

# Who Decides the Cherished? Tastes, Neighbors, Friends, Homes, Selves

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[Grits: A Cultural and Culinary Journey Through the South](#) by Erin Byers Murray [St. Martin's Press, 9781250116079]

Grits is a fascinating cultural history and examination of the current role of grits in Southern cuisine.

For food writer Erin Byers Murray, grits had always been one of those basic, bland Southern table necessities—something to stick to your ribs or dollop the butter and salt onto. But after hearing a famous chef wax poetic about the terroir of grits, her whole view changed. Suddenly the boring side dish of her youth held importance, nuance, and flavor. She decided to do some digging to better understand the fascinating and evolving role of grits in Southern cuisine and culture as well as her own Southern identity.

As more artisan grits producers gain attention in the food world, grits have become elevated and appreciated in new ways, nationally on both sides of the Mason Dixon Line, and by international master chefs. Murray takes the reader behind the scenes of grits cultivation, visiting local growers, millers, and cooks to better understand the South's interest in and obsession with grits. What she discovers, though, is that beyond the culinary significance of grits, the simple staple leads her to complicated and persisting issues of race, gender, and politics.

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Excerpt: My story doesn't start with grits. Although I was born in Augusta, Georgia, I grew up for the most part living outside the South—more than thirty years in places where grits were not a thing. I ate grits now and then as a kid but, unlike scores of folks in the South and beyond, I can't claim to have been raised on grits.

I've since come to appreciate them, just as I've come to better understand and appreciate the South. When I set out to write this book, I put myself on an intentional quest to do both. Along the way, I met corn farmers, seed savers, food writers, millers, grit packers, home cooks, historians, and Southern chefs who all helped me understand that, like many foods, grits help tell a story of the South. It's a story that is not just about a pile of food on a

plate. It goes deeper. It's at once joyful, sustaining, delicious, divisive, painful, and funny.

Grits reflect certain traits that I love about the South—they can be a simple celebration of humble, home-kitchen cooking or they can be dressed up, rethought, and revamped, interpreted into a more modern rendition. But grits also reveal storylines of the South's most conflicted realities—they are intertwined with the region's history of genocide and slavery and the resulting racial, cultural, class, and gender disparities that still exist.

I returned to the South to make Nashville my home in 2012, after longing for it for almost a decade. That is not an uncommon thing. Many people I've met and read about since moving from Boston to Nashville share my story: We left the South—whether pushed or pulled for reasons out of our control, like me, or driven by the urge to break free, or by the calling of opportunity or the desire to travel—and then found ourselves wanting to get back, to reconnect, to better understand this evolving region.

In many cases, I found that things had changed. Communities were larger, more colorful, more diverse—and yet many still retained their Southern lilt, as though the newest arrivals, who hailed from countries near and far, had adopted, and were feeding off, the history, the culture, the soul they found rising up out of the heat and earth of their new Southern grounds.

Upon my return, I also found a region that was both welcoming and guarded, accepting of strangers but with a quiet wariness that floated between statements like "What brought you back?" and "How are you liking it?" It was as if Southerners were waiting to see whether I would adapt and fit in—or whether I was better suited back where I'd been. Part of me assumed that my assimilation back to the South would come easily, like picking up an old recipe card and knowing inherently when to add a little extra sugar. Instead, it was like tackling Escoffier without the translation.

My context, which had been shaped in youth and reframed over and over again by my own nostalgia for the place—and especially its foods—was out of whack. Before moving back and setting

out on this project, I hadn't considered the many weights, measures, and historical realities that sit upon the Southern dishes I hold dear.

Grits can channel emotions and memories, and evoke tradition, no matter whether they're found on restaurant menus, breakfast tables, at church picnics, cocktail parties, or community potlucks. And I've learned that those who cook, eat, produce, write, and talk about grits are helping to shape an evolving story about the South.

The South is vast and diverse. It's made up of myriad micro regions, all of which are calling to be understood and celebrated in their own way. Nashville is now known for more than its neon call of honkytonks or the flaming crunch of hot chicken—today, it supports a dining scene that includes a growing number of Kurdish markets and Korean street food trucks alongside its meat and threes. It's hard to compare that evolution in any way to what's happening on the coast of South Carolina, where oyster beds are still tonged at sunrise and the foods of the Gullah Geechee are being acknowledged and celebrated. There's long been a multicultural food scene supported by the stony streets of New Orleans, and in North Carolina's Piedmont region, an area known for its barbecue and boiled peanuts, the culture can now be better understood through its new abundance of farm-focused, chef-driven restaurants. Each of these micro regions is becoming better defined as we explore Southern food—and grits have played a role in many of those story lines.

When I first set out on this project I assumed there was a divide between those who ate grits and those who didn't—and that the divide ran about even with the same line drawn by Mason and Dixon. But as I researched and interviewed, ate, and wrote, I came to understand that grits don't line up with or against any physical or metaphorical boundaries or borders. Though they have roots in the South, they're enjoyed in many other parts of the world. They make their way north and push far into the Midwest, up to the Northeast, and into the upper reaches of the continent. Indianans have a strong obsession for grits. Italy has polenta, which is a sister to grits. In her book *Victuals*, food writer and Appalachian

foodways authority Ronni Lundy wrote about the "Grits Line," saying that it "has been moving steadily north in my lifetime; now even Canadians swear by the pleasures of eating them." (It's true. In 2013, the *Toronto Star* called for Canadians to try their grits drizzled with maple syrup, listing a recipe from the restaurant Rose and Sons.)

This book is not about boundaries, though. And it's not just about grits, really. Mostly, it's about people's stories. Like so many foods, grits help people tell their stories. From home cooks to millers, corn farmers to chefs, those who opened up and shared with me their stories about grits divulged more than just talk of food. They spoke of their lives, their feelings, and their beliefs.

As I researched grits, I saw that the dish provided me with a lens through which I could better understand the place I had come to reclaim. There had been a number of big, thorny topics about the South that, upon moving back, I found myself trying to grapple with: the region's tumultuous history; old and new conversations about race; gender and where and how women find their place here; politics, both in government and in relation to food; and the changing culinary culture through which people across the South, including myself, identify themselves. By writing this particular book, about a dish I didn't fully understand, the story of this region has come into focus for me. And so, too, have my feelings about it.

I'd like to note that there is a lot for anyone to say about grits—even if I'd been given years to research the topic, I'd never find an end to the rabbit holes. But these are the stories that spoke to me. They are different from the ones that another person coming from another angle, from another time, place, and cultural background, might have discovered. And some of them are only partially offered here. This book is not going to connect all the dots or paint a complete picture. In fact, I often feel that the research I did for this project raised far more questions than it answered. But with those questions came the joy of discovery—with every story offered, I was introduced to another angle and another viewpoint of the South to consider.

Through grits I've learned a lot about a complicated and complex region and the many

people who have shaped—and are still shaping—its story. Some of these stories are hard to tell and uncomfortable. Others give hope for what's to come. All of them offer proof that this region is forever evolving.

So, if you'll indulge me: It's time to go out and buy a bag of stone-ground grits, maybe even sourced from a local mill, if that's available to you. Whatever you find, pour them into a pot at a ratio of four parts water to one part grits. Let them sit for a minute, or an hour, or even better, overnight. Then bring the whole mess to a boil and reduce the heat to low or very low. Stir frequently. Do not let them stick to the sides or the bottom—which means keep stirring. Once you've given them some time (thirty minutes probably won't do it; try forty-five or, better yet, two to three hours), add just a bit of something. Salt. Some cheese. A splash of half-and-half. A bit of coconut milk. Pepper. Butter, of course. Pile them onto a plate and dip your fork in. You will be eating something good, hearty, and life-giving. And hopefully, it will help you find your own story to tell.

## A Basic Recipe for Good Grits

Serves 4

There are so many kinds of grits available today. I would recommend seeking out a good stone-ground variety, preferably from a local or small batch source. Keep them in your freezer so that they remain fresh. If you want to amp up the flavor a bit, substitute vegetable or chicken stock for the water. This recipe is just a start. Once the grits are cooked, you can add cheese, cream, half-and-half, or coconut milk to add richness and depth of flavor, especially if you're serving them alongside something else.

4 cups water  
1 cup old-fashioned stone-ground grits  
Salt  
Butter  
Pepper

Place the water and grits in a medium pot. Add a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, then immediately reduce the heat to medium-low. Simmer, uncovered, stirring frequently, until smooth and creamy, 35 to 45 minutes. Serve warm with butter, salt, and pepper on the side.

[Holiday and Celebration Bread in Five Minutes a Day: Sweet and Decadent Baking for Every Occasion](#) by Zoë François and Jeff Hertzberg, M.D., Photographs by Sarah Kieffer and Zoë François [St. Martin's Press, 9781250077561]

From the authors of the Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day series comes a holiday and celebration cookbook that uses the same groundbreaking quick and easy baking method.

Zoë François and Jeff Hertzberg shocked the baking world when they proved that homemade yeast dough could be stored in the refrigerator to use whenever you need it. Now, they've done it again with *Holiday and Celebration Bread in Five Minutes a Day*, a cookbook with savory, sweet, healthy, and decadent recipes for every occasion.

Every culture has its great bread traditions for holidays and celebrations—traditional Christmas loaves from Ukraine, Greece, Germany, Italy and Scandinavia; celebration breads from France and Israel; Easter breads from the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Austria to name a few. The book is chock-full of fragrant, yeasted treats made for celebrations and special occasions. All the old standbys are here, plus delicious examples from around the world. All were too time-consuming and painstaking to make at home—until now.

In 100 clear and concise recipes that build on the successful formula of their bestselling series, *Holiday and Celebration Bread* will adapt their ingenious approach for high-moisture stored dough to a collection of breads from the four corners of the globe. This beautiful cookbook has color photos of every bread and includes step-by-step collages. With Zoë and Jeff's help, you'll be creating breads that rival those of the finest bakeries in the world—with just five minutes a day of active preparation time.

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### Excerpt: The Secret

Mix Enough Dough for Several Loaves and Store It in the Refrigerator it is so easy to have freshly baked breads and yeasted pastry when you want them, even during the holidays, with only minutes of active effort for each loaf. First, mix the ingredients from any of our recipes into a container all at once, then let them sit to rise. Now you are ready to shape and bake the bread, or you can refrigerate the dough and use it over the next several days—or even weeks, if you freeze it! Each recipe makes enough dough for multiple loaves. When you want fresh-baked bread, take a piece of the dough from the container and shape it into a loaf. Let it rest and then bake. Your house will smell like a celebration, and your family and friends will love you for it.

This is the book I've been waiting ten years to write. I've always managed to persuade Jeff to dedicate a substantial chapter in each of our books to the pastry side of bread, but in this book we get to focus exclusively on these beautiful, beloved recipes. I love all holidays and the foods we eat to celebrate them, but it's the sweets that truly move me. Growing up, I had a grandmother who baked a dozen types of cookies at Christmas and another who served the largest, fluffiest challah during Rosh Hashanah. I was gifted with many holidays to celebrate, each one with a rich tradition of foods. Later in life, my husband's family introduced me to a whole new world of flavors from Trinidad (which

is a true melting pot of cuisines). I have traveled the world in search of food, pastry, and bread, and now I get to share that love on these pages. —Zoë

The best thing about holidays, or really any celebration, is gathering with family and community to share time and great food together. Every culture in the world has its traditional, festive holiday recipes, and we set out to find them. Some were shared by our readers—one asked how to adapt her grandmother's Christmas stollen—or from people we met in the most unlikely places, like the airport limo driver in Denver who told us about Moroccan meloui. There is so much love and joy connected to these breads and the memories they evoke.

This is a book devoted to the sweeter side of bread—sweet-tasting, of course, but sweet for the soul, too. We've always struck a balance in our books between our love of carbs and sweets and our desire to maintain a healthy lifestyle. We are, after all, a pastry chef and a physician, writing books about bread, so there's bound to be a push and pull. Creating a book about holiday breads that are mostly full of sugar and butter can pose a philosophical dilemma. Even Zoë, a pastry chef by training, is as conscientious about what she eats and as careful to bake healthfully for her family as Jeff, who's a physician. And what we've discovered in our twelve-year collaboration comes down to this: moderation. Enjoy life, enjoy bread, enjoy sweets; just do it all in moderation, and even the most decadent treats can be part of a healthy lifestyle. We've included recipes that are made with whole grains and alternative sweeteners, but we don't use artificial sweeteners or synthetic fats, since we don't love the way they taste. If you have specific dietary needs, you may want to consider our book *The New Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day*, which uses whole grains and focuses on a healthy list of ingredients, or for non-wheat eaters, our *Gluten-Free Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day*. These books include delicious, indulgent holiday breads too. Most importantly, enjoy all the bread you bake!

How did a doctor and a pastry chef set out to write seven bread books together? This astonishing, crazy adventure—one that started as nothing more

than a little project between friends, but has become the best-selling bread cookbook series of all time—began in our kids' music class in 2003. It was an unlikely place for co-authors to meet, but in the swirl of toddlers, musical chairs, and xylophones, there was time for the grownups to talk. Zoë said that she was a pastry chef and baker who'd been trained at the Culinary Institute of America (CIA). What a fortuitous coincidence. Jeff wasn't a food professional at all, but he'd been tinkering for years with an easy, fast method for making homemade bread. He begged her to try a secret recipe he'd been developing. The secret? Mix a big batch of dough and store it in the refrigerator. It was promising, but it needed work.

Zoë was skeptical. Jeff had been trained as a scientist, not as a chef. On the other hand, that might be an advantage when it came to experimenting with new approaches to homemade bread. So we did a taste test—and luckily, Zoë loved the results. Better yet, she was willing to develop a book with an amateur. Our approach produces fantastic homemade loaves without the enormous time investment required by the traditional artisanal method.

This had been an opportunity that was just waiting for the right moment. In 2000, Jeff had called in to Lynne Rossetto Kasper's National Public Radio show, *The Splendid Table*, to get advice on getting a cookbook idea into print. Lynne was supportive and helpful on the air, but more importantly, a St. Martin's Press editor named Ruth Cavin, who'd been listening to Lynne's show, phoned *The Splendid Table* and asked for a book proposal. The rest, as they say, is history, as [Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day](#) was published in 2007.

We were first-time authors, with a great idea but no track record. Worse, we were far from being celebrity chefs, which was fast becoming a requirement for cookbook success. But we knew if people got their hands on this method, they would use it. The only problem was proving that to the publisher. St. Martin's gave us a small budget for photographs, which meant only eight color pictures, plus a smattering of black-and-white how-to shots. We'd have loved to have had more, but were



thrilled to have any. We may have the lack of photos to thank for the birth of our website.

We knew that people would need guidance to bake bread, and having lots of pictures would help more than just about anything. We hoped that we had a winner: the book plus our new website (BreadIn5.com), chock-full of pictures and with its two authors eager to answer reader questions themselves. Our website exceeded our wildest hopes—it became the center of a five-minute-a-day bread-baking community, with nearly a quarter-million pageviews per month. We're on duty every day—to answer questions, respond to comments, and post about what we're baking and working on. It's become part of our daily lives and our creative process. Through the questions and comments from readers, we've learned what works, what could have been easier, and what new breads people want. So our follow-up books, [Healthy Bread in Five Minutes a Day](#) (2009), [Artisan Pizza and Flatbread in Five Minutes a Day](#) (2011), [Gluten-Free Artisan Bread in Five Minutes a Day](#) (2014), and new editions of the first two are based on requests that came from our readers, who reached us through our website, our Facebook page (Facebook.com/Breadin), our Twitter identity (@ArtisanBreadIn), Pinterest (Breadin), and Instagram (@breadin5). We've met thousands of bakers just like us—busy people who love fresh bread but don't necessarily have all day to make it. It's been a joy.

Everyone loves great bread, and here is a way to make it that's fast, super easy, and cheap (under seventy-five cents a loaf). After six books and 750,000 copies sold, we're so happy to be back with this holiday book. It's really a community effort with the help of our readers, from whom we've learned so much. Thanks to you, we discovered what works well, what's complicated, and what needs more explanation. In this new book, we want to share everything we've learned during this ten-year conversation.

First off, people asked for more holiday recipes! We've included breads from all over the globe and many different holidays, including Christmas breads from Europe, Middle Eastern Ramadan pita, traditional Easter breads, challah for Jewish

celebrations, Indian breads, and many more. We also included breads that can be served on any given day to create a celebration, like monkey bread, cinnamon rolls, coffee cake, and everyone's favorites, doughnuts and croissants.

These holiday breads are often as beautiful as they are delicious, so we wanted more pictures to inspire you to create the recipes, so for the first time we've included pictures for each bread. Our breads come to life in more than 100 how-to photos and finished breads. We're thrilled with our new photos, and we hope they'll inspire you to bake every day.

These recipes are as easy as the ones in all of our books, but some require you to handle the dough slightly differently than we've had you do in the past, so Tips and Techniques (Chapter 4) and Ingredients (Chapter 2) are bigger and better than ever before.

We've incorporated some of our readers' frequently asked questions that kept popping up on the website. All of the dough recipes are written with weight equivalents in addition to cup-measures for flour and other ingredients. The new electronic scales have really simplified weighing for folks who want to do it. It's a timesaver, yields more consistent results, and there is no need to wash the measuring cups. And the dough recipes are set up so readers can customize the salt to their own palates.

Our goal in all of our Bread in Five Minutes a Day books has been to help home bakers make great daily breads and sweets but still have a life outside the kitchen. To all of you who helped us make this series happen, thank you. Together we've started a revolution—opening up hundreds of thousands of homes to the satisfaction and delights of homemade bread. And most important, we've had fun.

We want you to have fun baking, too. If you worry about the bread, it won't taste as good. Happy Holidays, or just Tuesday! <>

[Who Decides? Competing Narratives in Constructing Tastes, Consumption and Choice](#) edited by Nina B. Namaste, Marta Nadales Ruiz [At the Interface/Probing the Boundaries, Brill, Rodopi, 9789004350793]

How is the meaning of food created, communicated, and continually transformed? How are food practices defined, shaped, delineated, constructed, modified, resisted, and reinvented - by whom and for whom? These are but a few of the questions *Who Decides? Competing Narratives in Constructing Tastes, Consumption and Choice* explores. Part I (Taste, Authenticity & Identity) explicitly centres on the connection between food and identity construction. Part II (Food Discourses) focuses on how food-related language shapes perceptions that in turn construct particular behaviours that in turn demonstrate underlying value systems. Thus, as a collection, this volume explores how tastes are shaped, formed, delineated and acted upon by normalising socio-cultural processes, and, in some instances, how those very processes are actively resisted and renegotiated.

Contributors are Shamsul AB, Elyse Bouvier, Giovanna Costantini, Filip Degreef, Lis Furlani Blanco, Maria Clara de Moraes Prata Gaspar, Marta Nadales Ruiz, Nina Namaste, Eric Olmedo, Hannah Petertil, Maria José Pires, Lisa Schubert, Brigitte Sébastia, Keiko Tanaka, Preetha Thomas, Andrea Wenzel, Ariel Weygandt, Andrea Whittaker and Minette Yao.

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#### Excerpt: Constructing Tastes, Shaping Behaviours by Nina B. Namaste and Marta Nadales Ruiz

What does food mean and symbolize? How is that meaning created, communicated, and continually transformed? How are food practices defined, shaped, delineated, constructed, modified, resisted, and reinvented – by whom and for whom? These are just a few of the core questions that continue to draw scholars from a multiplicity of disciplines, and continents, to closely analyse the role of food as a system of meaning-making in both past and present society. In this volume of collected works, food studies scholars explore how competing narratives, mediated and delineated through food, shape identities and discourses about self and others.

Pierre Bourdieu in 1979 put forth the idea of taste as being a social construct and since then his theory has proved seminal to the social sciences and food studies. While some have criticized his theories as outdated and irrelevant in the twenty-first century, contemporary critics within food studies continue to



substantiate Bourdieu's ideas. For instance, Donald Sloan convincingly argues that culinary taste 'is not an expression of individual preference, but a signifier of longing for social acceptance.' An intellectual contemporary of Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau's theories of micro-resistance and micro-freedoms helped scholars understand the multiplicity of ways in which ordinary people create space and individual meaning for themselves even within constrictive social norms, particularly with food-related palates and customs.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, Bourdieu's concept of taste as a mechanism to create distinctions among and within classes continues to be a relevant frame of analysis when investigating the complex ways in which food mediates meaning in society.

Equally important and relevant to an analysis of food practices is Edward Hall's theory of culture as an iceberg and Michel Foucault's theories regarding power. Hall proposed that like an iceberg, in which very little of its total mass is actually visible, 90% of all culture is below the surface. The 10% that is visible via food practices, clothing, cultural products, etc. manifests a culture's underlying implicit values, beliefs, attitudes, and norms. Yet culture is not a stable, monolithic, fixed entity, but rather is a process in constant negotiation and construction. Therefore, food practices – what and how we eat, with whom, when, in what spaces – is one such visible site where the tacit is actively negotiated.

Central to negotiation, of any kind, is power, thus, the question, in the title of this volume, who decides?, becomes of particular importance. Language both demonstrates and creates our reality. Thus, the discourses we engage in, most certainly, have power – power to delineate self and others, power to delineate in/out groups, power to reinforce or remove an individual's belonging in a group, power to construct a want, desire, or consumption. Individuals use language to express the ways in which they view their agency in constructing an identity; groups use language to describe the interactions and experiences with other groups that then lead them to construct imaginings of themselves and others; media uses language to shape tastes, and ultimately consumption, via advertising campaigns and other

outlets. Ultimately, discourse, of which language is a part, is used to vie for what is of primary importance to the self, group, organization, institution, and/or nation. Who has access to and controls the outlets of expression ultimately gets to decide the dominant narrative, or the discursive systems of power. Yet, as de Certeau aptly proves, there is no dominant narrative without micro-resistances and, thus, counter-narratives. In our postmodern world the dominant narratives and systems of discourses are constantly contested, and reinforced, as the chapters in this volume so aptly demonstrate.

Part I explicitly centres on the connection between food and identity construction. The duality 'I' and 'other' is an essential contrast in the discursive construction of identity because the existence of the self depends on the existence of an Other. As Ruth Wodak et al. stated, the construction of identity relies upon three pillars: sameness, singularity and difference. Those three elements are always present when describing food practices, tastes and habits. Part II focuses on how food-related language shapes perceptions that in turn construct particular behaviours that in turn demonstrate underlying value systems. Language, then, becomes a mechanism through which to observe systems of power, particularly those connected to identity formation. As a collection, this volume explores how tastes are shaped, formed, delineated and acted upon by normalising socio-cultural processes, and, in some instances, how those very processes are actively resisted and renegotiated.

### Taste, Identity and Authenticity by Marta Nadales Ruiz

Food is a key component of identity. The way any given community eats is a public manifestation of its history, tradition, diversity, organisation, and uniqueness; it is closely connected to its territory, its language, and it represents each individual belonging to it. Thus, food is central to the sense of group identity, and its members' unique characteristics shape their common taste.

Despite being traditionally neglected by social sciences, in the last quarter of the twentieth century scholars and researchers in the fields of cultural sociology, anthropology, and social psychology

began to study food practices and collective representations.<sup>1</sup> Bourdieu, Grignon, Douglas, Lévi-Strauss, and Fischler, among others, have analysed the implications underlying food cultures and cuisines, and the social norms governing eating. They have also worked at showing that tastes can be understood as social constructions and, thus, key elements of difference between communities.

With regards to the construction of identity, Wodak et al. state that, whether own or foreign, there are three key elements on the subject of the construction of identity: sameness, singularity and difference. It is impossible to create or define any identity without a reference to them. Accordingly, as described below, the articles in this Part I show how food can shape identity in terms of common characteristics uniting a given community (sameness), singular characteristics that reinforce the authenticity of a given community (singularity), and the emphasis on other food practices, elements that reinforce the contrast with other tastes, other communities that do not share their characteristics (difference).

When it comes to dealing with cultural perspectives, it is necessary to focus on the contrast between 'I' and the 'other.' The construction of difference lies at the heart of the notion of identity; for this reason, when it comes to studying a certain identity we must be familiar with the other communities, the imagined communities as Anderson suggested, surrounding them. Their uniqueness, their singularity and their common features exist as long as there is a contrasting different 'other.'

Consequently, Part I presents a collection of works that analyse the construction of different cultural identities in food-related discourses. Included are chapters on rituals, practices that construct and continue tradition, pride in authenticity, the creation of new cuisines, new traditions and new identity elements; from Europe to Australia, from Portugal to the United States; from the traditional Victorian ritual of the afternoon tea to the new ritual of brunch as the epitome of American Cuisine; from Indian curry to Portuguese bacalhau; from British literature and online communities to non-fictional practices.

'Re-Orientalization: Confronting Asian America via the Steamed Pork Bun' by Minette Yao starts the section off with, as the title states, an inquiry into how the steamed pork bun mediates cultural and ethnic identity, in New York City and in London. In 'Italian Food: The Pride of a People without Borders,' Giovanna Costantini reviews food as a distinctive source of ethnic pride for the construction and dissemination of Italian cultural identity in the USA. She analyses the evolution of the authenticity of Italian food since the first Italian immigrants landed in the USA until the present situation in mass and social media. Brunch as the representation of America's national cuisine, this is what Hannah Petertil defends in 'Brunch: An Instance of American Cuisine.' She examines the historical context that allowed this breakfast-lunch hybrid to flourish as well as the meal structure that has given brunch such an imposing presence to become an element of American identity. In 'The Most American Daily Bread: The Rise and Fall of Wonder Bread,' Keiko Tanaka explores the rhetoric surrounding Wonder Bread and the parallels between the rise and fall of white manufactured bread in U.S. consumer culture and the rise and fall of hegemonic white-Anglo identity. Maria José Pires immerses the reader into the history of salted dried codfish in 'An Encomium of Bacalhau: The Portuguese Emblem of a Gastronomic Symphony.' She focuses on bacalhau as a symbol of Portuguese national identity, and describes the historical evolution of the product through politics, religion, and literature until it has become what it is today: a Portuguese emblem.

In 'The Cup of the Empire: Understanding British Identity through Tea in Victorian Literature,' Ariel Weygandt analyses, both from a historical and literary perspective, the 400-year-old British love affair with tea. She explains the evolution of the consumption of tea, its spread throughout the social classes until the ritual became a representation of national pride, an essential element of British identity. Next is Elyse Bouvier's chapter, 'Breaking Bread Online: Social Media, Photography, and the Virtual Experience,' in which she explores the ways in which sharing food-related photographs and creating social media posts does, indeed, construct community, as well as a delineate one's identity.

The last articles in this section present the results of ethnographic research on food practices. Thus, in “‘A Little Bit of Rice, a Little Bit of Fish Curry’: Food Practices of Malayali Nurses in Brisbane, Australia,” Preetha Thomas, Lisa Schubert, Andrea Whittaker and Brigitte Sébastia discuss the distinct food practices and cultural identity of a selected group of female nurses from Kerala, India, and their families currently living in Brisbane. Through interviews and ethnographic research, they describe how they manage to preserve their national identity in terms of culinary tradition in the new cultural environment as well as their strategies for dealing with change in the new social context. In “‘Mamakization’: Social Cohesion in Malaysian Iconic Eateries” Eric Olmedo and Shamsul AB, through ethnographic research, theorize the process by which Mamak stalls construct and form a locus of social cohesion in multiethnic Malay society.

To conclude, Part I contains a myriad of topics that result in a successful combination that reinforces the importance of food studies to identity and cultural studies, and to social sciences in general. <>

[The Price of Greatness: Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and the Creation of American Oligarchy](#) by Jay Cost [Basic Books, 9781541697461]

An incisive account of the tumultuous relationship between Alexander Hamilton and James Madison and of the origins of our wealthy yet highly unequal nation

In the history of American politics there are few stories as enigmatic as that of Alexander Hamilton and James Madison’s bitterly personal falling out. Together they helped bring the Constitution into being, yet soon after the new republic was born they broke over the meaning of its founding document. Hamilton emphasized economic growth, Madison the importance of republican principles.

Jay Cost is the first to argue that both men were right--and that their quarrel reveals a fundamental paradox at the heart of the American experiment. He shows that each man in his own way came to accept corruption as a necessary cost of growth. The Price of Greatness reveals the trade-off that made the United States the richest nation in human

history, and that continues to fracture our politics to this day.

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Excerpt: Like fashion, American political biography is notoriously faddish. With the exception of a few hardy perennials like Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, historical figures often fall in and out of favor with biographers. Not that long ago, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson were popular subjects, but interest in them has waned noticeably in recent years. Lately, more attention has been paid to Alexander Hamilton and James Madison—perhaps more so than at any point since their own times. Hamilton was the subject of a widely acclaimed 2004 biography by Ron Chernow, which reintroduced the first secretary of the treasury to Americans and inspired the award-winning Broadway hit *Hamilton*. There will probably never be a musical written about Madison, a quiet, diminutive planter from Virginia, but he has also enjoyed a renaissance and has been the subject of many scholarly treatments in recent years as well as of biographies geared toward a mass audience, including one written by Lynne Cheney, the former second lady of the United States.

This renewed interest in Madison and Hamilton is richly deserved. Too young to lead the country into the Revolutionary War, they were nevertheless among the heroes who helped save the peace. Having ascended to the summit of American politics by the mid-1780s, they were indispensable in framing the Constitution. Remarkably well educated, politically savvy, and possessing the boldness that comes naturally with youth, they

helped draft the new government at the Constitutional Convention and then defended it in the Federalist Papers and at the Virginia and New York ratifying conventions. These two giants of the early republic are well worth our attention.

Yet despite this recent revival, little has been written about the relationship between Madison and Hamilton. This leaves significant gaps in their stories. Not only were they central actors in the early years of the new republic, but their stories are inseparable. Though they were close allies and even friends in the 1780s, they became bitter rivals in the 1790s. After the project of framing a new government was finally completed, they turned on each other, and their dispute led to the first partisan political divide in our country. What happened? And more important, what does their falling-out tell us about the Constitution, our government, and our politics? More than two hundred years later, these questions continue to linger.

James Madison Jr. was born on March 16, 1751, into a family with a large estate in the Piedmont region of Central Virginia. He went to the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University), where he was instructed by the influential Scottish Presbyterian minister John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. In 1776 Madison entered the Virginia House of Delegates, where he fell into the orbit of Thomas Jefferson. This was the start of a lifelong friendship and one of the greatest political partnerships in American history.

Alexander Hamilton, the illegitimate child of James Hamilton and Rachel Faucette, was born on the Caribbean island of Nevis on January 11, 1757. Abandoned by his father and orphaned by the death of his mother, his early life was one of hardship and loss. But he was an unusually bright boy, and he landed a job as a clerk at an import-export firm. As a young man, he emigrated to North America and enrolled in King's College (now Columbia University), where he was soon caught up in the fervor of the an invisible government owing no allegiance and acknowledging no responsibility to the people." The Progressives offered an ambitious series of proposals "to destroy this invisible government" and "dissolve the unholy

alliance between corrupt business and corrupt politics"—including by reforming the tariff code along "scientific" principles, regulating business, and installing protections for workers. In [The Promise of American Life](#), Herbert Croly, one of the premier intellectuals of the progressive movement, characterized this approach as employing Hamiltonian means for Jeffersonian ends."

But Croly overlooked a crucial point. The second generation of Republicans, led by Madison, thought they were doing precisely that after the War of 1812 when they implemented these now inequitable policies in the first place. They thought they could repurpose the Hamiltonian machine for Republican ends, but they were wrong. Instead, a century later it had become clear that their fusion had in fact laid the groundwork for the corruption that the Progressives were struggling against.

For all its high drama, the battle between Madison and Hamilton can be understood through a more modern framework too, that of public-choice economics, which applies economic theories to the problems of politics and governance. Public-choice economists are particularly interested in how public goods are produced. Because everybody can enjoy public goods, and because one person's enjoyment of them does not interfere with another's, no single individual has an incentive to actually produce them. Instead, it is in everybody's interest to sit back, let others do the hard work, and just enjoy the results; however, if everybody does that, then the goods will not be produced. This is where the government comes into play. There are many ways it can facilitate the production of public goods; one strategy is to offer private subsidies to factions or groups capable of creating them, thus getting around the problem of free riding. This was, in effect, what Hamiltonian mediation was intended to do: incentivize the wealthy to create a sound currency and a diversified economy, which would be good for everybody.

