Settlement will come more gradually, as a community is formed through mishap and outburst, through scrupulous plan or devious plot or simple tragedy.

Next to arrive on the mountain is the unseemly family of Ernest Plover, who is dependent on Tinkler and utterly without spine. He brings his unkempt, useless wife and a rabble of singing, barefoot daughters, the eldest of whom is the waiflike Pearlamina, bearing the apple to be bitten or ignored by a grieving Mooney. Bold but strangely innocent, Pearlamina entices Mooney with sudden, unexpected visits. "You build that by yourself?" she says admiringly, on first seeing him by his cabin. And she adds disdainfully, "I knowed a man in Virginia that could throw a horse."

Ehle comes to his characters and their vivid language as naturally as his trees stand rooted to the earth. Of his wife's constant pregnancies, Ernest says, "I don't have to prick her; all I have to do is look at her, and she balloons out." "Ash-looking" is what Lorry does to find potatoes in her fireplace. Imy's coffin is a "bury box," and "cabin-caught" is what they all become in winter and in darkest night. This gift of tongues brings delightful realism to characters who vary greatly one from another in spite of the valley they have all chosen to settle in and defy. The tensions that slowly build between them are ominous and thrilling. "Here we are, come together, and closer will we come."

Mooney must find a wife. But will it be gentle Pearlamina, guileless and seductive, who is creating havoc in his heart?

He met her on the path one day. She was carrying her youngest sister along the path and was barefooted and held the baby close to her breasts. She walked toward him, her manner grave and serious, but she laughed softly in greeting him, so surprising him that he stopped. When he turned, he saw that she was watching him from farther along the path, and now she took the baby's hand and waved it at him. "Hello. Say hello," she said to the child.

Or will Mooney pursue the older and quieter Lorry, earthbound and sensible, the mother of sons, whose husband may appear at any moment? When Lorry visits Mooney's cabin, she doesn't "think she ought to sit down on the bed. That would be unseemly; also it would be deceptive, for she wasn't anxious in her body yet."

Ehle's women are treated with equal shares of empathy and dispassion. Pliant or unyielding, fretful or persevering, they confront a primitive environment and succumb or thrive. The men, modest or ambitious, gentle or violent, must work toward settlement even during episodes of mortal conflict. Perched on the edge of an uncivilized world, they must decide whether to move on or stay, whether to build of this wood quickly or that wood slowly, whether to sit by a grave or carve out a garden, whether to love and in what fashion to hate. This country will know its torments, most of them human-caused. The wandering husband will appear with a loaded rifle and keen eye; the slave-owning Tinkler will do his utmost to become the mountain's king; and other settlers will rattle and upset whatever compromise is found.

Who better to describe this place than a writer born and raised among its people, a writer who knows their particular language and ingrained habits of intemperance and benevolence. Even his landscape breathes, its plants curled to protect themselves, its rocks pressing hard against feet. There are the predators, too. Snakes and bears. Wolves. Pigs are carried off, sheep and dogs and chickens are killed because they have been brought by man and have no place in the natural world. Snakes inhabit scenes so horrifying, so brimful of detail as to suspend disbelief. Wolves provide the

distant chorus behind each puzzlement, and the great bear speaks for the mountain, blessing and damning as he moves among the inheritors of ground and river and trees.

Ehle still lives in these mountains. He has covered enough ground that he sees through its layers, knowing the former forests and the creatures that wandered there and the tools used to destroy what belonged and then build something to take its place. Living people abide in these stories with all their bravery and blemishes. The blemishes were formed long before they set out for the mountain, but it is up there that the settlers must look for grace. They have nothing worth keeping, nothing even close to worthy except for their hunger and belief in themselves.

[The Land Breakers](#) is a Chaucerian pageant—a pageant of herds and droves and carts and a beautiful woman on horseback and a man who believes himself to be king. It takes place in an early America with nothing to its credit but a people who have created themselves out of whatever it was that made them decide to up and go. It's the something that gets into Mooney and Imy as they make their way south inch by workaday inch. And what a force of new heart they bring to rushing creeks and the apparitional bear and the encroaching neighbors with their own unquenchable needs. These people will succeed or fail but they will lay down the structure of whatever lasts. They will be followed by their descendants in Ehle's six other chronicles of the mountain and its people. These books revolve around individual crises of faith or pride or class and each one stands entire. Appalachia has found a voice in Ehle's great achievement. -LINDA SPALDING

[I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing: Star Wars and the Triumph of Geek Culture](#) by A. D. Jameson [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 9780374537364]

"Funny, incisive, and timely ... Jameson does for geeks what geek culture does for its superheroes: he takes them seriously, respects their power, and refuses to hide his deep affection." —Lawrence Kasdan, co-screenwriter of *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Return of the Jedi*, *The Force Awakens*, and *Solo: A Star Wars Story*

In [I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing](#), A. D.

Jameson takes geeks and non-geeks alike on a surprising and insightful journey through the science fiction, fantasy, and superhero franchises that now dominate pop culture. Walking us through the rise of geekdom from its underground origins to the top of the box office and bestseller lists, Jameson takes in franchises like *The Lord of the Rings*, *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Trek*, and, in particular, *Star Wars*—as well as phenomena like fan fiction, cosplay, and YouTube parodies. Along the way, he blasts through the clichés surrounding geek culture: that its fans are mindless consumers who will embrace all things Spider-Man or Batman, regardless of quality; or that the popularity and financial success of *Star Wars* led to the death of ambitious filmmaking.

A lifelong geek, Jameson shines a new light on beloved classics, explaining the enormous love (and hate) they are capable of inspiring in fan and non-fan alike, while exploding misconceptions as to how and why they were made.

[I Find Your Lack of Faith Disturbing](#) tells the story of how the geeks have inherited the earth.

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## The Golden Age of Geekdom

I've always been a geek. And what's more, I'm old enough to remember when it wasn't cool to be one.

When I was in school, back in the 1980s and '90s, I spent each week looking forward to Friday night—not because I had dates or plans to meet up with my friends, but because that was when my local PBS station aired three episodes of *Star Trek* commercial-free: two episodes of *The Original Series*, plus one of *The Next Generation*. I tuned in religiously, regardless of whether or not I'd already seen them, taking notes on the plots and the names of the writers and directors. This was before the World Wide Web, before I even had a computer. If that wasn't nerdy enough, I savored the fact that, due to the lack of commercials, I was seeing each episode of *The Original Series* as it had originally aired, without any of its scenes missing. (The shows got trimmed down in syndication, to allow for extra advertising.)

The rest of the time I spent reading. I was especially fond of comic books like *The Uncanny X-Men*, a tale of misunderstood mutant outcasts. I took them with me wherever I went, concealing them from the other kids, afraid my hobby would lead to teasing and bullying—although I really don't know why I bothered, since I was teased and bullied anyway. I redrew my favorite panels, and spent what money I had on back issues, all the while wondering whether puberty might reveal me to be a mutant. I routinely longed for the X-Men's leader, Professor X, to come rolling up in his wheelchair and whisk me away to his boarding school, a

private institute "for gifted children" where the freaks and the outcasts ruled.

In some ways, that fantasy came true—it was just a little bit behind schedule. When I turned seventeen, I headed to college, where I finally met other people like me. At Penn State, I moved into the honors dorm, Atherton Hall, where, despite my social awkwardness, I quickly made friends with dozens of other students who couldn't care less about football or the Greek system. Instead, they spent their free time obsessing over *The Princess Bride*, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*. That was 1994, and Atherton Hall was "the Geek Dorm."

The next four years passed blissfully. I was living in a fantasy world, my mutant paradise, where the coolest kids were the ones who sewed their own *Star Trek* uniforms, and could recite huge swaths of *Star Wars* from memory. We commandeered the big-screen TV lounge to watch the *Evil Dead* trilogy, camped out in the lobby to conduct *Dungeons & Dragons* campaigns, and whiled away weekends playing the then-new fantasy-trading-card game *Magic: The Gathering*, all while debating the finer points of *The Lord of the Rings*.

I also started using the Internet, and sending and receiving e-mails, including lengthy chain letters analyzing unintended sexual innuendo in *Star Wars*, as well as lists of every episode of *Star Trek*. Those, plus the burgeoning Internet Movie Database, rapidly rendered my old *Trek* notebooks obsolete. I stumbled into chat rooms where people were arguing endlessly about science fiction, fantasy, and superhero comics, and having tremendously long conversations dissecting things like last week's episodes of *Babylon 5* and *The X-Files*. I realized with no small amount of surprise that, as obsessed as I was, others were yet more obsessed.

That realization made me back away from geek life. I was less nerdy than my youth had led me to believe. I had other interests: creative writing, punk rock, experimental films. And I was increasingly aware of the fact that, outside the Geek Dorm's ivied walls, the rest of the world was patiently waiting. So it was that, at the end of my senior

year, I convinced myself I needed to grow up. I sold my comics and my *Magic* cards, bought a car, got a job, and prepared to enter adulthood.

I needn't have bothered. It was 1998, and geeks were about to inherit the earth.

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Had I been paying closer attention while in college, I might have noticed that the real world was quietly changing. In early 1997, George Lucas rereleased the original *Star Wars* trilogy to theaters, in the form of the Special Editions. I was of course tremendously excited, and went to see the films with my friends, but failed to observe how the movies played with others. As far as I knew, we nerds were the only ones buying tickets—but if so, then how did the theaters sell out? Unbeknownst to me, geek was going mainstream.

Two years later is arguably when geek "broke." On March 31, 1999, Americans woke up to find *The Matrix* playing at their local multiplexes. The film proved a smash hit, the must-see movie of the summer, and deeply influential for years to come. Other geek milestones followed in rapid succession. *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* was released to tremendous fanfare on May 19, and while reactions were conflicted (to say the least), it still wound up becoming the highest-grossing movie of the year. *The Iron Giant* arrived in theaters on August 6, and while it didn't fare well commercially, it heralded a new, adult-oriented approach to animation, and enabled its director, Brad Bird, to later make the better-known Pixar hit *The Incredibles*. Finally, the *Star Trek* parody *Galaxy Quest* came out on Christmas Day, doing surprisingly well by appealing to general viewers as well as Trekkers.

To understand the change that was under way, it's important to remember what else was popular at that time. *Seinfeld* had just gone off the air, ceding its kingdom to the likes of *Frasier*, *Friends*, *E.R.*, and *Sex and the City*. The box office, meanwhile, was dominated by films like *Saving Private Ryan*, *There's Something About Mary*, *Rush Hour*, and *Patch Adams*, none of which scream "geek." Three other top films at the time—*Armageddon*, *Deep*

Impact, and Godzilla—are nominally science fiction, but in reality they're disaster films. Hollywood was still trying to make another Independence Day, which had lit up screens in 1996. In 1997, the king of the box office and the Academy Awards was Titanic, followed by The Lost World: Jurassic Park, Liar Liar, As Good as It Gets, and Good Will Hunting. With the exceptions of Men in Black and the Star Wars Special Editions, geeks were mostly underground, delighting in TV shows like Deep Space 9, Babylon 5, and Mystery Science Theater 3000, as well as movies like Star Trek: First Contact, The Fifth Element, and Starship Troopers.

After 1999, however, things really started to change. July 14, 2000, saw the release of Bryan Singer's X-Men, the first blockbuster film starring Marvel characters, which would mark the beginning of a new wave of superhero movies. The following year, the two highest-grossing films were Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone—based of course on the first Harry Potter book, which had been published in 1997—and The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring. Both not only proved to be crossover hits, but launched franchises that inspired dozens of imitators, promising plenty more fantasy to come. In 2002, the top four films were Sam Raimi's Spider-Man, which became the first movie to earn \$100 million in its opening weekend, then The Two Towers, Attack of the Clones, and Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. The geek renaissance was under way.

For my own part, I initially kept my distance, distraught over how Hollywood was mishandling my beloved childhood heroes. The X-Men movie, for instance, disappointed me because of the liberties that Singer and company took with the material. Wolverine and his fellow mutants wore black leather outfits and knew wire-fu, just like in The Matrix. Looking back now, I can see that my fragile, newfound sense of adulthood required that I dismiss movies like X-Men and Spider-Man in favor of artworks that I considered more sophisticated: the foreign films of the French New Wave, the underground experimental cinema that I could find in New York City, and the independent films being released to art-house screens by

companies like Miramax and Sony Pictures Classics. Secretly, though, I still saw all the superhero and science fiction films, even while I kept waiting for the geek fad to die out.

But a funny thing happened. The geek renaissance didn't end. Flash-forward to 2010, when the box office top ten looked like this:

1. Toy Story 3
2. Alice in Wonderland
3. Iron Man 2
4. The Twilight Saga: Eclipse
5. Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1
6. Inception
7. Despicable Me
8. Shrek Forever After
9. How to Train Your Dragon
10. Tangled

Gone were the likes of Saving Private Ryan, Titanic, and There's Something About Mary—war films, relationship dramas, and gross-out romantic comedies. All that remained was computer animation, fantasy, science fiction, and fairy tales. This reversal of fortune hasn't been short-lived. Since 2010, Marvel's ongoing superhero adventures, The Hunger Games series, Frozen, Jurassic World, and Star Wars: The Force Awakens have ranked among the highest-grossing movies of all time. The song remains the same as we continue down the list. Everywhere we find giant robots, witches and wizards, dystopias futures, superheroes, dragons, and talking apes. And while television took longer to catch up, the premieres of Battlestar Galactica and Lost in 2004 brought the geek renaissance into everyone's living rooms. Since then, TV's most popular programs have included The Big Bang Theory, The Walking Dead, Game of Thrones, and Stranger Things.

Nor is there any sign that this phenomenon's slowing down. The Marvel Cinematic Universe already consists of nineteen films, Iron Man through Avengers: Infinity War, with another half dozen announced, and who knows how many more in the works. In a recent article in Bloomberg Businessweek, Marvel Studios head Kevin Feige claimed that Marvel is planning films through at

least 2028. Meanwhile, DC Comics has been struggling to create its own superhero universe, centered on Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman. At the same time, Fox has released ten X-Men movies, with another five in development. And all three companies have expanded to TV, via shows like Daredevil, Jessica Jones, Arrow, Supergirl, and Legion—and that's just to mention the superheroes.