Again, borrowing from the language of public-choice economics, this strategy produces negative externalities, or bad side effects significant enough to compromise the original policy. Mediation is really a form of outsourcing national projects to groups that themselves do not necessarily share the

same nationalistic viewpoint, and side benefits are provided to make it worthwhile for the factions to provide the service. But as we have seen, government benefits can often become interchangeable with political power, enabling those groups to wield authority that they would not otherwise have possessed. So one negative externality of mediation is corruption of republican government, as the state behaves according to the interests of the faction rather than of the people at large. The corruption can happen through the law itself—for instance, when a public charter or other government license disrupts the balance of power in the republic. It can also happen informally, via conflicts of interests that legislators feel between the public good and their own personal loyalties. When the faction that gains control is a majority of the nation, the sort of corruption that occurs is what the classical republicans called mob rule or ochlocracy, what Madison called majority factionalism. When it is a minority, the corruption is oligarchy, rule by the wealthy. Historically, mediation has been more likely to facilitate oligarchy, but in some cases—for instance, in the case of the Tariff of Abominations—it has created majority factions that barter among themselves for their own benefit. Either way, this is a corruption of the republican form of government.

That the fight between Madison and Hamilton can be restated in the rather dry language of economics demonstrates that it was more than just a momentary clash of personalities. Instead, it illustrates a paradox at the heart of the American constitutional order. Our Constitution simultaneously promotes the notions of liberalism, republicanism, and nationalism. "We the people" are to form a "more perfect union," yet the sorts of policies that strengthen our national fiber can also diminish the republican character of our government, most often in ways that redound to the benefit of the wealthy.

This dynamic is more evident today than ever before. We have a government that over the last hundred years has taken on a large number of nationalistic endeavors, primarily by promoting economic growth, continuing to develop the national infrastructure, and building a military force superior to those of the nation's enemies. Moreover, the liberal project has evolved since the New Deal,

as well. In the Founding era, rights were understood in a negative sense: the government would leave you alone to enjoy your property, speak your mind, and worship God as you please. But in the twentieth century, rights have taken on a positive cast: the government takes responsibility for providing a minimum standard of living for those who cannot maintain it themselves. For all of these tasks, mediation is the primary tool employed by the government. How is economic growth promoted? By creating incentives for business owners. How is our overawing military properly equipped? By contracting weapons manufactures. How is medical care for seniors provided? By reimbursing doctors and hospitals. How is housing promoted? By encouraging home builders and financial-service institutions. The government does not build MRI machines, fighter jets, or homes. It pays people to do that, employing them as mediators between the state and the people.

Yet for all of the ostensible public-spiritedness in today's government, we the people have a stark lack of confidence in the republican project. Average citizens do not feel as though the government really represents them. Instead, it seems to speak for the "special interests"—in the terms of this book, the mediators. Even though we are all entitled to vote for federal offices on the second Tuesday of November in even-numbered years, it seems as though the government does not much belong to us.

This is one reason why the story of Madison and Hamilton remains vital, more than 180 years after they perished. Our anxieties about our government, our fights over what it should do and how it should do it, our recriminations and suspicions about each other's motives—these resemble the battle between the two founders, so long ago. Madison and Hamilton debated how to keep our national ambitions and our republican principles properly ordered; today, we still feel as if we do not have a good balance between these values.

How can we rediscover that equilibrium? There is a raft of potential policy fixes that could help root out corruption from the government: reforming campaign finance, tightening restrictions on lobbyists, devolving more power to the states,

encouraging greater civic participation, and so on. These are all fine ideas, but corruption is not a problem that simply needs a few policy tweaks. It requires consideration of the larger framework of what Montesquieu called "the spirit of the laws"—or how law relates to a nation, its people, and its form of government.

The classical republicans believed that corruption was an endemic feature of any unmixed commonwealth. According to Cicero, each type of good government (monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy) "has a path—a sheer and slippery one—to a kindred evil" (tyranny, oligarchy, or mob rule). Roman historian Polybius expanded on this idea to develop a cycle through which he believed all governments pass: from monarchy to tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, and finally mob rule, in a perpetual process of "growth, zenith, and decadence." As a consequence, Machiavelli advised "prudent legislators" to refrain "from adopting any one of those forms" and to instead create a system that included the rule of the one, the few, and the many; "such a government would be stronger and more stable," for the defects of each form would be countered by the virtues of the others. The republican revolution brought about by the Founders was to dispense with such mixed estates and found a government solely on the authority of the people at large.

How can corruption be arrested or reversed, once it has begun to set in? According to Machiavelli, the solution is to make changes "for their conservation which lead them back to their origins." He analogized the corruption of a republic to the decay of a physical body due to age, and he suggested that the way to reverse civic degeneration was "to return to its original principles," thereby "restor[ing] the prestige that it had at the outset." In Madison's view, "no government is perhaps reducible to a sole principle of operation"; rather, "different and often heterogeneous principles mingle their influence in the administration," akin to what Montesquieu called the "spirit which predominates in each."

In a suggested preamble to the Constitution, Madison offered a comprehensive view of the

principles upon which the United States was founded:

That all power is originally vested in, and consequently derived from the people. That government is instituted, and ought to be exercised for the benefit of the people; which consists in the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the right of acquiring and using property, and generally of pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. That the people have an indubitable, unalienable, and infeasible right to reform or change their government, whenever it be found adverse or inadequate to the purposes of its institution.

In this proposal, Madison made explicit the three principles that combine to form the spirit of the laws in the United States: nationalism, liberalism, and republicanism. The people of the United States—bound together in a single nation—are free because the government respects their rights and because they participate in the creation of the laws that govern them.

Purging our government of corruption, therefore, requires us to return to these three principles—but not in some vague, anodyne sense of gratitude. Instead, we have to reengage with them and relearn critical lessons that seem to have been forgotten. To start, we must appreciate that the Constitution did not settle the relationship among liberalism, republicanism, and nationalism for all time. Public policy, in all forms, necessarily advances or hinders each principle. Though we typically do not think of contemporary political questions in these foundational terms, Madison understood this, and we should follow his example.

We must also remember that these values are often in tension with one another. Republicanism and liberalism come from different traditions of political thought. They overlap in some ways but conflict in others. And nationalism is different altogether; a strong nation need not be either republican or liberal. Thus, holding these three values in their proper balance has to be a constant struggle. Neither Madison or Hamilton "solved" the problem, for it is a paradox that admits of no final answer. But both are to be credited for trying to solve it,

for in so doing they helped bring about a better understanding of how government functions in practice. We the people must endeavor to do likewise.

We should further appreciate that the republican quality of government has proven itself to be the most difficult to maintain over the generations. Our government vigorously pursues all sorts of national endeavors, and individual rights—both negative and positive—are more respected than ever before, but it feels as though our government has been hijacked from the people. It is easy to assume that our country is a republic because elections are free and open to all adult citizens, but this is a mistake. As Madison noted in the *National Gazette*, it is possible for a government to "support a real domination of the few, under an apparent liberty of the many. Such a government, wherever to be found, is an imposter." Madison appreciated that the policies that Hamilton was promoting were undermining the principle of popular sovereignty, even though they had no effect on the form of government. We must remain mindful of this and appreciate that policies that advance the national project or the liberal project must also remain consistent with the republican principles that are just as essential to the American creed.

Above all, we should remember that sovereignty ultimately belongs to the people, and if we wish the government to become more republican, we ourselves must rediscover that lost tradition. As Madison put it, "the force of public opinion" is what maintains government in practice. "If the nation were in favor of absolute monarchy, the public liberty would soon be surrendered by their representatives. If a republican form of government were preferred, how could the monarch resist the national will?" We get the government we deserve, in other words. So when the American people demand a return to republican propriety, the government will acquiesce, for "public opinion sets bounds to every government, and is the real sovereign in every free one." <>

[The Cambridge Companion to the United States Constitution](#) edited by Karen Orren, John W. Compton [Cambridge University Press, 9781107094666]

This Companion provides a broad, historically informed introduction to the study of the US constitutional system. In place of the usual laundry lists of cases, doctrines, and theories, it presents a picture of the constitutional system in action, with separate sections devoted to constitutional principles, organizational structures, and the various legal and extra-legal 'actions' through which litigators and average citizens have attempted to bring about constitutional change. Finally, the volume covers a number of subjects that are rarely discussed in works aimed at a general audience, but which are critical to ensuring that constitutional rights are honored in the day-to-day lives of citizens. These include standing and causes of action, suits against officeholders, and the inner workings of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC). This Companion places present-day constitutional controversies in historical context, and offers insights from a range of disciplines, including history, political science, and law.

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Excerpt: The essays that comprise this volume are written at a time when respected commentators across the ideological spectrum depict the condition of the US Constitution in terms of opprobrium falling somewhere between deviant and dysfunctional.<sup>1</sup> Ours is a period of political and institutional unease, when rules and rights long taken for granted are in fierce dispute, often under constitutional auspices, and when the accustomed means of resolution are themselves under serious questioning. Any reader's companion to the Constitution today should take these circumstances into account. Accordingly, in these introductory remarks we will stifle all impulses toward reassurance and instead offer a guide for situating the insights of the essays within what we perceive to have been an essential and ongoing problematic of American constitutionalism over time.

Our approach to understanding the Constitution normalizes today's constitutional disputes within a pattern of incongruent elements that has characterized American fundamental law from its beginnings. The approach consists of two essential steps. The first is to conceive of the Constitution's original character as a historical halfway station: halfway between monarchy and democracy, halfway between judicial sovereignty and legislative sovereignty, halfway between prescribed rights and "natural" rights, halfway between jurisprudence and politics, halfway in other respects that we will discuss as we proceed. Various, over several constitutional crises in American history, one of the halves mentioned can

be seen to push and pull against its opposite. These oppositions complicate the project inherent in all constitutions, which is adaptation to changing circumstances. To the degree that words written down more than two centuries ago serve as constant reference and touchstone for every move on every side, they carry this deep unsettlement forward into the present.

The second step in our approach involves taking into account certain implications of the precise moment in English history when the Constitution was framed. This goes beyond the truism that every enterprise, constitutional or otherwise, is limited by the vistas imaginable by its creators. In the case at hand, the effects are concretely lodged in the massive historical fact that every American state in the original republic formally received into its own law the common law and statutes of England as of some specified date, usually the time of the colony's settlement, as its own; only provisions considered on their face to be "repugnant" in this country — for instance, those on the royal succession or on the Anglican church — were excluded from this reception. Except for Louisiana, all subsequent states and territories followed suit, expressly, through constitutions or in legislation; likewise, after initial controversy, so did the federal government.<sup>1</sup> By this means, the new American governments grafted onto themselves the fruits of English political history, including both national rules and individual rights that were established to that point.

Notice that we are not talking here about influences but about legal provision, already up and running or soon to be implemented. The founders themselves accomplished their handiwork atop an immense grid of prior institutional experience, one that would serve to demarcate channels of future discord. From then forward, American judges would argue whether a given right had "vested" with ratification of the Constitution or if a particular substantive or procedural question was the subject of Parliamentary legislation at the date of reception specified and therefore did or did not qualify as a legitimate — that is to say constitutional — subject for American legislation, state or federal. To recognize this inheritance is in no way to discount the spirit of genius and creativity that permeated

events in Philadelphia in 1787. Nor does it lessen the significance of the momentous proposals and compromises fashioned there. But it does help explain certain otherwise quizzical features: how, for instance, the constitutional text could be so short and how it could have been expected that such diverse states would fit smoothly into a single union.

Following its own civil war and revolution, English government was by the eighteenth century partly, but by no means completely, extricated from its premodern past. The authority of the King was greatly diminished and the prerogative courts through which he had governed all but destroyed. Religious and commercial affairs, as well as ultimate control of governmental offices, had passed into the jurisdiction of Parliament, to be ruled from now on by statutes. Individual protections like freedom from censorship and search and seizure without warrant had been added to rights claimed by ancient patrimony. The totality was administered by the several courts of common law, in which, after the Act of Settlement of 1701, judges could for the first time make their decisions independently of the crown's will. At this same juncture, common law in the colonies became, if anything, an even more central institution than in Great Britain. At American independence, common law courts would constitute the most important local institutions of colonial government.

From their disparate beginnings, the colonies' legal systems converged to rely on English rules, English lawbooks, and English-trained judges, both to punish crimes and to regulate civil matters ranging from land sales to education. An ocean away, and therefore untainted by memories of intrigue and bloody reprisals associated with their English counterparts, common law courts enjoyed great respect and incurred none of the hostility visited on the Admiralty courts from the middle of the eighteenth century, though both systems were staffed by Americans. Moreover, common law proceedings included the jury trial, widely regarded by contemporaries as the quintessence of colonial democracy. Importantly, this broad development appears not to have been imposed by English governors but to have proceeded indigenously. Lawyers were in the forefront of the revolutionary struggle. All of these circumstances

supported the significant role eventually assigned the judicial branch of government under the Constitution.

As we will see, the inheritance of English law has anchored, defined, and motivated American constitutional law throughout its history. The procedural provisions received then continue to guide in important ways virtually every decision issued by an American court. The substantive provisions, on the other hand, have had the greatest bearing on constitutional change. It has become something of a commonplace today that the participants at Philadelphia were all white men and that the Constitution they wrote would require amending before their exclusive position in public affairs would be successfully challenged. What is perhaps less understood is how their superior status was hardwired into the Constitution by way of Article III. William Blackstone described the "private relations" of English law as master and servant, husband and wife, parent and child, guardian and ward; in the United States, James Kent would add the variation of domestic slavery. The eradication of these relations, both the rules they countenanced and the hierarchies they expressed, would become the central challenge of constitutional politics for the next two hundred years. It continues into our own time.

The essays in this volume employ no single chronological grid. Yet those that make demarcations in time repeatedly show them in correspondence to this historical project. Diverse conflicts and disruptions cause constitutional strain, including, as we will see, in foreign affairs. Still, it is striking how on every plane — principles, structures, actions — major turning points referenced are the removal of slavery at the end of the civil war; the battle to end master-and-servant law in the "Lochner era" and the coming of the New Deal; the ongoing offensive against the effects of Jim Crow, starting with the Warren Court. Today's openly politicized judiciary features at center stage the demise of traditional family relations and, with this step, unprecedented discord among jurists and scholars over what a Constitution "is" and what its existing words might legitimately command.

The progression to constitutional free fall, that is, to a politically chosen realm without firm rules rooted in the past, exhibits two genealogies. Each stems from the Constitution's "halfway" beginnings. Both of them are typified in the canonical writings of William Blackstone. Blackstone famously depicted English law as a feudal castle, but he set it down in a landscape of natural rights. All evidence indicates that the framers lived comfortably in both places. In Jefferson's correspondence we read how, for instance, when the author of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was tasked with the job of purging English residues from the laws of his own state, he backed off, doing no more than "omitting the expired, the repealed and the obsolete." To act otherwise, he thought, would, "from the imperfection of human language and its inability to express distinctly every shade of idea ... involve us for ages in litigation and render property uncertain ...." English common law and statutes prior to 1607 and all English law in colonial usage were retained by the Virginia legislature.

Jefferson's ease in such matters was impossible for his successors, many of whom found elements of the English inheritance intolerable. Their eventual dissolution by events caused a continuing division in constitutional thought that persists until today. On the one side are what we might call the "Extrafoundationists." These anticipate what will be discarded with interpretive add-ons: in the 1850s, "higher law"; in the 1930s, "legal realism"; in the 1950s, "evolving standards of decency"; in the 1970s, "representational reinforcement"; in the 2000s, "popular constitutionalism." On the other side, those we might deem "Foundationists" cleave to the original constitutional package. The common lawyers and formalists of history, when what remains of the past is largely the document itself, they become advocates for the constitutional text; after decades of staring into the abyss — *Brown v. Board*, *Engel v. Vitale*, *Roe v. Wade* — they become "originalists," in the difficult position of proceeding as if momentous social transformations never happened or did not touch on the framers' core assumptions.

The following essays take no side in this debate. Written independently of these introductory remarks, each offers its own analysis and

evaluation of the constitutional topics it surveys. What we propose in light of the foregoing is to convey beforehand how their subjects operate and change together in response to a common set of historical tensions. The essays are arranged in three categories: principles, structures, and actions. We will discuss each in turn, elaborating as we go the historical perspective of a Constitution "halfway."  
<>

[Monument: Poems, New and Selected](#) by Natasha Trethewey [Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 9781328507846]

### Longlisted for the 2018 National Book Award for Poetry

"[Trethewey's poems] dig beneath the surface of history—personal or communal, from childhood or from a century ago—to explore the human struggles that we all face." —James H. Billington, 13th Librarian of Congress

Layering joy and urgent defiance—against physical and cultural erasure, against white supremacy whether intangible or graven in stone—Trethewey's work gives pedestal and witness to unsung icons. *Monument*, Trethewey's first retrospective, draws together verse that delineates the stories of working class African American women, a mixed-race prostitute, one of the first black Civil War regiments, mestizo and mulatto figures in *Casta* paintings, Gulf coast victims of Katrina. Through the collection, inlaid and inextricable, winds the poet's own family history of trauma and loss, resilience and love.

In this setting, each section, each poem drawn from an "opus of classics both elegant and necessary," [Academy of American Poets' chancellor Marilyn Nelson] weaves and interlocks with those that come before and those that follow. As a whole, *Monument* casts new light on the trauma of our national wounds, our shared history. This is a poet's remarkable labor to source evidence, persistence, and strength from the past in order to change the very foundation of the vocabulary we use to speak about race, gender, and our collective future.

Excerpt:

Transfiguration

Today, it is not the shape of a bell, though  
 I think of bells sounding  
 somewhere in the distance as we left  
 you—each sound wave rippling  
 to the next: the shape of singing. Nor is it  
 round, though round  
 is an echo: shape of the chamber, the  
 bullet, the hole bored through skin.  
 It is not, now, the sign you drew across  
 your body, your hands tracing—  
 again and again—a prayer: Deliver me,  
 Lord, from mine enemies.  
 And though it haunts me, the shape of loss  
 is not the chalked outline,  
 simulacrum on the pavement, on the  
 report—an X each place  
 your life seeped out. Today, the fig tree in  
 winter stopped me.  
 Limned in snow, the dark tree mimicked its  
 shadow, twinned  
 branches curving inward, a nest of bones.  
 For a moment I watched  
 the bright cardinal perch there, then beat  
 its wings in flight.

her dress black as a habit, the bright edge  
 of her  
 afro ringing her face with light? And how

not to recall her many wounds: ring finger  
 shattered, her ex-husband's bullet finding

her temple, lodging where her last thought  
 lodged?

Three weeks gone, my mother came to me

in a dream, her body whole again but for  
 one perfect wound, the singular  
 articulation

of all of them: a hole, center of her  
 forehead,  
 the size of a wafer—light pouring from it.

How, then, could I not answer her life  
 with mine, she who saved me with hers?

And how could I not—bathed in the light  
 of her wound—find my calling there?

<>

## Articulation

AFTER MIGUEL CABRERA'S PORTRAIT OF  
 SAINT GERTRUDE, 1763

In the legend, Saint Gertrude is called to  
 write  
 after seeing, in a vision, the sacred heart  
 of Christ.

Cabrera paints her among the instruments  
 of her faith: quill, inkwell, an open book,

rings on her fingers like Christ's many  
 wounds—  
 the heart emblazoned on her chest, the  
 holy

infant nestled there as if sunk deep in a  
 wound.  
 Against the dark backdrop, her face is a  
 wafer

of light. How not to see, in the saint's  
 image,  
 my mother's last portrait: the dark  
 backdrop,

[Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New  
 Field](#) edited by Eboo Patel and Jennifer Howe  
 Peace, and Noah J. Silverman [Beacon Press,  
 9780807019979]

A groundbreaking academic anthology that  
 explores the emerging field of  
 interreligious/interfaith studies

As it is now backed by an impressive number of  
 courses, academic programs and centers, faculty  
 positions, journals and publications, funding, and  
 professional partnerships, there is no longer a  
 question as to whether the interreligious/interfaith  
 field exists. But its meaning and import are still  
 being debated. How is this field distinct from, yet  
 similar to, other fields, such as religious or  
 theological studies? What are its signature  
 pedagogies and methodologies? What are its  
 motivations and key questions? In other words, what  
 is the shape of interfaith and interreligious studies,  
 and what is its distinct contribution? These questions  
 are the driving force behind this anthology.

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Excerpt: You might say that this volume had its origins in a generic hotel conference room in San Diego in 2014 during the annual gathering of the American Academy of Religion (AAR). Diana Eck, senior scholar at Harvard, had wondered out loud if interreligious studies had something to offer not only in terms of content (examining what people are doing interreligiously) but also in terms of methodology, favoring an active learning approach over the default academic lectures. Murmurs of assent broke out among the eighty or so people gathered for the session titled "Toward a Field of Interfaith Studies: Emerging Questions and Considerations" and hosted under the auspices of the AAR's Interreligious and Interfaith Studies Unit. The panel, which included coeditors Eboo Patel and Jennifer Howe Peace, was organized around three questions: What personal history brings you to your place in interfaith studies? What are the challenges or tensions in this emerging field? (Or, as Patel put it, "What keeps you up at night?") And, from your perspective, what are some of the defining moments in the current evolution of this (sub)field?

Eck, who twenty-five years ago founded the Pluralism Project, an initiative that foreshadowed much of what has come to be called interreligious or interfaith studies, noted that she saw endless opportunities for real research in this new field. "There is a lot going on in the world that has to be brought into focus," she pointed out. Throughout the session, people were feeling their way toward what this field was, could be, or should be. "There is no frame for what we are doing," said one

participant. He elicited nervous laughter when he jokingly commented, "I'm pretty sure I'm going to be fired for what I did here today."

Patel observed that a distinctive contribution of the AAR was to offer "direction, depth, and definition," along with rigor as this field emerged. He quoted from his recent article "Toward a Field of Interfaith Studies":

Scholars from a range of fields have long taken an interest in how people who orient around religion differently interact with one another.... As the activity in this area increases, one crucial role for the academy is to give some definition to what is clearly an emerging field of research, study, and practice. Another role is to recognize the importance of training people who have the knowledge base and skill set needed to engage religious diversity in a way that promotes peace, stability and cooperation—and to begin offering academic programs that certify such leaders.

Further elaborating his hopes for the field, Patel named five civic goods associated with interfaith work: reducing prejudice, strengthening social cohesion, building social capital, strengthening the continuity of identity communities, and, finally, creating binding narratives for diverse societies.

Peace argued that interfaith studies is more than an academic exercise, given the reality of religiously motivated violence, bigotry, and a lack of mutual understanding across religious traditions. In her definition, interfaith studies is a field that values scholarship accountable to community, the dynamic link between theory and practice, and the centrality of relationships at every level (from subject matter to methodology and motivations).

Other scholars weighed in. "Interreligious studies is a subfield of religious studies," said panelist Jeanine Diller. This was clear in her context at a large secular university and mirrors Kate McCarthy's argument in her chapter for this book. Barbara McGraw (also a contributor to this volume) noted that in her setting at Saint Mary's College of California she defines this as an interdisciplinary field under the rubric of leadership. Her model includes a focus on (1) leadership in an

organization; (2) communication and dialogue; (3) identity and bias; and (4) religious literacy.

John Thatamanil, associate professor of theology and world religions, mentioned that his institution, Union Theological Seminary, had added "interreligious engagement" as their newest field within theological education. He outlined Union's approach, which includes theory from comparative religious studies, in-depth knowledge of a particular tradition other than one's own, and appreciation for cultivating dispositions that promote interreligious understanding (based in part on Catherine Cornille's work).

Oddbjørn Leirvik, who wrote *Interreligious Studies: A Relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion*, suggested three categories for the range of concerns we were discussing: (1) interreligious work—a broad term referring to practical efforts; (2) interreligious education or formation work, which Leirvik noted is less common in Europe than in the US; and (3) interreligious studies, which he described as being focused on studying interreligious dialogue as well as broader efforts related to building interreligious relations. He also noted that an important critical contribution of this area involves attending to the power relations and gender dynamics that are part of interreligious engagement. (This last point is taken up by several contributors to this volume, including Elizabeth Kubek and Jeannine Hill Fletcher.)

The session's conversation continued with animated dialogue about goals and definitions, both compatible and competing. All of it underscored a key concern articulated at the outset of the panel—that we lack a current consensus about the nature of this emerging field. What does it mean to do this work well?

Sixteen months later, in March 2016, over one hundred faculty members from across the United States came together for a conference at California Lutheran University to discuss curricular programs in the emerging field of interfaith and interreligious studies. Robert Jones, a sociologist and the CEO of the Public Religion Research Institute, was one of the keynote speakers. He caught up with the three coeditors of *The increasing number of grants from the Teagle Foundation,*

Henry Luce Foundation, Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation—all major funders of higher education—seek to advance research, theorizing, and teaching in interreligious leadership, religious literacy, and other areas under the rubric of interfaith or interreligious studies.

Major higher education associations such as the Council of Independent Colleges and the Association of American Colleges and Universities have formed collaborative partnerships for interfaith conferences, faculty development seminars, and institutes.

A central goal of this book is to draw a circle around these various "facts on the ground"—the courses, journal articles, degree programs, faculty positions, and common questions—and see what pictures emerge. How does this "thing" called interfaith (or interreligious) studies relate to similar things, such as religious or theological studies? What are the key questions, motivations, and outcomes that animate this emerging field? What are its signature pedagogies? In other words, what is the shape of interfaith/interreligious studies, and what is its distinct contribution?

The coeditors of this volume have had a long commitment to these questions and have played a significant role in putting some of the aforementioned facts on the ground. Jennifer Howe Peace held the first tenured faculty position in interfaith studies at Andover Newton Theological Seminary (what is now Andover Newton at Yale Divinity School). As mentioned above, she also cofounded and cochaired the AAR's Interreligious and Interfaith Studies unit and founded the AAR-affiliated Association for Interreligious/Interfaith Studies in 2017. Eboo Patel and Noah Silverman, as staff members at Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), received grants from each of the foundations mentioned above for partnerships with major higher education associations, which helped (and continue to support) many of the undergraduate courses and degree programs in interfaith and interreligious studies mentioned above. Each of us has published in this new field and taught courses, designed curriculum, and led faculty seminars in interfaith and interreligious studies. In the process,

we have encountered hundreds of college and university faculty and administrators who have come to identify themselves with this emerging field.

While the existence of interfaith or interreligious studies is increasingly hard to ignore, its meaning and import is still being debated. Bill Drayton, who coined the term "social entrepreneur," once responded when asked how he felt about that term's rapid proliferation, "I only wish people knew what it meant." Similarly, Eboo Patel notes that when IFYC gets résumés listing "interfaith experience," there is little to no agreement on what this means. This points to a practical question at the heart of this volume: what can one expect as a potential employer if someone has an academic pedigree in interfaith studies? As interfaith or interreligious studies has taken shape over the past five years, it has been defined in multiple ways, with disputes and disagreements among scholars with conflicting visions of the field's scope and purview. This book thus builds on the panel discussions, conferences, and debates over definitions to explore the state of the emerging field. The contributions in this volume attest to the range of research and work taking shape under the rubric of interreligious or interfaith studies.

### Overview of the Volume

When the coeditors issued a call for chapters for this volume, more than fifty scholars responded. From those, we chose the eighteen essays that appear in this collection. To develop an edited volume that was more than the sum of its parts, we gathered all the contributors for a conversation in August 2016 in Chicago. At that meeting, Mary Elizabeth Moore, dean of the Boston University School of Theology, shared opening remarks about the challenges and possibilities inherent in defining a field.<sup>1</sup> A field, by definition, is an area of open land often designated for a particular purpose and bound by signs of its outer limits—a fence, a stone wall, a creek. By analogy, an academic field frames a particular area of study both in terms of what it includes and excludes. The project and purpose of this volume is to offer multiple views on a field in formation.



Contributors to this volume do not necessarily agree on how to define, name, and bind the outer limits of this field (or subfield) or on what belongs in it (and what does not). This is by design. We hope the book will inspire conversations and lively debates among scholars, teachers, and religious practitioners about the kinds of questions and concerns interreligious/interfaith studies is uniquely positioned to explore.

The first section of the book, "Constructions: Mapping the Field," includes five chapters from authors with a range of disciplinary backgrounds and in diverse institutional settings—factors that shape and influence their approach to, and understanding of, interreligious/interfaith studies. Kate McCarthy writes from her position at a large public secular university and advocates for interreligious studies to be embraced as a subfield of religious studies, while suggesting that both the field and the subfield have something important to learn from each other. Deanna Womack, a pastor and seminary professor, describes interfaith studies as a "third way" that takes the best from the twin disciplines of her own intellectual formation: history of religions and theology. Taking a different tack, Elizabeth Kubek, shaped by women's studies and gender studies, argues for interfaith studies as a new inclusive and interdisciplinary field akin to other area studies. Coauthors Amy L. Allocco, Geoffrey D. Claussen, and Brian K. Pennington take readers through the concerns and questions they confronted while designing a minor in interreligious studies at Elon University and differentiating their curricular project from the civic project of interfaith engagement. Finally, Kristi Del Vecchio and Noah Silverman, program staff at Interfaith Youth Core, identify six key themes that have emerged from existing interfaith and interreligious studies curricular growth over the past five years. Each of these essays offers constructive proposals and lingering questions—valuable signposts as we continue the work of collectively mapping the boundaries of this emerging field.

Having traced the outlines of how this field might be constructed, we turn to the second part of the book: "Pedagogy and Classroom Practices." There are a set of teaching strategies that are becoming increasingly common or even "signature" ways of

doing interreligious and interfaith studies that are simultaneously impacted by and impacting our understanding of the field. In Kevin Minister's chapter, we see the transformation of one professor and his classroom as he moves from a more traditional "world religions" approach of teaching religions to an "interfaith studies" approach. Minister's piece is a helpful bridge from the previous section of the book as he considers the wider implications of this move for departments of religious studies in general. In the second chapter of this section, Ellie Pierce, research director at the Pluralism Project at Harvard and pioneer in producing a set of case studies on religious pluralism, offers a detailed look into the benefits and limits of using the decision-based case method in the interfaith studies classroom. Beyond formal case studies, Matthew Maruggi and Martha E. Stortz look more broadly at the power and importance of narrative storytelling as part of the tool kit for teaching interreligious studies. Postulating another key aspect of teaching in this field, Michael Birkel in "A Pedagogy of Listening: Teaching the Qur'an to Non-Muslims" homes in on the importance of listening as a pedagogical commitment in his experiences as a Quaker and professor of religion at Earlham College. The final contribution to this section is a chapter by Wakoh Shannon Hickey and Margarita M. W. Suárez focused on articulating key affective goals for their students and describing exercises designed to take students beyond acquiring data to cultivating qualities such as reflexivity, empathy, inquiry, and a commitment to pluralism—core dimensions of the coauthors' definition of what constitutes an interfaith studies approach in the classroom.

Part 3 of the book, "Challenges and Choices," includes four chapters that explore tensions, complications, and wider considerations that, these authors argue, should inform how interfaith studies is defined and constructed. Rachel S. Mikva begins this section by outlining six issues that complicate interreligious engagement, as seen from her experiences in the field. Jeannine Hill Fletcher focuses on one of the issues named by Mikva—the history of white Christian privilege in the United States—and argues that acknowledging this history and committing to structural transformation are

needed if interfaith studies fulfills hopes of contributing to a "religio-racial" project that can be inclusive of all persons. Thinking about what—or who—is included (or left out) of interreligious/interfaith studies as it is currently being conceived, the two final chapters in this section focus on this issue from very different angles. Marion H. Larson and Sara L. H. Shady look specifically at evangelical Christians in the interfaith movement in ways that pose larger questions about the ideological commitments and inclusivity of this field. Finally, Lisa E. Dahill widens the perspective appreciably by arguing that any approach to interreligious engagement that is relevant and responsive to our times needs to consider not only an interreligious model of understanding and solidarity but also an interspecies and holistic ecological model, one embodied, located in specific places, and with an express commitment to being in relationship not just with each other but also with the "more-than-human-world."

The fourth and final section of the book, "Applications Beyond the Classroom," explores a range of contexts and settings in which interfaith leadership, interreligious education, and interfaith studies approaches are having an impact on everything from religious leadership formation to advocacy work for adherents of minority religions in prisons and to training for diplomatic work. In the section's first chapter, Or N. Rose and Jennifer Howe Peace argue for a model of interreligious education that can broaden the way future religious leaders understand their role and their calling. The next chapter reveals how encountering religious prejudice in prisons and teaching religious literacy to prison officials led Barbara A. McGraw to develop an "interfaith leadership for institutional change model," which she now applies to other institutions and professions. Turning to the applicability of interfaith studies for professions beyond the academy, Mark E. Hanshaw and Usra Ghazi in the next chapter offer views from their respective locations about the important role interfaith studies can play in preparing people for the religiously diverse workplaces they will encounter once they graduate. In the final chapter, coauthors Heather Miller Rubens, Homayra Ziad,

and Benjamin E. Sax turn their attention to the possibility of fostering an "interreligious city," using their home city of Baltimore as a case study. <>

[The Realizations of the Self](#) edited by Andrea Altobrando, Takuya Niikawa, Richard Stone [Palgrave Macmillan, 9783319946993]

Recent discussions of self-realization have devolved into unscientific theories of self-help. However, this vague and often misused concept is connected to many important individual and social problems. As long as its meaning remains unclear, it can be abused for social, political, and commercial malpractices. To combat this issue, this book shares perspectives from scholars of various philosophical traditions. Each chapter takes new steps in asking what the meaning of self-realization is—both in terms of what it means to understand who or what one is, and also in terms of how one can, or should, fulfill oneself. The conceptual elucidations achieved from both theoretical and practical perspectives allow for a more mature awareness of how to deal with discourses on self-realization and, in any case, can help to demystify the subject.

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Excerpt:

Every now and then they were awarded prizes—Self-help by Smiles, and other books suitable for perusal by persons suffering from almost complete obliteration of the mental faculties. —Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*

Within the history of philosophy and across different cultures, few questions have been raised as frequently as what the realization of oneself means. Certainly, one of the very driving forces of philosophy seems to be the clarification of the self and its life. However, in spite of this, within recent years, there have been few serious critical and philosophical efforts to discuss what exactly it means to realize oneself. To this degree, there is a need to critically assess the meaning of self-realization.

Certainly, the topic of self-realization is present in many books concerning ethics, psychology and philosophy of psychology—as well as religious (or perhaps pseudo-religious) works. Yet, in spite of this, recently, there have been no books which clearly, directly and specifically address such a concept. The publications in this regard have mainly considered the philosophical issue of self-realization in historical terms, i.e. by means of interpretations, and expositions, of past authors, especially the ancient Greeks, Romans, and (often exoticized) Eastern thinkers—such as Laozi, Buddha, Confucius, or the Veda. As mentioned, for

current theories, the topic is nowadays mainly left to some religious (and dubiously scientific) works, as well as to some researchers in applied psychology. An up-to-date, open and scientifically rigorous, philosophical discourse on the very concept of self-realization is still lacking. We certainly ought to think of this as a gap that needs to be filled in order to enable an open, critical assessment of both religious and political propaganda. We should furthermore recognize the importance this can have for establishing a critical and democratic political agenda concerning issues concerning the individual and social good as well as well-being.

Indeed, it is not actually obvious what it means "to realize oneself". As a matter of fact, both terms included in such an expression are far from clear. What is the "self" that is supposed to be realized? A person? An ego? A specific form of being which is different from what one "is" as a whole human being, or as a person? And what does it mean "to realize"? To achieve a goal? To actualize a plan? To create oneself into a specific shape? To draw out one's own potential? Perhaps more importantly: Is self-realization an act achieved by the self, or is self-realization something more akin to a re-shaping of the self which we only experience passively? What is the relationship between the self's realization and its environment (both social and natural)? Moreover, what of the relationship between the self and the "author" of its realization? Should we not, indeed, distinguish between the "actualization of what one is", i.e. of the (assumed) essence of someone, and the shaping of someone or of someone's life according to a specific model or ideal?

In order to approach the problem of self-realization in a rigorous and philosophical way, and thus save it from largely unscientific, if not arcane, wisdom, it is clearly necessary to highlight the main aspects entailed by this notion. It is not enough to merely question the relevance of self-realization to our philosophical debate as if it were a unified and clear concept. We should first investigate how the self can be understood, and thus assess the corresponding meaning of its alleged realization. Equally, we need to critically assess what the different doctrines about the ethical realization of an individual imply as regards the

ontological status of the self, without treating the two aspects as separate topics.

Although in the past few decades, the philosophy of mind has become one of the main areas of investigation in philosophy, and has bred publications and debates concerning the issue of what it means to be a self, few attempts have been made to connect these theories with the dynamic and normative aspects of selfhood. There have certainly been some individual thinkers, such as Derek Parfit or Bernard Williams, who both proposed theories of self which are simultaneously a theory of what a self is (and is not) while also clarifying the practical-ethical implications that a conception of self can have. However, most debates in philosophy of mind concerning self and self-consciousness lack this broad view. As a result, most theories in ethics do not sufficiently problematize the very concept of the self they presuppose; in other words, they do not sufficiently work out the ontology, or metaphysics, of the self they try to establish the good, and/or the rights and the duties of. Otherwise, authors merely put forth a view of the self, with no attention to the repercussions that their interpretation may have. To put it briefly, the very connection between self and realization has seldom been the focus of recent philosophical theories and investigations.

This could seem especially true for analytic philosophy, mostly because of its (relatively recent) tendency towards hyper-specialization. As a consequence, researchers have focused on singular issues without considering the connections between these issues in a wider picture. For example, by keeping within one's area of specialization, one can easily neglect the practical consequences that the limits of self-knowledge has on the social activity of individuals to protect; or to affirm, oneself. Likewise, one can focus on the legal, or ethical, duties towards one's body without considering the many questions concerning the relationship between mind and body, i.e. without touching upon what the self can be identified with, and what the limits of one's self-identification with the body are.

With that said, several shortcomings can be found in the writings of the so-called continental philosophers as well. Indeed, such writings either

aim to principally discuss only the large picture, while neglecting the various issues and competing views concerning specific aspects of the idea of the self, and of the dynamics concerning the very concept of realization. Thus, many continental writings turn out to be at the very least aporetic in the actual philosophical panorama, or they otherwise end up restricting themselves to specific and quite isolated aspects of the self and of its realization. Take, for instance, the innumerable writings devoted to the issue of otherness, and intersubjectivity (especially those in the "phenomenological" tradition over the last 20 years). These writings have undoubtedly offered great contributions to our understanding of the self, and its social dimension. As a matter of fact, the phenomenological tradition has become one of the main voices in the current debates concerning social ontology. Nevertheless, the consequences that the phenomenological insights concerning self, otherness, and inter-subjectivity may have for practical and normative issues has only rarely been considered. As a matter of fact, almost no philosophical theory of community and society comparable at least in scope to the ones put forward in the past "classic" philosophers, such as Plato, Locke, Comte, or Hegel, has been developed by phenomenologists during the last decades (or at the very least, this has been the case since Sartre's death). As for other "continental" schools, it is clear that—unless one considers some (often dogmatic) forms of Marxism or Christian thought—there are people working on political philosophy and philosophy of law, such as, for instance, the heirs of the Frankfurt School, who develop their views while more or less leaving aside the more technical current issues concerning philosophy of mind. Hence, in the continental school as well, we find a similar gap between self and self-realization.

We can thus say that in spite of all the impressive research, investigations, debates, ideas, and theories carried out in the past decades, philosophers on both sides of the "divide" have only very sparingly been put together in order to develop some kind of systematic view. One could say that the systematic "spirit" has long since been thought deceased. Whether or not a kind of universal philosophy should really be declared

dead or whether or not a resurrection of sorts is possible is not a topic that merits discussion in the introduction of this book. However, we must point out that at the very least a kind of overall view of such a sensitive and concretely relevant issue as that of self-realization can, and probably should, be considered in its entire complexity. It permeates throughout our lives, at both the social and individual level. Moreover, this is entirely the case regardless of whether we want it or not. It would be more than a merely philosophical irresponsibility to leave this topic to some scattered insights or profit-oriented self-help books. This is particularly true when we consider the danger of leaving such an important topic up to a seemingly not uncommon "schizophrenic" view that has snuck into popular society and academia alike. Indeed, we find ourselves in a contradictory state in which, on the one hand, we declare the self-illusory, insubstantial or non-existent and, on the other hand, we insist on the primacy of individual rights (and duties), and fight in the name of freedom and self-determination for this insubstantial self, with no consideration as to how these seemingly conflicting viewpoints can possibly coexist. These problems have very real consequences that become apparent when we consider worth of thinking about the issue of individual well-being, or that of the distinction between commonwealth, and private interests. To neglect a kind of systematic investigation into the very complex idea of the self and its realization could also be tantamount to the declaration of the fatuity of philosophy.

Our goal in this volume is to take precisely the opposite stance. We want to contribute to the development and deepening of the plurality of views concerning the nature of the self, how it is constituted, how it works, and what its good, its rights, and its duties are. How the self, in brief, is self or non-self-realized, and, once come to life, how it realizes itself. We want to give space to allow the topics of self and self-realization to grow, and thus give space to a wider panoramic to problems that are rooted in our day to day lives.

Of course, possibly because these questions have deep-seated roots in any number of intellectual and cultural traditions, it would be a mistake to limit our discussions in this volume to developing

only one systematic view of self-realization. Our aim here is to respond to this task by collecting authors representing a plethora of different intellectual traditions, time-periods, and cultures. By bringing together authors from various different philosophical landscapes, we hope to lead the way to an open, critical discussion about what it means to realize (one)-self and how some specific topics related to the issue of self-realization can be addressed.

Now, one more note concerning the goal of this volume is in order before we can proceed. Indeed, what we must also consider when we discuss the concept of "self-realization" is the fact that realization has at least two main meanings. On the one hand, realization corresponds to the constitution, i.e. the "creation", the "building", the "formation" of something which is called "self" (or "I", or "ego"). On the other hand, realization also points to the process by means of which the (somehow already constituted) self can, or should, be considered as fulfilled. As one may assume from what has been said up to this point, these two sides of "self" and "realization" should not be separated. It is clear, as we have already said, that different theories of the self-require different understandings of the kinds of realization it is entitled to, and vice versa.

However, one cannot reasonably hope to offer in one volume the full-fledged version of all theories of self and realization, and of all the connected ontological, ethical, as well as epistemological issues.

Thus, the following contributions in this volume all offer some views of what self can mean, i.e. some understandings of the self, as well as some views about how the self can be fulfilled, i.e. some ideas concerning the achievement of the self. Each contribution is independent from the others. One could therefore remark that, in the end, also in this volume no full-fledged theory of self-realization is offered, i.e. a theory both of what a self is and of its fulfilment. Such a remark is certainly correct. As a matter of fact, no contributor has been required to specifically cover both sides of the issue of self-realization, nor have they been instructed to tackle only one aspect of selfhood in order to leave other

aspects to their fellow authors. What is more, the reflections, and theories, concerning the self and its realization touched upon in the following articles are not necessarily consistent with each other.

However, we do not consider this lack of one fully-articulated, entirely systematized view of self and self-realization to be a defect of this volume. To be clear, providing this only one systematic view of self-realization was also not our goal. Indeed, the assumption of one specific meaning of self or self-realization goes against the very spirit of our goal to overcome uncritical or unreflective acceptance of the consequences of these theories. To this end, we wish to give space for debates to begin, and grow, with authors representing various perspectives that all offer at least a grain of truth into the nature of what it means for us to realize the self. As the reader shall see, the inter-related ideas painted by the authors here are all deserving of further debate and careful inspection.

Perhaps, though, the sheer amount of differing opinions, ideas, and theories on the topic are precisely the cause of its disappearance from serious philosophical investigation. It is clearly an overwhelming issue that very few dare to tackle. In a sense, one is tempted to say that it is, as for a scientific point of view is concerned, at the best an issue for psychology. For some who think more "humanistically", it can be taken as an issue of ethical wisdom. However, one does thus easily forget how the issue is an extremely relevant social issue, and that dealing with it requires a thorough philosophical investigation of all its aspects. On the one hand, it is connected to the social dimensions, and to the social constitution, of the self. Whether one can realize oneself "beyond" a social dimension is far from being a merely psychological issue. It is strictly connected to the ontological status of the self. On the other hand, self-realization is a critically relevant matter in terms of law. It should suffice to remind the importance of self-determination in most modern legal systems. Not to mention the issue of happiness and well-being, which keep more than vague, one could even say empty, if no decently worked-out idea of self-realization is available, also just to differentiate it from them.

These hints should be enough to persuade one of the importance of a thorough philosophical investigation about the issue of self-realization is necessary for our both theoretical and practical lives. The hints should also suffice to convince anyone that no single philosopher can nowadays rationally believe that they are able to offer a systematic view of self-realization which covers even just all here mentioned issues.

Hence, it is necessary that nowadays philosophers open themselves to a cooperation which allows a better understanding of what self-realization means from different perspectives, and regarding the different issues it entangles. We should acknowledge that we are in an era where the collaboration between philosophers is a necessity, and is somehow also a duty, because no single philosopher is able to contemplate all issues of philosophy in this day and age. To do one's philosophical job properly, to achieve one's philosophical goals, all in all to realize oneself as a philosopher, one has to partake in a common enterprise, and this implies leaving part of the bigger picture to others.

In order to achieve the lofty goals in this volume, we have separated all works into two different sections, thus that we can create a mosaic of understandings of both "self" and "realization". These two sections are, unsurprisingly enough, "self", and "realization". As has already been stated, no authors were instructed to tackle only one specific facet of either self or realization, much less are there any contributions that only address one of the two. All sectional divisions are only based on a relative difference in the aspect of self-realization being emphasized. Moreover, in the middle, i.e. between the two parts, we have put a kind of intermezzo, Andrea Altobrando and Galen Strawson perform a kind of counterpunctual philosophical exchange with Strawson's theses concerning the self and anti-narrativism as *cantus firmus*.

To begin, our first section will focus more heavily on providing detailed outlooks on what the self is. After all, in order to discuss the self's realization, we ought to know what it is in the first place. Needless to say, there are so many competing

views of what the self is that it has become difficult to keep track of the different interpretations. Yet, it is precisely because of this conclusion that we must ask what it is to be a self, and whether or not there is one prominent meaning of the word. To this end, the authors assembled in this section share a common theme: what is the most basic meaning of the concept of the self, and what does it require to achieve this level?

First, Frischhut starts with a question central to this whole volume: is there such a thing as a true self to be realized? Is it something that passively develops? Or is it something that we actively construct and form? Frischhut argues convincingly that neither of these two views are capable of satisfying our intuitions concerning the true self. Outgoing from this line of reasoning, Frischhut comes to the intriguing conclusion that there is no such thing as a true self—or that, if there is, it is little more than a psychological state.

Taguchi raises another central question to our volume when he asks how it is possible for us to recognize ourselves as one individual self amongst many. While this may seem obvious, the fact that we can never look through the eyes of the other (lest they become our own), raises a serious problem concerning how we can know something we have never experienced. In order to answer this question, Taguchi relies upon the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Kitaro Nishida in order to show the ebb and flow between two poles of selfhood, i.e. between our uncountable, and un-contextual self, and our self as a contextualized individual, which is one amongst many.

Gallagher and Butler provide a different route to a similar question of what it takes to be a self. As the two efficaciously argue, in order to achieve minimal selfhood, the development of habits is necessary. In modern debates, those in the philosophy and phenomenology often put their focus squarely on the relationship between phenomenal consciousness and selfhood, with one popular move being to take pre-reflective self-awareness as a basis for diachronic consistency. What Gallagher and Butler manage to do, however, is to provide a link to what is known as the "narrative self" with the minimal and pre-

reflective self-focused on in modern debates by considering their connection with habits.

Northoff investigates another necessary component of selfhood when he looks at the temporal aspect of the self. With that said, Northoff provides a unique outlook on the manner by looking at how the temporal aspects of the self-match with the neuroscientific evidence that scientists have found in recent years. Northoff mixes philosophy with neuroscience in order to show that self and self-continuity have their basis in the brain's cortical midline structures, thus giving a physical account of how we are able to find continuity in the nature of our self.

Finally, Campagnolo goes beyond purely metaphysical questions to highlight an equally necessary component of selfhood by discussing economic self-realization. Specifically, Campagnolo asks, what is the economic self that we aim to realize in our day to day life? When we consider how recent economics relies on models that seem to reduce selves to purely rational agents, we can lose track of the subjective aspect of this exchange. In order to give a more full-blooded picture of the economic self, Campagnolo relies on the work of the Austrian economist, Carl Menger. In this way, Campagnolo proposes insights apt at developing an economic theory which is concretely capable of dealing with the self and subjectivity.

The next section will serve as a transition from accounts of selfhood to accounts of realization by means of a critical dialogue examining both topics. Specifically, as already mentioned, we feature a special conversation, actually a kind of interview, between Strawson and Altobrando concerning the feasibility—and ethical implications of—what has been called the "narrative view" of the self. On the basis of some of Strawson's texts, and more specifically his "The Unstoried Life", which we reprint here for the convenience of the readers, Altobrando has tried to let Strawson spell out more precisely how some of his ideas concerning the self can be linked to his more ethical, or existential, views. The result is a quite rhapsodic text, where different themes are intertwined, at times confused with each other, but then unravelled towards a clearer understanding of the ideas involved.



Following, despite the "polymorphous" nature of the texts, we confide in its capacity to help both the ones who are already familiar with Strawson's texts to better understand them, and the ones less familiar to approach Strawson's writings with a more adequate awareness of their general ideas, and relationships to each other. More specifically, this critical dialogue will simultaneously allow readers a chance to become more familiar with Strawson's powerful stance that narratives are—at best—unnecessary for becoming a moral self, while also touching upon how these issues relate to self-realization. Hence, this counterpointical interlude is aimed not only at entertaining the reader, but also at showing a concrete interaction between two philosophical voices, and its utility to get a more sharpened view of the link between some ideas concerning the self and self-consciousness and their import on possible views of self-realization.

Our final section will turn to several authors who place more emphasis on what it means to realize the self. In precisely the way that authors in the previous section faced the plurality of the meaning of the word self, contributions here will tackle the various questions concerning its realization. Questions concerning how one can realize one's self, and thus achieve one's potential and lead a good life, span the scope of multiple centuries and cultures. Yet, this myriad of different viewpoints all seem to contain at least a kernel of truth. Hence, here we shall assess a plurality of views from a range of different intellectual traditions, in order to critically assess their value to our daily lives.

The first contribution comes from Kondo. While Kondo, like Strawson and Altobrando did in the previous section of the book, tackles topics that can be related to narrative consistency, he does so from the standpoint of the Stoic concept of eudaemonia. Specifically, Kondo expertly navigates the work of several different stoic conceptions of the self to demonstrate how they conceived of self-realization as something self-activity. The wide-ranging and articulate nature of Kondo's investigation gives readers a clear picture of how one of the most important philosophical schools of the ancient world viewed the topic of self-realization. Kondo then finishes these considerations by touching upon different modern

analogues of this theory in order to better draw out the meaning of self-activity for both our understanding of Stoic philosophy and its modern applications.

After this concept of self-realization that stand at the roots of Western modernity, Suzuki presents an alternative from a more modern perspective. For Suzuki, realizing oneself is equivalent of realizing what it is that one wants to do. Yet, although it may sound intuitively promising to say as much, the meaning of what it is which one wants to do is not clear. Here, Suzuki utilizes the ideas of Harry Frankfurt, Gary Watson, and Michael Bratman in order to better announce his own ideas on the topic. While Suzuki largely agrees with Bratman's ideas on being committed to doing something, he keenly notes the importance of moods for being committed to something. By taking a hint from Martin Heidegger, Suzuki manages to give a new view on what it is to realize what it is one wants to do.

A different view of what it means to realize oneself is put forward by de Tienda Palop. De Tienda Palop specifically emphasizes the importance of the concept of flourishing when considering the topic of self-realization. In order to do this, de Tienda Palop lists three examples of what she labels as authors within the liberal tradition: J.S. Mill, Charles Taylor, and Martha Nussbaum. By progressing through the development of the Western liberal tradition, de Tienda Palop shows several important aspects of flourishing. First, through Mill, de Tienda Palop shows that respect for the autonomy and preferences of the individual are necessary for self-realization. Next, through Taylor that solely allowing for total autonomy and absolutizing individual preference is not sufficient, and that there needs to be a social ground for communication. Finally, through Nussbaum, de Tienda Palop shows that there furthermore need to be social grounds for mutually supporting and depending on one another in order to flourish.

In the same vein that de Tienda Palop stresses the concept of flourishing's connection to self-realization, Biasetti asks the question of what the legal basis that is most conducive to flourishing is in the modern world. Biasetti attempts to answer this

question with a defence of rights in a post-Parfit atmosphere. Biasetti starts by showing how Parfit's work managed to disassemble the classic defence of rights-theorists against utilitarianism by showing that individuals are not the "thick" entities we typically assume them to be. Against this background, Biasetti attempts to construct different grounds on which we should still accept rights talk. Specifically, Biasetti clearly demonstrates how rights are necessary for building "morality in the narrow sense", which is in turn necessary for morality in a broader sense, and thus necessary for human flourishing.

Liberati highlights a different social aspect of self-realization that is important to our modern society. Specifically, Liberati tackles the question of how we can have healthy human relationships necessary for a fulfilling social life in a technology dominated age. From the background of post-phenomenology, Liberati first demonstrates the changes that new technology such as cell-phones and computers have made to our interpersonal relationships. After this, he then seeks out to answer the question of whether or not fulfilling inter-personal relationships are necessary in this background.

Cheung adds a new dimension to the discussion concerning the interpersonal aspects of self-realization by touching upon a topic of critical importance: love. Specifically, by analysing how two Japanese philosophers, Kitaro Nishida and Satomi Takahashi dealt with Scheler's notions of sympathy and Agape, Cheung is able to provide a unique understanding of how love can be related to self-realization. Namely, Cheung focuses on the importance of the idea that love is a sort of union between two persons. Through this analysis, we gain a clear picture of the ways that joining two separate selves is possibly necessary for the realization of both.

In the final contribution, Stone also relies on the Japanese philosophical tradition to attempt to show how the loss or abandonment of one's self is, paradoxically, the key to self-realization. In an analysis of twentieth century philosopher Hajime Tanabe's post-World War II thought based on "absolute Other-power", Stone highlights how "giving up" one's self and allowing it to fall into

nothingness can allow one to achieve new forms of self-realization once one has encountered limit situations that previously prevented it. Specifically, Stone emphasizes the importance of the relationship between self-abandonment and passivity as a means of re-connecting with others and finding a new source of self-realization. <>

[Lacan and Cassirer; An Essay on Symbolisation](#) by Antoine Mooij, translated by Peter van Nieuwkoop [Value Inquiry Book Series, Philosophy and Psychology, Brill | Rodopi, 9789004373426]

The Neo-Kantian philosopher Cassirer and the psychoanalyst Lacan are two key figures in the so-called medial turn in philosophy: the notion that any form of access to reality is mediated by symbols (images, words, signifiers). This explains why the theories of both philosophers merit a description in their own unique idioms, as well as having their respective basic tenets compared. It will be argued that, rather surprisingly, these tenets turn out to be complementary - actually correcting each other - based on their shared notion of man as an *animal symbolicum*. Its fruitfulness will be substantiated for a limited number of topics within the humanities: perception, language, politics and ethics, and mental disorder, all to be considered from this perspective.

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Excerpt: This book aims to present an image of man as a symbolising being that is able to interpret itself and is thus endowed with the capacity of selfdetermination. However, any image of man has to be substantiated in human and cultural sciences, as well as being founded in a philosophical tradition. Without such substantiation it will be just an empty shell, while lack of foundation will make it an arbitrary effort. Consequently, a philosophical anthropology is composed of three constitutive elements: (1) the basic outline of the view of man itself, (2) its philosophical foundation, and (3) a detailed substantiation in terms of 'empirical knowledge of man'. Reasoned though a choice for a particular

concept of man may be, it will always remain a choice. The fundamental choice made in this book is to regard man as a symbolising being. This thesis will be proposed, scrutinized, and discussed, which may result in a contribution to a philosophical anthropology made concrete.

The emphasis in this book is on the second element: its foundation, which defines the concept of man as a symbolising being. What does that mean? Symbolisation or representation means, by way of introduction, that nothing can 'be' unless it is something else too or represents this other thing. Something is red if it has the properties of a red colour, thus representing red. For example, an official represents a particular authority, deriving his authority from this representation (rather than from what else he may be). In the course of the past century, two thinkers offered major contributions to the inherent field of research: the NeooKantian philosopher Cassirer (1874–1945) and psychoanalyst Lacan (1901–1981). Juxtaposing the two may raise a few eyebrows, as Cassirer and Lacan at first glance seem to have very little in common, whilst holding quite disparate views. Cassirer (1874–1945) was a quintessentially academic philosopher, and is hardly a household name in the world of philosophy. One of the last of the philosophers of culture, the name Cassirer smacks of bygone days, of pre-World War I NeooKantianism. And yet his chef d'oeuvre, his philosophy of culture, was written in the 1920s, in the midst of the exciting and fascinating years that followed the Great War. Cassirer is also known for his famous Davos debate with Heidegger. However, his forced exile from Germany in 1933 relegated him to the margins of history. And then there is Lacan (1901–1981), a famous psychoanalyst, a man with a complex character and a mixed reputation. Some worship Lacan, while others abhor his ideas. In that sense he is the typical French master thinker. And yet Lacan's work did stand the test of time, earning its place in history thanks to his specific theory of culture, of the symbolic order. In doing so he returned to Freud, to Freud's theory of culture and its notion of an inevitable discontent with culture. Whereas Lacan is inspired by Freud, Cassirer owes much to Kant's work, and so their perspectives are fundamentally

different. Yet they find common ground in their treatment of Kant's and Freud's work, respectively. In his philosophy of the symbolic forms, Cassirer demonstrates how Kant's ideas can be developed into a theory of symbolisation. In his turn, Lacan adopts a similar approach as Freud in his theory of the symbolic order. Here, in the theme of symbolisation, is where we recognise their mutual relationship. Man represents brutal reality through images, words and formulas, relying on symbolic systems in which language plays a key role. And yet each of these systems are characterised by the same lack: being limited to representing or symbolising reality as something else, they can never truly reflect or duplicate reality itself. Their capacity to represent is based on this lack, on this inability to duplicate. Nonetheless, this lack works out positively rather than negatively. Indeed, it enables representation, or productive representation, as well as the creation of a wide variety of symbolic systems. The very inadequacy of any symbolic system creates the need for more symbolic systems, a need that can in fact be addressed. The lack left (and created) by a particular type of symbolisation can be filled by another, complementary or corrective type of symbolisation. This symbolisation will take a variety of shapes and can be substantiated through a wide range of media (language, science, art, religion, etcetera). While none of these will show reality in its true form, each will use their own unique 'refractive index' to project reality. Thus, reality is only given as one single manifestation out of a pluriform range of manifestations: as a rock or rock formation, as food on the table; as radiation, as  $E=mc^2$ ; or as fascinating or terrifying – while none of these manifestations can be singled out as the 'one and only true' manifestation.

Brutal reality or the real itself eludes any such attempt. This describes the second characteristic they have in common. The real is processed symbolically – through images, languages or formulas – but reality itself is excluded from this process. As a result, man does not coincide with his natural body, nor does perceived nature coincide with nature itself, while knowledge of the other is charged with misunderstanding. Thus, man is denied access to immediacy – to life, brutal reality, to the

Other. Inevitably, any type of mediation, of symbolisation, leaves a gap, one that can manifest itself in all kinds of ways: maybe as an experience that does not match theory, or as an unexpected, indefinable impulsive act, or as an event that cannot be dealt with or symbolised in one's own life, ultimately leading to a trauma.

Obviously, this fundamental view of pluriform disclosure of reality may not appeal to all, or indeed provoke fierce criticism. After all, science, most notably the world of physics, only knows reality as it is. The fields of natural sciences, life sciences and neurosciences tell us exactly what nature is, what life is, what the mind is, and will undoubtedly continue to do so. And religion is a thing of the past, isn't it? Criticisms such as these are typical of the dominant discourse: man is an animal, man is his brain. Sweeping though these statements may seem, they do reflect a type of sentiment commonly conveyed using more elegant turns of phrase. The representation philosophy challenges and actually opposes such ideas. Arguments supporting this philosophy will not be offered by engaging in debate with contemporary thinkers of a naturalist persuasion. Instead, they will come to the fore through the discussion and elaboration of Cassirer's and Lacan's lines of thought.

In this context, Cassirer is particularly relevant. He was a great and versatile scholar and Neokantian and, true to form, a champion of the Enlightenment. Cassirer elaborated the tenet of a pluriform access to reality into a broad philosophy of culture, which encompasses a host of symbolic forms (myth, religion and art, language, law, science, etcetera). Each of these forms can represent or symbolise reality or the real in a specific way, but in doing so it also highlights an intrinsic deficiency. This deficiency or limitation of a representing system tends to be overlooked, however, whenever a specific type of representation claims to offer a comprehensive view. This may lead people to believe that modern science is the sole purveyor of the ultimate truth, that human rights are the greatest good, or that myth and religion are nothing more than fallacies. While Cassirer works out his vision in a broad historical perspective, Lacan chooses to put man itself centre stage by positing that man, the state of

human existence, is specifically defined by this lack, by the inadequacy of language, of symbolic systems. In man, this leads to subjective dividedness, to drives circling around a void, which may also bring into being a specific type of anxiety (occurring when symbolisation fails and the unfiltered real looms ahead). Again, this deficiency or fragmented state can be overlooked or ignored, leading to the suppression of inner dividedness and an inability to deal with emptiness.

Lacan and Cassirer may see eye to eye on these points, but their views on the nature of symbolisation are quite different. Cassirer's views are rather outspoken, as he gives primacy to meaning, to signification. When I see a cow, I will already know what a cow is, which means that based on this knowledge I can go on to distinguish and identify a cow as such. The primacy of signification also finds broad support within the philosophical community – from Husserl's phenomenology to Russell's analytical philosophy. Therefore, 'Cassirer' also represents a commonly accepted view that gives primacy to signification. Lacan's view differs in the sense that he first asks another question: How can anyone, for example a child, know what a cow is? The child will hear people talk about things like 'cows', 'heifers', 'horses', 'milking', 'slaughterhouse', 'quota' and 'Brussels'. What is it supposed to make of all these mysterious words? It is not until the child has been given some degree of explanation that it will be able to attribute meaning to these different terms and identify the objects to which these meanings or significations may or may not refer. In this way, Lacan draws attention to material terms, to meaningless letters, to the symbolising 'signifiers' even before a meaning has been established. We could say that Lacan thus complements and corrects Cassirer. Their divergent views create a whole range of other considerable differences, for example in terms of ultimate accessibility of reality, of being able to know reality. Cassirer is much more the optimist than Lacan, whose deep scepticism leads him to point out the inevitability of deadlocks occurring. It all goes back to their different points of departure: 'the signification' or 'the signifier'. Yet there is more to it than just a comparison between a theory of representation

based on the signification (Cassirer) or the signifier (Lacan), respectively. On closer inspection it turns out that their opposing views are in fact mutually complementary, indeed correcting each other in essential ways. This leads to a third theory of representation, one that offers a synthesis of the key elements taken from Lacan's and Cassirer's views (based on the notion that they mutually complement and correct each other). It highlights the issues associated with symbolisation itself, which is essential to be able to understand man, going on to substantiate these insights in the field of 'empirical humanities'.

This explains why the present book was designed as follows. Chapter 1 offers an outline of the human condition in hermeneutical terms: man as a creature that interprets itself and the world. The topics in this introductory chapter, which have been structured in a specific way, are based on earlier work. It provides a necessary historical and systematic background for a fruitful discussion of problems associated with the concept and the process of symbolisation. If we assume that man interprets himself and the world, what then is the nature of this 'self', and how exactly does the 'world' that needs explaining take shape? To answer this question, the basic tenets of the philosophy of Cassirer (Chapter 2) and Lacan (Chapter 3) as well as their mutual relationships will be discussed, with the focus being put in both chapters on symbolisation. Indeed, the proposed mutual relationship had already been pointed out in the earlier work mentioned, while the present work, by contrast, offers a fully fledged substantiation, which constitutes its very nucleus. The closing chapter (Chapter 4) introduces a synthesis of Cassirer's and Lacan's views on symbolisation – a third form. Above it offers a substantiation of this concept of symbolisation for a number of subdivisions of the humanities. In conclusion, this book is made up of three parts: (1) a view of man, (2) elements for a theory of symbolisation, and (3) its substantiation. Guided by Cassirer and Lacan, the notion of man as a symbolising creature or animal symbolicum is thus underpinned and substantiated, whilst contributing to a contemporary philosophical anthropology made concrete.