Given all of this, it's unsurprising that being labeled a geek has shifted from a stigma to an outright badge of honor, so much so that in the mid-2000s, "geek chic" became a fashion trend, as celebrities like Justin Timberlake and David Beckham began sporting horn-rimmed glasses and suspenders. Since then, black-rim glasses have remained perennial favorites with fashionistas ranging from hipsters to tween girls. October 2015 saw Party City selling a Teen Girls Hello Kitty Nerd Accessory Kit, which included oversize glasses, an adjustable necktie, and "a geek chic standard pocket protector featuring Hello Kitty's face." The accompanying paragraph at the Party City website proclaimed: "Nerds have never been so adorable!" It's also become acceptable, even cool, for adults to display their love of artworks previously fit only for kids and social outcasts. Alicia Keys won praise and admiration by singing a playfully soulful rendition of the Gummi Bears theme song during a 2012 appearance on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon, and popular comedians like Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert revel in their extensive knowledge of Star Wars, Star Trek, and The Lord of the Rings. Colbert even made a cameo appearance in The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug. In the year 2018, geek is not only mainstream, it's entrenched, much more than a fad. Comic books, superhero movies, and complex fantasy TV series have become familiar, even beloved objects in the cultural landscape, no longer worthy only of derision. Incoming college freshmen have grown up watching Hugh Jackman play Wolverine, and the kids who read Harry Potter are starting to have kids of their own. Even older geeks like me, initially skeptical of geek culture going mainstream, have long since returned to the fantasy fold, making peace with the fact that X-Men is no longer a littleknown comic but a

blockbuster movie franchise. Like most people, I now find myself eagerly anticipating the latest superhero movies, and enjoying the fact that I can read graphic novels on the subway without attracting snickers or stares. Put another way: the geeks won. <>

[Cognitive Neuroscience, 4th edition](#) by Marie T. Banich and Rebecca J. Compton [Cambridge University Press, 9781316507902]

Updated fully, this accessible yet thorough text highlights the most important theoretical, conceptual, and methodological issues in cognitive neuroscience. Written by two experienced teachers, the consistent narrative ensures that students link concepts across chapters, and the careful selection of topics enables them to grasp the big picture without getting distracted by details.

- Introduces students to the fascinating intersection of brain and cognition, and explores how the brain supports mental functions such as perception, memory, language, attention, emotion, and social cognition
- Engages students and relates the material to real-world concerns through use of examples within the text, focus on clinical applications such as developmental disorders, brain injuries, and dementias, as well as opening case studies and "In Focus" boxes
- Equips students with critical thinking skills that will enable them to critically evaluate new developments in the future
- Summaries at end-of-chapter consolidate knowledge around key points

#### New to this edition

- All chapters have been extensively updated to include more current techniques, as well as a greater emphasis on how the brain works as a network

- Includes a new chapter on neuroscience and society that considers how cognitive neuroscience issues relate to the law, education, and ethics, highlighting the clinical and real-world relevance of the field
- The chapter on emotion and social processing has been split into two separate chapters, reflecting the growth in these areas of research
- The illustration program has been updated to improve consistency and student understanding with more conceptual diagrams and figures to highlight major concepts

THE FOURTH EDITION of this book, although extensively revised, retains the spirit, organization, and many of the features of the first three editions. Like the earlier editions, it provides a systematic introduction to the neural basis of mental function. It includes state-of-the-art research from experimental work performed with humans and animals, as well as findings from clinical populations. The goal, as before, is to provide a balanced, synthesized, and integrated view of what we know both about the brain and about cognition. Simultaneously, the text aims to provide these views in accessible prose that will excite students to think critically about the potential of cognitive neuroscience to yield new insights.

While the entire text has been revised and updated, two sets of major changes are especially notable. First, the content of the book has been modified in line with the changing nature of the field. The introductory chapters have been reorganized to provide an integrated overview of the nervous system at both cellular and neuroanatomical levels in Chapter 1, followed by a new chapter on the historical development of cognitive neuroscience (Chapter 2). Two new chapters have been included, one on Social Cognition (Chapter 13) and another on Cognitive Neuroscience and Society (Chapter 17). The inclusion of these chapters reflects rapid expansions in new research in these subfields combined with awareness of the need for cognitive neuroscientists to address questions of societal interest. In addition,

material on hemispheric specialization from prior editions has been integrated with coverage throughout the text, rather than parceled into a separate chapter as in prior editions. Second, the book has been revised to make the content more accessible to students. It has been rewritten to focus on major concepts and to present them, and the experiments that support them, in a way that makes the critical ideas clear to students without bogging them down in detail. Finally, recognizing the importance of visual elements in learning, the four-color art program has been completely revised with an expanded set of figures in every chapter.

In addition to these major changes, every chapter has been thoroughly updated to reflect current findings in the fast-growing field of cognitive neuroscience. While the current edition still includes findings from traditional methods, such as the study of brain-damaged patients, which have provided foundational knowledge to the field, we pay special attention to the integration of findings from a variety of newer approaches, including transcranial magnetic stimulation, diffusion tensor imaging, multi-voxel pattern analysis, and studies examining functional connectivity. Throughout, our intention is to provide students with a thorough and solid grounding in the basic principles and findings of cognitive neuroscience, tools that they can then use to further understand applied and clinical problems.

### Text Organization and Features

The book's soul remains very much the same as in the first three editions, as the following main features have been retained.

The book provides a systematic survey of the neural bases of a wide variety of mental functions

The overall organization of the book is divided into three main sections: fundamentals (Chapters 1-3), neural bases of specific mental functions (Chapters 4-13), and broader applications (Chapters 14-17). The first part of the book, comprising the first three chapters, provides students with a basic foundation for the exploration of cognitive neuroscience. The first chapter provides information about the basic

parts and divisions of the central nervous system and the fundamentals of neural transmission. This chapter may be unnecessary for students who have already completed a course in physiological psychology, but will be of use to students who have not. The second chapter outlines the historical milestones in the development of the field, with special attention to methodological and conceptual developments that advanced the field in different eras. The third chapter acquaints students with the myriad of burgeoning techniques, both standard and novel, that are available to scientists and clinicians in their quest to understand the neural bases of mental function.

The second part of the book, Chapters 4 through 13, provides a survey of the neural bases of mental function, with each chapter devoted to a distinct mental function. The chapter topics discussed are, in order, motor processes, early perceptual processing, object recognition, spatial cognition, language, memory, attention, executive function, emotion, and social cognition.

The last part of the book, comprising the last four chapters, examines broad-based applications in cognitive neuroscience, including development, aging, clinical syndromes, and the interface between neuroscience and society. Instructors may view these chapters as more discretionary than earlier ones, in the sense that they cover more advanced issues. In our teaching, we've found that these advanced, applied, and clinical issues are of special interest to many students, as they find it very rewarding to use the knowledge that they have gained earlier in the text to approach these broader applications. Chapter 14 examines mental conditions such as schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorders, and substance abuse from a cognitive neuroscience perspective. Chapter 15 examines neural plasticity from a lifespan perspective, including developmental changes during childhood, adolescence, and aging. In addition, it discusses recovery of function in children and in adults, and the neural bases of developmental disabilities. Chapter 16 examines syndromes that are characterized by generalized cognitive disorders (rather than the more localized and specific disorders discussed in Chapters 4

through 13), including closed head injury, dementia, demyelinating diseases, and epilepsy. Finally, the text ends with Chapter 17, Cognitive Neuroscience and Society, which critically examines the ways in which cognitive neuroscience knowledge can be applied to domains of broad societal concern such as education, social inequality, the law, and morality.

### The sequence of the chapters is designed for progressive learning

The chapters have been carefully sequenced so that information in later chapters builds upon information in earlier ones. Notably, the processes most linked to motoric and sensory functions are presented earlier, and those that depend on more integrative aspects of brain function, such as executive function and emotion, are presented later. For example, the chapter on object recognition directly precedes that on spatial processing, so that the student is introduced to the ventral and dorsal visual processing streams in consecutive chapters. The chapter on memory is preceded by the language and object-recognition chapters so that the distinction between generalized memory disorders and the "memory" problems that are specific to certain domains (e.g., anomia in language or agnosia with regard to objects) is clear. Yet, despite the intentional progression of ideas across chapters, chapters are written to be self-contained so that instructors may alter the order of material depending on specific syllabus needs.

### The book is designed to actively engage students in the process of learning

Most chapters begin with an opening case history to pique the students' interest and preview issues that are discussed later in the chapter. For example, the opening case history in Chapter 4 discusses how Muhammad Ali's boxing career led him to have a Parkinsonian disorder, and the opening case history in Chapter 16 discusses the mental decline of Marie's maternal grandmother due to dementia. The text is written in a conversational tone rather than in a technical style, to grab the students' interest and retain it. We use analogies extensively so that difficult conceptual

issues can be presented in a tractable manner. Each chapter includes an "In Focus" box that explores in depth a specific applied issue in cognitive neuroscience, helping students to see the implications of research for everyday life.

To keep students oriented to terminology, key terms are introduced in boldface and defined in a glossary at the back of the book. Chapter summaries allow students to review the material learned or preview what is to be discussed, and outlines at the beginning of each chapter provide a clear conceptual structure of the contents. All these features are designed to make this book as user-friendly as possible.

### State-of-the-art knowledge in the field is presented without sacrificing accuracy or oversimplifying the material

As researchers who maintain highly active and visible research programs, we are in a position to ensure that the book contains not only a discussion of the "classic" findings in the field, but also the cutting-edge portion of our knowledge. Never, however, are students overwhelmed with a laundry list of findings or with overly technical arcane issues. Rather, representative studies are used to highlight the nature of current debates, so that students can understand, and think critically about, the conceptual issues under consideration and how researchers attempt to reason based on experimental evidence. Our extensive work in both research and teaching in cognitive neuroscience allows us to present issues in a manner that is precise and sophisticated, yet also accessible and integrative.

### WHAT'S NEW IN THIS EDITION

While the approach of the prior editions has been retained, this fourth edition has nevertheless been extensively revamped. The main new additions are as follows.

#### The use of an integrated four-color art program

With this edition, we have thoroughly revised the art program, emphasizing systematic depiction of information across the figures, so as to enhance students' ability to understand the material. All

figures from earlier editions have been redrawn, and many new figures have been added. Some figures highlight regions of the brain so the reader can quickly see "where" and "what" in the brain are important. Other figures present data from representative studies in the field, so that students can gain experience in viewing and interpreting data; still others depict important experimental paradigms so that students can quickly grasp how a key study was conducted.

#### Addition of two new chapters

Two chapters have been added to the text to reflect growing areas of research over the last decade. A new stand-alone chapter covering social cognitive neuroscience (Chapter 13) is now included due to the burgeoning growth of research in this area. In the previous edition of the text, this material was relegated to a relatively short section of the chapter on Emotion. The new Social Cognition chapter addresses how new knowledge from neuroscience expands our understanding of how we perceive the mental states of other people, categorize people into social groups, and control our behavior to align with social norms.

In addition, completely new to this edition is Chapter 17, Cognitive Neuroscience and Society. This chapter, which concludes the book, covers issues of broader societal significance to which the field can speak. For example, the chapter addresses research on how laypeople view neuroscience research, what neuroscience may add to our understanding of the effects of social inequality on development, and how neuroscience knowledge is being used in criminal justice settings. As students of cognitive neuroscience enter a wide range of professions, such as law, education, and business, it is crucial for them to be able to critically evaluate what neuroscience can and cannot add to discussions of issues in these arenas.

#### Extensive updating of the material to incorporate the acceleration of knowledge in the field

The field of cognitive neuroscience continues to explode with new discoveries. As a result, all of the chapters of the book were extensively rewritten to incorporate this vast amount of additional

knowledge, which is reflected in hundreds of new references from studies using diverse methodologies.

[The Consciousness Instinct: Unraveling the Mystery of How the Brain Makes the Mind](#) by Michael S. Gazzaniga [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 9780374715502]

“The father of cognitive neuroscience”

illuminates the past, present, and future of the mind-brain problem

How do neurons turn into minds? How does physical “stuff”—atoms, molecules, chemicals, and cells—create the vivid and various worlds inside our heads? The problem of consciousness has gnawed at us for millennia. In the last century there have been massive breakthroughs that have rewritten the science of the brain, and yet the puzzles faced by the ancient Greeks are still present. In *The Consciousness Instinct*, the neuroscience pioneer Michael S. Gazzaniga puts the latest research in conversation with the history of human thinking about the mind, giving a big-picture view of what science has revealed about consciousness.

The idea of the brain as a machine, first proposed centuries ago, has led to assumptions about the relationship between mind and brain that dog scientists and philosophers to this day. Gazzaniga asserts that this model has it backward—brains make machines, but they cannot be reduced to one. New research suggests the brain is actually a confederation of independent modules working together. Understanding how consciousness could emanate from such an organization will help define the future of brain science and artificial intelligence, and close the gap between brain and mind.

Captivating and accessible, with insights drawn from a lifetime at the forefront of the field, *The Consciousness Instinct* sets the course for the neuroscience of tomorrow.

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Imagine, if you can, being conscious of only one moment—right now.

This moment exists without a past or a future. Now imagine life being a series of these moments, each existing in some kind of isolation from all other moments, not connected by subjective time. Imagine being temporarily frozen in each of the moments that together make up normal living. It is hard to imagine this scenario because our minds travel back and forth through time so fluidly, like a ballerina in *The Nutcracker*. One moment serves as the grist for the next planned action, which is in turn weighed in the present against our past experience. It is hard to imagine this ever not being true. And yet, conk your head in the right way and that might be you, still able to understand the idea of having a past and future, but unable to place yourself in your own past or future. Weird, if true. No past, no future, only the present.

In this book I will take you on a journey through a world where hard-to-imagine alterations in what we call conscious experience are commonplace. The neurologic ward of every hospital is replete with disruptions of normal conscious experience. Each of these cases tells us something about how our brains are organized to deliver up our cherished

consciousness, moment by moment. Each example of disruption cries out to be understood, to be used to deduce a coherent story about how our brains build and produce the everyday joys of being conscious. In the past, folks were content to tell stories of these bizarre phenomena. Here in the twenty-first century, it is not enough to simply describe the basketful of intriguing disorders. In this book, my goal is to move forward on the problem of consciousness, and I will try to illuminate how our exquisitely evolved brain is organized to do its magic. In short, I want to examine how matter makes minds.

A few years back, a work trip found me passing through customs at Heathrow in London. The passport control officer, an attentive British civil servant, dutifully asked me my name and business and reason for coming to the United Kingdom. I told him I did brain research and was on my way to Oxford for a meeting. He asked if I was aware of the two different functions of the cerebral hemispheres, the left and the right. I somewhat proudly said that not only had I heard about it, I was in part responsible for the work. As he perused my passport, he asked what the meeting in Oxford was going to be about. I responded, with an air of authority, "About consciousness."

The agent closed the passport and, handing it back, asked, "Have you ever thought about quitting while you are ahead?"

Apparently not. Some of us are naturally incautious in our desire to wonder about our nature. Working away in the mind/brain sciences as I have for sixty years makes me painfully aware that we humans have not yet grasped the problem in its fullness. Still, it is in our nature to think about who and what we are and what it means to be conscious. Once bitten by the question, we spend our lives gnawed by the desire for an answer. Yet, when we try to grab hold of the problem of consciousness, it seems to dissolve like fog. Why has the quest to understand consciousness been so difficult? Do the lingering ideas of the past block us from seeing clearly how it comes about? Is consciousness just what brains do? Just as a pocket watch with all of its gears tells us the time, do brains with all their

neurons just give us consciousness? The history of the topic is vast, swept by pendulum swings between the pure mechanists and the hopeful mentalists. Surprisingly, twenty-five hundred years of human history have not resolved the question or taught our species how to frame an understanding of our personal conscious experience. Indeed, our core ideas have not changed that much.

While thinking explicitly about consciousness was ignited by Descartes three hundred years ago, two overarching and contradictory notions—that the mind either is part of the brain's workings or works somehow independently of the brain—have been around seemingly forever. Indeed, these ideas are still with us.