This approach inevitably leads to some degree of repetition, which offers the advantage of selective reading. Chapter 1 does not contain much that is new to the philosophically versed reader, while those to which Lacan's ideas hold little appeal may want to skip Chapter 3 and focus on the chapter that discusses Cassirer, or vice versa. Chapters 1 and 4 are particularly relevant to those who take a particular interest in the global contours of the view of man as a symbolising being and its substantiation in an 'empirical study of man'. This diversity is very much in line with the subject matter at hand and its approach: offering building blocks to produce a view of man as a representing living creature, as a symbolising animal. Prior knowledge of Lacan or Cassirer is not presupposed, but the chapter on Lacan does address the 'technical' aspect at a somewhat advanced level. Indeed, the work of Lacan has been embraced by a considerable number of French, Anglo Saxon, German (and Spanish) and Dutch speaking people (particularly in Belgium), which had given rise to an abundant literature. The magnitude hereof is so extensive that, because of unavoidable arbitrariness, any explicit references to secondary literature will be of a very limited nature. In addition, we have seen the emergence of a post Lacan reception, elaborating the later Lacan towards 'the real' ('the Lacanian Real'). Indeed, this post Lacanian development will be referred to and criticised, albeit briefly, because it presents a clear challenge to the interpretation of Lacan's work offered here. By contrast, such an internal discussion would be less relevant with regard to Cassirer's work, because it never gave rise to the forming of different schools of thought. Nonetheless, this would not preclude a divergence in interpretations of his work today. Whilst focusing on its main theses, a broader discussion of these interpretation issues will be left out. The scope of this book, however, does reach beyond outlining both Lacan's and Cassirer's views. Taking their bodies of work as a basis, it is aimed at gaining more insight into the problems associated with symbolisation, while advocating the notion of man as an animal symbolicum. <>

### Essay: An Outline of the Human Condition

There can be little doubt that modern science undermines the traditional image of man, as a spiritual being with the capacity for freedom and self-determination. Although classical philosophers did devote a section to man, it remained secondary to the story of nature, cosmos and world order. The main challenge was to assign man a position within this structure, which was not essentially problematic. The advent of modernity introduced a new problem – Descartes, Newton and the mechanisation of the world image effectively relegated the traditional concept of man to history. The problem of man has been high on the agenda ever since, owing to the fact that the physical order determined by laws of nature does not afford any conceptual space for the traditional constituting qualities of man – meaning fulfilment, self-determination. In the final analysis, the ongoing debate about the (im)possibility of free will and other phenomena of consciousness – 'man is his brain' – is little more than a rekindling of this debate, triggered by new research data that do not necessarily lead to new conceptualisation.

Once again, the idea is not to engage in a fresh debate on naturalism, but only to refer to it indirectly, where relevant. Besides, the naturalistic view of man has 'strong academic' overtones, as was pointed out by the British philosopher P.F. Strawson (1974, 1–15) in a very influential article. He argues that a person may decide to reject the freedom of will and all that goes with it, but will never actually live by this decision. People live in mutual relationships and do not consistently regard each other as objects – which would be a prerequisite for validating the theories of determinism and physicalism. Yet people do not look upon each other this way, nor do the proponents of this thesis. Moreover, people couldn't even if they tried. Life cannot well be imagined and be worth living without the notions of mutuality or autonomy, of a ratio-driven existence. People will find themselves unable to maintain consistent objectivity in their interpersonal attitudes or to accept the state of isolation this would bring. Even the classical deterministic systems (like those proposed by the Stoics and Spinoza) leave some

margin for freedom in the sense of affirming the way things are.

The idea of this book is to outline and make a case for the traditional view of man, as well as to qualify it from Lacan's and Cassirer's perspectives, respectively. Here, the emphasis will be on the latter. This qualification does not result in the elimination of the traditional view of man, which would be reflected in concepts such as 'we are our brain' or 'the death of man as a subject'. This traditional view of man remains sustained, with man as a creature that is able to explain both reality and itself and is thus capable of self-determination. It is grounded in the view of man as a being endowed with the gift of reason and language. Man is a speaking and rational being that has 'reason' and 'language' as reference points. This view of humanity goes back as far as Aristotle, who believed only one type of reason and language existed. For example, he derived the fundamental categories of reality from the grammar of the Greek language. A champion of modernity, Kant interiorised reason – 'reason is found inside man' – while also supporting the notion of a single reason. However, the notion of a uniform pattern, there being one valid form of access to reality, one single form of reason, came under increasing pressure in the post-Kantian period. The idea of a single reason gave way to the notion that there are multiple ways of disclosing or symbolising reality. Science as well as religion and law offer various modes of access to reality, of symbolisation, each of which could rightfully claim being 'reasonable'.

Within this qualification of reason, language retains its central role, in the sense that any type of symbolisation will rely on (some form of) 'language' – in mythical stories, to support rites and bans, to express formulas, etcetera. Cassirer elaborated this notion in the first half of the 20th century. Moreover, man may be a creature endowed with reason, but even more so it is a symbolising being or animal symbolicum. Indeed, more than a rational creature – according to Aristotle – and symbolising – according to Cassirer – man is part of a community. In Aristotle's times, this community was the city or city state. Just like Kant modified the traditional concept of reason, so did Hegel elaborate the social dimension. Indeed, even the

depth structure of knowledge is of a social nature (Brandon 2000, 32–35). Any type of access to reality will take place within a cultural community and is therefore socially embedded. As an individual being, man is a 'subjective mind' whilst being part of an 'objective mind' as well – the mind and mindset of a community and its associated cultural domains such as customs and habits, the legal system, science, and above all language. Indeed, any type of cultural domain relies on language. Once again the significance of language is highlighted, not as a central medium for gaining access to reality but as a social institution. Language as a common vehicle of communication, is defined by an inherent autonomy, by historical inertia and a unique structure or system. When speaking, man must obey the rules and structure of the language he uses. Or, to phrase it differently: Man owns language, but to the extent that language is a common asset he is also owned by language. Man has language at his disposal, but the reverse is also true, a viewpoint which gained prominence in the later forms of hermeneutics (the later Heidegger). Later on, Lacan would embrace it as his main theme. His thesis was that the mode of existence of man itself is essentially determined by this state of submission to language, which limits his capacity for self-determination quite dramatically.

This thesis poses a challenge to hermeneutics. Why introduce hermeneutics here? Well, there is a very good reason to do so, considering that hermeneutics takes as its starting point the Aristotelian conception of man as a being that interprets both itself and the worlds and is thus capable of self-determination. Hermeneutics would go on to cast this notion into an actualised frame. And this is where it gets problematic. Hermeneutics is capable of processing the widening scope of allowed forms of interpretation and that is actually its founding principle. Nor does hermeneutics object to recognising the social and historical embedding of interpretation, in whatever form. However, it does come up hard against the notion that an external structure (such as language) would determine both the interpretation and the interpreter, effectively dismissing his contribution as being minor or even irrelevant. Thus, we could say that Lacan's structuralist views are diametrically



opposed to the basic tenets of hermeneutics. Lacan would have been the first to admit this. Then again, we could also say that Lacan added a deeper level and maybe even a new chapter to hermeneutics. As a result, hermeneutics would take on a broader and indeed added meaning.

Design of this chapter. Before going on to discuss the various types of hermeneutics, first of all we will offer a brief and general outline of the hermeneutical view of man presented here, as a mode of the human condition. For this purpose, three levels of the human condition need to be distinguished. As a second step, three corresponding forms of hermeneutics will be outlined. The distinguishing characteristics of the three levels and three types of hermeneutics constitute the framework of this book (see also Annex). It also throws into relief the views of Cassirer and Lacan, who each address the themes at hand in their own way (as will be explained in Chapters 2 and 3). Next, the applicability of this model will be illustrated by highlighting the field a scientific discipline: psychopathology. This elaboration does offer the possibility of deepening the (three-level) model outlined, while the status of the human body will also be discussed separately and briefly. The final section serves as an overture to the following two chapters by inquiring into the essence of the state of human existence. The answer to this question – the capacity to symbolise – which the present chapter discusses only in passing, will be the central theme of the two subsequent chapters.

### Three Levels of the Human Condition: From Intentionality to Structure

The underlying principle of a hermeneutical anthropology is that man explains both himself and the world. To this we could add that explanation unfolds at multiple levels. This addition implies that it would be meaningful to distinguish levels within the present context. No justification will be offered at this point, as the elaboration of this hypothesis is supposed to bring out its relevance. Consequently, a brief and schematic outline should suffice here. This may come across as somewhat presumptuous, but the design of this book makes this inevitable. To put it succinctly: Man experiences all that happens

around and inside himself, while acting on account of insights thus accumulated; he finds himself in a world, at a particular time and place, and therefore in a particular situation; he uses a predefined language to articulate his experiences and actions. Summarising, man is (1) an intentionally living being (2) that finds itself in a world or a multitude of situations and (3) relies on language. The levels at which man interprets himself and the world reflect the three levels of the human state of existence: the living being that interprets both itself and the world.

The first level concerns experience (perceiving, thinking, feeling) and action (well considered, immediate, impulsive, etcetera). To experience is not the same as being stimulated, while taking action differs from being moved. A person who experiences and takes action, will both experience and do something; and is aware of what he is experiencing and doing. Experience and action are both characterised by what is commonly referred to as intentionality, which should be conceived as focus on an object as well as an awareness of being focused. I see, do, want, desire, remember, or expect something, and I have knowledge of this somehow. When describing an intentional relationship the emphasis is on how the experience conveys something to me (in form of a memory or perception, etcetera), or on how an action puts me into a relationship with something (intentionally, unwittingly, by premeditation, etcetera). The emphasis is on the *lopo*le or subject pole, in which an active role is assigned to me. This intentional relationship can be described as centrifugal, as an arrow departing from the subject and aimed at objects. These objects also have a certain duration, may or may not take place in a space and may also be experienced by others. Which leads us to the next level: the embedding of phenomena in a world.

This second level is about the world. All I experience and do is embedded within a coherent set of references that forms a unity: a world. This world is arranged in a categorical fashion. It includes juxtaposed or consecutive relationships (of space and time), of cause and effect, of thing property, of causality, of mutual relationships (intersubjectivity). Thus, man finds himself in a world

that always was, that he finds and into which he is 'thrown', in a temporo-spatial situation that is not of his own choosing. Even though within this situation he 'designs' his own world – the world of a toddler is very different from that of an adult – its margins remain narrow. No one is offered the choice to live in the 21st century or the Middle Ages, it is simply the time that he lives in. Apparently, rather than on the subject pole the emphasis is on the object pole – on the world that a person finds himself in, with the associated categorical definition in space and time, as well as in cause-and-effect. More than space, time and causality, it is also the presence of others that shapes this world. People find themselves in a temporal-spatial situation that was also – and even essentially – determined by others, being thrown into this situation by others at birth. 'Intersubjectivity' thus becomes an intrinsic part of the world. 'The Other' (all others taken together), however, is assigned a specific role. The others relate to each other by relying on specific and culturally defined means of understanding, including language and its structure. A close relationship exists not only between the world and the Other, but also between language and the Other. This explains why the category of the Other will be discussed from the third level.

The third level is that of language and culture. With culture relying on language, language can be described as its universal medium. The unique structure of language gives it an autonomous status vis-a-vis the language user. People may be able to change their situation to some degree, but they have no means of changing language. In this sense, man is fundamentally dependent on language, and this state of dependence is structurally defined. The newborn child is biologically dependent on the care provided by others, but is also dependent on language, which at first will be completely incomprehensible and alien to this child.

Notwithstanding, others will attempt to use this language to explain things to the child, like maybe it's thirsty or has an ear problem. As it listens, the child is gradually being introduced into the order of language and its associated cultural habits. From the child's perspective this language comes from outside and is overwhelmingly powerful. We could therefore say that language works retroactively,

adding a linguistic quality to the intentional phenomena (of the first level) and the world (of the second level) – a name, an identity, being counted. What is, will now appear as being countable and nameable.

So how exactly do these three levels relate to each other? Obviously, they are not distinct but are interconnected, with language fulfilling a unique role. At the first level, the emphasis is on the intentional relationship and consequently on the subject pole, whereas at the level of the world the emphasis will be on the object pole. We could say that language is the intermediary between the two poles, because language – by virtue of naming alone – adds identity and consistency to the inner world as well as what is happening in the outside world. The connection could be called dialectic, with the opposition between subject pole and object pole being mediated by a third figure: language. Besides, these three poles or levels of the human condition have one element in common, namely that of interpretation or explanation. Thus we have offered a brief outline of man as being capable of explaining himself and the world. Sweeping and broad though this description of the state of human existence may be, it does convey the image of man as a hermeneutical being. A brief explanation of the term 'hermeneutics' might be in order.

Hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the original, technical name for the art of understanding. Understanding refers to human experiences, actions and linguistic utterances and their results in cultural products such as texts and social institutions. When does a demand for interpretation presents itself? Whenever something is experienced as strange or, in more general terms, in situations where things are not altogether clear. This may occur in everyday life as well as in scientific environments. It is the latter from which hermeneutics emerged in the early 19th century. As society had moved away from its religious traditions the need arose for explaining and reinventing one's own tradition for it to be reappropriated. Moreover, contacts had been established with other cultures, which were also experienced as strange and needed an explanation. It appears that interpretation takes place within the field of tension that exists between 'strangeness and familiarity'. Indeed interpretation

will not be possible for things that are considered utterly strange or that cannot be related to. By contrast, things that are completely familiar and self-evident need no interpretation at all. Therefore, hermeneutics has secured a place in the scientific world within the field of the humanities, which are predominantly interpretative in nature: What is the relevance of a legal text in this particular situation, what function does rhyme have in this poem, what is the meaning of this dream, etcetera? At its time of birth, in the early 19th century, hermeneutics had yet another *raison d'être*, being born from the idea that a natural-scientific mode of experience does not suffice to gain proper understanding of man, of human reality. The latter point of view may need clarification and correction by a perspective that takes sense and meaning into account. Contrary to Kant's beliefs, there is no such thing as a single legitimate – natural-scientific – form of knowledge. No, it is diversity what we see. Thus, in the course of the 19th century, hermeneutics was soon welcomed to the ranks of philosophy to complement or correct Kant's views – much like what was at stake with Neo-Kantianism (e.g. that of Cassirer). Acknowledged also is the influence of Hegel and his notion of the objective mind and of the social context of all knowledge. This would put the hermeneutical philosophy directly in the lineage of German idealism: a type of idealism that is continued with more modest means and a limited ambition (human finiteness itself).

Three types of hermeneutics may be distinguished. The first type closely meets the requirement of objectivity. The central question is: What is the signification of an experience or action that, despite its value aspects, should be answered in the most objective and unbiased manner possible. In light of the ambition of objectivity and neutrality we could speak of a 'hermeneutics of the signification'. The second type calls its possibility into question by arguing that any interpretation takes place within a situation that will bias the question, which means that interpretations are invariably 'prejudiced' to some extent: the hermeneutics of the situation. The third type of hermeneutics focuses on language and its formal structure. It conforms to the notion that man is tied

to a situation, while adding language and culture as external structures. Man expresses himself through language and signifiers, but something is left behind. The very fact that these representations, these signifiers come from the outside makes that 'something' (on the subject and object poles) will not find currency. This can be referred to as a 'hermeneutics of the signifier'.

Consolidating these three modes of thought under the umbrella of hermeneutics might be frowned upon. Obviously, there are significant differences within each movement, and even more significant differences between the three movements. And yet this does not necessarily pose an obstacle to introducing such an arrangement, considering that the relevance of a difference is also determined by the perspectival context. Is it historical and specialised, or maybe more general? In search of a general objective – designing an image of man – the choice for uniting what is in many ways diverse, would be much more justifiable than adopting a purely historical and comparative approach, highlighting the differences. In the first case, a global structure would be preferable. Another point that argues in favour of this global tripartition is that it ties in well with the three levels of human condition outlined before: intentionality, being in the world and language dependence. We could say that they are congruous. The hermeneutics of the signification refers to the level of intentionality, the hermeneutics of the situation addresses the level of the world and the hermeneutics of the signifier deals with language and its structure. The dialectical relationship established between the three levels of the human condition (of subject pole, object pole and language) returns in the three types of hermeneutics, which engage in a similar dialectical relationship. This puts an intentional analysis opposite a situational analysis, both of which are being brought together by the overarching perspective of structural analysis. Thus, the history of hermeneutics and its three manifestations is progressing in a dialectical fashion, we might argue.

### Three Types of Hermeneutics: From Signification to Signifier

Hermeneutics of the signification. Phenomenology could be regarded as the first representative of the hermeneutics of the signification, although a caveat may be in order. Essentially, phenomenology is a tree with many branches, with the material phenomenology of life (developed by Michel Henry) as its most recent sprout. In this tangle of diversity, reference is invariably made to Husserl (1859–1938), who founded this movement and gave it its name. His work covers a wide field to include many areas of study, such as a descriptive psychology and a transcendental philosophy (which in its turn includes static, genetic and genealogical orientations). For all the diversity of interpretations it spawned, a ‘standard image’ did emerge (Welton 2000, 113–131). The aim was to offer an unbiased and generally valid description of phenomena. In his work, Husserl attempted to steer well clear of any current philosophical tradition, to which end he developed a whole new and complex set of concepts. In fact, he did everything ‘himself’ – unlike Cassirer and Lacan, who stood on the shoulders of Kant and Freud, respectively. Within the current framework, only a few notions are relevant (in respect of the later discussion of Cassirer and Lacan).

What Husserl discovered was the meaning-giving activity of consciousness, which he defined as intentionality. Rather than just ‘record what is’, consciousness ‘conceives what is’, which means an object is not given in its bareness but is part of an ‘as structure’. I will not perceive just anything, but I perceive a thing as something else (as a house, or a shed). Even the most elementary perception is charged with meaning, involving a ‘sense of knowing’, which knowledge is part of the act itself. When I see a house, knowing this becomes part of the act of seeing: I know that I see it. This led Husserl to look at all modifications of consciousness (perceiving, remembering, expecting, etcetera). Yet there is more to consciousness than the part that actively involves me: There is also a lot going on at a preconscious level, quite automatically, without any involvement from the ‘I’. Underlying conscious perception is a preconscious awareness of the world. The process of purposefully moving towards

a place is underpinned by walking without thinking. This would become the second major field of study for phenomenology: customs and habits, corporeality, the self-evident (Husserl 1966, 1989). In the 1920s this theme was taken up by Husserl and later also by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, in a number of ways (see below). It is worth noting that the distinction mentioned does not run parallel to the psychoanalytical conscious/unconscious distinction. The unconscious as interpreted by psychoanalysis refers to a process of repression and exclusion, which is quite distinct from the two ways of being present: conscious and preconscious. This point will be discussed in more detail later.

The phenomenological study of two fields – of what is conscious or preconscious, respectively – cannot be approached in a similar way, because that which is conscious is not given in the same way as the preconscious, which is in a sense nonconscious. ‘How this should be approached’ will turn out to be a key issue, but will not be considered here. However, what both cases have in common is the ambition of phenomenology to indicate what would be essential or typical of a particular field of experience, in order to develop adequate concepts. To this end, it does not study experiences of an actual consciousness in the sense of an introspective psychology, but rather looks at modifications of the consciousness *per se*: perceiving a thing, hearing a tone, remembering the past, holding on to the present. Instead of engaging in empirical (introspective) psychology its ambition is to define the nature of phenomena, a descriptive brand of psychology. It strives to identify the essential characteristics of a consciousness performance as well exactly how its object is given. For instance, in external perception a thing will never appear in its entirety, from all sides at once, but only from one side. It is known only perspectively, inviting or indeed forcing us to walk around us to appreciate it in its entirety. In the case of internal perception (of an emotion) a different process is at work. Inner perception, Husserl would say, is not restricted by perspectival limitation. The perception of the inner state (of an emotion) has no front or back, and is given with the emotion itself, without any adumbrations. Obviously, this resume serves merely to clarify the

type of inquiry, the question whether Husserl was right or wrong will not be addressed. What is essential is that experience itself reveals its essential characteristics through exploration of its boundaries. Husserl regards this 'intuitive' moment as essential, thus eliminating the prerequisite of establishing empirical facts. The psychic is eminently suited to this purpose, seeing that we stay 'at home', close to ourselves. This type of phenomenology leads to a philosophical psychology, if you will, describing the essence of psychic phenomena: perception, memory, imagination, as well as hallucination and delusion. In fact, it also led to a phenomenological brand of psychopathology, which was highly prolific and still resonates in the established definitions of psychopathological phenomena (e.g., anxiety, compulsion, urge). This type of phenomenology may not offer an empirical psychology itself, but it does enable an empirical phenomenological psychology and psychopathology. This brand of psychology could rightfully claim its place, and interestingly it was in this field that phenomenology made its strongest impact. We could even say that the essential contribution of phenomenology lies in the limited field of descriptive psychology, even today and in the future. Husserl went even one big step further, by proposing consciousness as the very source of being, of the validation of being, rather than simply describing the essential structures of consciousness. Indeed, these essential structures would build the map of reality and its domains, to create a regional ontology. This resulted in a philosophical idealism taken to its extreme (De Boer 1976) that attracted little following, although there is still ongoing debate about the exact remit of his philosophy. The universal pretensions of phenomenology met with fierce criticism from hermeneutical quarters. One criticism was that any description cannot aspire to be more than an interpretation that will not have any lasting 'apodictic' validity.

Historically, the significance of interpretation and its inherent uncertainty was highlighted particularly by Dilthey (1833–1911). Interpretation is the central motif: How to gain access to the experiences of others, of life forms that appear as unfamiliar to us (De Mul 2004). At first glance,

moving from Husserl to Dilthey, from essential structures of consciousness to historic factuality, from philosophy of consciousness to a philosophy of life, may seem like a huge leap. Yet the consciousness as interpreted by Husserl also includes deeper, preconscious layers, while life according to Dilthey 'shows itself' or expresses itself. This will become the central theme of Dilthey's work: the inner quality of life that expresses itself and can only be understood through expression, which he describes as *Leben, Ausdruck, Verstehen* ('Life, Expression, Understanding') (Dilthey 1961, 230–239). This has a definite impact on society, on human science. Again we see a 'dialectical of the interior and exterior' at work, with the interior not being understandable without expression, and the expression representing the interior. The interior may be conceived in two ways, namely as referring to the state of mind of an individual (as in the case of the early Dilthey) or in relation to a tendency, a focus seen in a culture or cultural community (the later Dilthey). In Hegelian terms this would be the subjective or the objective mind, respectively. In both cases, the interior can be known and therefore exist only through its interpretation. In fact, Husserl also attaches importance to interpretation, arguing that perception gives meaning (is interpretative), which would also apply to consciousness as a whole. Thus, we could say that phenomenology is the basis for hermeneutics, and hermeneutics in its turn presupposes phenomenology. This means that phenomenology can be transformed or reduced to a hermeneutical phenomenology. Consequently, both movements can be placed under the heading of hermeneutics of the signification, which is driven by a desire for objectivity and neutrality, unlike the type of hermeneutics introduced below.

Hermeneutics of the situation. Interpretation does not solely refer to intentional phenomena such as experience and action, but also applies the situation in which experience and action take place. Moreover, each person will be shaped in a fundamental way by the situation in which he lives and grows up, in which he has been 'thrown'. This term aptly describes the element of chance that comes with being, with being where we are and what we are: our fate or destiny in life, which we did not choose ourselves. In that sense, people will

always be children of their time, of their age. The value that is attributed to fate, to coincidence, to life events, the absurdity that comes with it, actually reflects a watershed between the pre- and post-World War I philosophy. While in the 19th century the emphasis was on developing rationality, the horrors of World War I brought home starkly the lack of reasonability of events, the absurdity of people's actions and the role of coincidence and contingency. This would have a dramatic impact on the worlds of religion, art and philosophy. Rational religion, which includes natural theology, has run its course, and Karl Barth (2010) now proposes a fundamentally different concept of Christian religion, e.g. a belief that relies on a naked and contingent fact that appears absurd from a viewpoint of rationality: the death and resurrection of a person named Jesus. The notion of the absurd also resonates in the world of art. This is the heyday of surrealism, of seeking ecstatic experiences on the border between life and death, driven by the notion that everyday reality obscures yet another reality or deeper layer (as shown by the magic realism and surrealism in painting and poetry). It also left its mark on the philosophical domain, in the theme of contingency and the deeper layers of consciousness. Chance, fate and the deeper layers of human existence become central themes in the hermeneutics of the situation, creating a hermeneutics of the facticity (which would lay the groundwork for the so-called 'existential philosophy'). Heidegger is a key figure in this pursuit, particularly the early Heidegger (1987) from 1919 onwards, and the earlier Heidegger (1962) of *Sein und Zeit* ('Being and Time'). His ambition is to explain the lived situation based on its factual qualities, in the practical dealing with things, preceding objectifying and theoretical knowledge. Heidegger coined the term pre-predicative (as opposed to predicative) to describe what is primarily meaningful and can be done ('Bedeutsam'), before it can be said or predicated. He introduced this distinction at his very first public appearance, and it would actually go on to underpin his whole work.

The sphere of meaningfulness refers to the world as a sum of situations as well as their horizon: the world as it is found, from which one lives, which

'exists'. Then again, man is also capable of engaging in a relationship with the world into which he finds himself thrown. He 'must' make something out of his life by designing a life's project from the situation he finds himself in. And he must do it now, else he'll be gone and it's too late. And yet in spite of the predominant presence of contingency and coincidence in the world, it is neither coincidental nor contingent that man should find himself in a world. Man finds himself essentially in the world, defined by his own unique shapes of space and time, a specific categorical hierarchy and specific orders of being.

Obviously, this view is subject to criticism, which was voiced from early on, taking two distinct forms. The first criticism is that with Heidegger the role of the Other is of secondary importance (without even considering the question that the role of the Other might be a moral one), while the second criticism argues that no space is allowed for the conception of culture, or of the objective mind. On closer inspection it turns out that the two types of criticism are actually closely linked, referring back as they do to Heidegger's tenet of the solitary I or 'solipsism', which relegates the Other to a subordinate position, not leaving any conceptual space for the notion of culture. In Heidegger's view, the world is primarily, in each case mine ('jemeinig') rather than ours. Its emphasis on the isolated individual, left to his own fate, strongly reflects a rejection of dominant ratio-based lines of thought: Kierkegaard versus Hegel. This emphasis also betrays one-sidedness of this approach. And yet the notion of situation itself might open up ways to correct this view. Indeed, being maintained intersubjectively, a situation is defined by inertia. We could say that Gadamer (1900–2002), an autonomous student of Heidegger's, actually anticipated this defect in the 1950s. He pointed to the weight of history and the power of tradition, to which man must submit even before becoming aware of it. More than design an existence, man 'must' conform to the world that exists. Even if a person emigrates, as a next step he must immigrate, integrate into society and live by the customs and habits of his new home land, appropriating its objective mindset. In the process of assuming this new identity, something is

inevitably left behind and therefore lost. In the following, whenever reference is made to 'situation', this should be taken as a broad and generalised concept that includes the culture and the Other, even though these themes will merely be touched upon. This will be done within the context of the third type of hermeneutics, that of the signifier.

Hermeneutics of the signifier. This type builds on the hermeneutics of the situation and its emphasis on thrownness. However, the two aspects that it neglects will now become central themes: the others (the Other) and culture (Otherness). In the 1960s and 1970s, the French structuralists were defining forces within this development. Structuralism became a child of its time, as the programme of hermeneutics of the situation (taking the form of existential phenomenology) had lost its momentum, its defects clearly showing. Structuralism could now step in to provide the answers. This development did not come about overnight, as structuralism was the product of a quintessentially French tradition that gives prominence to concept and theory rather than experience. There is every reason to regard Lacan as the linchpin in this effort, being among the first to criticise the phenomenological concept of lived experience ('*expérience vécue*') as the ultimate source. Moreover, spanning more than three decades, his work can be seen as building on the achievements of Lévi-Strauss, a champion of structuralism (whom he held in great esteem throughout his career), but also as an inspiration to Derrida, whose views of deconstructivism owe more to Lacan than he would have cared to admit, while the reverse is also true. In Chapter 3, which deals with Lacan, this will be discussed in more detail, but obviously an introduction is needed first. Indeed, Lacan would have denied this affiliation most certainly. From a wider perspective, however, this mood of thought appears to be a fresh offshoot from the ancient tree of hermeneutics, even tracing back to early Romanticism. Even in the first type of hermeneutics language is relevant as experience needs to be expressed, and each experience will have pass through the language grid. Next, language manifest itself as a component of the situation into which the person has been thrown. Here, with the hermeneutics of the signifier, the

emphasis is on the formal structure of language, being a system of differences, with terms ('signifiers') differing among themselves, but also differentiating in what they express and define.

The word 'signifier', a translation of the French 'signifiant', stresses the formal and differential aspect of language. From this perspective, the language is made up of formal and empty terms or signifiers, which carry no intrinsic meaning and will not become meaningful until combined with other, different terms. (The word 'term' would be an effective synonym of 'signifier' in terms of expressing its semantic emptiness, its lack of meaning and the prerequisite of caesura.) Combining them, however, will produce meanings and concepts that allow statuses in the world to be named and articulated: This is red paint, this is a green house, this is mine, that is yours, you have no right to it. Thus, language becomes part of something bigger – culture – that controls the relationships among those who share this culture. Together, language and culture can be referred to as the symbolic order, which is an equivalent of the 'objective mind' concept.

In his approach, Lacan has his own unique way of looking at speech and language. Rather than producing an image of reality, as was suggested by, for example, the early Wittgenstein, language does offer a productive representation of reality, which puts reality itself, the real at a distance and causes its immediate experience to be lost. The distance created by language simultaneously brings the dimension of absence, loss and lack into being. The experience of a lack as a lack, however, will lead to a desire to remedy this lack, which means that 'language' and 'desire' are closely connected. Desire is maintained as well as produced by language. Indeed, a basic desire is expressed through an actual demand, while desire itself (for example the desire for love) remains unfulfilled when it is responded to. This demand therefore leaves a remainder, which in turn kindles desire. Lacan would highlight the significance of this deficit or lack that defines human existence (*manque à être*), considering the relationship of man onto the world as fundamentally broken, for the very reason that language is the mediator of this relationship. At the same time, this fragmented

state enables the subject to distance himself from the world, to contemplate and reflect and thus make choices. Besides creating the possibility of desire, language enables reflection.

Language leads to representation, to objectification of the outside world. In this process of shaping the outside world, not only language – the word – but also the image is a contributing factor. The same applies to the shaping of the inner world, the shaping of a stable and distinct I, of a subject. The hapless newborn is completely dependent on its environment, on others who are supposed to provide care and protection. Undoubtedly it will experience feelings of tension or relaxation, but there is no ‘self’ yet – it is still waiting to be shaped. Initially, this process will take the form of the images or figures that are presented and which the child will identify with. The parent’s smile is echoed by the smile of the child, which makes the child feel happy and the parent perhaps even more so. The relationship is mirrored on both sides, and so is the emerging ‘self’. The child will also see its reflection in the mirror, in the image it returns: ‘That, there, that’s me, apparently’. Thus, a first form of identity is being offered, constituting the quintessential experience of the mirror stage. In this regard Lacan builds on the work of Wallon (1949), whilst connecting the body image to the theme of narcissism, as has been done before by Schilder (1935), a neurologist who was close to Freud. Lacan’s elaboration, however, proved to be very fruitful.

Driven by images, this type of identification is defined as ‘imaginary’. It is quite an apt term, referring as it does to something that it is imaginary, fictitious. It may give the child a sense of bodily unity and control of which it is not capable yet. This type of identification might be described as being defined by alienation, and this thesis will go on to define Lacan’s work: any identification represents a type of ‘emigration’ and therefore also carries an element of alienation. In this case, the alienation is found in the assumption of a narcissistic component, as the child believes itself to be greater and more powerful than it actually is. The imaginary and mirroring type of identification does not end after childhood, but will permeate a person’s entire lifetime, which stimulates but also

gives rise to conflict: ‘you a red cup, me a red cup too’ – ‘you get promoted, I want to get promoted too’. Which makes a mirroring or dual order essentially instable, because it is also associated with rivalry, envy and aggression. This will become a key theme in the work of the French philosopher René Girard. As opposed to Girard, however, Lacan does not look for a solution in the figure of the scapegoat who is supposed to guarantee social stability – although this figure might temporarily fulfil such a role (Girard 1982). Instead, Lacan sees a more permanent solution in introducing ‘the third’, an order that includes and supports the imaginary relationship, and attributes right and duties.

Lacan introduces the figure of the third in the form of the (m)Other, who puts the child in front of a mirror and has power over this child. The mirror experience – that, there, that’s me – is thus confirmed – ‘yes, that’s you’ (Lacan 2002, 678). This means that the imaginary identification is qualified as well as confirmed, as confirmation takes place from the position of a third, from an outside space. The purely dual relationship is now replaced by a triangular relationship. Instead of – or rather in addition to – the image appears the word: ‘That’s you, mummy’s sweetheart’ (or a similar term of endearment).

This will free the child from the alienation brought on by identifying with a (mirror) image, but that is not enough to provide access to the ‘realm of freedom’. Rather than disappear, alienation will take on a new form, because any identification will lead to renewed alienation. Just like the child does not coincide with the mirror image, so does it fail to coincide with the way it is referred to. We see a shift in alienation from the imaginary to the symbolic level, or from the imaginary to the symbolic order. Symbolic identification brings its own unique type of alienation: ‘That’s you, and you need to be that way to be mummy’s sweetheart, for mummy to love you’. The dependence of the Other will not disappear either and also shifts – from the vital level to the level of language, the symbolic level. As a result, the child will depend on the terms in which it is referred to in addition to a vital level of care. This means that man, more than being dependent on the Other, who has a hold on



him, now becomes dependent on his words, with the Other's language having a hold on him.

In the process, the child is empowered to get a hold on the world itself, which is partly shaped by language. Thus, language renders its own unique contribution to the shaping of a world, as it names the world (subject and objects), which can now be identified and objectified. This means that the scope of the symbolic order is more specifically (though not exclusively) that of the objectification from language: 'There is a chair and look, there is another one, and a stool, and that's a mirror over there'. And next to it, the imaginary quality of the figures perceived by the child appears not to be discursive or predicative in nature, but closely matches the phenomenological concept of the prepredicative.

### Three Levels of the Human Condition Revisited

It should be clear by now that the three types of hermeneutics distinguished are more intimately connected than one might think, which would strengthen the case for putting them together under the header of hermeneutics. As well as being linked to each of the 'three levels', they are connected individually and dialectically in a 'hierarchy-based unity'. With the types of hermeneutics being defined, this may be good time to revisit the three levels of the human condition. The path followed thus far allows the brief outline of the three levels offered in the foregoing – intentionality, world, language-dependence – to be taken together and explained in some more detail.

**Intentionality.** We saw that the addition of the prepredicative type of intentionality was an important one. The scope of intentionality extends beyond the sphere of judgement, as it also includes the stage preceding judgement before something is known, of being affected before realising it, of what is unwittingly expressed: the sphere of customs and habits, of day-to-day dealings with things that are self-evident, actions that can be performed without thinking. All these events take place pre-consciously, before people will actually become aware of them. This essentially highly complex relationship can be named in different ways, each of them highlighting a particular aspect:

passively, without an active involvement (Husserl), pre-predicatively (Heidegger), pre-objectively (Merleau-Ponty), or proceeding according to the Gestalt perception of an image (Cassirer, Lacan). Objects will appear not as objects but as invitations, as being fit for a particular purpose, much like a shady tree invites you to lie down under it, or the self-evidence of occupying an empty chair – we may speak of 'affordances'. In this enumeration, it is not the distinguishing terminology that is important (nor the different philosophical backgrounds) – what truly matters is the wide range of aspects they reflect. An opulent summation of this mode of experience, also in relationship to behaviour, is offered by Erwin Straus. Jointly, these non-objectifying forms of intentionality find their opposite number in the discursive or objectifying type, which they actually underpin: the objectifying perception, the voluntary, intentional action and discursive thought. These relationships will be discussed in greater detail later in this book.

In addition to the dual mode, intentional phenomena also share a number of characteristics, as had been noted in passing before. They are (1) interpretative, (2) normative, and (3) intersubjective in nature. First and foremost, intentional phenomena are interpretative, as was stated before. In the field of perception, for example, to see invariably means to 'see as'. While experiencing a landscape as peaceful, in an objectifying way we could see a strip of asphalt crossing it as a poorly maintained road. Initially, Husserl believed that an interpretation free core was embedded in perception, but later he rejected this thought. Since then the idea of the interpretative quality of perception has become a cornerstone of phenomenology as well in a variety of related philosophical movements. Their interpretative quality also makes perception and other intentional phenomena as well normative, as they are subject to argument: You are right about that, you are doing this wrong, that is not true, this emotion is not sincere. It means they are made subject to a standard (of correctness, of truth, of authenticity). This normative component sets them apart from sheer phenomena of nature (even though that is what they are in part). Or perhaps better said:

Intentional phenomena are subject to a dual regime. An action is a physically and physiologically driven movement as well as an intentional phenomenon, guided by rules and therefore normative. The physical event remains a phenomenon of nature while being transformed into a cultural phenomenon: This is done intentionally, that happens by accident. Culture creates rifts. It bisects natural coherence, offering 'moments of truncation'. The same applies to language. A language utterance is a physiological event, but can also be regarded as a meaning-distinguishing entity ('phoneme') which, combined with other, different phonemes, produces meaning-carrying units ('monemes'). The phonetic distinction between 'deaf' and 'dead' is merely gradual, but phonematically they conjure up two different worlds. The science of phonetics (physiology of sounds) deals with the former aspect, phonology with the latter. Both look at regular patterns, but of a different kind. This 'dual regime' therefore points to a fundamental difference between naturally occurring regularities and rules, the differences between the regular patterns of low and high tide and the sand ribbons they create on the beach, and the rules that apparently need to be followed. It represents a variation on the classical distinction between 'physei on' and 'thesei on', between what grew naturally and what culture has brought into being.

The word 'apparently' betrays yet another characteristic of rules. Following a rule does not necessarily mean that the person involved is subjectively or reflectively aware of the rule followed. Most people will speak a language without being aware of the rules they obey speaking it, just as people in their daily dealings will be little aware of the subtle rules of conduct they observe. This will not come to the fore unless a person violates the 'code' and is confronted or may have to suffer the consequences. The rules adhered to in actual speech are also likely to deviate from those written down in grammar textbooks for that particular language. The following of rules commonly happens as a matter of course and effectively applies to all intentional and rule driven phenomena. Which leads us to the final

characteristic of rule following: intentional phenomena are embedded in a social order.

In regard of the thesis of the social nature of intentional phenomena, Wittgenstein's argument of the impossibility of a private language has become something of a classic. (Also worth mentioning is Hegel, the very first to highlight the social dimension of human knowledge.) Although Wittgenstein's argument may be a different one, it sends a strong and clear message. First and foremost, he claims that private mental events to which the word at large would have no access cannot exist. His criticism can be summed up as follows: Assuming that only I am able to know something, I cannot really know this, because this would rule out the possibility of verification and therefore of knowledge. For mental events to be understandable and knowable – to the other as well as the person involved – they need to be made subject to a set of public rules. Essentially they need to provide access to the other. This aspect of knowability would include all modifications of intentionality (as well as its derived forms, such as affects, fantasies, etcetera). This is a key argument, considering that the so-called first-person perspective and the third person perspective are often opposed, with the other essentially being denied access to the inner workings of a person's mind. This argument effectively qualifies the opposition, meaning that the other will always 'look over his shoulder', even from the first-person perspective. Thus, the he figure becomes incorporated into the I figure. What I see is also affected by what the other sees. By extension, this also applies to how I see myself, a process in which the other is implicated.

'Knowable' is obviously not the same as 'actually known'. After all, man has only very limited knowledge of the inner workings of other people's minds as well as their own mind. It all comes down to the limited scope of intentional knowledge. A person at work will be aware of the fact that he is working, but may not always be aware of what else he is doing as he works (toeing the line, engaging in passive resistance, having fun, trying to excel, slacking off, etcetera). To actually become aware, reflection is needed, as this will provide insight into the deeper, unconscious layers of

unconscious desire (see below). A person may be hard to read by others, but perhaps even more so by himself. One will have to wait and see what a person will do or how he will treat others – even more so because the other often will see more clearly what goes on in a person's mind than the person himself (for the very fact that the latter is directly involved). The other person will see a facial expression and hear the intonation of their voice, something the person himself can interpret only through the other person's reactions. We see the other but not ourselves, and see ourselves through the other: Does he still recognise me? This problem of the other and of social embedding leads us to the second level, that of the world.

World. We already saw that the second level, the level of the world, refers to the sum of objects (taken broadly) or to the 'horizon of understanding' from which they can be understood. The horizon of understanding includes the categories in which these objects are presented. The most fundamental categories are space, time and intersubjectivity. Both space and time can be either external or physical in character – the physical space and physical time – as well as being internal or subjective – the consciousness of space and time. The time axis ( $t_1$ ,  $t_2$ ) of external, physical time is opposed with the ecstasies of present, past and future of internal, subjective time, with the 'now' at its centre. As the metronome, the timekeeper, is ticking the time away (tic, toc, tic, toc), I myself will experience time in terms of 'just now' and 'soon'. This distinction between the two manifestations of time represents a traditional theme in time philosophy. A similar distinction can be made with regard to space: We have an external, physical space defined by three objective coordinates (height, width, depth) as well as a space of experience that is dominated by 'near' and 'far', with 'here' at the centre. And just like the philosophy of time sometimes presupposes the presence of a third form of time that would serve as a mediator between external and internal time (Ricoeur 1985), so will the question pose itself whether mediation might also be at work in respect of space (external space and consciousness of space). What are these mediating forms of time and of space?

Firstly, the third form of time. We could say that the infinite external time and internal time are merged while being transformed into the temporality of the subject which presumes its finiteness – which introduces a third manifestation of time. After all, the young child is faced with the task of reconciling the message received from outside, 'time to go to sleep' (' $t_1$ '), with the indefinable inner experience of 'just now' and 'soon'. It may find that its life is finite and unfolds between birth and death (which may be a thing of a distant future, but is a certainty nonetheless), allowing it to internalise external time (up to a point). In turn, this will produce awareness of a future that is still open – 'later when I grow up' – as well as of a past that may be remembered, but cannot be undone by some act of magic. More than just live 'in time', the child becomes temporal itself. The process of transformation from external and internal infinity to finiteness and temporality, therefore brings limitation, or even castration. This will lead to a third manifestation of time, namely a symbolic or dimensional time, which allows a person to live from any of these dimensions: from the past, focused on the future, or predominantly in the 'here and now', respectively. A similar process of limitation will unfold in the spatial dimension, in the constitution of a spatially and corporeally situated object ('corps sujet') living within an world with which it is connected by means of a 'intentional bow'. Just like man is temporal, so is he spatial in nature. This represents a third manifestation of space – a symbolic, dimensional space that allows man to live from any of the three dimensions: from above – adopting a bird's eye view – with himself at the centre, or living from the margin – outside looking in – respectively. The limitation brought on by finiteness will therefore also impact the intersubjective level: Yes, the other does contribute to shaping and limiting my world. The world is my world, but to the extent that it is my world, it also belongs to others.

Structure. That which is described as an experience and has been interpreted from a situation can become part of a structure, most notably the structure of a language and, from a broader perspective, the structure of a symbolic form or symbolic order, of laws and rules with language at

their centre. Becoming part of a structure represents the third level in the experience, situation and structure sequence. This third level is that of the objective mind. The fact that the order of structure, of language and rules, is important is certainly not a recent finding. It makes that intentional phenomena and the life world are pervaded with norms, that they have a normative quality, defined as they are by moral or legal norms or standards as well as by daily life norms. Their significance already became evident in the discussion of intentional phenomena governed by a rule. Indeed, perception passes through the grid of language, which is shared by a language community. From this perspective, the objective mind is seen mostly in its autonomy, in its deeper layers, at the level of immutability. The individual may have some hold on his own situation, but not on the language with which he grows up. This relationship should not be interpreted in terms of an interaction, as this would be a gross overestimation on the part of the subject. Language having a complete hold on the subject, the subject is forced to bend to its rules. This will have implications for the subject's state of existence, as was mentioned briefly with regard to Lacan: the birth of a desire and the possibility of reflection. They will be discussed again briefly (as a preamble to a more detailed discussion of Lacan in Chapter 3).

The implications of the subject's dependency on language. First of all, language dependence leads to subjective dividedness, produced by the general quality of linguistic terms. Rather than mirror a predefined reality, language enables us to draw together a variety of phenomena under a single denominator. Language plays an active role in determining 'what is'. For the very fact that terms are general, no term will suffice to capture the unique quality of the subject. The subject cannot identify itself completely with any of the qualifications nor with the sum of qualifications: 'I'm unhappy, I'm a teacher, an uncle, a car owner', etcetera. Thus, the subject will be split up into the subject of what is said and that of the speaker who fails to meet any of the qualifications and will therefore remain unsaid. A dichotomy or bisection results – which may be put on a par with the bisection occurring between the conscious and the

unconscious (according to Lacan). This dichotomy effectively creates a distinction between (unconscious) desire and (conscious) demand. Desire expresses itself through a demand ('I want chocolate') but will not merge fully with the demand and actually transcends it (for example, in the form of a desire for unconditional love, total independence or utter dependence). Here, the subjective perspective finds both its basis and ultimate contours, with the deeper layers surfacing. The difference between (conscious) demand and (unconscious) desire may seem insignificant, but it is in fact essential. A demand is controllable and strives for control, while the unconscious desire wants more: 'a bit more', 'another one', 'alright, another one' ('encore').

Besides creating the possibility of desire, language enables reflection as well, we might argue: Is this a treat real or am I imagining things? Is it wise to do this or will it lead to excess? And what's wrong with excess anyway, why do I shy away from it? Whichever form it may take, the possibility of distancing oneself, which is the basis of reflection, appears to be given with language. What are we supposed to make of this? For the sake of hypothesis we could offer two reasons. Firstly, language introduces a set of logical modalities, such as denial, possibility, necessity, etcetera, while language being a prerequisite for gaining access to logical space (Sellars 1997, § 31). The introduction of this logical modality set brings a huge widening of the experience horizon. It means that experience itself can be 'modalised'. I am able to imagine that what is can also not be. Things may be different than I think they are: 'You do not have to see it that way, there are other possibilities too'. The second reason would be that language by definition refers to other language users, each of them contributing their own unique perspective in a process of linguistic intersubjectivity. Thus, language offers the possibility of changing perspectives: 'I see it like this, but this other person apparently sees it differently'. Within the context of the human condition outlined, the two factors taken together – intersubjectivity and logical modalisation – constitute the basis for reflection or deliberation (obviously without considering biological factors). The intentional insight given with (predicative)

intentionality – when I'm at work I know that I'm working – now gives way to reflective insight: 'What else do I do when I'm working, am I obedient, do I really want to be, what are my deeper motives?' Thus, language empowers man to choose what he wants do after deliberation, out of 'free will'. Summing up: Man is a being that interprets itself and the world and is thus capable of self-determination. That is the basic philosophy of hermeneutical anthropology.

The body. So how exactly does the relationship with the body fit in all this? As mentioned before, intentional phenomena follow a dual regime. So how should their relationship be described? To even begin to answer this question – if the question can be answered at all – we would have to engage in a lengthy discussion. Outlining the problem is a challenge in itself, and any outline given will inform the resulting answer. That is why we shall limit ourselves to offering a limited number of keywords. The line of thought presented here seems to have at its heart that natural phenomena and intentional phenomena are categorically different and yet can go together. A perception is not a sensory stimulus, an action is not the same as a movement, as intentional phenomena are always associated with an intrinsic form of 'knowledge'. When I do something, I'll be more or less aware of doing it. Thus, man envisages reality while acting or perceiving, thus representing reality, while being engaged in a variety of intentional attitudes. 'It is so' is replaced by: I believe it to be so, I hope it is so, I'm afraid it is so.

Next to a categorical difference, we also see an actual merging of the two heterogeneous entities – of the physical (the body) and the mental representation (the mind). We distinguish two classical doctrines of unification's between the mental and the physical. First of all there is the 'two sides to a coin' doctrine (the Spinoza type), and secondly the doctrine of interaction (attributed to Descartes, maybe wrongly so). Without attempting to engage in debate, a third option could be suggested. The term 'foundation' might more aptly describe the relationship between the biological and the mental (even though this term would be a metaphor only). Thus, the biological substrate can be regarded as the foundation that enables both

actions and experiences to take place, whilst eluding a description of actions and experiences in terms of any physical or physiological substrate. It would be possible, however, to look more closely at biological conditions of perception, of actions, of anxiety episodes or mood swings, etcetera. This will unveil correlative relationships that, however, cannot aspire to be more than just 'correlations'. And yet these conditions are the base of mental functions, which are co-determined by factors concerning experience, situation and structure. As a result, biological, biochemical and electrochemical factors become conditional elements of a highly complex and arcane body which is not likely to be fathomed any time soon. The condition of the body and the brain drives psychic functioning and influences experience, making actual signification wholly dependent on biological conditions. In addition, signification relies on the external situation and on the way in which a person see and expresses himself and his situation. In other words: Feelings of rage about experienced injustice are not biochemically determined. Then again, meaning fulfilment or interpretation does have its effects on the body. For example, the person who wears himself out, or allows himself to be worn out (for whatever reason), in the absence of compensating mechanisms will have to face dysregulation of one or more neurotransmitter systems (resulting in burnout, depression and anxiety) at some point in time.

Aristotle described man as a living body, gifted with ratio and language as well as being part of a community. This section discusses man as a 'living body', but it is a small step to community and language. Man, a child, is born as a needy body, after which the other and culture will embrace it, shaping and kneading it – from the very first skin contact with the mother. The body carrying the imprint of this first touch is a 'signified body'. The human body is more than 'embodied cognition' – it is actually a reflection of the primary interaction with others and with the culture of the environment. Thus it also represents an embodiment of culture.

The body is shaped and transformed (passively) by the other, whilst being the (active) carrier of experience, of interpretation and signification (in terms of social and cultural contexts). The metaphor

of the relationship between body and mind can therefore not be one of 'interaction', or 'the two sides of a coin', but is defined by circumlocution: Rather than being straightforward, the relationship between body and mind should be conceived as being circular, following the circuitous route of the world. 'Mind' should be taken to mean only initially that the body, the organism, stands in a formative relationship to the world. This may not render the problem less complex, but it does make it more manageable. Here is an example: Biochemistry (neurotransmission) determines the mood of a person (as being depressed), which in turn colours the world (as being depressing), which thus modified enters the mind of this person. Yet other stimuli contribute to this modification: interventions by others ('don't give up'), perspectives from the situation (rivalry) and culture (guilt and shame). This will either increase or diminish tensions, thus worsening or improving the person's mood, which will have its repercussions on the body. Their source lies in input from the world, not in thought or feelings. All spheres – the physical, the intentional, situation and culture – are involved yet retain their autonomy. This becomes evident from experience, as culturally and situationally defined experience is not only reflecting the state of the body, just like the body in its turn often takes its own course.

Now that we have outlined the three levels of the human condition (and of a putative relationship with the biological substrate), addressing the contribution of the three types of hermeneutics, the question of its possible application could now be raised. We already saw the value of phenomenology for psychology and psychiatry, particularly with regard to its descriptive branch, which is psychopathology. It would therefore be justified to consider the value of the model of the three levels of the human condition and of the three types of hermeneutics for this discipline. Needless to say that other scientific disciplines might also be suited to this approach, including the social-cultural sciences and law, but the great advantage of psychopathology is that Lacan's philosophy is partly relying on psychopathology.

### Application in Psychopathology

Essentially, psychopathology is conceived as the description of a mental disorder, of psychic phenomena labelled as abnormal or pathological. The emphasis on description suggests that it is too early to look for an explanation of the disorder – in biological, theoretical, psychodynamic, sociological terms. Nor does it stand in competition with a classifying approach of the DSM-IV/5 type, which brings its own unique sophistication and applicability, but it can contribute to a more in-depth description of phenomena that were defined operationally within its context. This requires the presence of a global system, however. It might be useful to draw on the traditional distinction between the neurotic disorder, the psychotic disorder, and the personality disorder, which takes up an intermediate position between the two first disorders. 'Neurotic disorder' is a term that may have fallen into disuse, but this does not eliminate the domain itself, which is why the term will still be used here.

The neurosis is not far removed from normality, as becomes apparent from its symptoms: a strong need for control (such as compulsive phenomena or an overbearing manner), anxiety (e.g., taking the form of phobias), or emotional instability (histrionics). The close relationship with normality becomes apparent from the fact that similar symptoms also appear in normality. Many people have peculiar habits or idiosyncrasies (such as the need for control, anxieties, perversities, mild or severe addictions, group dependence) that remain manageable, however, and indeed have a stabilising effect, allowing them to function more or less normally. This stabilising effect sets these apart from truly neurotic problems, where these symptoms or excesses just have an invalidating effect, causing the subject to suffer and maybe seek help (sometimes encouraged by people around them). Thus, neurotic symptoms are the result of a disruptive process seen in a symptom that originally has a stabilising function but becomes overburdened: A mild tendency towards phobia develops into panic, alcohol use goes out of hand, availability to the other leads to exhaustion and ultimately depression, etcetera. In other cases a person may become upset by his own cruelty or

lack of will, which is (wrongly) experienced as being alien to his person. Within the neurotic spectrum, the effect of invalidation are limited, because both in the neurotic person and in normality, the relationship with the world remains intact, which is precisely what causes suffering.

The psychosis is found on the opposite side of the spectrum. Here, the relationship with the world is highly fragile or has even been severed, leading to a failed realitytesting, as may become apparent from symptoms such as hallucinations ('objectless perceptions') and delusions ('incorrigible aberrations'). The psychotic person lacks insight into his own condition – depending on the extent of psychosis – and 'believes in his own symptoms' rather than considering himself ill. He truly believes he is being conspired against, in the case of a delusional disorder, sees himself as a worthless person, in the case of melancholic disorder, or feels utterly exposed in the case of schizophrenia – and this belief is unshakeable.

Finally, the personality disorder (its most serious forms) takes up an intermediary position. It is found halfway between psychosis and neurosis, in the sense that realitytesting (unlike with a psychosis) is not cancelled out but is impaired or split, resulting in the juxtaposition of two opposite worlds of experience, without the person involved actually suffering from the disorder (unlike in the case of a neurosis). In the case of the personality disorder, the other – the partner, society, a victim – will be the first to suffer. Society will bear the brunt of the extreme narcissism of the narcissistic personality (the psychopathic manager), while the partner of a person with a borderline personality disorder will suffer from his need for both fusion and rejection. Or, he will leave colleagues drained by leading a life that to all intents and purposes 'appears' to be completely normal, while inside this person there is only emptiness and chaos (the 'As-if' personality).

Following on from this summary of the psychopathological field we will turn our thoughts to the question whether the three types of hermeneutics might render some form of contribution to the psychopathology outlined. A brief discussion of the three levels of the human condition will also be included. In fact, the history of

psychopathology is characterised by a significant hermeneutical tradition, with Jaspers (1997), Binswanger (1957) and Lacan (2002) as key figures with their key publications: *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* ('General Psychopathology') in 1913, *Schizophrenie* ('Schizophrenia') in 1957 and *Écrits* in 1966. Rather than describing its historical contribution, we need to look at its significance today. The three types of hermeneutics will be addressed based on the 'three levels'.

Hermeneutics of the signification. Here, phenomenology comes to the fore, a discipline that focuses on the description of psychic phenomena, which obviously represents a key field of research in psychopathology. The focus is on the first level, the level of intentionality. It may offer a contribution to the description of anxiety, compulsion, dependency, hallucinations and delusions, but in practice this turns out to be no easy matter. A person without firsthand experience of hallucinations will be hard put to describe the phenomena of 'hearing voices'. Here, phenomenology may add value by disproving the traditional definition of this phenomenon, which is 'perception without object'. An object is in fact present – the voice heard by the person involved – but there is no perception – with the subject involvement taking place at quite a different level than with perception itself, as the object (for example, 'the voices') will have a hold on the subject from which it cannot extricate itself. Lacan repeatedly emphasised this point. Offering a description is not just challenging when it comes to describing types of experience that are a far cry from general human experiences, but also in regard of more accessible phenomena. For example, anxiety is an emotion experienced by most people, but offering an apt description of its unbearable quality turns out to be quite a daunting task. And yet it remains the task of phenomenology to offer as objective a description as possible of psychic phenomena and their mutual delimitations. So what exactly is the difference between a compulsive action a person must perform, and an urge that a person finds irresistible (through lack of will power or through addiction) or an impulsive action that feels as though it is happening to this person? The actions may look more or less identical

from the outside, but most likely the interior experience is fundamentally different. For one thing, there is a phenomenological difference, namely the difference between 'I must do this, else I'll become very frightened' (in the case of compulsion), 'I wanted to do it, but then again I didn't' (in the case of lack of will power) and 'I did it, even though I didn't want to' (in the case of impulsive actions, with the subject losing control but 'doing' it just the same). These examples share one characteristic, and that is that they invariably refer to conscious, predicative phenomena, which makes them even more poignant: A person who feels compelled to check four times if he actually turned off the gas, will be very much aware of the fact he is doing this; a person consuming yet another alcoholic drink will know perfectly well he is doing the wrong thing, etcetera. They belong to the domain where phenomenology was first practised: the analysis of the intentional, of the active, conscious I involvement: 'I' did like this or 'I' did it like that.

Not just the predicative, conscious sphere is relevant, but so is the prepredicative, preconscious sphere. This preconscious element is of key importance to psychopathology as well as phenomenology. In the case of a mental disorder, it may be 'deteriorating', a case in point being the 'latent' type of schizophrenia, without hallucinations or other alarming symptoms. Its onset often goes unnoticed and is not associated with telltale symptoms such as hallucinations or delusions. Instead, it is characterised by a gradual decay of social and emotional competencies. What in most people happens automatically, is self evident – how to behave in the presence of friends, how to buy groceries and smile at the right moment – no longer happens by itself and requires active thinking. Or, to phrase it differently: Capabilities governed by the preoperative type of intentionality (habitual functioning, social competencies) are no longer driven preconsciously and need to be triggered consciously or even overconsciously. From a phenomenological perspective, we could speak of 'a loss of natural self-evidence', of primary *Bedeutsamkeit*. The balance between the preconscious 'I' and the conscious 'I' is lost. This would qualify it as an 'I

disorder' or 'ipseity-disorder', where the loss of a primary and preconscious type of communication with the world is compensated for by reflection, leading to a hyper-reflected type of being in the world. This person is constantly 'scanning' his inner world, with the outside world lacking the quality of reality.

Hermeneutics of the situation. This also marks the transition to applying the second type of hermeneutics – that of the situation – which refers to the second level, that of the world. Rather than describing intentional phenomena, it focuses on the way in which these phenomena are embedded in a person's world. A person with a compulsive disorder will suffer from compulsive phenomena, while his entire world is commonly structured in a highly typical manner. His world is dominated by order as well as by chaotic hiatuses. This would enable us, in the field of psychosis, to describe the specific world of melancholy, of delusional disorders and of the range of worlds that is associated with schizophrenia. Belonging to the hermeneutics of the situation, this type of description is more interpretative and less focused on unequivocal than phenomenology (which is part of the hermeneutics of the signification), but is equally legitimate. This type of analysis is practised mostly in the field of anthropological psychopathology, which often contributes enlightening views. Melancholia – the serious, psychotic type of depression associated with delusions (including the delusion of the irreparable debt) – can thus be 'reduced' to a typical disorder of time order. Indeed, 'suffering from time' is a key component of this disorder. The subject experiences the present as being infinite, with time passing at a snail's pace, rendering the future hopeless – in fact, there is no future ('it's a catastrophe'), while the subject keeps returning to the past ('if only I had done this or that'). This constellation suggests the presence of a serious disruption of time consciousness, with a 'reversal' of normal relationships. The future has taken on the (immutable) qualities of the past, while the past (to which the subject keeps returning) in its turn has acquired the quality of a future that is yet open. And just like the melancholy state may be interpreted as a disrupted time perspective, so can



the delusional disorder, or paranoia – the delusional state of persecution that makes the person feels treated unfairly – be understood from a disrupted relationship with the Other, who has now become the persecutor. This means that schizophrenia, as the third type of psychosis – characterised by the limits between inside and outside falling away – might be explained as a disrupted relationship with the body (and its attendant experiences). Which leads us to the third type of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics of the signifier. Here the central theme is that of delimitation, which concerns the third level, of language and structure. According to Lacan's line of thought, 'language' produces reality by naming it and symbolising it by putting brutal reality, the real on a distance, where language introduces a lack, with desire hovering around it. This lack may have been established effectively, partly effective or, as a third possibility, may not have been established at all, with each of these modalities having psychopathological significance. In the case of a neurosis and normality, the lack is addressed effectively, enabling a life-defined-by-desire, with all its ambitions and disappointments, while obviously also carrying the risk of experiencing self loss or excessive behaviour (such as extreme aggression). In a person with a personality disorder, its function is impaired, meaning that a rift is seen between two mutually unconnected worlds of experience, with excess being part of the life style (which can be harmful socially but, in the right context, may also produce aesthetical value). In the case of the psychosis, the distance or lack is too small and may even be absent, which means that the person involved will be overwhelmed by brutal reality, by excessive experience, as in the case of a manifest psychosis. This does not take away the fact that such a condition might be compensated for by some device that offers protection against manifest psychosis – for example by choosing a particular profession, by working very hard, by living in isolation or by writing books. Besides, the occurrence of a psychotic state does not necessarily point to the presence of such a specific and fragile structure, as each man has his own unique fragilities which may be decompensated (should

compensation fail). And yet normality, including neurosis, does offer some level of protection, having instituted a life-by-desire, with its forms of partial satisfaction and bearable unfulfilled desires. As a result, neurotic desire may be described depending on the way this unfulfilled quality is dealt with – for example by 'control and restraint' in the case of the compulsive neurosis, or by 'this is not going to happen for me anyway' in the phobic-avoiding person. These neurotic manoeuvres produce a curtailing of desire while leaving desire as such intact.

The subdivision into neurosis, psychosis and personality disorder may be a traditional one, but a normative element will also be at work, which is true for the conception of a mental disorder per se. At the very least it has social, psychological and biological components – which obviously complicates the problem. At an even more fundamental level, this norm has an anthropological quality, to the extent that a mental disorder can be seen as a disruption of the process of establishing desire, of the relationship towards one's own body, to time, etcetera.

### An Inquiry into Possibility: The Capacity to Symbolise

The three levels of the human condition worked out by the corresponding three forms of hermeneutics, constitute a basic framework for man that offers the possibility of substantiation in the psychopathological domain. The question of its foundation still needs to be addressed. Rather than attempt to analyse actual relationships we need to look at its possibility or context. How exactly can intentionality, being-in-the-world and language provide access to reality (always in a specific way)? Can they actually do what they are supposed to do? The answer may seem obvious enough, but it is not.

Does language provide an authentic form of access to reality, or does it effectively obscure and obfuscate reality, as was argued by language sceptics? Does perception allow us to glimpse the truth or is it 'Falschnehmung'? Can the life world, with its freedom of will, survive as a legitimate gateway to reality or will the results of modern science prevail? Instead of addressing factual

issues such as the structure of the life world – the *quaestio facti* – the question should focus on the validity of pretended knowledge – the *quaestio juris*. This would refer to its legitimate basis or condition of possibility, not its factual nature of a particular way of understanding. Reflecting a shift in emphasis from reality to knowability, Kant labelled this type of inquiry as ‘transcendental’.