In recent years the topic of consciousness has become red-hot once again. At the same time, and despite the modern avalanche of new data, there are few, if any, generally accepted proposals on how the brain builds a mind and, with it, conscious experience. The goal of this book is both to break free from this quagmire and to present a new view of how to conceptualize consciousness. Our journey includes knowledge gained not only from neurology but also from evolutionary and theoretical biology, engineering and physics, and, of course, psychology and philosophy. Nobody said the search was going to be easy. But the goal—understanding how nature pulls off the trick of turning neurons into minds—is attainable. So hold on to your hat! Plainly stated, I believe consciousness is an instinct. Many organisms, not just humans, come with it, ready-made. That is what instincts are, something organisms come with. Living things have an organization that allows life and ultimately consciousness to exist, even though they are made from the same materials as the non-living natural world that surrounds them.

And instincts envelop organisms from bacteria to humans. Survival, sex, resilience, and walking are commonly thought to be instincts, but so, too, are more complex capacities such as language and sociality—all are instincts. The list is long, and we humans seem to have more instincts than other creatures. Yet there is something special about the consciousness instinct. It is no ordinary instinct. In

fact, it seems so extraordinary that many think only we humans can lay claim to it. Even if that's not the case, we want to know more about it. And because we all have it, we all think we have insight into it. As we will see, it is a slippery, complex instinct situated in the universe's most impenetrable organ, the brain.

The word "apple" is a noun; it signifies a real, physical object. The word "democracy" is a noun as well, and it describes something a little harder to pin down, a state of societal relationships. It is easy for me to show you an apple, its physical reality. It is hard for me to show you the physical reality of a democracy. How about "instinct," another noun? All three are definable somethings, whether they are objects or concepts, managed by the brain. We have lots of these somethings, but where are they in the brain? Are some best represented as actual structures in the brain and others best represented by the processing actions of structures? Indeed, what is the physical reality of an instinct? Is it tangible, like an apple, or elusive, like a democracy?

Complex instincts are more like democracies; they are identifiable but not easily localized. They emerge from the interaction of simple instincts but are not those things themselves just as an intricate pocket watch chugs away at keeping time, yet time itself is impossible to find in the watch. In order to understand how the watch relates to time, you have to describe its principles of design, its architecture, not just list all its springs and gears. The same is true of the consciousness instinct. Don't think that if consciousness is an instinct, there will be a single, unitary, discrete brain network generating that phenomenal self-aware state we all relish. It is not like that at all. When we visit the neurologic wards, armed with our ideas, you'll recognize right away that patients who suffer from dementia, even severe dementias, are conscious. These patients with widely distributed brain lesions, a level of disruption vast enough to bring any computing machine to its knees, remain conscious. In one hospital room after another, each harboring a patient with a focal or a diffuse brain impairment, consciousness purrs along. After a tour of the wards, it begins to look like consciousness is not a

system property at all. It is a property of local brain circuits.

In this book's first section, we will see how nature became an "it," a thing separate from us that can be studied and understood in objective terms. We trace this idea all the way through Descartes up to modern times and the dawn of modern biology. Surprisingly, most modern scientific thinking has looped back to build on the ideas of the ancient Greeks, and holds essentially the same models, which link the mental and physical inexorably together in one system. Modern science has started to pursue the same goal the Greeks sought, but so far it, too, has fallen short. Again, new ideas are needed, and this book takes a shot.

In Part II, some modern principles of brain functioning are introduced that I feel should guide our journey into how neurons produce minds. It is amazing to me how the "brain as a machine" metaphor, first proposed by Descartes and wholly adopted by most of modern science, has led us to believe that the entire machine is needed to perform many of its functions. In fact, we are each a confederation of rather independent modules, orchestrated to work together. To understand how those modules collaborate, we need to know about the overall architecture of the system, an architecture called "layering" that will be familiar to many readers, such as computer scientists. And finally, we'll pay that visit to the neurologic clinic to test this formulation. There we will discover that our modular brain with its layered architecture is managing our consciousness from ... everywhere in its local tissues, over and over again. There is not one centralized system working to produce the grand magic of conscious experience. It is everywhere, and you can't seem to stamp it out, not even with a wide-ranging brain disease like Alzheimer's.

In Part III, I confront that nagging issue at the core of this mind/brain business: How do neurons gin up mind? How do those squishy bundles of wet tissue make you and me mental? It turns out there are gaps throughout our understanding of the physical world. We study one level of organization and then another, but in fact we don't understand how

the two different levels work together. There is a notorious gap between life and inanimate matter, between mind and brain, between the quantum world and our everyday world. How can those gaps be closed? It looks to me like physics can help us.

Finally, I offer a perspective on how the modules, layers, and gaps play out to yield what we call conscious experience. The psychology professor Richard Aslin once commented to me that he felt the idea of "consciousness" was a proxy for a whole host of variables correlated with our mental lives. We use "consciousness" as shorthand to easily describe the functions of a multitude of inborn, instinctual mechanisms such as language, perception, and emotion. It becomes evident that consciousness is best understood as a complex instinct as well. All of us come with a bucketful of instincts. Our incessant thought pattern jumps around. We have feelings about one idea, then its opposite, then our family, then an itch, then a favorite tune, then the upcoming meeting, then the grocery list, then the irritating colleague, then the Red Sox, then ... It goes on and on until we learn, almost against our natural being, to have a linear thought.

Conscious linear thinking is hard work. I'm sweating it right now. It is as if our mind is a bubbling pot of water. Which bubble will make it up to the top at any given moment is hard to predict. The top bubble ultimately bursts into an idea, only to be replaced by more bubbles. The surface is forever energized with activity, endless activity, until the bubbles go to sleep. The arrow of time stitches it all together as each bubble comes up for its moment. Consider that maybe, just maybe, consciousness can be understood only as the brain's bubbles, each with its own hardware to close the gap, getting its moment. If that sounds obscure, read the book to find out for yourself whether you can see it this way, too. Importantly, enjoy your thoughts as they bubble up to the surface of your own consciousness.

When I started this book, I didn't think I would wind up with some of the thoughts I have now outlined. The lurking question was always: Is consciousness really an instinct?

In his now classic book [The Language Instinct](#), Steven Pinker provides a necessary wake-up call for the scientific community: How can minds and brains be both delivered biologically and also modified by experience? The book provided a needed framework for thinking about the limits of learning and the realities of mind parts derived through natural selection. Pinker also brilliantly observed that conceptualizing higher-order human traits (such as language) as instincts is downright jarring.

Popping the phenomenon of consciousness onto the instinct list—right in there with anger, shyness, affection, jealousy, envy, rivalry, sociability, and so on—is equally disorienting. Instincts, as we all know, evolve gradually, making us more fit for our environment. Adding consciousness to the instinct list suggests that this precious human property, which we all hold dear, is not a miraculously endowed part of our species' special hardware.

If we allow consciousness to be an instinct, we toss it into the vast biological world with all of its history, richness, variation, and continuum. Where did it come from? How did it evolve? What other species share features of it?

Let's pause to ask the fundamental question: What is an instinct, anyway? The term is thrown around like confetti at a parade. Each year, the list of instincts grows and grows. You would almost think that if you popped off the skull, you would see a bunch of labeled lines, each representing one of the much heralded instincts. Indeed, the human brain ought to be a rat's nest of wires connected up to do their job. Yet if you ask a neuroscientist to show you the network for a particular instinct, such as rivalry or sociability, no such knowledge exists—at least, not yet. So how does it help to call stuff instincts?

When feeling at sea about definitions and meanings in the mind/brain business, it is always rewarding to dial up William James once again. More than 125 years ago, James wrote a landmark article simply titled "What Is an Instinct?" He wastes no time in defining the concept:

Instinct is usually defined as the faculty of acting in such a way as to produce certain

ends, without foresight of the ends, and without previous education in the performance.... [Instincts] are the functional correlatives of structure. With the presence of a certain organ goes, one may say, almost always a native aptitude for its use. "Has the bird a gland for the secretion of oil? She knows instinctively how to press the oil from the gland, and apply it to the feather.

The definition seems straightforward, and yet it is cleverly dualistic. An instinct calls upon a physical structure to function. Yet using the structure calls upon an "aptitude," which apparently comes along for free. Finding the physical correlates of an instinct's physical apparatus is doable, but how do we learn how it comes to be used? Does it just happen? Not a very scientific answer. Does the bird start out with a reflex to press the gland and, over time, learn that, as a consequence, everything works better? Clearly if there was no oil gland, there would be no oil and no opportunity for learning to use it to fly better. One can see the blind loop of natural selection and experience working together to form what we would call an instinct.

Bird behavior is one thing, but does this really apply to human cognition and consciousness? James offers a rationale for how it might all work:

A single complex instinctive action may involve successively the awakening of impulses.... Thus a hungry lion starts to seek prey by the awakening in him of imagination coupled with desire; he begins to stalk it when, on eye, ear, or nostril, he gets an impression of its presence at a certain distance; he springs upon it, either when the booty takes alarm and flees, or when the distance is sufficiently reduced; he proceeds to tear and devour it the moment he gets a sensation of its contact with his claws and fangs. Seeking, stalking, springing, and devouring are just so many different kinds of muscular contraction, and neither kind is called forth by the stimulus appropriate to the other.

As I look at James's work now, I recognize a schema that fits the module/ layering ideas. James

appears to suggest that the structural aspects of instincts are inbuilt modules embedded in a layered architecture. Each instinct can function independently for simple behaviors, but they also work as a confederation. Individual instincts can be sequenced in a coordinated fashion for more complex actions that make them look an awful lot like higher-order instincts. The avalanche of sequences is what we call consciousness. James argues that the competitive dynamics that go into the sequencing of basic instincts can produce what appears to be a more complex behavior manifested from a complex internal state. He even adds a description of the animal's experience of obeying an instinct: "Every impulse and every step of every instinct shines with its own sufficient light, and seems at the moment the only eternally right and proper thing to do. It is done for its own sake exclusively." It sounds like a lot of bubbles are conjoined by the arrow of time and produce something like what we call conscious experience.

The dynamics of which bubble pops up when is no doubt influenced by experience and learning. However, experience, learning, and consciousness must all be isomorphic—operational within the same system. Once the phenomenon is thought of in this way, we see conscious experience for what it is: Mother Nature's trick. Thinking of consciousness as an evolved instinct (or a whole sequence of them) shows us where to look for how it emerged from the cold inanimate world. It opens our eyes to the realization that each aspect of a conscious experience is the unfolding of other instincts that humans possess, and that, by their very nature, the mechanisms and capacities they harbor produce the felt state of conscious experience. Remarkably, in the past few years biologists of all stripes have been able to come together in a breathtaking way to identify twenty-nine specific networks in the brain of a fly, each controlling a specific behavior. These individual behaviors can be flexibly combined and recombined into more complex patterns. Yes, it is in the fruit fly where we may learn the lessons of consciousness! The hunt for understanding the physical dimension of instincts is on.

However, many abhor the use of concepts such as instinct to describe phenomenal conscious experience. To them, this definition also robs humans of their unique status in the animal kingdom, namely, that we alone are morally responsible for our actions. Humans can choose to do, and we can therefore choose to "do the right thing." If consciousness is an instinct, they argue, then humans must be automatons, or witless zombies. Yet, putting aside for the moment the physical realities of quantum mechanics and Schnitts with their liberating symbolic functioning, we can argue that accepting the idea that a complex entity like the brain/body/mind has a knowable mechanism does not doom one to such deterministic and despairing views. James himself addressed this overarching concern:

Here we immediately reap the good fruits of our simple physiological conception of what an instinct is. If it be a mere excitomotor impulse, due to the pre-existence of a certain "reflex-arc" in the nerve-centres of the creature, of course it must follow the law of all such reflex-arcs. One liability of such arcs is to have their activity "inhibited" by other processes going on at the same time. It makes no difference whether the arc be organized at birth, or ripen spontaneously later, or be due to acquired habit, it must take its chances with all the other arcs, and sometimes succeed, and sometimes fail.... The mystical view of an instinct would make it invariable. The physiological view would require it to show occasional irregularities in any animal in whom the number of separate instincts, and the possible entrance of the same stimulus into several of them, were great. And such irregularities are what every superior animal's instincts do show in abundance.

James provides much more, and it does take time to absorb the idea of instincts. I urge you to read his original paper to see his clear thinking, clear writing, and unshakable pragmatism on these difficult issues. James points the way forward, refusing to accept the despairing caricature of humankind as robot at the beck and call of reflex responses. To him, a complex behavioral state can be produced by varying the combinations of

simple, independent modules, just as a combination of multiple different small movements makes the complex behavior of a pole vaulter as he sails upward over the pole. When acting together in a coordinated way, even simple systems can make observers believe other forces exist. James's stance is clearly stated: "My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will." This proclamation is consistent with the idea that beliefs, ideas, and thoughts can be part of the mental system. The symbolic representations within this system, with all their flexibility and arbitrariness, are very much tied to the physical mechanisms of the brain. Ideas do have consequences, even in the physically constrained brain. No despair called for: mental states can influence physical action in the top-down way! [\[See Appendix\]](#)

The flexibility of my own symbolic representations has been a source of joy and surprise, not despair, over the course of this project. Perhaps the most surprising discovery for me is that I now think we humans will never build a machine that mimics our personal consciousness. Inanimate siliconbased machines work one way, and living carbon-based systems work another. One works with a deterministic set of instructions, and the other through symbols that inherently carry some degree of uncertainty.

This perspective leads to the view that the human attempt to mimic intelligence and consciousness in machines, a continuing goal in the field of AI, is doomed. If living systems work on the principle of complementarity—the idea that the physical side is mirrored with an arbitrary symbolic side, with symbols that are the result of natural selection—then purely deterministic models of what makes life will always fall short. In an AI model, the memory for an event is in one place and can be deleted with one keystroke. In a living, layered symbolic system, however, each aspect of a mechanism can be switched out for another symbol, so long as each plays its proper role. It is this way because it is what life itself allows, indeed demands: complementarity.

Who is going to put science to all of these ideas?  
What will the neuroscience of tomorrow look like?

In my opinion, the hunt for enduring answers will have to include neuroengineers, with their ability to eke out the deep principles of the design of things. Such a revolution is in its early days, but the perspective it offers is clear. A layered architecture, which allows the option of adding supplemental layers, offers a framework to explain how brains became increasingly complex through the process of natural selection while conserving successful basic features. One challenge is to identify what the various processing layers do, and the bigger challenge is to crack the protocols that allow one layer to interpret the processing results of its neighbor layers. That will involve crossing the Schnitt, that epistemic gap that links subjective experience with objective processing, which has been around since the first living cell. Capturing how the physical side of the gap, the neurons, works with the symbolic side, the mental dimensions, will be achieved through the language of complementarity.

In the end, we must realize that consciousness is an instinct. Consciousness is part of organismic life. We never have to learn how to produce it or how to utilize it. On a recent trip to Charleston, my wife and I were out in the countryside looking for some good ole fried chicken and cornbread. We finally found a small roadside diner and ordered. As the waitress was walking away, I said, "Oh yes, and add some grits to that order." She turned back to me, smiled, and said, "Honey, grits come." Grits come with the order, and so does what we call consciousness. We are lucky for both.