This question can be approached from each of the ‘three levels’. Taking the level of intentionality as a starting point, we arrive at an original meaning giving consciousness as a structuring principle (as with pure, transcendental phenomenology). At the level of the situation the focus will be on human existence, while the level of language will put the symbolic function, the capacity to symbolise, centre stage. In the following, the third option is taken as a starting point. The hypothesis to be tested is whether the three levels of the human condition can be made possible or supported by the capacity to symbolise. Throughout this explanation, reference is made – either explicitly or indirectly – to the two other options (the transcendental phenomenology and Heidegger’s earlier philosophy), but this is mostly done in support of the choice for the issues of symbolisation as being the most fundamental field.

The symbol concept is taken rather broadly here. At one end of the spectrum we find the symbol concept in the soft sense of the word – a rose as a token or symbol representing love. At the other end we find the formal or hard symbol concept of modern science. In between lies the broad field of experience, of the life world, of language and culture, each of which also have a symbolic quality: the symbolism of social life, for example of an official symbolising authority, of presenting gifts that symbolise a social connection, etcetera. According to this hypothesis, a common trait would be that they all go back to the process of symbolisation, where something is not ‘itself’ – the official – and only acquires meaning by representing something else – authority. Something does not become recognisable and knowable until it represents something else. Something ‘is’ only if it is token as something else as well. Most likely, symbolisation is connected with this as at every level. At least two levels are relevant. The act of

symbolisation within a world (official/authority) should be distinguished from a type of symbolisation of brutal reality into a world – a fundamental, radical type of symbolisation that will of course play out in any factual symbolisation. This may sound more metaphysical than it actually is, because this world always represents a multitude of worlds: the life world, the world of science, the world of the young child. And if a metaphysical question arises – ‘why would there be something rather than nothing?’ – it will flesh out to take on a functional form.

Guided by Cassirer and Lacan, the issues of symbolisation and representation will be discussed in depth later in this book. The choice for Cassirer (1874– 1945) is an obvious one, seeing that he was the first philosopher to address the issue of symbolisation in a consistent way. He put the problem on the philosophical agenda and outlined its contours. Following in Kant’s footsteps, he adopted an approach that fits in nicely with the question at hand, as he made a study of the legitimate basis or validity of knowledge pretence. He also broadened Kant’s philosophy into a theory of culture. And yet, for a number of reasons, his philosophy has never earned the place in history it should rightfully be assigned. This is not the case with Lacan, although his philosophy is not particularly well known either. Then again, he did manage to put the theme of symbolisation on the map through his concept of the symbolic order. Most notably, he looked at the impact of the process of symbolisation on man’s specific mode of existence. Yet another difference can be identified, not so much in practical elaboration as in theoretical point of departure. Cassirer embraces the primacy of signification in his discussion of the question of symbolisation, a choice that is called into question by Lacan, while embracing the primacy of the signifier. It leads to significant differences as well as mutual correction, in cases where similar points are addressed. The conclusions thus drawn will be applied to the outline given of the human condition and its ‘three levels’ – in Chapter 4. In the Chapters 2 and 3 on Cassirer and Lacan respectively an attempt will be made to describe the basic structure of their philosophies

without any bias towards the view of man outlined here. The idea is to make a fresh start. <>

### [Nietzsche and the Dionysian: A Compulsion to Ethics](#)

by Peter Durno Murray [Value Inquiry Book Series, Studies in Existentialism, Hermeneutics, and Phenomenology, Brill | Rodopi, 9789004364868]

[Nietzsche and the Dionysian](#) argues that the Dionysian affect in Nietzsche's early work can be linked to an originary interruption of self-consciousness articulated by the philosophical companion, who compels us to respond to the plurality of life they express by being 'true to the earth' and 'becoming who we are'. Such an ethics, compelled by the Dionysian affect, grounds any future for humanity in the affirmation of the earth and life.

Usually, however, there came to these people of fate that redeeming hour, that autumnal hour of ripeness, in which they had to do what they did not even 'want' to do: – and the deed, of which they had hitherto been most afraid, fell easily and unsought from the tree, as an involuntary deed, almost as a gift. –

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Excerpt: The psychological problem apparent in the Zarathustra type is how someone who to an unprecedented degree says no and does no to everything everyone has said yes to so far, – how somebody like this can nevertheless be the opposite of a no saying spirit; how a spirit who carries everything that is most difficult about fate, a destiny of a task, can nonetheless be the lightest, spinning out into the beyond – Zarathustra is a dancer –; how someone with the hardest, the most terrible insight into reality, who has thought 'the most abysmal thought', can nonetheless see it not to be an objection to existence, not even to its eternal return, – but instead find one more reason in it for himself to be the eternal yes to all things, 'the incredible, boundless yes saying, amen saying' ... 'I still carry my blessed yes saying into all abysses' ... But this is the concept of Dionysus once more.

In August 1881, at the pyramidal stone near Surlej, Nietzsche catches a glimpse of the possibility of liberating thinking from its denial of the value of the earth and life. The eternal return teaching, symbolized by the boulder, is found to present a sign of a permanent possibility of overcoming the violent thought of transcendence in which the value of life is denied through the creation of a separate world. In this moment of philosophical inspiration, Nietzsche also sees a way to overcome the nihilistic pessimism that has ensued from the failure of the thought of transcendence to produce justice. The 'gloom' of European nihilism – in which the value of each experience of the sublime is undermined by judgements of good and evil – gives way to a sense of the immediate and eternalizing affirmation of the transience of life, in which the necessity of uncertainty is joined with and counterbalanced by a newly created ethical affirmation of the human future. In such moments, Nietzsche finds that we become who we always were, affirmers of life 'without exclusion'.

The sublime moment of actual life affirmation experienced near Surlej occurs through the genius of interactive consciousness, despite the necessary injustice of all interpretation, and is called 'the Dionysian' affect. The term refers to a compulsion to express the most valuable experiences of life in the highest aesthetic form and occurs as a response to an interruption of self-consciousness which originates in a philosophical companion, and attempts to transmit a worldview which does justice to the companion.

An inextricable link is made between two extremes, which occur simultaneously in an intoxication attributed to Dionysus and called 'the Dionysian', referring to compound, primarily twofold affects, the principal characteristics of which are the feeling of a compulsion to address the transience of life and an ethical requirement to express this affirmatively for others. These feelings provide a grounding for a practical philosophy for the free spirit as affirmer and legislator which encompasses both 'wild and beautiful (wildschöne) nature' and 'the mild and gentle (milden sanftmüthigen) ruler'. This twofold 'mania' is found to occur as an affective response to otherness, in which the coincidence of pleasure and displeasure produces

a 'shuddering' or 'shivering' interruption to self reflective thinking, a form of passivity which denotes an immanent or 'natural' locus for thinking. While the model for such manic encounters is famously found in the experience of the spectators of Attic tragedy, and is also found to be undergone by initiates into the Greek Mysteries, Nietzsche suggests that future human being might discover this originary sense and learn to apply it practically through the informal encounters between Dionysian philosophical companions, in moments when the experience of the human sublime lifts us out of decadence into ethical and political work for the future.

In choosing the affects associated with the shuddering mania to be a force for creating meaning in the context of engagements with others, it is argued here that Nietzsche reinstates 'Dionysian' or divine 'madness' within an optics of life as a grounding for philosophical thought. Nietzsche's early works are shown to identify an inspired creative transmission of the Dionysian or tragic affect, occurring as a combined sense of immediacy and eternalization, transmitted in allegories of time and becoming such as eternal recurrence, amor fati, the children's land and the Übermensch. The moment of transmission is described as one of being compelled to use Apolline language through the power of Dionysian wisdom, in expressing the highest possibilities for the future as an affective and intellectual commitment to uphold an affirmation of the value of life, arising through this engagement with others as the evaluative power of life.

The feeling of necessity, compulsion or obligation is found to rely on an originary interruption of consciousness articulated by a philosophical companion, who, in this capacity, can be considered to be a 'mask of Dionysus', or one who assumes the singular role of the transmitter of the most valuable affirmative affective event. The interruption is not only related to a practical ethics to be applied to their unique, separate existence, but also to a new compulsion to life which is opposed to the notion of a fundamental antipathy or indifference towards others and life. This simultaneous twofold affect – shuddering compulsion – is found to be an ethical sense or passion which is spiritualized through

engagements with others as the real mirror of reflective thought – Nietzsche's new optics of life – to reground an alternative notion of justice. Responding in this context forges 'a bond between human beings' which signifies beyond those involved, creating an ethical bond with the 'generality of humanity' (Generellomenschlichen) and the 'generality of nature' (Allgemein-Natürlichen), which reinstates the priority of a sense of justice which is true to the earth.

To think in this way is to adopt a 'naturalistic ethics', considered in the Nietzschean sense of establishing a grounding for thinking in loyalty to the earth, and which considers that ethics should be in the service of life, especially expressed as a response to a companion's spoken and inferred demand for affirmation of the human, earth and life beyond our own lives in the development of meaning. In this way of thinking, there is a requirement that the grounding of our evaluation of affectivity in life affirming ethics should remain operative even when one is faced with life's sternest tests of affirmation, and also when one is most affirmatively inspired and might be tempted to create meanings which betray life. It is suggested that humanity does this in any case without perhaps understanding the extent to which each thought might be an affirmation of the future and one more expression of a compulsion to ethics.

It is argued that the meaning created under such circumstances will be a transmission of an ethical affect which is grounded in the encounter with a philosophical companion. The term 'companion' has been chosen here as the focus of study – rather than friend or 'higher friend', for example – as a result of Zarathustra's decision to seek companions (Gefährten) as those fellow creators (Mitschaffenden) who can look beyond themselves and 'beyond good and evil', while becoming who they are. The term companion (Gefährte) is used in classical studies in reference to Odysseus and Jason and their companions. The main terms that Nietzsche uses for 'companion' or similar are Gefährte, Genosse, Geselle, Kamerad and Begleiter, and in his letters he uses a wide variety of titles, for example, finishing a letter to Overbeck, Nietzsche refers to himself as 'Freund, Kamerad, College, ja Mitmensch' and refers to

Overbeck as dear friend and colleague. A later preface, which lists a number of the affirmative qualities that can be attributed to philosophical companions, includes the epithet, 'most endangered ones' (Gefährdetsten), making a connection between wandering and danger; or crossing over and going under, which will be used throughout Nietzsche's works. These connections have influenced the choice of Gefährte, although with some hesitation and an appreciation of the dangers involved. The development of an affirmative philosophical position with others and the dangers associated with this is a continual theme for Nietzsche, which underlies the use of the term 'companion' in this work. The term also has a straightforward relationship to Dionysus and his travels, as discussed below.

Companions (Gefährten) the creative one (Schaffende) seeks, and not corpses, herds or believers. Fellow creators (Mitschaffenden) the creative one seeks, who will write new values on new tablets.

In most cases, philosophical companions will not be friends in the everyday sense, but those with whom we share a philosophical goal or vision to work for a future which is affirmative of life, having recognized the value of the Dionysian event of interruption and considered its significance beyond our self-interests. The companion is the one capable of generating the powerful affect of creative ethical inspiration. In this encounter, the companion, in their immediacy, and in their suggestion of an affirmative eternity, challenges the self to greater heights of creative affirmation by encouraging us to undertake to produce and transmit an enhanced plurality of perspectives, the ultimate aim of which is to provide an encompassing sense of lifeaffirming justice associated with those who are on the way to 'becoming who they are'. Such companions are also referred to as free spirits, wanderers, immoralists, good Europeans and Hyperboreans.

Ethical sensibility is found to occur within encounters with companions, in which the self undergoes an affective compulsion to act. Thinking ethically with the other in mind, as the signification of thinking beyond the present shared by the two, might start

by attempting an 'aesthetic justification' of existence and extend the horizon of this to the greatest extent to which one can conceive of the other's significance in terms of both creaturely and creative will to power. However, attempting to speak for the other in this way continually exposes the limits of interpretative thinking, leading to a sense of their unique difference to any possible interpretation, while retaining a sense of their infinite value. The necessary difference which the other transmits, in addition to their compelling us to express this sense of value alongside our reductive interpretation, is found to represent an exemplary source of power. To respond affirmatively to this exemplary power requires us to command ourselves as will to power to commit ourselves to aesthetic-ethical creating for the other. The combination of the creation of meaning and the transmission of value, occurring in response to the encounter with the Dionysian philosophical companion, is found to be the grounding of interpretive consciousness and the source of the ethical development of language, and as such to also provide the dynamic force for the development of consciousness.

The primary or original undergoing of the immediate and eternalizing Dionysian event, occurring in the encounter with the companion, opens a realm of evaluation that could not be reached through solitary thinking, which merely creates and destroys new idols for itself in vain. Nietzsche is shown to advocate the establishment of an agon with the companion and the provision of a new grounding of sense in this encounter. The questioning of the value of our interpretation of life by the companion leads to the question of the identity of others in the broadest sense. The companions thus represent the beginnings of the universe and the eternity of humanity, and as such become the subject of a sense of the human sublime. This height is achieved through a response to the call for a justification of life, in an acceptance of a responsibility or necessity to work for the future of the human, earth and life.

Nietzsche provides us with some tools with which to work. He advises us to 'become who we are'; to be 'loyal to the earth'; to create meaning through, or on the basis of, the grounding in the 'optics of life';

and to create metaphors based in 'time and becoming'. In this way, he finds it possible to redeem the past in creating an affirmative future for the earth, and to begin to formulate a politics which could work for the benefit of the earth and life. To think affirmatively at this level is a great challenge for our time.

Nietzsche continually urges his readers towards thinking for the future – affirming the future here on earth beyond their own existence. For Nietzsche '[a]n individual is a piece of fate ... one more law, one more necessity imposed on everything that is coming and going to be'. The evaluation of powerful events, whether intersubjective or not, as signifying a transcendent or immanent principle or essence – and on this basis attributing the highest value to gods, metaphysical substances, essential human qualities or essential qualities in nature – is a denial of the value of life in its infinite plurality, something we are required to be able to bear without such evasion. In the companion, we find one who, in their uniqueness, points to a new sense of humanity past and future, and in addition, being both material finite being and embodied psyche, stands for human, nonhuman and 'material' existence – the meaning of which is always in question. This extended signification will be recognized precisely as an unpredictable force affecting us that, with or without the consent of our companion, exceeds our own intentions for or against, extending the parameters of the requirement for justice.

The model of the priorities for thinking, based in Nietzsche's analysis of the Dionysian affect, can be further utilized to achieve a greater level of justice for humanity, earth and life. This work will be undertaken by those who have decided that the ethical requirement for action on behalf of the earth and life are urgent. A start has possibly already been made in the recognition of the problems with modern nihilistic thought, leading to a process of affirmative thinking joined with eco ethical concerns, along with a call for a rethinking of the all-encompassing economic model of modern consumerism which fosters irresponsibility and an apparent accompanying requirement to dissociate public and ethical life. There is no doubt that thinking affirmatively in the face of what seems to

be an impossible future is difficult. This book hopes to give an affirmative impetus to the process of overcoming this dissociation through developing the model of the affirmative human being.

At Surlej, the lonely philosophical wanderer undergoes a sense of separation from society, which is comprehensively counterbalanced by a sense of the continual renewal of humanity, always filled with an opportunity to affirm life and a future described as the 'children's land' – a future for which philosophy should work. Nietzsche turns to the preeminence of a future thought by philosophical companions and sees the value of this moment of engagement as an expression of a form of life that affirms both the finite present and the infinite future of the earth and life. In so doing, he grounds values in the interactions of finite human beings who, in signifying the otherness of human, life and earth, through and beyond themselves, become more perfect similes of time and becoming.

### Outline

Chapter 1 examines Nietzsche's association of the Dionysian affect with a life affirming basis for philosophy. It begins with the abbreviated and accessible ceremonial form of the event appearing in Attic tragedy and the Hellenistic Mysteries. It argues that Nietzsche finds the original sense of the event in the informal relationships between companions undergoing inspiration, love and grief. Nietzsche argues that the remarkable mania is of the highest value to humanity as a grounding for an ethics based in affirming the value of life and a resulting concept of justice. The claim for a grounding in life affirmation is examined critically in relation to the notions of 'cosmodicy' and 'Dionysian theodicy', considered as philosophical consolations. An alternative to this idea of consolation is found in Nietzsche's 'pessimism of strength', which advocates another form of justice involving the creation of values which are grounded in the Dionysian event, as the expression of humanity's engagement with the earth and life despite uncertainty.

Chapter 2 presents the naturalistic satyr-world of the creature conjoined with the eternalizing creation of the highest concepts affirming the value of life. The satyr expresses the wisdom of nature, a

role taken over in Attic tragedy by the Chorus. The model in which the spectator has their existence questioned by the Chorus is adapted to the engagement between the self and other. The questioning is concerned with the possibility of evaluating life affirmatively in that moment within the world of becoming. The dithyrambic dramatist is found to respond to the requirement for ethical wisdom with creations that transmit the conviction that existence is worthwhile, for individuals and humanity at large, despite suffering and finitude. The chapter also examines in detail how the full significance of the grounding in the other, ranging from creature to creator, can be transmitted as an aesthetic-ethical philosophical sense of justice that affirms life.

Chapter 3 addresses the model of wandering philosophers separated from culture and struggling to become liberated from European nihilism. They are attempting to develop an affirmative philosophy, but are subject to an unfortunate ambiguity concerning the value of the earth and life. The first task for the future is to create elemental metaphors which express a naturalistic limit for thinking about what is best for human existence. These metaphors must be formulated so as to transmit the grounding which is achieved through an affirmative engagement with a companion. In this engagement, the companions push each other to create values which are 'beyond themselves', exceeding self-interest, and thus creating together in the context of an affirmative engagement with life. A form of Dionysian celebration is evoked in which an ecstatic interaction between life and wisdom occurs as a dance or agon – creaturely self and other create together for the eternity of humanity.

Chapter 4 discusses Nietzsche's notion of the possibility of overcoming the denial of the value of life through 'spiritualization' in the context of the requirement for affirmation. The overall activity of the self, considered as body, soul and spirit, is found to be directed simultaneously towards immediacy and eternalization by a 'twofold will'. This 'double will' is found to constantly seek to engage in the Dionysian event, in both the immediacy of humanity in the context of the elemental and the heights of ethical meaning

creating. The chapter argues that a sense of veracity is transmitted in this event through an agonal relationship with the philosophical companion which forms the language that acts as a standard to which our evaluations and interpretations should correspond. The evaluative event is found to extend from the neuronal level of the body to that of spatiotemporal eternity and to ground the production of language in this extensive sense of human existence. As a test for affirmation at this level, a descent into the self confronts the residual belief in human fallenness and the development of resigned nihilism aiming at redemption from the devaluation of life. Both of these aspects need to be operational in an agon in which the grounding relationship with companions becomes integral to the creation of values. In the process of spiritualization, this test is continually applied to the passions and their complementary virtues, placing each in question in a process in which they contribute together to the development of a practice of ethics and justice.

Chapter 5 examines a more sophisticated level of selfconscious will to power based in the notion of its spiritualization in developing justice. Despite advocating a passivity with respect to companions, a question remains concerning the apparent injustice associated with Nietzsche's advocacy of the rank ordering of humanity in relation to which certain groups seem to be regarded as inherently unable to achieve the redemptive levels of power which are associated with justice. It is argued that this advance requires valuing a mode of passivity associated with the Dionysian affect. In accordance with the Dionysian model, the self considered as both creature and creator in terms of will to power cannot act without an environment of resistance and cannot duplicate the height of the articulate resistance of the companion to our evaluated world. Only on this basis is it possible to extend the notion of will to power beyond models based on the self and a singular other to gain a greater sense of its significance in terms of time and becoming, loyalty to the earth, the optics of life, and becoming who we are.

Chapter 6 analyses the practical possibilities of Nietzsche's philosophy, beginning with Nietzsche's notion of a community of philosophical free spirits

located on the Blessed Isles, which expresses a metaphor of commitment by a community of thinkers seeking to overcome European nihilism through the institution of a philosophy which works for the future. The new 'gift-giving' virtues based in Dionysian naturalism are found to provide a basis which leads to a new table of ethical laws which Zarathustra provides as the best means to approach working for the future beyond our own interests and finite lives. In addition, Zarathustra teaches a number of lessons to the Higher Human Beings, which are discussed in the context of the requirements for the emergence of a philosophical community. The ethical sense of the advice that the Higher Human Beings should 'learn to laugh' is examined critically, as is the notion that they should learn to say 'one more time' to life, in developing a sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of others, despite the continual process of passing away. The sociopolitical projection of this worldview is considered in relation to the notion of becoming 'good Europeans' through mastering the work for a future which Nietzsche refers to as the 'children's land'.

Chapter 7 continues the discussion of the philosophical community by examining what is entailed, for Nietzsche, in our becoming modern Hyperboreans. The purpose of the philosophical engagement at this level is found to be to create a future for humanity together, beyond the metaphysics of good and evil. The chapter argues that a model of an eternal human future, referred to as the *Übermensch*, is to be considered in terms of the extremes suggested by the otherness of the companion as both creature and creator. It is found that the grounding of ethics in the encounter with the companion – considered as a higher form of friend – can be extended to include the eternity of the human, earth and life as an appropriate philosophical commitment to an affirmative future. Finally, the conversations on Naxos are shown to be the highest form of philosophical engagement – a dialogue in which the twofold aspects of the highest affective states of humanity, given the metonymies of Dionysus and Ariadne, engage an unknown philosophical companion.



## A Note on the Texts

Manzino Montinari has argued that our obligation to read Nietzsche well requires that we consider the texts, the notes and the letters, to which I would add the philological material, though I disagree that Nietzsche was 'entirely finished with everything' in Turin. While finding *The Will to Power* not to be a directly credible source of Nietzsche's ideas, and in this sense unusable as a Nietzschean text, except as a kind of index, this is not to say that the notes upon which it is based are not valuable or even necessary as a background source of information concerning the possible ways in which Nietzsche's thinking was developing in the late 1880s, especially in relation to the Dionysian and the good European. Unfortunately, most of this material remains only available in German, including Nietzsche's analysis of Plato's dialogues and the history of Greek literature and religion, as well as most letters and the notes from the last year or two. The translations used in this book have been amended in almost all cases, using all the available translations, to a greater or lesser degree. In addition, in an attempt to improve clarity, where possible, amendments have been made to provide gender neutral language. In this I have, by and large, followed Adrian del Caro. This is not to suggest that Nietzsche intended to use language in this way. I acknowledge a concern has been raised specifically regarding the translation of *Übermensch*, suggesting that we have not yet earned the right to use gender neutral language in translating Nietzsche, or elsewhere, and accept that there is a continuing debate, the value of which Nietzsche also may or may not have respected.

<>

[The Gnostic World](#) edited by Garry W. Trompf in Collaboration with Gunner B. Mikkelsen and Jay Johnston; Assistant Editors: Milad Milani (Organization), Brikha H. S. Nasoraia (Illustrations); Advisory Editors: Ex officio as Advisory Board members of the Gnostica Monograph Series (Routledge): Jason BeDuhn, Antoine Faivre, Iain Gardner, Wouter Hanegraaff, Jean-Pierre Mahé, and Raoul Mortley; with Dylan M. Burns, Michael Carter, Majella Franzmann, Joscelyn Godwin, Samuel Lieu, Christopher Partridge, and John O.

Ward [Routledge Worlds, Routledge, 9781138673939]

[The Gnostic World](#) is an outstanding guide to Gnosticism, written by a distinguished international team of experts to explore Gnostic movements from the distant past until today. These themes are examined across sixty-seven chapters in a variety of contexts, from the ancient pre-Christian to the contemporary. The volume considers the intersection of Gnosticism with Jewish, Christian, Islamic and Indic practices and beliefs, and also with new religious movements, such as Theosophy, Scientology, Western Sufism, and the Nation of Islam.

This comprehensive handbook will be an invaluable resource for religious studies students, scholars, and researchers of Gnostic doctrine and history.

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Excerpt: It is high time scholars and general readers alike should have the opportunity to contemplate and probe "the Gnostic World" as a whole, guided by the best up-to-date scholarship. An immense amount of ink is still being spilt on interpreting the Gnostic texts of Antiquity, in particular the Nag Hammadi Codices in Coptic from the early Christian centuries, materials from Egypt ranking with Judaea's Dead Sea Scrolls among the most spectacular archeological discoveries ever. And more recently such a controversial text as the Gospel of Judas has come to light, along with the availability of previously secret scrolls and lead rolls held by the Mandaean, extollers of John the Baptist, and different materials enabling us to be clearer about the rise of the Manichaeans, the most widespread of the ancient "Gnostic" systems. In these cases a veritable treasure house of what has been called

ancient "Gnosticism" has opened up, its varied pieces inevitably beckoning explanation as a whole and asking for the means to place it in a bigger perspective. All the (admittedly understandable) excitement over the antique finds has been inspiration for holding in mind and better conceptualizing a Gnostic World that is both broader in scope than the special, often arcane lines of speculation first associated with early Christian heresies, and longer in time as a persisting and highly important current in the history of human thought. This book is designed as a collection of critical studies by experts to both widen and deepen study in Gnostic movements and strands of speculation as a discrete "World" of human socio-spiritual life from the distant past until today.

The idea of a truer and more profound capacity to know is most commonly traced to the parable of the cave given by the ancient Greek philosopher Plato, with its stark contrast between those who are lost in the dinginess of shadow puppetry and those who can see the clear light of day, able "to know" (*gignōskein*) better. In the most general way (*gnōsis*) implies a better than ordinarily accessible "knowledge," and a Gnostic in the generic sense would be someone who is a deep and (on typical assumption) wise knower. In ancient Greek semantics, then, "Gnosis" and "Gnostic" already connect to wisdom (*sophia*) and the love of it (*philosophia*), word associations remaining to this day. When the agenda of this collection was first being projected, expectations as to how subjects and thinkers should be broached were kept as loose as possible, just pronouncing that: "Quests for Gnosis, or for the deep knowledge in which the mysteries of the cosmos are unveiled, form a crucial component in world religious and cultural life." But scholars acquainted with the general field are only too well aware of the differing usages and deployments of Gnosis, its cognates, and linguistic equivalents in various historical and geographical contexts. It might mean access to some highly arcane formulaic instructions or else an abstract, high-principle of Truth. It may be intentionally kept secret as covert mystery (hence the neologism "mysteriosophy" tested by Italian historian of religions Ugo Bianchi) or, in contrast, a teaching

that is open to all, if discreetly imparted. It might only be received by initiatory procedure or else simply by the possession and reading of a relevant text. The applications of contents might range from a highly specific elite (or "cultic") group, in a geo-historically confined situation, to the generous, but now properly disclosed message that it has always been the Truth behind "all" religions (in its acclaimed "perennialism"). Whatever the variations, an air de famille pertains, to use a phrase (deployed by French esotericist Antoine Faivre) for discerning, as a heuristic device, the related thought-modes we call "esoteric," "mystical," "occult," "theosophical," "sapiential," and not just what is "Gnostic[al]." In toto, moreover, both the variegation and interwovenness point to a "World" of consciousness and activity that this volume seeks to encompass.

As we proceed through the volume, we find how changes in the way the cosmos is conceived of can affect the functioning objective of "gnosis," whether to overcome problems inflicted by an alienating demiurge (as with "classic Gnosticism"), or later on to seek union with the one true God (a common medieval tendency, as with the Sufis), or later again to subvert authoritarian, "established" religions with deeper insights (ponder William Blake and the English Romantics). As we advance through the centuries (through the pages of this book), "history" diminishes (but never completely overcomes) "myth" as the conceived theater in which attained "Gnosis" is dramatized: the Gnostic myth of the soul's descent into matter and hoped-for return gets encased in varieties of cyclical theories about the human adventure through earthly temporality. And slowly, especially in modern times, higher "Knowledge" sheds some of the primacy originally given to "spiritual-revelatory" experience for a more secular acceptance of extraordinary disclosures from more rational investigations of the natural order, or of human pasts long hidden from sight, or psychic data that would stir Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung to say in a famous 1959 film interview that from probing the Unconscious he could "know" rather than just believe in God. It is remarkable, as Dutch historian of Hermetic and related speculation Wouter Hanegraaff has shown, how secularized

even New Age "gnoses" present themselves, as if they have to be legitimated by modern science; and by now we are all somehow absorbed into a "myth of universal knowledge" offered to us daily on screens from the Internet. Still, it intrigues that, if the ancient Gnostics mostly fell for what modern cosmologist Paul Davies called "the matter myth," despising materiality as such as well, in the long run we owe from later thinking in the Gnostic trajectory our greater awareness of cosmic process and of matter/energy interchangeability, which both bear "theological implications."

All these matters are addressed by the rich set of studies in this volume, and along with the encouragement of diachronic awareness come demonstrations of geographical spread: gnōsis, for example, being cognate to the Sanskrit jñāna; with Gnostic insights seeping into the Islamicate world (as far as Indonesia, and with renowned gnoseologist Ayatollah Khomeini framing the Iranian constitution on Platonic principles); and the globalization of Western theosophic and New Age cabals such that even isolated tribal movements can be affected by the prized possession of Masonic texts and their symbols. It is indeed a very suitable, not just timely event that the collective contents of this book should join the "Routledge Worlds" series.

When it was originally mooted that such a volume of this was needed (in 2012), under the encouragement of the Editorial of Acumen (publishers since subsumed by Routledge), it was conceived more as an encyclopedic affair, with a myriad of entries large and small alphabetically ordering materials from "Zarathustra to the Da Vinci Code, as it were" (in my jocular phrasing). However, that soon proved an unwieldy prospect, and Routledge's invitation to join their series facilitated much better focus and management. From the first there was no intention to compete with the monumental [Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism](#) (2006), its senior editor Wouter Hanegraaff having co-founded with me the monograph series Gnostica (from 1997). The dream of taking in more non-Western materials, Persian and Indic, Buddhist and Islamic especially, was the immediate and obvious mark of distinction for this volume, and with it the prospect of bringing in many non-European authors who could give

expression to the wide Gnostic World beyond top-heavy specialist concentration on difficult ancient texts issuing from Nag Hammadi and new European-supervised archeological digs. Attempts have admittedly been recently made to convey a better sense of a wider compass of Gnostic prepossessions across time and space, with the anthology of Essential Gnostic Scriptures edited by Marvin Meyer and Willis Barnstone, monographs by Julia Iwersen in Germany, Sean Martin in Britain, Pepa Sanz Bisbal and Ramiro Canon in Spain, Richard Smoley and April DeConick in the United States, along with very popular coverages, of course, such as Andrew Phillip Smith's Dictionary of Gnosticism. But one can dare to say that the cross-cultural breadth and depth of this volume are close to being its best and clinching *raison d'être*. Indeed, the rich range of nationalities present here is to be celebrated, and, at the risk of being chauvinist, the academic resources in Australia have been a draw-card, its biggest cities now the most ethnically diverse on earth.

Then again, more than justification for this volume lies in the range of experts probing the ancient materials, the study of which has involved one of the great stories of international collaboration and academic exchange. So, as new things have come to light, from better piecing together of papyrus fragments or finds from the earth, there is always usefulness in having the best up-to-date scholarship on the foundation works of "Gnosticism." An older generation, particularly of Nag Hammadi scholars, has moved on: individuals of that time graciously wished us the best, but the cohort of scholars we have here, some who have worked with the "elder statesmen," others arising anew, put us in touch with ongoing, cutting-edge scholarship and generate welcome new insights.

Naturally, the structure of this book should give weight to the importance of understanding the ancient bases and inheritance of Gnostic thought and practice, and this gives necessary background to many essays on Gnostic currents and movements running to our time. Articles in the Theoretical section are designed to address issues of definition, scholarship, and conceptual framing that pertain to the trajectory or "World" as a whole. The Ancient section, with papers on the background to ancient

Gnostic religious and philosophic modes, on how to best characterize major elements and speculative themes, and on the contents of various texts and the worldviews they convey, gives that fundamental grounding to the whole enterprise. Actually the papers in the Ancient section reflect an extraordinary, indeed immense, body of ongoing research especially on "classic Gnostic," "orthodox Christian Gnostic," Mandaean, and Manichaean remains, and all the excitement and healthy debate issuing from the string of new "discoveries" since the last World War. Writers on later phenomena will typically gauge the significance of what has persisted from Antiquity, and what relevant strains of thought came to be seriously modified and why.