[How to See the World: An Introduction to Images, from Self-Portraits to Selfies, Maps to Movies, and More](#) by Nicholas Mirzoeff [Basic Books, 9780465096008]

Every two minutes, Americans alone take more photographs than were printed in the entire nineteenth century; every minute, people from around the world upload over 300 hours of video to YouTube; and in 2014, we took over one trillion photographs. From the funny memes that we send to our friends to the disturbing photographs we see in the news, we are consuming and producing images in quantities and ways that could never

have been anticipated. In the process, we are producing a new worldview powered by changing demographics—one where the majority of people are young, urban, and globally connected.

In [How to See the World](#), visual culture expert Nicholas Mirzoeff offers a sweeping look at history's most famous images—from Velázquez's *Las Meninas* to the iconic "Blue Marble"—to contextualize and make sense of today's visual world. Drawing on art history, sociology, semiotics, and everyday experience, he teaches us how to close read everything from astronaut selfies to Impressionist self-portraits, from Hitchcock films to videos taken by drones. Mirzoeff takes us on a journey through visual revolutions in the arts and sciences, from new mapping techniques in the seventeenth century to new painting styles in the eighteenth and the creation of film, photography, and x-rays in the nineteenth century. In today's networked world, mobile technology and social media enable us to exercise "visual activism"—the practice of producing and circulating images to drive political and social change. Whether we are looking at pictures showing the effects of climate change on natural and urban landscapes or an fMRI scan demonstrating neurological addiction, Mirzoeff helps us to find meaning in what we see.

A powerful and accessible introduction to this new visual culture, [How to See the World](#) reveals how images shape our lives, how we can harness their power for good, and why they matter to us all.

### Visual Activism

So, what then is visual culture now? It has evolved into a form of practice that might be called visual thinking. Visual thinking is something we do not simply study; we have to engage with it ourselves. What we might call visual culture practice has gone through several versions in the past twenty-five years and has now converged around visual activism. For many artists, academics, and others who see themselves as visual activists, visual culture is a way to create forms of change. If we review the interpretations of visual culture outlined in this book, we can see how this concept has emerged.

When visual culture became a keyword and focus of study in and around 1990, as we saw in the

Introduction, it centered on the question of visual and media representation, especially in mass and popular culture. The shorthand for understanding the issues concerning visual culture at that time was to say it was about the Barbie doll, the Star Trek series, and everything concerning Madonna. By which we should understand that people were centrally concerned with how identity, especially gender and sexual identity, was represented in popular culture, and the ways in which artists and filmmakers responded to those representations. I do not mean to say that these issues no longer matter, but that the ways in which we engage with them have changed.

The South African photographer Zanele Muholi (b. 1972) is one key example. She calls herself a "black lesbian" and a "visual activist." Her self-portrait resonates with Samuel Fosso's, which we looked at before.. Both use leopard print as a sign for "Africa." Although both are wearing glasses, Muholi's heavy frames suggest she is an intellectual, while Fosso's sunglasses were part of his parody. Muholi's hat places her in modern, urban South Africa. Above all, her direct look at the camera claims the right to see and be seen.

Her work makes visible the tension between the freedoms offered by the South African constitution and the realities of homophobic violence encountered by LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex) people every day. Legal protection for people of all sexual orientations exists in theory, but it is ineffective day to day in the townships. Muholi's work shows how she and other queer South Africans are engaged with their lives and loves in the face of this violence. She wishes to be seen as a black lesbian and to be accepted as such by her peers. In 2014, Muholi gave the keynote speech at the International Association of Visual Culture conference in San Francisco, itself titled "Visual Activism." For the hundreds in attendance, the questions implied by her work were global: What does it mean to be seen to be a citizen in a global era? Who represents us at local and national levels in a globalized society? If the state cannot back up its own declarations with actions, how do we represent ourselves, visually and politically?

These questions resonate with the shift in thinking through representation that began around 2001 with the participatory movement slogan "They do not represent us" that we discussed in Chapter 7. The notion that "they do not represent us" now appears more like a recurrent theme in modern history, from the Chartist claim to represent England in 1848 to the Arab Spring of 2011.

The financial crash of 2007 and onward in Ireland led to unemployment, emigration, and a widespread sense of crisis in government. Art and museums have become a place to try to think through how to respond to this crisis. Artists Megs Morley and Tom Flanagan came across some notes made in 1867 by Karl Marx for a speech on Ireland that seemed uncannily familiar:

The situation of the mass of the people has deteriorated, and their state is verging to a crisis [similar to that of the 1846 Famine]. (Marx 1867)

Morley and Flanagan asked three writers to imagine their own speeches on "The Question of Ireland." They then had actors perform the speeches, which they filmed in Ireland's national theater of Irish language, *An Taibhdhearc*.

The result was a three-screen, hour-long film that combined the visual language of avant-garde cinema with the classic political rhetoric of the popular speech. It is a real performance that now seeks to find a national rather than a personal identity. Morley and Flanagan go back to the revolutionary past to look for possible futures. The second segment meditates on how Ireland was created as a new nation less than a century ago, with great hopes, but it has not been able to realize them. The speaker concludes that what is needed is a revolution, but not in the classical Marxist sense: "Revolutions are about vision . . . a revolution of vision, of purpose, maybe hope." This revolution is not imagined as violent or confrontational, but begins with the simple act of "loving ourselves" in a country known for the self-deprecatory wisecrack. Although this was a film shown in art galleries and museums, its creators' hope and intent was to create change in Ireland, above all a change of vision.

For what has become clear is that the implication of "they do not represent us" (in all the senses of that term) is that we must find ways to represent ourselves. Visual activism, from the selfie to the projection of a new concept of "the people," and the necessity of seeing the Anthropocene, is now engaged in trying to make that change. That effort takes place against the backdrop of ongoing war, from Afghanistan to Ukraine, and especially across the Middle East. It is not a short-term project but one that involves considering how we live our lives as a whole.

In Detroit, the activist and philosopher Grace Lee Boggs, who died in 2015 at the age of 100, began every meeting with a question: "What time is it on the clock of the world?" In the opening shot of the film *American Revolutionary* (2014, director Grace Lee), she muses: "I feel so sorry for people not living in Detroit." As you watch the (then) ninety-five-year-old carefully wheel her walker among one of the many urban ruins of the city, you may wonder if she can be serious. Boggs devoted her life to Detroit. She moved there in 1955 when it was the global hub of the automotive industry. Detroit gave the world the assembly line, affordable transport, personal consumer credit to buy cars—and, as Boggs liked to point out, global warming via the automobile. In her view, we have now to engage in what she calls "visionary organizing" to think about how life after industrial, fossil fuel—based culture might be possible. She saw this as exciting and liberating, a chance to move "beyond making a living to make a life." Despite the poverty in the city—now officially affecting 42 percent of the 81 percent African American population—Grace Lee Boggs saw the future as beginning again in Detroit.

In Boggs's view, we all live in some form of Detroit. What is called globalization is a transition from the industrial economy to something else. What was created at the Ford factories in Detroit was the assembly-line system of production. A worker carried out the same task over and over again because this division of labor enabled the factory as a whole to produce more cars. Most of the work in a modern Ford factory is done by robots, welding and painting in showers of sparks that

might be dangerous to people. One of the tasks of the remaining human labor force is to think of ways to make the process still more efficient. A group of Toyota workers realized that their paint shop could reduce its staff from eight people to three if some changes were introduced. Toyota rewarded these individuals but dismissed five out of eight employees in their paint shops worldwide. Not without reason, the Italian philosopher Paolo Virno has called the new way of working "Toyota-ism," just as the assembly line was known as Fordism (2004).

Visionary organizing is a way of thinking about how we might use our creative energies to better ends than cutting jobs and increasing profits. It is another form of visual activism. People around the world are coming to similar conclusions and finding new ways to engage with how to imagine change. In Germany, an opinion poll found that 24 percent of young people expressed the desire to become an artist. I don't think that suddenly a quarter of all Germans want to be painters or sculptors. Rather, art might seem to be the only way to live a life for yourself in the global economy, as opposed to the dominant so-called service economy in which we work, not for each other but for someone else's profit. This desire to live otherwise lies behind the worldwide surge in participatory media, from YouTube channels to Snapchatting, and performance. Teen bloggers and video channels on YouTube are finding audiences in the tens of millions, while 32 million watched the 2014 League of Legends videogame championships in South Korea. Even museums are becoming involved. The proposed M+ museum is described as a "new museum for visual culture in Hong Kong." Scheduled to open in 2018, it has already provoked a lively debate in the city as to what visual culture means: is it a way of thinking about contemporary art in the global city? Or is it a set of everyday practices such as graffiti, calligraphy, martial arts films, and other aspects of Hong Kong's a new self-image of the protestor. It makes visible what was done even though it was perpetrated out of sight of any media depiction or representation. The grand jury decision not to indict Officer Darren Wilson, the policeman who shot Brown, for any crime, took the

"Hands Up" meme across the United States and indeed the world, with solidarity actions in London and elsewhere using the slogan.

<----- PIXELS

(WORD/ IMAGE/ SOUND/ VIDEO) ---->

-----> ACTIONS <-----

(DIRECT/ PERFORM/ CONVERSE/ MATERIAL)

## Visual activism graphic

$$\begin{pmatrix} U(t) \\ V(t) \\ W(t) \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 1 & 0 & 0 \\ 0 & \cos Rt & -\sin Rt \\ 0 & \sin Rt & \cos Rt \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} U(0) \\ V(0) \\ W(0) \end{pmatrix}$$

In visual activist projects, there is an alternative visual vocabulary emerging. It is collective and collaborative, containing archiving, networking, researching, and mapping among other tools, all in the service of a vision of making change. These are the goals that the tools of visual culture, which I set out in the Introduction, seek to achieve. In 1990, we could use visual culture to criticize and counter the way that we were depicted in art, film, and mass media. Today, we can actively use visual culture to create new self-images, new ways to see and be seen, and new ways to see the world. That is visual activism. At the end of this book we can perhaps put it still more simply.

Visual activism is the interaction of pixels and actions to make change. Pixels are the visible result of everything produced by a computer, from words created by a word processor to all forms of image, sound, and video. Actions are things we do with those cultural forms to make changes, small or large, from a direct political action to a performance—whether in everyday life or in a theater—a conversation or a work of art. Once we have learned how to see the world, we have taken only one of the required steps. The point is to change it. <>

[The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression](#) by C. S. Monaco [Johns Hopkins University Press, 9781421424811]

The Second Seminole War (1835–1842) was the last major conflict fought on American soil before

the Civil War. The early battlefield success of the Seminoles unnerved US generals, who worried it would spark a rebellion among Indians newly displaced by President Andrew Jackson's removal policies. The presence of black warriors among the Seminoles also agitated southerners wary of slave revolt. A lack of decisive victories and a series of bad decisions—among them the capture of Seminole leader Osceola while under the white flag of truce—damaged the US army's reputation at home and abroad. Desertion was rampant as troops contended with the subtropical Florida wilderness. And losses for the Seminoles were devastating; by the war's end, only a few hundred remained in Florida.

In his ambitious study, [The Second Seminole War and the Limits of American Aggression](#), C. S. Monaco explores the far-reaching repercussions of this bloody, expensive campaign. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, Monaco not only places this protracted conflict within a military context but also engages the various environmental, medical, and social aspects to uncover the war's true significance and complexity.

By examining the Second Seminole War through the lenses of race, Jacksonian democracy, media and public opinion, American expansion, and military strategy, Monaco offers an original perspective on a misunderstood and often neglected chapter in our history.

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Excerpt: The Second Seminole War (1835-42) was the boldest and most enduring armed struggle by eastern Indians against the forces of the United States. The initial battlefield successes of the Seminoles caused such apprehension that senior generals believed it would spark a pan-Indian rebellion, especially among thousands of newly displaced Indians who were forced west of the Mississippi River by the removal policies of President Andrew Jackson.<sup>1</sup> The presence of black warriors among the Seminoles was another heady component of the Florida war and struck a note of panic among southerners, who were hypervigilant against any sign of slave revolt. Once more, the specter of a united coalition—this time between Indians and blacks from throughout the country—appeared plausible (though nothing of this nature ever surfaced) and justified all efforts to quash the Seminole uprising, no matter the cost. The victims of America's two original sins, that is, the brutal ethnic cleansing of Indians from their homelands and racialized slavery, loomed as combined forces of retributive justice, a fear that can be traced at least to the mid-eighteenth century.

Furthermore, the war thoroughly stymied the capabilities of the US Army, and, for the first time in its brief history, the army garnered an ignominious reputation both at home and abroad. Incidents such as the capture of the Seminole war leader Osceola—the most renowned Indigenous figure of the antebellum period—while under a white flag of truce betrayed the code of honor that was so deeply instilled at the Military Academy at West Point and contradicted Euro-American cultural mores of gallantry and fair play. Among other seemingly endless assaults to the army's character and abilities, a military court of inquiry initiated by Andrew Jackson placed two of the country's preeminent generals, Winfield Scott and Edmund P.

Gaines, under harsh scrutiny for their botched operations in Florida. A plethora of bad decision making resulted in heated criticism by America's rapidly growing newspaper press and provided a potent political weapon to the administration's Whig opponents.

For a country accustomed to relatively brief and overwhelming victories over Native opponents dating back to the colonial era, the war proved particularly frustrating. Complicating this issue was the fact that the military campaign unfolded amid the liminal characteristics of the Florida peninsula, a subtropical wilderness that often took on an almost otherworldly reputation. This region has indeed been curiously susceptible to the imaginations of outsiders. The territory may have constituted a "howling wilderness," as one war veteran described it, but it also evoked equal parts revulsion and awe: "A glowing picture of hell and heaven." Florida's incongruous nature, much like the Native people who inhabited it, cast it beyond genuine comprehension. Physicians from both the North and the South, for example, envisioned the territory as a land of dark and sinister swamps that continually emitted invisible and poisonous vapors, like some exotic engine of disease and death.<sup>6</sup> Vestiges of this enigmatic, outlier status have lingered to the present. Most historians, for example, have paid slight attention to this conflict, despite its lengthy and widespread impact.<sup>6</sup> Lack of martial success certainly aided in its later marginality, but there is little doubt that geography was also a factor. Florida's rather undistinguished Spanish colonial past, meager population, endemic diseases, and lack of economic development further placed it as a region apart from traditional southern sensibilities as well as the country as a whole. Aside from a single major study, *The History of the Second Seminole War*, written by John K. Mahon fifty years ago, no other academic historian before now has attempted a book-length analysis and virtually no one has looked beyond a strictly military viewpoint to examine how the entire nation was affected—an omission, as will be demonstrated, of startling dimensions.<sup>7</sup> The present volume is intended to fill the gap.

America certainly did not endure the seemingly endless Florida war, as it was called, in stoic indifference; instead, numerous social and political ramifications followed in its protracted wake. A dearth of military laurels, phenomenal costs—\$40 million by one estimate, a figure that far exceeded the average annual budget of \$33.7 million—rampant fraud, dejected morale, desertions, a high rate of officer resignations, as well the fact that the entire effort appeared to exclusively benefit southern interests were among the most vocal complaints within Congress and among the public at large.' The Jackson and Van Buren administrations misjudged the readiness and training of the approximately ten thousand regular army troops (the bulk of the nation's undersized standing army) and thirty thousand militiamen who served. Moreover, a succession of generals failed to accurately assess the leadership abilities and combat prowess of their adversaries. Another perilous factor was the army's unpreparedness for the natural hazards of this southernmost territory, which included a particularly lethal malarial strain. Fear of disease predominated soon after the army's arrival and necessitated regular troop withdrawals between late spring and fall, the so-called sickly season. These hiatuses left Seminoles ample opportunity to reoccupy much of the land that had been lost during the prior year's actions. They also could recover their strength, plan strategy, hunt, plant food crops, attend to their families, and, as one contemporary put it, "again be ready to deal death from their hiding places." Despite most of the surviving Seminoles and their black auxiliaries being transported west by the end of the conflict, the setback to national esteem was palpable. The war dealt an unforeseen blow to Indian removal and clearly refuted deeply held presumptions of military and cultural superiority. On another level, in addition to being a violent clash between the US military and the Seminoles, the campaign can be seen as a contest between ecological forces and American expansionism. Swarms of malaria-infected mosquitoes (whose role in disease was then unknown), in combination with the indefatigable Seminole, proved to be the strongest deterrent to settler-colonialism yet experienced.

In order to present the war as comprehensively as possible, this book follows an interdisciplinary approach. One must not only place this protracted conflict within a military context but also engage the various environmental, medical, and social aspects of the war or its true significance and complexity would be lost. This work is thus divided into four sections that focus on a variety of subdisciplines. Part I, "Genesis of War," covers its origins: from tracing the development of the Seminoles as a distinct people and deciphering the often-misunderstood role that African Americans played among them to the problematic treaties that were imposed upon the Indian leadership and that formed the questionable legal foundation for the deportation process. Seminole cultural and spiritual identity was fundamentally linked to their continued presence in Florida, and the very thought of leaving it was anathema to those who saw themselves as the rightful guardians of the land and the creatures who dwelt there. With the passage of the Indian Removal Act (1830), however, the US government became focused on the indiscriminate expulsion of the eastern Indians to lands west of the Mississippi. But the treaties that were implemented in Florida, like most other Indian treaties, were so fraught with irregularities and fraud that even army officers regarded them with unveiled contempt. These accords may have endowed the mission of Native exclusion with the appearance of legality, but this one-sided and manifestly unjust process also set the stage for war.

Part II, "War of Indian Removal," centers on the principal military engagements and related peace overtures. Faced with their impending exile to the Arkansas Territory, the Seminole war council refused to surrender their reservation land and, contrary to the acquiescence of other, far larger southeastern tribes, resolved upon an aggressive war posture. The Seminole leadership planned a "total war" scenario that aimed to destroy all vestiges of white settler existence in the Florida interior. Implementation of this line of attack was done with such effectiveness that most of the inhabited portions of the peninsula, including major sugar plantations and mills, expansive livestock operations, and myriad farms, were annihilated

along with virtually every small homestead and farmhouse—a swath of devastation that totaled \$8.5 million in damages. Army commanders were never able to mount an effective campaign against such a strategy. The near total annihilation of a column of 108 men under Major Francis L. Dade—the "Dade Massacre"—as well as the separate assassination of General Wiley Thompson, the superintendent of Seminole removal and a former congressman, on December 28, 1835, shocked the country and resulted in impassioned calls for the "extermination" of the Seminoles. The loss of Dade's command was entirely unexpected, and its emotional impact on the country would not be matched until Custer's notorious "Last Stand" forty years later. Given the unique topography of the Florida Territory and the tactical skills and resolve of the combined forces of the Seminoles, traditional military tactics were deficient in all respects. Under the command of Major General Thomas S. Jesup, however, the army resorted to acts of deception in order to apprehend as many of their foes as possible. The large, pitched battles that marked the first years of combat eventually ceased, and depleted Native forces implemented low-level, guerilla-style maneuvers instead. During the war's final stage, the army used "the persuasive power of gold" (large monetary incentives given to prominent chiefs and warriors) to lure their recalcitrant enemies to the West." Finally, the government announced the end of hostilities only after a few hundred Seminoles were left in the most inaccessible region of the southern Everglades—the forebears of today's Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, and, lastly, the Independent or Traditional Seminoles still living in various regions of southern Florida.

Although specifics concerning the health and mortality of Indigenous forces may never be known, documentation from the US Army has nevertheless provided valued insights into the war years. Even so, the state of medical care available to the troops and the weighty consequences of continued ill-health on the military's capabilities has been one of the least explored facets of this conflict. Part III, "Health, Medicine, and the Environment," thus

examines this rarely mentioned topic as well as the effect of the environment on health and morale. Viewed within a biocultural perspective, malaria-infected mosquitoes were deadly in relation to the invading army while simultaneously shielding Native forces—most of whom benefited from resistance to local diseases due to their long exposure to such illnesses. Insufficient diets, filthy living conditions, a strange "miasmatic" terrain, unrelenting Indian attacks, mercury-laden medicines, as well as high temperatures and humidity all lowered the body's resistance to infection and also adversely affected the mental health of US troops. Despite a surfeit of difficulties, the Army Medical Department's usage of quinine sulphate offered definitive proof of its effectiveness under such conditions. Although it was never employed as a prophylactic, quinine was still the primary reason that many soldiers could return to duty after suffering from malaria. This achievement aided in the drug's proliferation among civilian doctors and also led to its usage during subsequent wars—an outcome of the Seminole war that has seldom been noted. By the end of the Florida war, the Medical Department seemingly held an unsurpassed competency, and publications from the surgeon general's office, as well as the department's new statistical orientation, led to the assumption that matters of health could be systematically surveyed and analyzed. This new "scientific" orientation promised to add a new level of dignity and authority to the medical profession as a whole. Conversely, the reputation of East Florida as a land of "darkness and shadows, where pestilence walketh at noonday," as an army surgeon summarized it, discouraged white settlers from migrating to the peninsula, and it remained the least inhabited region of the South until the mid-twentieth century, an outcome that reinforced the far-ranging sense of futility attached to the war effort.

Finally, part IV, "The War and The National Mind" explores another seldom acknowledged characteristic: the unprecedented role of the burgeoning newspaper press in framing political agendas directly related to the conflict—a development that the Whig Party used to full

effect. The Whig construction of Osceola as "the fallen Prince and Hero of Florida" and the party's heated denunciation of his ignoble seizure exposed the Democratic administration as lacking a moral foundation and thus intrinsically unworthy of public office. Sensationalized accounts of Osceola reflected the idealized norms of antebellum society and had little to do with his actual persona. Alternatively, Democrats countered Whig embellishments with the equally forceful claim that Osceola was a savage and "inhuman butcher" of innocents." Following massive newspaper coverage of Osceola's death while imprisoned, his reputation grew exponentially. His demise resulted in the creation of what one scholar has called a "consumable, controlled Euro-American image" that could be advanced for multiple purposes. Whether as hero or red devil, Osceola's entry into the American mythos derived first and foremost from self-interest on the part of white society.

The success of such political "spin" inspired other groups to utilize the "sad and tender chords of the Indian story" for their own gain. An especially noteworthy example is the notorious "Bloodhound War" cry enacted by abolitionists. Despite the fact that bloodhounds only made a brief appearance in Florida—General Zachary Taylor once implemented a short-lived and ineffective experiment using a few tethered and muzzled dogs as trackers—abolitionists nevertheless constructed the false claim that the army unleashed these animals to indiscriminately maul and kill Seminoles and blacks, a theme that gained international condemnation. It is thus hardly surprising that this same resonate theme was also employed by Whigs during the 1840 presidential campaign. The proven ease with which certain factions could manipulate events further inspired abolitionists to reframe the Florida war as a racial uplift narrative. Seminole leadership was unfortunately co-opted in this imaginative retelling that featured blacks as heroicized freedom fighters. This motif is best exemplified by Joshua Giddings's abolitionist tome, *The Exiles of Florida* (1858), a work still cited today, most often without caveat, by a small cohort of like-minded historians. The backwoods of territorial Florida, in other words, functioned as a

convenient canvas on which to project a certain type of visionary politics, a circumstance that has further aided in the war's historical marginalization. <>

[The German Spirit in the Ottoman and Turkish Army, 1908-1938: A history of military knowledge transfer](#) by Gerhard Grüßhaber [De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 9783110552898]

The study focuses on the mutual transfer of military knowledge between the German and the Ottoman/ Turkish army between the 1908 Young Turk revolution and the death of Atatürk in 1938. Whereas the Ottoman and later the Turkish army were the main beneficiaries of this selective appropriation, the German armed forces evaluated their (prospective) ally's military experiences to a lesser extent. Through the analysis of archival and published sources and memoir literature the study provides evidence for the impact of this exchange on the armies of both countries and on the Turkish civil society. Indeed, the officer corps in both countries was a small but influential group of the society for the further development of their nations.

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#### Excerpt:

##### The 'German Spirit'

At the beginning of my first visit to the Gallipoli peninsula in September 2009, the major World

War One Ottoman battlefield in today's Republic of Turkey, I was hugged by an elderly Turkish participant of our tour group as soon as he realized that I was German. "Our ancestors once fought here together, we are brothers in arms!" he proudly exclaimed, hugging me yet again. Apart from the odd feeling of being applauded for being German in a (for me at that time) foreign country, this experience raised the question of why the military relationship between these two countries is still remembered. Soon, I began to wonder how it had affected the armies of both countries and whether this transfer of military knowledge might have also shaped the society as a whole.

Part of the German mindset between 1871 and 1914 was the "German Spirit" ("Deutscher Geist"), a nationalist construct of the Wilhelmine era. The use of attributive virtues and qualities was intended to contribute to the inner consolidation and to offer self-confidence to the young nation after the unification of the empire in 1871. Beyond the bourgeoisie those ideas were especially popular among the German military, resulting not least from its implied sense of mission. The "German Spirit" reached its peak in the "Spirit of 1914" and was also welcomed in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup> Several generations of Ottoman officers were inculcated with this nationalist ideology, resulting from their textbooks translated from German and their instructors who "were either Germans or [Ottomans] imbued with the German Spirit [Alman ruhuyla]."

Even the German liberals ascribed this spirit an important role in German foreign policy. According to journalist Ernst Jäckh, "[...] Prussian generals revolutionize the Ottoman people through the Turkish army, not on purpose- by no means! - as bearer and transmitter of the German Spirit, which is not even suffocated by the Prussian drill."

The author Paul Rohrbach did not advocate a direct German rule or colonization of the Ottoman lands, but "[...] the induction [Hineinleitung] of the German Spirit into the big national renewal process" of the Ottoman Empire. These German intellectuals were aware that the 'German Spirit' was competing with the French cultural influence in

the Ottoman state, especially during World War I. Therefore the Orientalist Carl Heinrich Becker highlighted the favorite military virtues inherent in the German mindset:

"The German Spirit is not as amicable and impressive, but also not as absorbing as the French one. It is more serious and cumbersome, therefore discouraging and does not allure to superficiality but to educating thoroughness."

### Focus of the Study

I decided to focus my study not on the well-studied German military mission between 1882 and 1918, but rather on the contacts between German and Turkish military members that outlasted the official end of the alliance in 1918. The period of the study covers most of the "Young Turk Era" between the 1908 revolution and the death of president Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938. It is against this background that the activities of German military instructors in the Ottoman Empire/Turkey as well as the 'apprenticeship years' of Ottoman and Turkish officers in Germany before and after the First World War will be analyzed. This study focuses on the Ottoman land forces.<sup>2</sup>

According to the historian Hartmut Kaelble, transfer is defined as "adaptation of concepts, values, norms, attitudes and identities at the migration of persons and ideas between cultures and at the contact between cultures". The receiving party picks out the fragments that seem useful and merges them with its own cultural tradition, thereby creating something new. In this study, I define this process as appropriation. Part and parcel of these cultural transfers are irritations, insecurities, frustrations and disappointments, especially in the context of the unequal relations between the industrialized German middle power and the agrarian Ottoman multi-ethnic empire until 1918. Regarding the transfer of military knowledge not all features of the sending side are applicable to the receiving socio-military culture. A selective appropriation of knowledge, based on a grown mutual dependency is therefore assumed. Especially during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II., "[a] wariness of Western encroachment of all kinds translated into a more combative approach to the

West in general and a more selective appropriation of its institutions."

The European military innovations were not entirely separable from the European culture. The material military hardware included immaterial cultural features, and thus it was an Ottoman illusion to appropriate the one without the other. Sultan Abdülhamid II. (reg. 1876-1909) was aware of this fact when

he commented on sending young Ottoman civilian and military students to Europe: "They remain only as long as it is necessary to take a brief look at the civilization of the West, to see what good there is to learn, and to report home. A short stay bears less dangers related to the harmful influence of the poison of the European civilization." Eventually the appropriation of technology also led to a rapprochement to the German cultural fundament of the military power, especially after Abdülhamid's careful policy was no longer in charge. The 'poisonous' 'German Spirit' had a deep influence on the shaping of the Turkish officer corps. It is thus no exaggeration to say that for the Republican army after 1923 "the German military doctrine not only influenced the Turkish war strategy, [but also] the state of mind of the Turkish General Staff's officer corps, in other words, what kind of officer corps was aspired."

This study will concentrate on the content and practices of the military knowledge transfer in order to better understand the impact and the limitations of the German-Ottoman/Turkish military cooperation. It should, however, be pointed out that the transfer between the German and the Ottoman Empire was not restricted to the late 19th and the early 20th century and the German military was not the sole role model for the Ottoman military.

### German and Ottoman Military Transfer since the early Modern Age

In the early modern age, the armies of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and the Ottomans often faced each other on the battlefield. These martial confrontations were accompanied by a continuous transfer of military related knowledge on both sides, as was also the case among the rivaling European powers. The development of

Ottoman firearms was clearly inspired by European models. On the tactical level the Ottoman troops also appropriated European practices, including the volley fire (first reported in 1605), and adapted them for their own conditions.<sup>19</sup> In the 16th century, for some of the West European spectators, their adversary's army and leadership system was advantageous. The discipline of the Janissaries was seen as superior to the own marauding mercenary Landsknecht armies. The European admiration for the Ottoman army's elite corps continued. In 1670 the Austrian General Montecuccoli even proposed to establish military schools across the entire Habsburg Empire similar to the Janissary training facilities. He also argued for the implementation of the Ottoman supply system and for a reform of the own imperial cavalry to counter the light and mobile Ottoman sipahi riders. In the ensuing period, the Austrian and later the German cavalry equipment also began to show many influences from the Ottoman horse and riders gear. The Hussar's uniform, with its dolman jackets decorated with breast lacing and the iconic kalpak fur cap, followed Ottoman uniform patterns. The name of the German Ulan lancers was even derived from the Ottoman term *oglan*, i. e. the underage boys selected for service in the Janissary corps. But also in terms of technical transfers, the confrontations of the Ottomans and the European powers were fruitful for the development of European military knowledge. The siege of Crete (1667-1669) and the deployment of the Ottoman humbaraci sappers inspired Vauban, the French fortress architect, in his treatises on siege and mine warfare. Mine warfare based on Ottoman principles was also applicable to the French and German army until 1914.