The Medieval Section opens up an extraordinary view into Gnostic speculation that has been too long without clear and critico-distantiated exposition or has not been placed in the kind of perspective that allows a Gnostic World to be recognized, or too long thought unworthy or perhaps improper to display to world-wide readership because mainstream religion has ruled it "suspect". The Modern section, divided into Western, Eastern (and Beyond), and Current Issues, presents a vast panorama, enabling readers to see how Gnostic threads extend out of the Eastern Christian, Jewish and Muslim arenas into many different spiritual and socio-religious movements that make up part of the rich tapestry of the world's religiosity at present. These include, inter alia, neo-Gnostic churches, decisively Western Sufism, peculiar adaptations of minority Shi'i theology for African-American Muslims, and Gnostic impetuses in modern literature, art, film, and aesthetics more generally. Negative reactions to resurgent Gnosticism, indicated by such a title as *Against the Protestant Gnostics* by Philip Lee (and recalling the early adversarial heresiology of the Church Father Irenaeus), go to show the Gnostic mode is taken as a living theological contestant within the huge Christian theater, not just an isolated part of the multi-religious mix.

The division of editorial responsibilities was as follows: I was in charge of Theoretical, Medieval, and the Eastern Modern chapters; Gunner Mikkelsen, from the Ancient History Department at Macquarie University, handled Ancient; and Jay

Johnston, Associate Professor in Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney and my colleague tackled the Western Modern. Collaboration was essential, and we have each cherished the collegiality that has come out of undertaking a mammoth task. This includes the very pleasant working experiences with Assistant Editors Dr Milad Milani (Western University Sydney) and Prof Brikha Nasoraia (Universities of Sydney and Mardin, Turkey) — who made us a truly multicultural lot — and willing support enjoyed from the Editorial Advisory Board members. We have all been thankful for the guidance and patience of Sarah Gore, at the Routledge editorial for the Worlds series, and for generous seeding money provided by both Routledge and the Theosophical Society of Australia. Such available funds helped with the translation of the major article by Faivre by Korshi Dosoo. <>

[The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy](#) edited by Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard and Mary Laven [Oxford University Press, 9780198816553]

The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy explores the rich devotional life of the Italian household between 1450 and 1600. Rejecting the enduring stereotype of the Renaissance as a secular age, this interdisciplinary study reveals the home to have been an important site of spiritual revitalization. Books, buildings, objects, spaces, images, and archival sources are scrutinized to cast new light on the many ways in which religion infused daily life within the household. Acts of devotion, from routine prayers to extraordinary religious experiences such as miracles and visions, frequently took place at home amid the joys and trials of domestic life -- from childbirth and marriage to sickness and death.

Breaking free from the usual focus on Venice, Florence, and Rome, The Sacred Home investigates practices of piety across the Italian peninsula, with particular attention paid to the city of Naples, the Marche, and the Venetian mainland. It also looks beyond the elite to consider artisanal and lower-status households, and reveals gender and age as factors that powerfully conditioned religious experience. Recovering a host of lost voices and compelling narratives at the intersection between the divine and the everyday, The Sacred Home

offers unprecedented glimpses through the keyhole into the spiritual lives of Renaissance Italians.

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The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy is the product of four years of interdisciplinary research, supported by a European Research Council Synergy Grant. It draws on work conducted by a team of nine researchers and benefits from their varied formations and expertise. The interdisciplinarity of the team as a whole is mirrored in the trio of authors. While each of us comes from a different discipline (Italian Literature, History of Art and Architecture, and History), our work on this project has continually led us to cross boundaries and to enter each other's intellectual territory in pursuit of new sources and interpretations. Boundary-hopping has also characterized our approach to the Italian peninsula. Rather than limiting our research to a single city or region of Italy, we have gathered evidence from across the Italian states and have made a point of focusing our attentions on those areas that have been less studied. At the same time, we have deliberately adopted a broad chronology that encompasses both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and allows us to chart change over the *longue durée*.

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An earthquake rips through an Italian town. Devastating cracks appear in the buildings, walls start to collapse. Terrified people scream from

windows while their homes crumble beneath them; others try to attract attention by standing on rooftops and waving their hands but to no avail. Just one house withstands the tremors and the reason is clear. Inside, a family consisting of mother, father, and four children, all neatly attired and of tranquil disposition, are on their knees and praying intently. Their intercessions are addressed to a tonsured saint, who hovers close to the house, almost within touching distance and yet separated by a ring of clouds that signals his location in the supernatural realm. The culmination of the act of domestic devotion is materialized in the image itself: a painted wooden board, less than a foot across, commissioned by the Viadana family to commemorate the salvation of their home.

This compelling image with its unusual cross-section view provides a rare glimpse into an ordinary Italian Renaissance home to reveal a family engaged in fervent prayer. It is a fitting emblem for our book, which seeks to uncover the ways in which people experienced domestic devotion during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. While the history of Catholicism is often told from an institutional or clerical perspective, our primary interest is in the devotions of the laity, conducted away from the church or confraternity, beyond the immediate gaze of the clergy, behind the doors of the home. Private piety does not yield its secrets easily to scholars and, as we embarked upon our topic, we sometimes felt as though we were squinting awkwardly through the keyholes of Renaissance houses. In fact, only by opening our eyes to a very wide array of sources, visual, material, architectural, textual, and archival, have we been able to gain a fuller picture of the pious practices, holy objects, and sacred spaces that structured domestic life.

Our book grows out of and is indebted to a wealth of existing scholarship. Here, we elaborate on the relationship of *The Sacred Home* to its scholarly hinterland and suggest how earlier work in neighbouring fields has shaped our own methods and approaches.

### The Home in Renaissance Italy

Since the nineteenth century, the Italian *casa* has featured in accounts of the Renaissance as a place

of civility, culture, and consumption, but has seldom been conceived of as a sacred space. Jacob Burckhardt's famous essay, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, first published in 1860, included a short section on 'domestic life' that lauded contemporary thinkers like Leon Battista Alberti for bringing 'order into domestic life'. As is well known, Burckhardt's account of Italian society described a people who were marked out by their individualism, worldliness, and scepticism and for whom 'the notion of sin and of salvation' had 'almost entirely evaporated'. So it is no surprise that his vision of domestic order was accomplished not thanks to religious beliefs or practices but to 'intelligent economical views, and a rational style of domestic architecture'. The Renaissance volume of Pompeo Molmenti's history of 'private life' in Venice, published in 1880, dwelt at greater length on the themes of family and home. Like Burckhardt, Molmenti was a pioneer in the field of cultural history, as interested in 'palaces, gardens and villas' as he was in 'love, conversation, feasts and meals'. But while both historians were concerned with the institutions of the Church and with public displays of fervour such as festivals and processions, neither was drawn to investigate private, domestic devotion. That lack of curiosity about household religion persisted with Attilio Schiaparelli's path-breaking 1908 study of the architecture and decoration of *La casa fiorentina*. With regard to decoration, he could scarcely avoid mentioning the profusion of religious art with which Florentine homes were adorned. Even so, there is no engagement with the devotional meanings of the pictures, which Schiaparelli insisted (in the context of the Medici collections) were selected on 'purely aesthetic' grounds. In these vintage studies, the Italian *casa* was quietly enlisted in the secularizing narrative of the Renaissance.

Across the course of the twentieth century, scholars of the Renaissance approached the home from a number of different angles. While historians of art and architecture tended to focus on villas and palazzi, the rise of social history and the late twentieth-century burgeoning of concern with gender served to inspire interest in non-elite homes. At the same time, the material culture of the home began to attract attention from historians, art

historians, archaeologists, and textual scholars. More recent studies have made extensive use of inventories as a source for reconstructing the material culture of the Italian Renaissance home. Densely packed with fresh insights and offering multiple viewpoints into domestic life, this new layer of research testifies to the wealth of possibilities opened up by the 'material turn' in Renaissance studies. The focus on the material culture of the home makes us alert to factors such as gender and age, and to the cultural hybridities that were being forged in an age of travel and expansion. By shining a bright light on the 'decorative arts', historians of material culture have forced us to reconsider our conceptions of value and meaning in the Renaissance world. And yet it is noticeable that even these rich and nuanced studies have continued to emphasize luxury goods, worldly habits, and secular knowledge at the expense of spiritual experience. It seems that we have still not entirely escaped from the long shadow cast by secularizing narratives forged in the nineteenth century.

### Renaissance Religion

The Sacred Home resists that remarkably enduring stereotype of the Renaissance as a 'secular age' and instead embraces the less familiar concept of 'Renaissance religion'. Our use of the term 'Renaissance' demands some justification: it is of course a nineteenth-century invention; its etymology invokes the 'rebirth' of classical culture and therefore places non-Christian values at its heart; its historiography, as we have mentioned, is deeply entwined with narratives of secularization. It is perhaps for these reasons that Anglophone scholars who study Christianity in this period often prefer to use the terms 'late medieval' or 'Early Modern' and to steer clear of the loaded 'Renaissance'. But 'medieval' and 'Early Modern' create their own difficulties in so far as they tend to nourish an opposition between 'traditional' and 'innovative' and to accept the Protestant and Catholic Reformations as the dividing mark between the two. This book focuses on the period 1450 to 1600, a timeframe that straddles the pre- and post-Reformation eras and allows us to chart alternative currents of change, reform, and renewal across the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

If the 'Renaissance' as a period has the advantage of carrying us across the Reformation chasm, the adoption of the term brings other heuristic benefits. By engaging with the idea of 'Renaissance religion' we have accepted the challenge to consider the ways in which the exceptional creativity of the period was harnessed to devotional ends. As previous scholarship has demonstrated, the visual and material culture of Renaissance Italy was founded on wealth.<sup>1</sup> The spending power of the Italian people supported a proliferation of artists and artisans whose workshops churned out the non-essential goods that responded to and stimulated the desires of those with cash to spare. At the same time, developing technologies, such as the production of tin-glazed earthenware or print, pitched new objects into the market that were at once beautiful and affordable. Fifteenth-century inventories chart an exponential rise in the presence of colourful ceramics, ornate metalwork, fine linen, fashionable clothes, paintings, books, and jewellery, in households across the peninsula. Less often noted is the fact that the multiplication of 'worldly goods' was matched by an explosion of devotional commodities, from images of the Virgin Mary and prayer books to pilgrim souvenirs and rosaries. Even those objects that we are apt to classify as 'luxury items' may have had a devotional significance that is lost in the terse descriptions provided by inventories: a maiolica dish could be adorned with the image of the Crucifixion or a favourite saint; a ruby ring might bear the Name of Jesus or other holy symbol inside its rim; an expensive silver candlestick in the bedroom was perhaps used to illuminate an image of the Madonna.<sup>2</sup> By focusing on the religious function of so many of the objects that cluttered the Renaissance home, we show how domestic space could be a site for devotional renewal. The 'consumer revolution' of the Renaissance, we argue, played a key role in the domestication of religion.

Our attempt to reframe the history of religion in new chronologies owes much to the insights of colleagues working on the medieval period. As John Arnold has eloquently explained, the problem with established narratives of change is that they 'slip too easily into teleology'; they already 'know the "end" of the story' and this dictates 'the



unfolding of all that precedes'. This is a particular challenge for those of us who work on the period that encompasses the Reformation. And yet our research draws fresh attention to the dynamism of religion before Luther and to the continual reinvention of medieval beliefs and practices—including pilgrimage, the promotion of local saints, the veneration of relics and iconophilia—throughout the Renaissance and beyond. We therefore follow the exhortation of the literary scholar James Simpson to 'escape' from 'the repulsive-attractive magnet of medieval versus Reformation'. In this mission, we are inspired by Caroline Bynum, who has shown how a new focus on the material experience of religion can facilitate that escape and enable us to refashion old narratives."

In the context of Italy, where Protestantism never became fully established, we might expect scholarship to be less in thrall to what Simpson calls the 'magnetic rupture' of the Reformation. It is, after all, well known that the centuries preceding Luther were marked by many manifestations of devotional renewal in Italy: the rise of penitential movements, the spread of Mendicant preachers, the explosion in confraternities, a new concern with sacramental piety, the proliferation of charitable initiatives, church-building and other forms of lay patronage. The city-studies that transformed our understanding of the Italian Renaissance in the 1970s and 1980s demonstrated that religion was fundamental to the success and survival of the great urban centres, while a second wave of research into confraternities further established the connections between lay piety and civic life. This rich historiography finds its visual counterpart in Gentile Bellini's detailed painting of the Procession of the True Cross of 1496. Here we see nobles and dignitaries joining with confraternity members before the ducal church of San Marco to parade the celebrated fragment of the cross: it is a clear statement of 'civic religion' of the kind that is central, not marginal, to our understanding of the Italian Renaissance.

But if this vision of Renaissance religion stands secure and relatively impervious to the pull of the Reformation magnet, other aspects of devotional experience in Italy have been eclipsed by Protestant models of change. Scholars in this field

have tended to see unorthodoxy or heresy as signs of cultural ferment. Meanwhile, orthodoxy is assumed to be stifling. The sixteenth century is thus characterized as an era of increasing subjugation for the Italian laity, culminating in a monolithic Counter Reformation. The study of household religion has no doubt been skewed by this historiography. Enthusiastically embraced as a site of lay autonomy by historians of the Reformation, the home has been neglected in studies of Catholic Europe.

### The Holy Household

Since the Reformation itself, a powerful discourse has claimed the home as the focus of Protestant renewal. A barrage of Lutheran propaganda in the first half of the sixteenth century sought to monopolize marriage and household as the institutions that underpinned reform. Presenting themselves as the 'defenders of the estate of marriage', Lutheran preachers and pamphleteers inveighed against the old clerical ideals of virginity and celibacy and insisted that marriage and family life were the means to bring about social stability. These core values were reflected in the many printed and painted representations of the family that to this day seem to define Early Modern Protestantism: a typical woodcut image, printed in a popular English book of psalms, shows a well-groomed nuclear family taking religious instruction from the paterfamilias. Rather than attempting to reclaim this moral high ground, the Catholic Church fought back by restating the supremacy of celibacy. In 1563, the final year of the Council of Trent, the assembled prelates of the Church reaffirmed the inviolability of the vow of celibacy for nuns and male clergy as a point of faith and pronounced anathema on all who dared to assert that the married state was more worthy than virginity.

This historic ideological divide continues to shape the scholarship on religion in the age of reform. Among the studies that have cemented this divergent view, two bear particular relevance. Steven Ozment's *When Fathers Ruled*, first published in 1983, offered a compelling analysis of the idealization of family life by Protestant reformers. It presented what was then a revisionist

view insofar as it aimed to dispel the image of the sixteenth-century father as a tyrant, and instead focused on the ideals of love and companionship fostered by the emerging Protestant churches in Germany and Switzerland. But Ozment's account was dependent on an unexplored 'other', which was to some large extent fabricated by the propagandists of the Reformation era. According to this model, while Martin Luther exhorted Christians to enjoy the gifts of marriage and family life, the Catholic masses were oppressed by unattainable and unnatural ideals: priests entangled themselves in guilt-ridden relations with concubines, monks masturbated in their cells, and nuns were subjected to abuse from their frustrated confessors. Even laymen and women could never escape from the authority of the priesthood and from the hierarchy that placed virginity above marriage. Lyndal Roper's *The Holy Household*, published in 1989, offered a more cynical account of Protestantism as a highly gendered religion, premised on a model of patriarchal authority that served to buttress the values and interests of a guild-dominated society. But despite this difference of emphasis, it presented further evidence in support of a profound shift in the nature and experience of religion, from church-based and clerical to home-based and patriarchal. According to both Ozment and Roper, the closure of convents and the marriage of priests were symbolic steps towards the relocation of Christianity within the household.

To the work of Ozment and Roper may be added many more studies of the Protestant household, including Christopher Hill's Marxist interpretation of the English Puritan household, Simon Schama's cultural analysis of Calvinist domestic life in the Dutch Golden Age, and Tara Hamling's study of art in British Protestant homes. In marked contrast, historians of late-medieval and Early Modern Catholicism have largely ignored the question of how religion was practised in the home, while those who have actively looked into this matter have concluded that there is little to report. Pondering practices of fasting before the Reformation, John Bossy commented that 'this was a domestic observance, one of the few domestic rites which medieval Catholicism possessed'. Marc Forster,

focusing his investigation on a later period, observed that, in Germany at least, 'devotions within the household, and particularly familial practices ... were not an important part of Baroque Catholicism'. A pocket of research focusing on the homes of Catholics living in minority communities constitutes an exception. English recusant homes and Catholic households in exile have been the subject of a good deal of scrutiny, while the famous 'house chapels' frequented by Catholics living as a tolerated minority in Amsterdam have also received scholarly attention. In a similar vein, recent use of archives of the Inquisition has uncovered the domestic devotional activities of heterodox communities of proto-Protestants in Italy; one such household is recorded in the remarkable family portrait of the Valmarana. But the domestic devotional lives of Southern Europeans adhering to the Roman Church—orthodox, normative, and dominant—have gained very little notice.

The twin historiographies of Renaissance and Reformation have conspired to divert attention from the holy households of Italy. On the one hand, scholars of the Renaissance have tended to overlook the vibrancy of private devotion; on the other, Reformation historians have portrayed household religion as quintessential to the Northern European Protestant experience. Between these two scholarly traditions, the sacred home in Renaissance Italy has slipped from view. And yet this forgotten aspect of Renaissance religion was critical to the experience of Italians across the social scale. The vast majority of the population lived not in institutions but in private homes; moreover, overwhelming evidence suggests that it was in the domestic sphere that laypeople nurtured intimate, everyday relationships with the Virgin Mary, Christ, and the saints.

### Approaching the Sacred Home

The elusiveness of our subject is not only the result of historiographical traditions. Our research poses particular challenges in terms of evidence.

Whereas it is relatively easy to go into an archive or library and to ask to see the documents relating to a religious order, church, or convent, we are all too aware that it would be fruitless to request 'records relating to domestic devotion'. Private

piety usually goes undocumented and while diaries afford occasional glimpses into the practice of religion at home, the shortage of written records that directly speak to our research question has forced us to be imaginative in our use of sources.

Profiting from our interdisciplinary range, we have approached the home from a variety of different angles. First, we have considered spaces of devotion, from the bedside to the threshold; second, we have focused on practices, such as praying, reading, or interacting with images; third, we have explored the role of objects—a category that includes books and paintings as well as rosaries and crosses—in order to see the ways in which the presence of material things animated religion in the home; fourth, we have engaged seriously with the stories that people living in the Renaissance told about their religious experiences, hence our extensive use of miracle books and votive images. In order to pursue our topic from multiple vantage points, we have embraced material, visual, and textual records with equal enthusiasm; museum collections, archives, libraries, and urban streets have all been the sites of our research.

We have also gone out of our way to extend our reach beyond the elites of Renaissance Italy. This does not mean that we have ignored those with wealth and status. The portrait of the noble Petrozzani family from Mantua shows a mother with her five children kneeling before an altar bedecked with an image of the Crucifixion. The children are exquisitely dressed in damask outfits—red for the boys and gold for the girls; depending on age, each one wears either a delicate lace collar or a full-blown ruff. The older daughter has dropped her luxurious red leather-bound prayer book with silk ties on the floor. The mother, Chiara Albini Petrozzani, an elegant widow clad in black, gently touches the head of her youngest child, who is staring out of the painting towards the viewer, as if to direct the little girl's attention back to the altar. It is a touching visual record of domestic devotion of the kind that is deeply valuable to our research—a quiet counterpart to the dramatic depiction of the Viadana family, with which we began. However, conscious of the fact that evidence such as a family

portrait only exists for the highest stratum of society, we have been dogged in our pursuit of less glamorous, more typical kinds of source material. By trawling through notarial records, calling up volumes of local devotional literature, and delving into inquisitorial and criminal records, we have aspired to capture a broader and more textured view of religious practices across the social spectrum.

Finally, our research has taken us across the length and breadth of the Italian peninsula. We have deliberately resisted the allure of the golden triangle—particularly powerful among Anglophone scholars—that has resulted in so many books on Venice, Florence, and Rome. Instead, we have focused our efforts on a different geographical trio: the Venetian terraferma, the Marche, and the city of Naples and its surroundings. Again, we have not restricted our consideration to these areas. We have benefited from the more established scholarship on Venice and Florence and we have extended our investigations, where relevant, to other parts of Italy. However, our concentration on three less studied regions has enabled us to bring fresh evidence to the discussion in order to cast new light on the shadowy topic of the sacred home.

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Pasted onto the back cover of a battered edition of the *Dottrina Christiana*, published in Vicenza in 1579, a single sheet of paper testifies to the devotions of its former owner. At the top there is hand-drawn sunburst containing the IHS and two kneeling angels. Beneath, a spiritual poem has been written out in a clear hand and framed with a decorative border consisting of rows of unevenly-penned triangles coloured in dark ink. The page has been cropped at some later stage, but seems to be a form of personal, poetic amulet that has been deliberately stuck into a well-used household text. The poem is couched in the first person and speaks of the writer's soul, 'which used to go wandering'.

By scrutinizing the personal touches in this humble book, we bring the fundamental elements of our exploration of the sacred Renaissance home back into focus. An individual, who remains anonymous, has left behind traces of his or her engagement

with a devotional object. Onto that object, a cheap text printed in small format, the anonymous user has inscribed an image, the kneeling angels in a sunburst, as well as an amuletic formula, the IHS. The poem gestures at literary aspirations, while the imagery suggests a homespun kind of creative engagement. The volume itself connects the personal devotions of the owner with a wider context, including the burgeoning network of Schools of Christian Doctrine, the local church, the confraternity and its members. The book and its paratexts remind us that domestic devotion is inward-looking, nourished by familiar formulae, pictorial targets for prayer, or personal poetic pledges. It also reaffirms that private piety is connected to wider currents of communal worship and instruction. As we have seen, the home was not a bounded space, but a porous one that was everywhere open to the supernatural. Worries about the everyday jostled for position alongside concerns about death, purgatory, and the afterlife.

In his account of the 'domestication of the Renaissance', Peter Burke discussed the spread of cultural developments to new kinds of audiences via networks of knowledge, and the key role played by innovative technologies and media in this process of expansion. By ending our study with the example of a printed book, we highlight one such technology that also had a profound impact on the 'domestication' of Renaissance religion. Religion was increasingly materialized in our period through ever more affordable books, images, and objects that made their way into homes across the Italian peninsula. We have argued in this book that the influx of these devotional tools into the homes of ordinary people was an enabling process that activated devotion 'on the ground'. For most people, this devotion was not heterodox or heretical, but fell within the parameters of acceptable practice. As the additions to the printed *Dottrina Christiana* make clear, domestic devotion also left space for the personal, in all its varied, idiosyncratic forms.

Viewed from the perspective of household piety that we have uncovered in this study, the period 1450 to 1600 can be seen as one of empowerment for the laity across Italy. While some have argued that the peninsula had a 'failed'

Reformation, we emphasize instead a process of renewal, often overlooked in the scholarly search for heterodoxy that has dominated studies of Italian religion for this period. The site for this renewal was the home, a 'holy household' increasingly adorned with small paintings, cheap prints, rosaries, books and pamphlets—a kind of devotional clutter that would come to define Catholic dwellings into the eighteenth century and beyond. Local cults enriched and influenced this holy household in fundamental ways, in the outpouring of miracles and the growing production of votive tablets with domestic themes. The sacred home was thus a site of continuity but also of marked expansion and change.

For the Tudor linguist, John Florio, the verb 'domesticate' meant 'to tame, reclame, make familiar, mild or gentle'. It is clear that the Catholic Church was committed to 'taming and reclaiming' the home as a site of devotion—a quiet campaign that nevertheless gathered pace during the sixteenth century when orthodox religion came under threat. For the laity, undergoing the demands and crises of daily life, a kind of domestic religion that was 'familiar', 'mild', and 'gentle', attuned to their concerns, was to be welcomed. The Italian sacred home, forged in the creative melting-pot of the Renaissance, would play a key role in the religious renewals of the post-Reformation age.

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[\*Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy\*](#) edited by Maya Corry, Marco Faini, Alessia Meneghin [Intersections, Brill, 9789004342569]

[\*Domestic Devotions in Early Modern Italy\*](#) illuminates the vibrancy of spiritual beliefs and practices which profoundly shaped family life in this era. Scholarship on Catholicism has tended to focus on institutions, but the home was the site of religious instruction and reading, prayer and meditation, communal worship, multi-sensory devotions, contemplation of religious images and the performance of rituals, as well as extraordinary events such as miracles. Drawing on a wide range of sources, this volume affirms the central place of the household to spiritual life and reveals the myriad ways in which devotion met domestic needs. The seventeen essays encompass religious history,

the histories of art and architecture, material culture, musicology, literary history, and social and cultural history.

Contributors are Erminia Ardissino, Michele Bacci, Michael J. Brody, Giorgio Caravale, Maya Corry, Remi Chiu, Sabrina Corbellini, Stefano Dall'Aglio, Marco Faini, Iain Fenlon, Irene Galandra Cooper, Jane Garnett, Joanna Kostylo, Alessia Meneghin, Margaret A. Morse, Elisa Novi Chavarria, Gervase Rosser, Zuzanna Sarnecka, Katherine Tycz, and Valeria Viola.

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Index Nominum

Excerpt: This volume sets out to explore the world of domestic devotions in early modern Italy. Religious life in this time and place has long been the subject of scholarly study; so too have the household, family and domestic sphere. Yet it is only relatively recently that academic attention has been paid to the overlap between these – to the myriad, complex and diverse ways in which people in this era engaged with religious beliefs, practices, rituals and objects in their homes.

Scholars who seek to illuminate the interface between religion and domestic life have benefited from gains made by earlier work on the home and family. The seminal work of the anthropologist Mary Douglas has been crucial in this regard. For her, the home is both a space and a community: it is a repository of memory, a place where each individual is expected to invest in the collective good, somewhere with an aesthetic and moral dimension. The boundaries of the home are not fixed, and it can be a fragile entity that is easily disrupted. This fluidity is central to our definition of domesticity. The early modern casa housed not just the nuclear family but a shifting network of kin,

friends, business associates, servants and apprentices. Households were not stable units: babies were put out to wet-nurse, children lived with employers, elite girls were raised in convents, widowed women returned to their natal homes, men left for seasonal work, relatives came and went. Defining 'domestic space' is also not straightforward. Many Italians would not have recognised any clear delineation between spaces for living, working and socialising, as extant architecture makes clear. Numerous individuals spent parts of their lives in institutional settings, and the poorest in society, lacking defined spaces that they could call 'home', nonetheless experienced what can be classed as 'domestic' devotions.

Notwithstanding these realities, our aim is to affirm the importance of the domestic environment to spiritual life in this period. If we acknowledge that behaviours and rituals shape human experience to a greater degree than doctrines, then it becomes clear that the home is as deserving of the attention of scholars interested in religiosity as the church. Within the *casa* daily prayers were said, candles were lit in front of images, and divine grace was received. Births, deaths and marriages all took place at home and were marked by religious rituals and observances. Times of crisis as well as key moments of the day – waking, eating, sleeping – were punctuated with prayer that could be individual or communal, spoken, read or sung. This was an era of increasing focus on the importance of the household and family (in general, civic and moral terms), and although the practice of domestic devotion was by no means an early modern invention, its significance was amplified in the period's discourse. The definition of a space as domestic in no way precluded its conceptualisation in explicitly spiritual terms. In recognition of this fact, advice literature urged laypeople to make space for moments of quiet reflection and meditation (both literally within their homes and figuratively within their hearts and souls); a wealth of material evidence confirms that many did so.

Essays in this volume draw attention to these realities, and shine light on their significance to life in this period. They highlight that domestic devotions were often simultaneously personal, familial and communal. Although the home could be

an intimate space of quiet contemplation, religious life within its walls was shaped by the participatory activities of church, confraternity, shrine, parish, pilgrimage and procession in profound ways. Equally, rituals that took place in the church, confraternal hall or street had domestic aspects and meanings, and the language and imagery of home and family appeared frequently in Catholic discourse. The home was a site of pious sociability, where religious festivities, weddings, and in general all those activities traditionally associated with collective and public gatherings were celebrated. Domestic devotions were enmeshed with institutional forms of piety, and many essays explore the ways in which practices, sounds, gestures and objects which originated in churches, monasteries and confraternal houses migrated into dwellings. Others make fresh contributions to historical debates surrounding the validity of the public/private distinction, indicating the need to pay careful attention to early modern language and attitudes. In recognition of these elisions, essays in this volume probe the intricate web of connections that bound early modern believers to one another, and examine how they negotiated different forms and spaces of piety and expressions of faith.

In the light of these observations, the question arises of whether any aspect of spiritual practice was primarily domestic in nature. Prayer, for instance, could be conducted anywhere. However, preachers and the authors of moralising treatises identified certain aspects of devotion as being especially suited to the home. Daily reading was encouraged for those who were literate, as was meditation on an image. Believers were urged to find time and space in their lives for quiet, regular contemplation of the holy mysteries. (Such advice was clearly modelled on monastic ideals of behaviour, with treatises on the household urging their readers to think of their homes as analogous to houses of God.) It is perhaps in the quotidian repetition of behaviours that we can locate something that was particular to domestic devotion, rather than in any single act or ritual.

Another aspect that is characteristic of this period is the significance afforded to objects and artworks. Demand for religious texts and wares exploded in

these years, with the greater availability, affordability and diversity of material goods meaning that more people than ever before aspired to own such items. Laypeople from across the social scale used objects to create areas within their homes that were suited to daily acts of piety. Works of art were repositories of stories, hopes and prayers, as essays in this collection demonstrate. They were treasured for their beauty, their rich materials, and sometimes their artistic worth. Primarily though, religious items were valued for their ability to move the soul, provide protection and bring believers closer to the divine. In the home, beholders entered into particularly intimate relationships with depicted figures: speaking to them, touching and kissing them, imaginatively interacting with them on a daily basis. Small objects worn close to the body, such as pieces of jewellery, agnus dei pendants or little scraps of prayer in pouches, were often especially cherished. The extraordinary range of items with religious significance of some sort that were incorporated into domestic life (including furniture, crockery, inkstands, candlesticks, holy water stoups, combs and cutlery) indicates how vibrantly artists and makers responded to the requirements of different believers: rich and poor, educated and uneducated, men, women and children.

Among other things, this diversity highlights the need for historical sensitivity towards distinctions in devotional experiences. A wealth of scholarship has made clear that religion offered one of the most significant vehicles for the formation and expression of female subjectivity and agency in the early modern era. How did that dynamic operate within the home? Moralists taught that an explicitly patriarchal structure ought to govern family life: it was the assumed male head of the household who was to lead communal prayers and enforce religious discipline. Women were relied upon to behave in a pious manner and help ensure the sanctity of the home, teaching children the basics of devotion, for example, but they were expected to do so under male guidance and supervision. Spirituality itself could be deeply gendered, with contemporaries regularly associating practices and beliefs that were condemned as superstitious and silly with femininity, regardless of whether they

were adhered to by men or women. The reality, although it was profoundly informed by these discourses, was of course more complicated. While any simplistic association of domesticity with femininity must be vigorously resisted, it is nonetheless true that women were able to carve out agency from within the intersecting frameworks of the domestic and the devotional. Sometimes this crystallised around explicitly female events that were more likely to happen at home than anywhere else, such as childbirth. On other occasions, reputations for piety allowed laywomen to situate themselves at the centre of networks of power and exchange. While valuable studies have shed light on the links between female religiosity and the household more work is needed on the spiritual experiences of laymen, and the ways in which concepts of masculinity, as well as femininity, shaped religious life within the home.

Disparity in social status offers another analytical framework through which our topic can be viewed. Those who were poor and spent their days in the fields or moving around the city might have found it difficult to attend to admonitions to create quiet spaces of contemplation in their daily routines. Those who could not afford the full paraphernalia of domestic devotion (or who shared their living space with many others) were less able to create areas demarcated for prayer within their homes. Many of the essays in this volume explore practices that were commonplace across the social scale, or pay attention to objects and works of art that were available to those without great means. Yet the disparities between the experiences of rich and poor is an area where more work is to be done.

As with all historical enquiries covering a span of several hundred years, our topic prompts consideration of changes and continuities in domestic devotion. Italian spirituality in this era was shaped by forces that crystallised in two major events: the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation, and the Council of Trent. The spread of Reformed ideas in Italy in the first decades of the sixteenth century – partly thanks to the diffusion of cheap print – prompted questioning of some of the most widespread devotional practices.