Especially after the failed second siege of Vienna in 1683, the Ottoman army had lost its threatening character. By the end of the 17th century, the archenemy on the other side of the river Rhine had taken the place of the 'Turks', thus fulfilling mobilizing purposes. In many German principalities, the integration of military customs of the former archenemy of Christendom into their own military

and self-representative practices increased.<sup>24</sup> Since the beginning of the 18th century, the music

detachments of most European armies appropriated elements of their enemy's marching music. Ottoman instruments were included and adapted to occidental tonality. The dominating elements of the so-called "Janissary music" (Mehterhane) as the jingle sticks and the horsetails were united with the ancient Roman aquila standard, generating the Jingling Johnny (Schellenbaum). In the imperial German army after 1871, the Schellenbaum was even crested by a stylized crescent in many regiments, a clear reference to its undeniable origins.

The application of European military knowledge had become a necessity for the Ottoman state by the end of the 18th century. During the 'Long French century in Ottoman military reforms' (1735 -1880), the Ottomans went through a "do-or-die-moments that could only be impeded by military reforms, in this case, by the employment of European instructors.

### The 'Long French Century', 1730-1882

By means of military reforms, the government wanted to prevent further defeats on the battlefield and strengthen the central power. In the course of the 19th century, the latter gained importance against the various independence movements that emerged in the Ottoman periphery. One way to facilitate the modernization was to employ European instructors. French advisors especially were very active in various Ottoman military institutions. The French military mission reached its peak in the decade before and after the French Revolution. The strengthening of the Ottoman state and its army lay in France's political interest against the Russian expansive policy at the Ottoman periphery.

Count de Bonneval was a former French officer and adventurer in Habsburg service during the Spanish war of Succession and the Austro-Ottoman war of 1716-1718. Despite his latter deployment, Bonneval converted to Islam and assisted as Ahmed Pasa the Ottoman army in the reorganization of the artillery corps from 1729 until his death in 1747. His work was continued by the Hungarian born French diplomat Baron François de Tott (Ferenc Tóth) during the Ottoman-Russian war

(1768-1774). In addition to further modernization efforts in the artillery in 1773, Tott founded the imperial naval engineer school (Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun) in the capital, the first Ottoman training facility based on modern European scientific methods. In the 1790s the French side even proposed to establish a modern Ottoman armament manufactory sector to supply the new established Nizam-i Cedid (New Order) troops, while more than French military instructors and armament specialists worked in the Ottoman capital. Many features of the later German dominated period were already visible here, as the underlying idea of the contemporary (French revolutionary) spirit, the dominating language of the sending nation and the signature of a (not applied) French-Ottoman military alliance. Altogether, these were but small reform efforts that failed to reach the majority of the Ottoman armed forces.<sup>29</sup> Besides the transfer of knowledge by those foreign instructors, the Ottoman military also began to appropriate European scientific and military methods by reading and translating the standard works in those fields. During the peak of Napoleonic power in 1804, the Ottoman Mühendishane library acquired more than a dozen French army instruction manuals. The establishment of an Ottoman Turkish vocabulary for the European works was a major task of these Ottoman translational efforts. The next major step towards the foundation of a reliable European style army was the founding of the Nizam-i Cedid corps during the reign of Sultan Selim III. Born out of the circumstances of the defeat against Russia in 1774, this new unit was intended to replace the old fief based timar cavalry and the Janissaries as well as the irregular levend mercenary infantry corps. This new corps became the prototype of a conscript army. But it remained a small contingent, compared to the size of the regular Ottoman troops. Many of the Nizam troops and officers fell victim to the May 1807 Janissary uprising, which delayed the reformation of the Ottoman army for nearly two decades. But the survivors of the 1807 purge provided the nucleus of a new army after 1826, when the old Janissary corps was finally disbanded in a bloody purge.

The French role model continued during the first half of the 19th century, while also many advisors from other European countries joined the ranks of the foreign instructors in the Ottoman army. Those were not always the best representatives of their profession, as the Ottoman army also attracted many cashiered officers and adventurers with purely pecuniary interests. Interrupted by the Franco-Ottoman war in Egypt and Palestine in 1798-1800, the Ottoman admiration for the French system persisted. Further steps included the establishment of the Ottoman military academy (Mekteb-i Fünun-u Harbiye-yi Sahane) in Maçka in 1834, based on the example of the French St. Cyr academy, and finally the participation on the side of France and Great Britain in the Crimean War. However, while taking into account the Ottoman preferences for the French and later the Prussian role model in the context of military reforms, one has to be aware that parts of those competing models were also the product of mutual transfers. There was also the possibility of combining different European military 'schools' in the Ottoman setting. The 1846 conscription law with quota per district was a combination of the French lot drawing recruitment and the model of the Prussian Landwehr reserve formations.

#### Study Outline

In Chapter 2 the appropriation of the German mindset will be traced back to the German military mission between 1882 and 1895, in particular, to the instructions in the Ottoman military academy and to Colmar von der Goltz's influential book, *The Nation in Arms*. The side of the Ottoman/Turkish officers, besides its personal contact with German instructors, adapted military knowledge through the reading of German works and the official (partial) adoption of translated German service regulations. In addition, the Ottoman/Turkish officers sent to Germany for further training appropriated parts of the German *Weltanschauung* and the philosophy of history of their German 'brothers in arms'.<sup>92</sup> The German officers who served as instructors and observers during the Balkan Wars of 1912/13 pointed to the lessons of these conflicts for the coming war in Central Europe. The major point of concern for the German military observers was the

poor performance of the Ottoman forces that had fought in accordance with German field regulations. Especially during the First World War an institutional merge can be stated for both armies on the Ottoman theatre of war. Not only did German commanders join the leading Ottoman forces but also German organizational features were adopted. However, it should be underlined here that the German army was not the only role model for the Ottomans.

These processes continued after 1918 through the activities of German instructors in Turkish military academies until 1938/39. Therefore this study includes the estates and memoirs of the officers previously neglected by research. Drawing on the aforementioned letters, diaries and military reports, the transnational<sup>95</sup> military networks that entered a mutual exchange will be considered in the analysis of the mutual knowledge transfer. In addition to these archival sources, the publications in contemporary military magazines reporting on activities and developments in other armies are of equal importance.

In this context, the question pertaining to the social consequences of this military knowledge transfer forms the thematic core of Chapter 3. Militarism was not seen as something negative in the German army at that time, despite its civilian critics. For contemporary German officers, the term had a positive connotation that was also accepted by Ottoman officers during their internships in Germany. The Bavarian colonel Ludwig Schraudenbach retrospectively highlighted the benefits modernizing the garrison in Lebanese Baalbek for the Ottoman recruits: "German 'militarism' truly has accomplished cultural work [Kulturarbeit] there [...]."

This 'cultural work' also extended to the civilian sphere, where the cooperation of the armies of both countries was especially visible in the field of paramilitary youth organizations. This cooperation went far beyond a pure modernization of the Ottoman armed forces. During the First World War, the Ottoman counterpart of the German umbrella organization Bund Jung- Deutschland (BJD) established by Colmar von der Goltz in

1911, was founded with the assistance of German officer Heinrich von Hoff. These military trained young men were easily disposable and easy to mobilize for the front. Hoff had previously established the local BJD group in Stuttgart. During his time in Ottoman service in 1916/17 Hoff then applied his experiences in the military preparation of the male youth. Both the BJD and the Osmanlı Genç Dernekleri (OGD, Ottoman Youth Association) served the purpose of integrational militarism. This form of mobilization offered certain incentives to fit those young men, deprived of constraint, into the uniform. Through the indoctrination of male youth, inner conflicts in both countries were to be bridged. In Germany, those tensions were of political nature, reaching new dimensions with the 'stab in the back legend' (Dolchstoßlegende) after 1918. In the late Ottoman Empire these tensions were caused by the Turkish national movement that led to ethnic tensions within the multi-national empire. In the Republic of Turkey, the official motto, "Every Turk is born as a soldier!" ("Her Türk asker doğar"), used by the state, became one of the founding myths of the young nation state. Mustafa Kemal [Atatürk] had thus used among other ideas Colmar von der Goltz concept of the 'nation in arms' and had it adapted for his own purposes. Upon Turkish request, Carl Diem, a German sport functionary, former personal assistant to Colmar von der Goltz in the BJD (1911-1914) and pioneer of a German state controlled main youth organization, came to Ankara in 1933. Although Diem was reluctant about the German National Socialist movement, he reviewed the Turkish situation and wrote a study on the creation of a centralized youth organization that would prepare young people for military service and train them towards a life as obedient and physically active citizens.

The effects of this mindset are noticeable to this day in Turkey. In the current debates in Germany on the role of Turkish working migrants it is mostly forgotten, that also some of the (as I would call them) German 'guest workers in uniform' came to the Bosphorus with rather problematic ideas. On those grounds there is a need for more research on the reception of the 'German Spirit' in the Turkish armed forces and its effect on the Turkish civil

society. Indeed, the officer corps in both countries was a small but influential group of the society for the further development of their nations. Many of the presidents of republican Turkey were, at least to some extent, either in contact with German officers or had contact to German military knowledge at earlier stages of their careers.

The continuities after 1918 are of importance in Chapter 4. Through the analysis of the postwar assessment of the Ottoman World War performance on the German side, the implications and possible lessons are shown. The state of Mustafa Kemal was but one role model for many conservative officers, since the Germans had not managed to break the Versailles Treaty with military force. But to what extent was the Turkish officer corps still under the influence of the 'German Spirit'? Was there a dependence upon the German model in Turkish military organization and training? What were the differences and lessons from the military alliance of 1914-1918 for the Turkish side? In order to answer these questions of organizational nature, mainly (semi-) official periodicals and autobiographical sources from both countries will be analyzed. After all, it was mostly the instructors of the German military mission and their former Ottoman military students, who took the mindset of the other side.

In addition to the similarities, the differences have to also be considered. How did the military representatives of the "barracked nations and the "military nation" continue to find common ground in terms of a militarist spirit? Was there a need for national independence in military affairs on the Turkish side?

The ethnic heterogeneous society of the young Republic of Turkey demanded other measures by the armed forces than the Weimar Republic as the latter was divided by political conflicts. However, the dynamics resulting from the World War's 'storm of steel' had significant influence on the mindset in both armies, which led to leadership claim that intended to fill the gap left by the loss of reputation of the monarchy. <>

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## Appendix

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### WHAT IS AN INSTINCT? by William James.

Instinct is usually defined as the faculty of acting in such a way as to produce certain ends, without foresight of the ends, and without previous education in the performance. That instincts, as thus defined, exist on an enormous scale in the animal kingdom needs no proof. They are the functional correlatives of structure. With the presence of a certain organ goes, one may say, almost always a native aptitude for its use. "Has the bird a gland for the secretion of oil? She knows instinctively how to press the oil from the gland, and apply it to the feather. Has the rattlesnake the grooved tooth and gland of poison? He knows without instruction how to make both structure and function most effective against his enemies. Has the silk-worm the function of secreting the fluid silk? At the proper time she winds the cocoon such as she has never seen, as thousands before have done; and thus without instruction, pattern, or experience, forms a safe abode for herself in the period of transformation. Has the hawk talons? She knows by instinct how to wield them effectively against the helpless quarry."<sup>1</sup><sup>two</sup>

A very common way of talking about these admirably definite tendencies to act is by naming abstractly the purpose they subserve, such as self-preservation, or defence, or care for eggs and young—and saying the animal has an instinctive fear of death or love of life, or that she has an instinct of self-preservation, or an instinct of maternity and the like. But this represents the animal as obeying abstractions which, not once in a million cases is it possible it can have framed. The strict physiological way of interpreting the facts leads to far clearer results. The actions we call instinctive all conform to the general reflex type; they are called forth by determinate sensory stimuli in contact with the animal's body, or at a distance in his environment. The cat runs after the mouse, runs or shows fight before the dog, avoids falling from walls and trees, shuns fire and water, etc., not

because he has any notion either of life or of death, or of self, or of preservation. He has probably attained to no one of these conceptions in such a way as to react definitely upon it. He acts in each case separately, and simply because he cannot help it; being so framed that when that particular running thing called a mouse appears in his field of vision he must pursue; that when that particular barking and obstreperous thing called a dog appears there he must retire, if at a distance, and scratch if close by; that he must withdraw his feet from water and his face from flame, etc. His nervous system is to a great extent a preorganized bundle of such reactions—they are as fatal as sneezing, and as exactly correlated to their special excitants as it is to its own. Although the naturalist may, for his own convenience, class these reactions under general heads, he must not forget that in the animal it is a particular sensation or perception or image which calls them forth.

At first this view astounds us by the enormous number of special adjustments it supposes animals to possess ready-made in anticipation of the outer things among which they are to dwell. Can mutual dependence be so intricate and go so far? Is each thing born fitted to particular other things, and to them exclusively, as locks are fitted to their keys? Undoubtedly, this must be believed to be so. Each nook and cranny of creation, down to our very skin and entrails, has its living inhabitants, with organs suited to the place, to devour and digest the food it harbors and to meet the dangers it conceals; and the minuteness of adaptation, thus shown in the way of structure, knows no bounds. Even so are there no bounds to the minuteness of adaptation in the way of conduct which the several inhabitants display.

The older writings on instinct are ineffectual wastes of words, because their authors never came down to this definite and simple point of view, but smothered everything in vague wonder at the clairvoyant and prophetic power of the animals—so superior to anything in man—and at the beneficence of God in endowing them with such a gift. But God's beneficence endows them, first of all, with a nervous system; and, turning our attention to this, makes instinct immediately appear

neither more nor less wonderful than all the other facts of life.

Every instinct is an impulse. Whether we shall call such impulses as blushing, sneezing, coughing, smiling, or dodging, or keeping time to music, instincts or not, is a mere matter of terminology. The process is the same throughout. In his delightfully fresh and interesting work, "Der Thierische Wille," Herr G. H. Schneider subdivides impulses (Triebe) into sensation-impulses, perception-impulses, and idea-impulses. To crouch from cold is a sensation-impulse; to turn and follow, if we see people running one way, is a perception-impulse; to cast about for cover, if it begins to blow and rain, is an imagination-impulse. A single complex instinctive action may involve successively the awakening of impulses of all three classes. Thus a hungry lion starts to seek prey by the awakening in him of imagination coupled with desire; he begins to stalk it when, on eye, ear, or nostril, he gets an impression of its presence at a certain distance; he springs upon it, either when the booty takes alarm and flees, or when the distance is sufficiently reduced; he proceeds to tear and devour it the moment he gets a sensation of its contact with his claws and fangs. Seeking, stalking, springing, and devouring are just so many different kinds of muscular contraction, and neither kind is called forth by the stimulus appropriate to the other.

Schneider says of the hamster, which stores corn in its hole: "If we analyze the propensity of storing, we find that it consists of three impulses: First, an impulse to pick up the nutritious object, due to perception; second, an impulse to carry it off into the dwelling-place, due to the idea of this latter; and third, an impulse to lay it down there, due to the sight of the place. It lies in the nature of the hamster that it should never see a full ear of corn without feeling a desire to strip it; it lies in its nature to feel, as soon as its cheek-pouches are filled, an irresistible desire to hurry to its home; and finally, it lies in its nature that the sight of the storehouse should awaken the impulse to empty the cheeks" (p. 208). In certain animals of a low order the feeling of having executed one impulsive step is such an indispensable part of the stimulus of the

next one, that the animal cannot make any variation in the order of its performance.

Now, why do the various animals do what seem to us such strange things, in the presence of such outlandish stimuli? Why does the hen, for example, submit herself to the tedium of incubating such a fearfully uninteresting set of objects as a nestful of eggs, unless she have some sort of a prophetic inkling of the result? The only answer is *ad hominem*. We can only interpret the instincts of brutes by what we know of instincts in ourselves. Why do men always lie down, when they can, on soft beds rather than on hard floors? Why do they sit round the stove on a cold day? Why, in a room, do they place themselves, ninety-nine times out of a hundred, with their faces toward its middle rather than to the wall? Why do they prefer saddle of mutton and champagne to hard-tack and ditchwater? Why does the maiden interest the youth so that everything about her seems more important and significant than anything else in the world? Nothing more can be said than that these are human ways, and that every creature likes its own ways, and takes to the following them as a matter of course. Science may come and consider these ways, and find that most of them are useful. But it is not for the sake of their utility that they are followed, but because at the moment of following them we feel that that is the only appropriate and natural thing to do. Not one man in a billion, when taking his dinner ever thinks of utility. He eats because the food tastes good and makes him want more. If you ask him why he should want to eat more of what tastes like that, instead of revering you as a philosopher he will probably laugh at you for a fool. The connection between the savory sensation and the act it awakens is for him absolute and *selbstverständlich*, an "a priori synthesis" of the most perfect sort, needing no proof but its own evidence. It takes, in short, what Berkeley calls a mind debauched by learning to carry the process of making the natural seem strange so far as to ask for the why of any instinctive human act. To the metaphysician alone can such questions occur as: Why do we smile, when pleased, and not scowl? Why are we unable to talk to a crowd as we talk to a single friend? Why does a particular maiden

turn our wits so upside down? The common man can only say, “of course we smile, of course our heart palpitates at the sight of the crowd, of course we love the maiden, that beautiful soul clad in that perfect form, so palpably and flagrantly made from all eternity to be loved!”

And so probably does each animal feel about the particular things it tends to do in presence of particular objects. They, too, are a priori syntheses. To the lion it is the lioness which is made to be loved; to the bear, the she-bear. To the broody hen the notion would probably seem monstrous that there should be a creature in the world to whom a nestful of eggs was not the utterly fascinating and precious and never-to-be-too-much-sat-upon object which it is to her.<sup>[2]</sup>

Thus we may be sure that, however mysterious some animals’ instincts may appear to us, our instincts will appear no less mysterious to them. And we may conclude that, to the animal which obeys it, every impulse and every step of every instinct shines with its own sufficient light, and seems at the moment the only eternally right and proper thing to do. It is done for its own sake exclusively. What voluptuous thrill may not shake a fly, when she at last discovers the one particular leaf, or carrion, or bit of dung, that out of all the world can stimulate her ovipositor to its discharge? Does not the discharge then seem to her the only fitting thing? And need she care or know anything about the future maggot and its food?

Since the egg-laying instincts are simple examples to consider, a few quotations about them from Schneider may be serviceable:

“The phenomenon so often talked about, so variously interpreted, so surrounded with mystification, that an insect should always lay her eggs in a spot appropriate to the nourishment of her young, is no more marvellous than the phenomenon that every animal pairs with a mate capable of bearing posterity, or feeds on materials capable of affording him nourishment. . . . Not only the choice of a place for laying the eggs, but all the various acts for depositing and protecting them, are occasioned by the perception of the proper object, and the relation of this perception to the

various stages of maternal impulse. When the burying beetle perceives a carrion, she is not only impelled to approach it and lodge her eggs in it, but also to go through the movements requisite for burying it; just as a bird who sees his hen-bird is impelled to caress her, to strut around her, dance before her, or in some other way to woo her; just as a tiger, when he sees an antelope, is impelled to stalk it, to pounce upon it, and to strangle it. When the tailor-bee cuts out pieces of rose-leaf, bends them, carries them into a caterpillar or mouse hole in trees or in the earth, covers their seams again with other pieces, and so makes a thimble-shaped case—when she fills this with honey and lays an egg in it, all these various appropriate expressions of her will are to be explained by supposing that at the time when the eggs are ripe within her the appearance of a suitable caterpillar or mouse hole and the perception of rose-leaves are so correlated in the insect with the several impulses in question that the performances follow as a matter of course when the perceptions take place.” . . .

“The perception of the empty nest, or of a single egg, seems in birds to stand in such a close relation to the physiological functions of oviparation, that it serves as a direct stimulus to these functions, while the perception of a sufficient number of eggs has just the opposite effect. It is well known that hens and ducks lay more eggs if we keep removing them than if we leave them in the nest. The impulse to sit arises, as a rule, when the bird sees a certain number of eggs in her nest. If this number is not yet to be seen there, the ducks continue to lay, although they perhaps have laid twice as many eggs as they are accustomed to sit upon. . . . That sitting, also, is independent of any idea of purpose and is a pure perception-impulse is evident, among other things, from the fact that many birds, e.g., wild ducks, steal eggs from each other. . . . The bodily disposition to sit is, it is true, one condition [since broody hens will sit where there are no eggs], but the perception of the eggs is the other condition of the activity of the incubating impulse. The propensity of the cuckoo and of the cow-bird to lay their eggs in the nests of other species must also be interpreted as a pure perception-impulse. These birds have no bodily disposition to become broody, and there is

therefore in them no connection between the perception of an egg and the impulse to sit upon it. Eggs ripen, however, in their oviducts, and the body tends to get rid of them. And since the two birds just named do not drop their eggs anywhere on the ground, but in nests, which are the only places where they may preserve the species, it might easily appear that such preservation of the species was what they had in view, and that they acted with full consciousness of the purpose. But this is not so. . . . The cuckoo is simply excited by the perception of quite determinate sorts of nest, which already contain eggs, to drop her own into them and throw the others out, because this perception is a direct stimulus to these acts. It is impossible that she should have any notion of the other bird coming and sitting on her egg.”<sup>[3]</sup>

Remember that nothing is said yet of the origin of instincts, but only of the constitution of those that exist fully formed. How stands it with the instincts of mankind?

Nothing is commoner than the remark that Man differs from lower creatures by the almost total absence of instincts, and the assumption of their work in him by “reason.” A fruitless discussion might be waged on this point by two theorizers who were careful not to define their terms. “Reason” might be used, as it often has been used since Kant, not as the mere power of “inferring,” but also as a name for the tendency to obey impulses of a certain lofty sort, such as duty, or universal ends. And “instinct” might have its significance so broadened as to cover all impulses whatever, even the impulse to act from the idea of a distant fact, as well as the impulse to act from a present sensation. Were the word instinct used in this broad way, it would of course be impossible to restrict it, as we began by doing, to actions done with no prevision of an end. We must of course avoid a quarrel about words, and the facts of the case are really tolerably plain! Man has a far greater variety of impulses than any lower animal; and any one of these impulses, taken in itself, is as “blind” as the lowest instinct can be; but, owing to man’s memory, power of reflection, and power of inference, they come each one to be felt by him, after he has once yielded to them and experienced their results, in connection with a

foresight of those results. In this condition an impulse acted out may be said to be acted out, in part at least, for the sake of its results. It is obvious that every instinctive act, in an animal with memory, must cease to be “blind” after being once repeated, and must be accompanied with foresight of its “end” just so far as that end may have fallen under the animal’s cognizance. An insect that lays her eggs in a place where she never sees them hatch must always do so “blindly;” but a hen who has already hatched a brood can hardly be assumed to sit with perfect “blindness” on her second nest. Some expectation of consequences must in every case like this be aroused; and this expectation, according as it is that of something desired or of something disliked, must necessarily either re-enforce or inhibit the mere impulse. The hen’s idea of the chickens would probably encourage her to sit; a rat’s memory, on the other hand, of a former escape from a trap would neutralize his impulse to take bait from anything that reminded him of that trap. If a boy sees a fat hopping-toad, he probably has incontinently an impulse (especially if with other boys) to smash the creature with a stone, which impulse we may suppose him blindly to obey. But something in the expression of the dying toad’s clasped hands suggests the meanness of the act, or reminds him of sayings he has heard about the sufferings of animals being like his own; so that, when next he is tempted by a toad, an idea arises which, far from spurring him again to the torment, prompts kindly actions, and may even make him the toad’s champion against less reflecting boys.

It is plain then that, no matter how well endowed an animal may originally be in the way of instincts, his resultant actions will be much modified if the instincts combine with experience, if in addition to impulses he have memories, associations, inferences, and expectations, on any considerable scale. An object O, on which he has an instinctive impulse to react in the manner A, would directly provoke him to that reaction. But O has meantime become for him a sign of the nearness of P, on which he has an equally strong impulse to react in the manner B, quite unlike A. So that when he meets O the immediate impulse A and the remote impulse B

struggle in his breast for the mastery. The fatality and uniformity said to be characteristic of instinctive actions are so little manifest, that one might be tempted to deny to him altogether the possession of any instinct about the object O. Yet how false this judgment would be! The instinct about O is there; only by the complication of the mental machinery it has come into conflict with another instinct about P.

Here we immediately reap the good fruits of our simple physiological conception of what an instinct is. If it be a mere excito-motor impulse, due to the pre-existence of a certain “reflex-arc” in the nerve-centres of the creature, of course it must follow the law of all such reflex-arcs. One liability of such arcs is to have their activity “inhibited” by other processes going on at the same time. It makes no difference whether the arc be organized at birth, or ripen spontaneously later, or be due to acquired habit, it must take its chances with all the other arcs, and sometimes succeed, and sometimes fail, in draughting off the currents through itself. The mystical view of an instinct would make it invariable. The physiological view would require it to show occasional irregularities in any animal in whom the number of separate instincts, and the possible entrance of the same stimulus into several of them, were great. And such irregularities are what every superior animal’s instincts do show in abundance.<sup>[4]</sup>

Wherever the mind is elevated enough to discriminate; wherever several distinct sensory elements must combine to discharge the reflex-arc; wherever, instead of plunging into action instantly at the first rough intimation of what sort of a thing is there, the agent waits to see which one of its kind it is and what the circumstances are of its appearance; wherever different individuals and different circumstances can impel him in different ways; wherever these are the conditions—we have a masking of the elementary constitution of the instinctive life. The whole story of our dealings with the lower wild animals is the history of our taking advantage of the way in which they judge of everything by its mere label, as it were, so as to ensnare or kill them. Nature, in them, has left matters in this rough way, and made them act

always in the manner which would be oftenest right. There are more worms unattached to hooks than impaled upon them; therefore, on the whole, says Nature to her fishy children, bite at every worm and take your chances. But as her children get higher, and their lives more precious, she reduces the risks. Since what seems to be the same object may be now a genuine food and now a bait; since in gregarious species each individual may prove to be either the friend or the rival, according to the circumstances, of another; since any entirely unknown object may be fraught with weal or woe, Nature implants contrary impulses to act on many classes of things, and leaves it to slight alterations in the conditions of the individual case to decide which impulse shall carry the day. Thus, greediness and suspicion, curiosity and timidity, coyness and desire, bashfulness and vanity, sociability and pugnacity, seem to shoot over into each other as quickly, and to remain in as unstable equilibrium in the higher birds and mammals as in man. They are all impulses, congenital, blind at first, and productive of motor reactions of a rigorously determinate sort. Each one of them, then, is an instinct, as instincts are commonly defined. But they contradict each other—“experience” in each particular opportunity of application usually deciding the issue. The animal that exhibits them loses the “instinctive” demeanor and appears to lead a life of hesitation and choice, an intellectual life; not, however, because he has no instincts—rather because he has so many that they block each other’s path.

Thus, then, without troubling ourselves about the words instinct and reason, we may confidently say that however uncertain man’s reactions upon his environment may sometimes seem in comparison with those of lower creatures, the uncertainty is probably not due to their possession of any principles of action which he lacks, but to his possessing all the impulses that they have, and a great many more besides. In other words, there is no material antagonism between instinct and reason. Reason, per se, can inhibit no impulses; the only thing that can neutralize an impulse is an impulse the other way. Reason may, however, make an inference which will set loose the impulse the

other way; and thus, though the animal richest in reason might be also the animal richest in instinctive impulses too, he would never seem the fatal automaton which a merely instinctive animal would be.

Let us now turn to human impulses with a little more detail. All we have ascertained so far is that impulses of an originally instinctive character may exist, and yet not betray themselves by automatic fatality of conduct. But in man what impulses do exist? In the light of what has been said, it is obvious that an existing impulse may not always be superficially apparent even when its object is there. And we shall see that some impulses may be masked by causes of which we have not yet spoken.

Were one devising an abstract scheme, nothing would be easier than to discover from an animal's actions just how many instincts he possessed. He would react in one way only upon each class of objects with which his life had to deal; he would react in identically the same way upon every specimen of a class; and he would react invariably during his whole life. There would be no gaps among his instincts; all would come to light without perversion or disguise. But there are no such abstract animals, and nowhere does the instinctive life display itself in such a way. Not only, as we have seen, may objects of the same class arouse reactions of opposite sorts in consequence of slight changes in the circumstances in the individual object or in the agent's inward condition; but two other principles, of which we have not yet spoken, may come into play and produce results so striking that observers as eminent as Messrs. D. A. Spalding and Romanes do not hesitate to call them "derangements of the mental constitution," and to conclude that the instinctive machinery has got out of gear.

These principles are those of the inhibition of instincts by habits and of the transitoriness of instincts. Taken in conjunction with the two former principles—that an object may excite ambiguous impulses, or suggest an impulse different from that which it excites, by suggesting a remote object—they explain any amount of departure from

uniformity of conduct, without implying any getting out of gear of the elementary impulses from which the conduct flows.

Take first the inhibition of instincts by habits. The law is this: When objects of a certain class elicit from an animal a certain sort of reaction, it often happens that the animal becomes partial to the first specimen of the class on which it has reacted, and will not afterward react on any other specimen.

The selection of a particular hole to live in, of a particular mate, of a particular feeding-ground, a particular variety of diet, a particular anything, in short, out of a possible multitude, is a very widespread tendency among animals, even those low down in the scale. The limpet will return to the same sticking-place in its rock, and the lobster to its favorite nook on the sea-bottom. The rabbit will deposit its dung in the same corner; the bird makes its nest on the same bough. But each of these preferences carries with it an insensibility to other opportunities and occasions—an insensibility which can only be described physiologically as an inhibition of new impulses by the habit of old ones already formed. The possession of homes and wives of our own makes us strangely insensible to the charms of those of other people. Few of us are adventurous in the matter of food; in fact, most of us think there is something disgusting in a bill of fare to which we are unused. Strangers, we are apt to think, cannot be worth knowing, especially if they come from distant cities, etc. The original impulse which got us homes, wives, dietaries, and friends, at all, seems to exhaust itself in its first achievements and to leave no surplus energy for reacting on new cases. And so it comes about that, witnessing this torpor, an observer of mankind might say that no instinctive propensity toward certain objects existed at all. It existed, but it existed miscellaneously, or as an instinct pure and simple only, before habit was formed. A habit, once grafted on an instinctive tendency, restricts the range of the tendency itself, and keeps us from reacting on any but the habitual objects, although other objects might just as well have been chosen had they been the first comers.

Another sort of arrest of instinct by habit is where the same class of objects awakens contrary

instinctive impulses. Here the impulse first followed toward a given individual of the class is apt to keep him from ever awakening the opposite impulse in us. In fact, the whole class may be protected by this individual specimen from the application to it of the other impulse. Animals, for example, awaken in a child the opposite impulses of fearing and fondling. But if a child, in his first attempts to pat a dog, gets snapped at or bitten, so that the impulse of fear is strongly aroused, if may be that for years to come no dog will excite in him the impulse to fondle again. On the other hand, the greatest natural enemies, if carefully introduced to each other when young and guided at the outset by superior authority, settle down into those "happy families" of friends which we see in our menageries. Young animals, immediately after birth, have no instinct of fear, but show their dependence by allowing themselves to be freely handled. Later, however, they grow "wild," and, if left to themselves, will not let man approach them. I am told by farmers in the Adirondack wilderness that it is a very serious matter if a cow wanders off and calves in the woods and is not found for a week or more. The calf, by that time, is as wild and almost as fleet as a deer, and hard to capture without violence. But calves rarely show any particular wildness to the men who have been in contact with them during the first days of their life, when the instinct to attach themselves is uppermost, nor do they dread strangers as they would if brought up wild.

Chickens give a curious illustration of the same law. Mr. Spalding's wonderful article on instinct shall supply us with the facts. These little creatures show opposite instincts of attachment and fear, either of which maybe aroused by the same object, man. If a chick is born in the absence of the hen, it "will follow any moving object. And, when guided by sight alone, they seem to have no more disposition to follow a hen than to follow a duck or a human being. Unreflecting lookers-on, when they saw chickens a day old running after me," says Mr. Spalding, "and older ones following me for miles, and answering to my whistle, imagined that I must have some occult power over the creatures: whereas I had simply allowed them to follow me

from the first. There is the instinct to follow; and the ear, prior to experience, attaches them to the right object."<sup>[5]</sup> But if a man presents himself for the first time when the instinct of fear is strong, the phenomena are altogether reversed. Mr. Spalding kept three chickens hooded until they were nearly four days old, and thus describes their behavior:

"Each of them, on being unhooded, evinced the greatest terror to me, dashing off in the opposite direction whenever I sought to approach it. The table on which they were unhooded stood before a window, and each in its turn beat against the window like a wild bird. One of them darted behind some books, and, squeezing itself into a corner, remained cowering for a length of time. We might guess at the meaning of this strange and exceptional wildness; but the odd fact is enough for my present purpose. Whatever might have been the meaning of this marked change in their mental constitution—had they been unhooded on the previous day they would have run to me instead of from me—it could not have been the effect of experience; it must have resulted wholly from changes in their own organizations."<sup>[6]</sup>

Their case was precisely analogous to that of the Adirondack calves. The two opposite instincts relative to the same object ripen in succession. If the first one engenders a habit, that habit will inhibit the application of the second instinct to that object. All animals are tame during some phase of their infancy. Habits formed then limit the effects of whatever instincts of wildness may later be evolved.

Mr. Romanes gives some very curious examples of the way in which instinctive tendencies may be altered by the habits to which their first "objects" have given rise. The cases are a little more complicated than those mentioned in the text, inasmuch as the object reacted on not only starts a habit which inhibits other kinds of impulse toward it (although such other kinds might be natural), but even modifies by its own peculiar conduct the constitution of the impulse it actually awakens.

Two of the instances in question are those of hens who hatched out broods of chicks after having (in three previous years) hatched ducks. They strove to

coax or to compel their new progeny to enter the water, and seemed much perplexed at their unwillingness. Another hen adopted a brood of young ferrets which, having lost their mother, were put under her. During all the time they were left with her she had to sit on the nest, for they could not wander like young chicks. She obeyed their hoarse growling as she would have obeyed her chickens' peep. She combed out their hair with her bill, and "used frequently to stop and look with one eye at the wriggling nestful, with an inquiring gaze, expressive of astonishment." At other times she would fly up with a loud scream, doubtless because the orphans had nipped her in their search for teats. Finally, a Brahma hen nursed a young peacock during the enormous period of eighteen months, and never laid any eggs during all this time. The abnormal degree of pride which she showed in her wonderful chicken is described by Dr. Romanes as ludicrous.<sup>[7]</sup>

This leads us to the law of transitoriness, which is this: That many instincts ripen at a certain age and then fade away. A consequence of this law is that if, during the time of such an instinct's vivacity, objects adequate to arouse it are met with, a habit of acting on them is formed, which remains when the original instinct has passed away; but that if no such objects are met with, then no habit will be formed; and, later on in life, when the animal meets the objects, he will altogether fail to react, as at the earlier epoch he would instinctively have done.

No doubt such a law is restricted. Some instincts are far less transient than others—those connected with feeding and "self-preservation" may hardly be transient at all, and some, after fading out for a time, recur as strong as ever, e.g., the instincts of pairing and rearing young. The law, however, though not absolute, is certainly very wide-spread, and a few examples will illustrate just what it means.

In the chickens and calves above mentioned, it is obvious that the instinct to follow and become attached fades out after a few days, and that the instinct of flight then takes its place, the conduct of the creature toward man being decided by the formation or non-formation of a certain habit

during those days. The transiency of the chicken's instinct to follow is also proved by its conduct toward the hen. Mr. Spalding kept some chickens shut up till they were comparatively old, and, speaking of these, he says: "A chicken that has not heard the call of the mother till until eight or ten days old then hears it as if it heard it not. I regret to find that on this point my notes are not so full as I could wish, or as they might have been. There is, however, an account of one chicken that could not be returned to the mother when ten days old. The hen followed it and tried to entice it in every way; still, it continually left her and ran to the house or to any person of whom it caught sight. This it persisted in doing, though beaten back with a small branch dozens of times and, indeed, cruelly maltreated. It was also placed under the mother at night, but it again left her in the morning."

The instinct of sucking is ripe in all mammals at birth, and leads to that habit of taking the breast which, in the human infant, may be prolonged by daily exercise long beyond its usual term of a year or a year and a half. But the instinct itself is transient, in the sense that if, for any reason, the child be fed by spoon during the first few days of its life and not put to the breast, it may be no easy matter after that to make it suck at all. So of calves. If their mother die, or be dry, or refuse to let them suck for a day or two, so that they are fed by hand, it becomes hard to get them to suck at all when a new nurse is provided. The ease with which sucking creatures are weaned, by simply breaking the habit and giving them food in a new way, shows that the instinct, purely as such, must be entirely extinct.

Assuredly the simple fact that instincts are transient, and that the effect of later ones may be altered by the habits which earlier ones have left behind, is a far more philosophical explanation than the notion of an instinctive constitution vaguely "deranged" or "thrown out of gear."

I have observed a Scotch terrier, born on the floor of a stable in December, and transferred six weeks later to a carpeted house, make, when he was less than four months old, a very elaborate pretence of burying things, such as gloves, etc., which he had

played with till he was tired. He scratched the carpet with his forefeet, dropped the object from his mouth upon the spot, and then scratched all about it (with both fore and hind feet, if I remember rightly), and finally went away and let it lie. Of course, the act was entirely useless. I saw him perform it at that age, some four or five times, and never again in his life. The conditions were not present to fix a habit which could last when the prompting instinct died away. But suppose meat instead of a glove, earth instead of a carpet, hunger pangs instead of a fresh supper a few hours later, and it is easy to see how this dog might have got into a habit of burying superfluous food, which might have lasted all his life. Who can swear that the strictly instinctive part of the food-burying propensity in the wild Canidae may not be as short-lived as it was in this terrier?

A similar instance is given by Dr. H. D. Schmidt,<sup>[8]</sup> of New Orleans.

"I may cite the example of a young squirrel which I had tamed, a number of years ago, when serving in the army, and when I had sufficient leisure and opportunity to study the habits of animals. In the autumn, before the winter sets in, adult squirrels bury as many nuts as they can collect, separately, in the ground. Holding the nut firmly between their teeth, they first scratch a hole in the ground, and, after pointing their ears in all directions to convince themselves that no enemy is near, they ram—the head, with the nut still between the front teeth, serving as a sledge-hammer—the nut into the ground, and then fill up the hole by means of their paws. The whole process is executed with great rapidity, and, as it appeared to me, always with exactly the same movements; in fact, it is done so well that I could never discover the traces of the burial-ground. Now, as regards the young squirrel, which, of course, never had been present at the burial of a nut, I observed that, after having eaten a number of hickory nuts to appease its appetite, it would take one between its teeth, then sit upright and listen in all directions. Finding all right, it would scratch upon the smooth blanket on which I was playing with it as if to make a hole, then hammer with the nut between its teeth upon the blanket, and finally perform all the motions required to fill up a

hole—in the air; after which it would jump away, leaving the nut, of course, uncovered."

The anecdote, of course, illustrates beautifully the close relation of instinct to reflex action—a particular perception calls forth particular movements, and that is all. Dr. Schmidt tells me that the squirrel in question soon passed away from his observation. It may fairly be presumed that, if he had been long retained prisoner in a cage, he would soon have forgotten his gesticulations over the hickory-nuts.

One might, indeed, go still further with safety, and expect that, if such a captive squirrel were then set free, he would never afterward acquire this peculiar instinct of his tribe.<sup>[9]</sup>

Leaving lower animals aside, and turning to human instincts, we see the law of transiency corroborated on the widest scale by the alternation of different interests and passions as human life goes on. With the child, life is all play and fairy-tales and learning the external properties of "things;" with the youth, it is bodily exercises of a more systematic sort, novels of the real world, boon-fellowship and song, friendship and love, nature, travel and adventure, science and philosophy; with the man, ambition and policy, acquisitiveness, responsibility to others, and the selfish zest of the battle of life. If a boy grows up alone at the age of games and sports, and learns neither to play ball, nor row, nor sail, nor ride, nor skate, nor fish, nor shoot, probably he will be sedentary to the end of his days; and, though the best of opportunities be afforded him for learning these things later, it is a hundred to one but he will pass them by and shrink back from the effort of taking those necessary first steps the prospect of which, at an earlier age, would have filled him with eager delight. The sexual passion expires after a protracted reign; but it is well known that its peculiar manifestations in a given individual depend almost entirely on the habits he may form during the early period of its activity. Exposure to bad company then makes him a loose liver all his days; chastity kept at first makes the same easy later on. In all pedagogy the great thing is to strike the iron while hot, and to seize the wave of the

pupil's interest in each successive subject before its ebb has come, so that knowledge may be got and a habit of skill acquired—a headway of interest, in short, secured, on which afterward the individual may float. There is a happy moment for fixing skill in drawing, for making boys collectors in natural history, and presently dissectors and botanists; then for initiating them into the harmonies of mechanics and the wonders of physical and chemical law. Later, introspective psychology and the metaphysical and religious mysteries take their turn; and, last of all, the drama of human affairs and worldly wisdom in the widest sense of the term. In each of us a saturation-point is soon reached in all these things; the impetus of our purely intellectual zeal expires, and unless the topic be one associated with some urgent personal need that keeps our wits constantly whetted about it, we settle into an equilibrium, and live on what we learned when our interest was fresh and instinctive, without adding to the store. Outside of their own business, the ideas gained by men before they are twenty-five are practically the only ideas they shall have in their lives. They cannot get anything new. Disinterested curiosity is past, the mental grooves and channels set, the power of assimilation gone. If by chance we ever do learn anything about some entirely new topic we are afflicted with a strange sense of insecurity, and we fear to advance a resolute opinion. But, with things learned in the plastic days of instinctive curiosity we never lose entirely our sense of being at home. There remains a kinship, a sentiment of intimate acquaintance, which, even when we know we have failed to keep abreast of the subject, flatters us with a sense of power over it, and makes us feel not altogether out of the pale.

Whatever individual exceptions might be cited to this are of the sort that “prove the rule.”

To detect the moment of the instinctive readiness for the subject is, then, the first duty of every educator. As for the pupils, it would probably lead to a more earnest temper on the part of college students if they had less belief in their unlimited future intellectual potentialities, and could be brought to realize that whatever physics and political economy and philosophy they are now

acquiring are, for better or worse, the physics and political economy and philosophy that will have to serve them to the end.

The natural conclusion to draw from this transiency of instincts is that most of them are implanted for the sake of giving rise to habits, and that, this purpose once accomplished, the instincts themselves, as such, have no *raison d'être* in the psychical economy, and consequently fade away. That occasionally an instinct should fade before circumstances permit of a habit being formed, or that, if the habit be formed, other factors than the pure instinct should modify its course, need not surprise us. Life is full of the imperfect adjustment to individual cases, of arrangements which, taking the species as a whole, are quite orderly and regular. Instinct cannot be expected to escape this general rule.

The most interesting thing possible now would be to test our principles by going through the human instincts in detail. But as I have already exceeded my allotted space, that must be reserved for another opportunity.

#### Notes

1 P. A. Chadbourne: *Instinct*, p. 28. New York, 1872.

2 “It would be very simple-minded to suppose that bees follow their queen, and protect her and care for her, because they are aware that without her the hive would become extinct. The odor or the aspect of their queen is manifestly agreeable to the bees—that is why they love her so. Does not all true love base itself on agreeable perceptions much more than on representations of utility?” Schneider: *Thierische Wille*; p. 187. A priori, there is no reason to suppose that any sensation might not in some animal cause any emotion and any impulse. To us it seems unnatural that an odor should directly excite anger or fear; or a color, lust. Yet there are creatures to which some smells are quite as frightful as any sounds, and very likely others to which color is as much a sexual irritant as form.

3 *Der Thierische Wille*.

4 In the instincts of mammals, and even of lower creatures, the uniformity and

infallibility which, a generation ago, were considered as essential characters do not exist. The minuter study of recent years has found continuity, transition, variation, and mistake, wherever it has looked for them, and decided that what is called an instinct is usually only a tendency to act in a way of which the average is pretty constant, but which need not be mathematically "true." Cf. on this point, Darwin's *Origin of Species*; Romanes's *Mental Evol.*, chaps, xi. to xvi., incl., and Appendix; Lindsay's *Mind in Lower Animals*, vol. i., 133-141—ii., chaps, v., xx.; and Semper's *Conditions of Existence in Animals*, where a great many instances will be found.

5 Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

6 *Op. cit.*, p. 289.

7 For the cases in full, see *Mental Evolution in Animals*, pp. 213-217.

8 *Transactions of American Neurological Association*, vol. i., p. 129, 1875.

9 "Mr. Spalding," says Mr. Lewes (*Problems of Life and Mind*. Prob. I., chap., ii., § 22, note), "tells me of a friend of his who reared a gosling in the kitchen, away from all water; when this bird was some months old, and was taken to a pond, it not only refused to go into the water, but when thrown in scrambled out again, as a hen would have done. Here was an instinct entirely suppressed." See a similar observation on ducklings in T. R. R. Spedding: *Essays on Darwinism*, 1871, p. 73. London. <>