The Reformation manifested itself in Italy in manifold ways: Lutheran, Calvinist, Anabaptist, anti-Trinitarian and even more radical ideas coexisted and mingled with one other, and need to be considered alongside attempts at reform that were rooted in Catholic orthodoxy.

It was not just beliefs that were shaped by the influence of Reformed doctrines but also practices. Clandestine conventicles were held in semi-public spaces such as shops, taverns and workshops, as well as in homes. Such places provided ideal environments for discussion, and for the performance of deviant rituals. Adherents to these new creeds often adopted a double standard of behaviour in their everyday lives: the practice of Nicodemism made it possible to draw a distinction between one's public persona, and one's inner self. Individuals who adhered to this approach seemed outwardly to abide by Catholic orthodoxy, but in private followed their true beliefs. Despite many reformers, such as Calvin, arguing that martyrdom was preferable to dissimulation, the majority of heterodox believers in Italy chose the latter path.

As is well known, Protestants placed significant emphasis on domestic aspects of religiosity. While the Reformation called for a more personal brand of spirituality, based on the reading of the Gospels rather than the authority of priest and Church, it also entailed a whole range of beliefs that had a powerful influence on everyday life. Reformed spirituality involved activities such as chanting the Psalms, celebrating the Lord's Supper and reading and discussing the Bible that all took place within the home; it could even shape dietary regimes. The influx of new ideas that penetrated Italy also had an impact on visual cultures of devotion. Examples include Lorenzo Lotto's portraits of Luther and his wife, painted in 1540 for his nephew Mario D'Armano, or the famous Crucifixion drawn by Michelangelo for Vittoria Colonna, with its emphasis on ideas expressed in the *Beneficio di Cristo* (1543).

One area where reformers in the post-Tridentine Church were in partial agreement with Protestants was on the need to eradicate 'superstition'. For Protestants, the term referred to the use of most religious paraphernalia, belief in miracles and

many other aspects of Catholic devotion. For the post-Tridentine reformers, superstition designated what could now be defined as traditional, or folkloric forms of practice. Belief in a whole world of magical and supernatural powers had long shaped attitudes to ritual, prayer, enchantments and images in Italian religiosity. Many 'superstitious' practices were intrinsically domestic, and revolved around everyday hopes and fears: conception; recovery from illness; warding off accidents; protection against bad weather and thieves; safeguarding mothers and babies during childbirth; defence against evil spirits, and so on. The intertwining of magic and religion was commonplace and was widespread amongst believers of all levels of society, including members of the Church. In the aftermath of Trent, the repressive apparatus of the Counter Reformation targeted these practices in an attempt to eradicate them. The dual measures of censorship and inquisitorial activity were wielded in the effort to stamp out deviancy. As a result, little survives of the wealth of cheap prints, flysheets and texts that transmitted many of these ideas. There are a few extant printed or manuscript copies of prayers, orations and legends with rubrics that insist on the talismanic and amuletic powers of the text, but most of what we know of their use derives from indirect sources such as trials, letters, *Acta synodalia* and later accounts. These sources tell us that despite its best efforts, the Counter Reformation Church failed to eliminate these beliefs. Essays in this volume point to a position of reluctant compromise that was adopted by some reformers: traditional forms of devotion could be tolerated within the domestic sphere, if in public believers conformed to the newly codified orthodoxy.

There had always been a divergence between how the Church thought spirituality ought to manifest itself in the home and how it did so in reality. This rift between the prescriptive tenets of domestic devotion and its actual features deepened over the sixteenth century. Historians have long mined the substantial advice literature of this era, but those who are interested in the experience of lay piety also have to attend closely to the scraps of evidence that have come down to us in trial



records, legislation, songs, material and visual remains, written accounts and architecture. In many cases, those interested in domestic devotion find themselves caught between prescriptive sources and accounts of 'deviant' practices. Widespread, everyday devotions were not often recorded (not all are as lucky as historians of Tuscany who have recourse to *libri di famiglia* which often contain pertinent material); the essays in this volume therefore represent a precious effort in the reconstruction of the kinds of customs, rituals and beliefs that powerfully shaped both religious and home life in early modern Italy.

### The Unbounded Nature of Domestic Space

It has been noted that many of the essays in this volume testify to the impossibility of drawing any clear distinction between individual and collective devotions, instead highlighting the myriad ways in which these were linked. Spiritual ties expanded outwards from the domestic sphere, enmeshing the whole community in a network of social relationships that had a religious dimension. Iain Fenlon's contribution explores devotional music, demonstrating that it was common for the chanted litany to be sung in the home as well as in churches, monasteries, and convents. By a careful study of extant evidence Fenlon is able to reconstruct some of the pious sounds that echoed through early modern homes. Study of Florentine *laudi* demonstrates that a 'rich variety of interlocking musical practices', both public and private, were audible in this urban context. In Venice, too, *madrigali spirituali* and litanies, *laudi* and hymns such as the 'Salve Regina' were commonly heard in *casa*. In the intimacy of the home, in front of images of the Virgin, prayers were said and devotional songs sung, just as in church.

Remi Chiu's essay similarly illustrates how sound linked domestic and communal spaces. Chiu focuses on a series of processions held in Milan in 1576–78 during an outbreak of plague. These were organised by the Archbishop Carlo Borromeo as a response to the problem of collective sin. Whether sung in the streets during one of these processions, or from behind doors and windows due to the imposition of quarantine, religious music brought the

populace together in the fight against the communal scourge. Moreover, singing at home could activate a form of imaginative devotion: by retracing the steps of Christ on his long suffering Via Crucis one could remain safely indoors during the plague and yet attend a procession 'in spirit'. If the procession must be seen as a physical expression of civic and social organisation and hierarchy, it can also be read as an event during which liturgy and music allowed individuals to participate in a shared devotion that encompassed domestic space within its boundaries. The home thus became the site of religious experience that was simultaneously individual, familial, household, civic and communal.

Jane Garnett and Gervase Rosser discuss the *ex voto* as a particular point of reference, a witness to this special relationship between individual religiosity and that which was communal. Focusing on Liguria, the authors argue that while the *ex voto* evidently functioned as a direct witness of the receipt of personal grace, it simultaneously held powerful collective significance. Those who left *ex votos* at shrines declared themselves to be part of a local community of believers. By doing so, they participated in the formation of public memory and affirmed the miraculous powers of a particular holy figure. The *ex voto* thus represents a perfect example of the ways in which personal religious experiences found natural expression and obvious significance in the context of a social community.

At times, the impetus for the convergence of domestic and communal aspects of religious life came more from one side than the other. If Chiu deals with the appropriation of communal customs by laypeople in domestic contexts, Valeria Viola considers the opposite occurrence: when spaces that were ostensibly reserved for the devotions of a household took on more expansive and collective significance. Viola's essay presents case-studies of the architecture of noble residences in Palermo during the age of Counter Reformation. She demonstrates that apparently 'private' familial oratori and chapels were used for church functions that included the wider community, either regularly or when the necessity arose. A careful comparison of rural and urban examples reveals that this was especially true in the countryside, where in some

cases the communal role of a 'private' space concluded with its final transformation into a parish church. Viola also highlights the importance of paying attention to regional variations in responses to the restrictions that Rome sought to impose on the use of domestic chapels after Trent, exploring how they shaped the particular spiritual landscape of Palermo.

### Domesticating the Divine

Contemporaries recognised that domestic space was defined as much by its myriad links to other spheres and networks as by any sense of enclosure. At the same time, the richly interactive relationship between domesticity and religiosity meant that beliefs about the household and family themselves shaped piety. Domestic metaphors and imagery featured in prayers and songs, vite of recent saints described their origins in ordinary lay households, and images of the births of holy babies in contemporary settings affirmed that everyday events could have intense religious significance. This was also a period characterised by a real appetite for images, objects and stories that illuminated the home lives of holy individuals, whether near contemporaries or Biblical figures. Popular texts told of how the little boy Jesus helped his mother around the house, laying the table and making the beds, and increasing prominence was given to the iconography of the nuclear Holy Family, with their loving bond held up as an ideal for ordinary people to emulate. In addition, from earliest childhood early modern Italians were encouraged to develop close, even familial, relationships with the holy figures who inhabited their homes – appearing in prints and paintings, decorating crockery and other day-to-day objects, evoked in literature, prayer and song.

This impulse towards the domestication of the divine is unsurprising: this was a period during which the home increasingly took centre stage in moral and civic discourse. Discussions of marriage, household management and childrearing; interest in etiquette, manners and bodily deportment; the attempted regulation of household goods – all emphasised the moral significance of the home. Margaret Morse examines this overlap in her essay on portraiture. She asserts that neat art historical divisions of

Renaissance paintings into 'secular' and 'religious' did not reflect the contemporary reality. Piety could be signalled in portraits via clothing, poses, jewellery and books. But even paintings that lacked these overt markers of religiosity could take on spiritual significance when they were hung alongside devotional images and placed in close proximity to domestic altars. Morse argues that this kind of arrangement communicated that a depicted figure was a devout member of the Christian community. If the sitter was deceased the image called forth prayers for his or her soul, and exerted continuous pressure on the living to dutifully maintain the family's honour and good standing. We are thus encouraged to think in more flexible terms about how we classify certain aspects of early modern culture.

Zuzanna Sarnecka's investigation of the taste for domestic presepi (Nativity scenes) encapsulates many of the trends outlined here. In the later thirteenth century Pope Nicholas IV commissioned a presepio for Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, in commemoration of St Francis' particular devotion to Christ's birth and the miracle at Greccio. Similar sculptural representations subsequently filled churches and convents, before migrating into homes in miniature. Paying particular attention to questions of materiality and gender, Sarnecka provides a case-study of these little terracotta objects. Many of them were functional as well as decorative, taking the form of inkstands. They asserted a charming connection between writing and the moment when 'the Word was made flesh' at Christ's birth. Thus a very everyday activity could be imbued with mystical meaning by an object that brought the holy narrative into the home.

By contrast, Elisa Novi Chavarria's study considers a cult that had its genesis in domestic circumstances, before emanating outwards into society. In Naples in the later sixteenth century Isabella della Rovere, Princess of Bisignano, was renowned for her great piety. In her chamber hung a painting depicting a Marian vision that had been experienced by her spiritual advisor, the Capuchin monk and 'living saint' Geremia da Valacchia. Geremia had the work of art made for her, and it testifies to the intimate relationship that bound the two together.

But, as Novi Chavarria attests, neither Isabella nor Geremia was an isolated figure. The Princess was at the heart of a network of aristocratic sociability that was based on cultural connections and the exchange of religious relics, scientific instruments, and artistic artefacts. The holy man became the subject of widespread devotion and as his fame spread, so too did the image he had made for Isabella, disseminated in prints and sculptures. Thus the intimate, personal religious encounter of these two figures lay at the heart of a cult that traversed social boundaries and spread beyond Italy.

### The Materiality of Devotion

As has already been noted, the centrality of material and visual culture to early modern Catholicism is inescapable. The essays in the previous sections, although grouped under different headings, encompass discussion of maiolica inkstands, musical instruments, ex votos, architectural structures, paintings, domestic altars, relics and prints. Catholicism was undoubtedly a religion of things: the liturgy came to employ a vast array of objects (chalices and patens of precious metals, candles and candleholders, bells, sacred vestments, crosses and so on) and churches were lavishly furnished. This period also saw a remarkable proliferation of objects intended for private devotion: rosaries, crucifixes, agnus dei, medals and pilgrim badges, domestic altars, holy water stoups, prints, plaquettes, sculptures and paintings. Objects and their uses sparked debate and attracted criticism, most obviously during the Protestant Reformation. Although the Catholic Church affirmed the value of the visual and material culture of religion, increasingly after Trent it sought to control the use of such objects through sanction and censure.

Historians of Catholicism have long paid attention to objects, images and the evidence of sources such as post mortem inventories, but the essays in this section confirm that there is still much that can be illuminated by a focused approach to material culture. Michael Brody's study provides an overview of sixteenth-century *piatti da pompa*, objects that were often painted with religious scenes and which call into question modern definitions of a devotional image. Brody conducts a

survey of the iconographies of these maiolica wares, which were found in homes across Italy. He perceives them as operating in an analogous way to paintings, and considers to what degree their cheaper production distinguished them and increased their appeal.

Brody's essay illustrates the advantages of directing new attention towards a specific category of objects, and the same is true of the contributions of Irene Galandra Cooper and Katherine Tycz. Galandra Cooper concentrates on the agnus dei. Her analysis attends to their physical and material characteristics, and commences with fundamental questions such as: What were agnus dei? Who made them and for what purposes? To what kinds of beliefs and practices do they attest? These little pieces of wax were initially an entirely licit sacramental distributed by the Church. Individuals treasured them, keeping them at home or on their persons, pinned to their clothes or hanging from their necks. However, these were multivalent objects that could slip into the realm of the illicit and become points of tension – both between the Church and laypeople, and between individuals within a single household. In the aftermath of the Council of Trent ecclesiastical authorities attempted to impose a rigidly orthodox discipline over the use of such items, and Galandra Cooper fruitfully turns to inquisitorial records to unpick these complexities.

Katherine Tycz's essay considers the material resources which women had recourse to when they faced hardship or significant life events. Focusing on items such as girdles, amulets and holy words, prayer sheets, and phrases written on *brevi*, and on attitudes to these objects that are revealed in contemporary sources, Tycz illuminates both actual practices and gendered understandings of religiosity. She demonstrates that fierce belief in the power of such aids during pregnancy and childbirth was enduring and widespread. From consideration of the apotropaic virtues of the *brevi*, Tycz moves outward to the histories of child bearing, pregnancy and infancy in early modern Italy. Her essay demonstrates that although the study of material culture prioritises research on artefacts, it is also enriched through analyses of representations of materiality, both textual and visual.

The use of objects in private devotion was nothing new, of course. Michele Bacci's essay reminds us that Christians had prayed in front of images since the earliest days of the religion. By the twelfth century, Byzantine believers had adapted rituals of the Mass and transposed them into their homes, along with religious icons. Although this domestication of church practices was suspect in the eyes of some Westerners, the production and domestic use of icons quickly spread in Italy and the Venetian empire. By the fifteenth century, the *maniera greca* was perceived as distinct from the Western style: the latter was considered more aesthetically appealing, but icons were thought by many to retain a particular value in private devotion. Bacci illustrates how artists freely mixed Italianate features with Byzantine ones to create works that made visible a trans-confessional concern with the efficacy of images for personal piety.

### Prayer and Meditation

Throughout the early modern era, reading devotional texts and contemplating sacred images were privileged ways to gain access to the divine. A large portion of the print industry's output consisted of religious literature. Notwithstanding the prohibition issued in the aftermath of Trent on reading the Bible, Italian devotees had access to a large and manifold choice of spiritual works, mainly in the vernacular. Many of these books were cheap, affordable, and readily available on book-stalls, from street vendors, and in bookshops. As scholars are beginning to recognise, both the birth of new spiritual genres and the spiritualisation of pre-existing ones contributed to a rejuvenation of Italian literature in this period. However, one should bear in mind that words and images were not mutually exclusive: many devotional books were illustrated (or contained at least one woodcut), and they shaped forms of piety that also found expression in the visual arts. Essays in this section reflect on devotional literature, on how it affected prayer and meditation, as well as on its interactions with imagery.

As Sabrina Corbellini confirms in her essay, reading provided a 'mystical itinerary' to God, performed in accordance with rules that were handed down to

laypeople by spiritual advisors. In turn, literate laypeople taught the art of religious reading to fellow devotees. This was true of Bartolomea degli Obizzi, whose spiritual father was the Dominican Giovanni Dominici, and who herself provided guidance to other women with whom she corresponded. As Corbellini notes, there was a substantial – and still partially unexplored – outpouring of devotional books, many of which recommended regular religious reading. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, members of the mendicant orders came to comprehend the demand from laypeople for instructions on how to practice their devotions, and were swift to use the printing press to disseminate manuals that soon became best-sellers (examples include Cherubino da Spoleto's *Regola della vita matrimoniale* (ca. 1464) and *Regola della vita spirituale* (ca. 1485)). Spiritual teachings learned while attending sermons or church were often written down, and subsequently read, meditated on, and discussed at home.

While some of the devotional works that were printed for a growing audience of devout readers achieved remarkable success and longevity, many of them are nowadays largely forgotten. The same is true of paintings. Maya Corry turns her attention to the production of numerous relatively cheap, small-scale religious paintings of generally Leonardesque inspiration, which depict episodes from the infancy of Christ and St John the Baptist. Devotional literature was deeply concerned with infancy, often recommending that a child's religious education begin in their earliest years when their soul was especially malleable. Medical beliefs taught that children were naturally inclined towards sensual pleasure, and pedagogues advised that their moral instruction ought to be enjoyable. Visual images were thought to be particularly appealing, and in combination with the idea that works of art could access the soul with greater immediacy than the written word, these discourses can be seen to have driven the market in certain iconographies that were pleasing to children. Works representing the encounter between Christ and his cousin in a joyful and 'childish' way provided a focus for the youngest members of the household, stimulating pleasure, recognition and positive spiritual

development. Such images were generally small-scale and widely available, and Corry's study thus provides new insight into the religious concerns of those lower down the social scale.

If the needs and desires of laypeople drove the production of devotional works of art, the same was equally true of texts. Nor was there any clear distinction between these, for contiguity between the written word and images was a defining feature of religious culture. Erminia Ardissino analyses the production of books on the rosary, exploring the interplay between words and pictures in this sub-genre. As is well known, the rosary was one of the most widespread forms of devotion in Europe. Spoken individually or collectively it could be practised anywhere, inside the home or within one of the many confraternities of the rosary. The first Italian book on the subject was Alberto da Castello's 1522 best-seller, the *Rosario della gloriosa Vergine Maria*, which was reprinted forty times. Rosary books were often illustrated so that the illiterate could take spiritual advantage from them, while more literate readers could fruitfully consider the images alongside the written text. Later in the century books of imprese and emblems specifically centred on the rosary were published, and it became the subject of narrative poems (some intended for a learned audience, others for a more popular readership). This dense and rich literature also encompassed texts by female authors, such as Francesca Turini Bufalini's *Rime spirituali sopra i misterii del santissimo Rosario* (1595). Ardissino's essay illustrates how a single religious practice could stimulate a wealth of cultural responses, traversing all levels of society.

### Conflict and Control

In a time of confessional divisions, personal religiosity became an increasingly delicate matter. Homes were privileged spaces where heterodox ideas could be discussed and deviant devotional practices could be performed, as has been noted. Although we tend to think of reformed devotion as generally not relying on materiality, this is only partially true. Books, paintings and woodcuts were all central in non-orthodox devotions, and a variety of rituals and practices were associated with them.

Later in the sixteenth century the Inquisition's attention shifted towards the resistance of 'superstitious' practices, which the post-Tridentine Church struggled to eradicate. A number of essays in this volume deal with these issues, highlighting the ambiguities and the shortcomings of the strategies of the Roman Church.

Giorgio Caravale reasserts the value of the analytical categories of public and private in the specific context of the Counter Reformation, when contemporary observers became wary of forms of devotion that were practised 'away from an audience'. The space in which heterodox believers sought shelter from prying eyes was not necessarily a physical place, a secluded room of one's house, but could be the inner part of one's soul. Yet religious authorities were suspicious of the domestic diffusion of heterodox practices and sought to encourage public displays of orthodoxy. In the second half of the sixteenth century the Inquisition tribunal increasingly turned its attention towards mysticism and superstition. Caravale defines these deviations from orthodoxy respectively as an 'excessive focus on the inner life' and an 'excessive misuse of outward signs'. Given the practical impossibility of exerting control over the personal religiosity of all Catholics (and also because of the many jurisdictional conflicts within the Counter Reformation Church), Rome resorted to a compromise. Certain forms of devotion, such as cults dedicated to un-canonised holy people, were prohibited in their public manifestations but tolerated in private. Possession of suspect books might be permitted as long as they were not read. This led to an ambivalence, a grey area in official attitudes to personal devotion that Caravale links to longer-term historical trends.

The question of how contemporaries understood the concept of 'private' devotion is taken up by Stefano Dall'Aglio in his study of a phenomenon that lay in the grey area identified by Caravale: the cult of Girolamo Savonarola.

As late as the 1580s, secret conventicles were held during which devotion was paid to relics and images of the friar, and stories of his miracles were told (these also circulated in the anonymous *Trattato dei miracoli*). The cult, which was not

limited to Tuscany and which involved members of all levels of society, was eminently domestic. This, Dall'Aglío suggests, was not only because it was prohibited, but was also due to Savonarola's own promotion of intimate and domestic forms of piety. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Dominican voices suggested that worship of Savonarola be allowed to continue, so long as it was conducted in 'private'. Here, Dall'Aglío argues, privacy was understood to mean within the home, rather than in one's inner soul.

This is not to suggest, however, that authorities simply ceded control over the domestic sphere. Those who advocated compromise did so in acknowledgment of the disruptive potential of religious beliefs that found expression behind closed doors. In a city such as Venice, with its proximity to German-speaking regions, these issues were particularly acute. Here, as Joanna Kostylo affirms, different confessions coexisted, and the extraordinary output of the printing press as well as the feverish circulation of manuscripts meant that it was easy to access heretical ideas. Kostylo's analysis of apothecaries' households – spaces that were simultaneously familial and professional, meeting places where news was exchanged and people gathered – reconstructs the ways in which heterodox beliefs spread and took root. Multiple, conflicting religious identities could exist within a single family, and theological discussions that took place in the home could eventually lead to forms of radical unbelief. Kostylo reveals how complex networks of sociability shaped heterodoxy in early modern Venice. Lutheran – but also Calvinist and, to some extent, Anabaptist – believers read books aloud, discussed theological issues, prayed and sung together, performed music, and celebrated the Lord's Supper.

While confessional conflicts or the attempted suppression of traditional, local or folkloric cults are certainly not unique to the Italian peninsula, the extent of the interaction between these components of early modern spirituality in Italy was profound. In some respects the home was a laboratory in which reading and discussion, the comparison of confessions and faiths, and a constant dialogue took place. It is unsurprising, then, that ideas were

shaped there that informed some of the major strands in European thought.

## Conclusion

Inevitably, a collection of case-studies such as ours cannot provide an entirely comprehensive overview of our topic. The domestic devotions of Italian Jews are not considered here, for example. Certain aspects of Catholic spirituality which undoubtedly had domestic manifestation are not addressed. New models of sanctity introduced in the Counter Reformation period are only touched upon, despite their relevance to our theme. (The biographies of the Oratorians, for example, exemplary first followers of St Filippo Neri, reflect an innovative, domestic pattern of sanctity that was expressed through continuous prayer, virtue and visions, and which often included women and children.) Differences based on location and region are hinted at, and a number of essays focus on areas that are understudied in Anglophone scholarship: Naples, Palermo, Liguria, Lombardy. But a more systematic study of regional variation is outside the scope of our volume.

What we hope to have demonstrated beyond doubt is that a tight bond existed between the domestic and the devotional. Household rituals and beliefs that were largely beyond the reach of external authority cannot be adequately traced in any one type of source, or by means of a single approach. For this reason, our volume draws on expertise across several disciplines in order to bring to light the pivotal place of piety in the early modern Italian home. Essays encompass the histories of art and architecture, material culture, musicology, literature, and social and cultural history. They address how spiritual concerns shaped definitions of 'home' and 'privacy', the role of images and objects in devotion, the ability of domestic religious practices to shape wider social, cultural and economic life (and vice versa), and the complex relationships that existed between official orthodoxy and beliefs that were suspect or unsanctioned.

This volume poses a challenge to the enduring notion that Catholic religiosity in the early modern era was governed primarily by institutions. It asserts in unambiguous terms that spiritual life was

not characterised by the endless repetition of empty ritual. Practices of domestic devotion did not fade away after Trent, nor did Catholic authorities cease to provide advice on how, when and where these should be conducted (the Jesuits are an obvious example). Throughout our period, for ordinary Catholics the home was a place for religious instruction and reading, prayer and meditation, communal worship, miracles, multi-sensory devotions, the contemplation of religious images and the performance of rituals. It was within this context that intimate relationships with the divine were forged and maintained; the study of domestic devotions can open up the history of the emotions and subjectivity in fascinating and important ways. Spiritual experience within the home was familial and communal, so our topic has ramifications for the study of religious institutions, and society and culture more broadly. Overall, what emerges most forcefully from these collected studies is a clear sense of the vibrancy, flexibility and importance of domestic devotions in early modern Italy. <>

[Strangers, Neighbors, Friends: Muslim-Christian-Jewish Reflections on Compassion and Peace](#) by Kelly James Clark, Aziz Abu Sarah, Nancy Fuchs Kreimer [Cascade Books, 9781498246132]

From 9/11 to Israel-Palestine to ISIS, the fear of the religious stranger is palpable. Conservative talk show hosts and liberal public intellectuals are united in blaming religion, usually Islam, for the world's instability. If religion is part of the problem, it can and should be part of the solution. *Strangers, Neighbors, Friends*--co-authored by a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew--aims to inform and inspire Abraham's children that God calls us to extend our love beyond family and fellow believer to the stranger. "These essays are like rays of light. They provide insight into the Abrahamic traditions, but more importantly, they illuminate the path to a common life together." --Eboo Patel, author of *Interfaith Leadership*, President of Interfaith Youth Core Kelly James Clark is Senior Research Fellow at Grand Valley State University's Kaufman Interfaith Institute. He is editor of [Abraham's Children: Liberty and Tolerance in an Age of Religious Conflict](#) (2012), and author of [Religion and the Sciences of Origins](#) (2014), [Return to](#)

[Reason](#) (1990), *The Story of Ethics* (2003), [When Faith Is Not Enough](#) (1997), and [101 Key Philosophical Terms and Their Importance for Theology](#) (2004). Aziz Abu Sarah is an entrepreneur, speaker, peace builder, and author. He is the recipient of the Goldberg Prize for Peace in the Middle East, the Eliav-Sartawi Award, and was named one of the 500 most influential muslims in the world by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre. Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer is Associate Professor of Religious Studies and the founding Director of the Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College where she was ordained in 1982. She co-edited [Chapters of the Heart: Jewish Women Sharing the Torah of Our Lives](#) (Wipf and Stock, 2013).

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#### Kelly James Clark:

As I write, Jews and Christians in a Texas town have joined their Muslim rothers and sisters to rebuild their mosque after arson; they are contributing dollars and time to ensure them a safe place of worship. A few days earlier, an Egyptian Muslim wrapped his arms around a suicide bomber, preventing the deaths of countless Coptic Christians in Cairo at the cost of his own. Thousands upon thousands of Muslim leaders are diligently working to prevent the radicalization of individuals and to preserve peace. Jews in Israel are laying their bodies down in front of bulldozers to prevent the building of illegal settlements in the West Bank. And Christians in Canada are opening their homes and lives to Syrian refugees escaping the worst humanitarian tragedy since World War II.

You have to work really hard to hear this good news of faithful Muslims, Christians, and Jews showing compassion to those of other faiths. It's riot so hard to hear of the omnipresent atrocities of ISIS and al Qaeda. Given that most Muslims, Christians, and Jews want to live in peace and bequeath better lives to their children, there is surely more good news than bad. But bad news sells. And fear drives us to watch more bad news. So the media

Focus on the bad, generating more prejudice and advertising revenue.

Compassion should rule in the Abrahamic religions. In each of them, compassion towards the stranger is strictly commanded. The Jewish Scriptures say: "When a stranger lives with you in your land, do not ill-treat him. The stranger who lives with you shall be treated like the native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev 19:33). Likewise, Jesus, identifying himself with needy people, said: "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" (Matt 25:35). And in the Quran we read: "Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, the needy, the near neighbor, the neighbor farther away, the companion at your side, the traveler" (Quran 4:36).

Fear, not compassion, seems to be ruling the day, driving the three Abrahamic religions apart. From the United States' drone warfare in Afghanistan and Yemen, to Israel's defiant building of settlements in the West Bank, to ISIS's vicious suicide bombings (killing mostly fellow Muslims), we are increasingly more likely to fear, ignore, dehumanize, and even harm the Abrahamic stranger than we are to invite them in. But we, Muslim-Christian-Jew alike, do so in violation of our religions' most profound understandings.

With this book, authored by three different children of Abraham, we hope to persuade Abraham's children that Christianity and Islam and Judaism, at their very best, demand compassion and kindness for strangers, sharing and suffering with neighbors, and a radically inclusive and ever-expanding circle of friends. Indeed, each religion suggests that generous and unexpected compassion, even toward the stranger, has the radical power to transform strangers into neighbors and friends. That is, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have the spiritual and moral resources for Muslims, Christians, and Jews to get along, to live together in mutual peace and harmony.



In this book we'll focus on how, without loss of genuine faith, Christians, Muslims, and Jews can and should overcome their fears and cultivate and work for peace, liberty, and compassion I enlisted Nancy Fuchs Kreimer and Aziz Abu Sarah to join me in writing from our own faith perspectives. Our aim is to inform and inspire faith-based action—to courageously extend our divinely motivated love beyond family, friend, and neighbor to the stranger.

Before concluding the introduction, listen to Nancy and Aziz in their own voices.

### Nancy Fuchs Kreimer

I am an associate professor of religious studies and the founding director of the Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pennsylvania, just north of Philadelphia. I was ordained at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1982. I also hold a master's degree from Yale Divinity School and a doctorate from Temple University. I have developed community-based learning opportunities for rabbinical students and their Christian and Muslim peers. I am a founding member of the Interfaith Center of Philadelphia, Shoulder-to-Shoulder of the Islamic Society of North America, and the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom. I recently coedited *Chapters of the Heart: Jewish Women Sharing the Torah of our Lives* (Wipf and Stock, 2013), which was a finalist for a 2014 National Jewish Book Award.

When my daughter was little, someone asked her if her father practiced law. "Practiced?" she exclaimed. "He doesn't have to practice! He knows!" Well, he was, indeed, a knowledgeable lawyer, but he also had to practice. After all these years, I am still "practicing" Judaism. That means, first and foremost, becoming what we call in Yiddish, a *mensh*. It is the work of a lifetime.

Much of what I know about the practice of Judaism will be in the Torah and rabbinic writings—but not all. Some is from the wisdom of the Yiddish language, a pastiche of German and Hebrew that encodes life lessons in its very vocabulary, but so much more. Some of what I know about the practice of Judaism comes from medieval Hebrew poetry; from contemporary Jewish theologians, novelists,

and psychologists; from true tales of the Holocaust or of modern Israel; and from the life stories of Jewish men and women who have inspired me. I have also learned much from the privilege I have had, as a Jew, of encountering and working with men and women of other faiths who are working equally hard to practice their own.

Encountering other faiths has, in the end, changed me and my Judaism. For me, the theological work, the political work, and the personal work have all been a religious practice. In this book, I hope to show how this practice emerges from and is sustained by my reading of Jewish tradition.

You might be wondering: What is that "reading" she is talking about? Is she uncovering the true "essence of Judaism" or inventing a new Judaism in keeping with her own values and vision? Let me tell you why I think there is a better question to ask.

Jews have always been inventing Judaism. I do not believe Judaism is "all about peace" any more than I think it is "all about violence." I know from my study of Jewish thought over thousands of years that we have both peace and violence in our texts. I trust my tradition enough not to fear that messiness. Not only has Judaism evolved over the centuries; we are currently in a time of very rapid change. As a rabbi, I believe it is my responsibility to uncover the teachings that will help us move forward in this globalizing world. So the better question to ask is: How can we lift up those teachings that are most generative of peace and compassion for our time and place?

### Aziz Abu Sarah

I am, first and foremost, a Palestinian from Jerusalem. I am many other things—a National Geographic Explorer and Cultural Educator, a TED Fellow, a businessman, a peace worker—but I am, again most fundamentally, a Jerusalemite Palestinian. Nothing has shaped me more than growing up in Israel and the West Bank during successive intifadas as an outsider Palestinian. Although my experiences radicalized me as a young man, I found my way to peace and justice. You'll need to read my chapters to find out why and how. I seek in all that I do the intersection of my vocation and social justice.

I am the cofounder of MEJDI Tours, a social enterprise focused on introducing multi-narrative cultural expeditions to the travel industry. MEJDI has been recognized by the United Nations World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations for its innovations in travel and education.

I also served as the executive director of the Center for World Religions, Diplomacy, and Conflict Resolution at George Mason University (2009-2015) and was chairman of the Bereaved Families Forum, a joint Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation organization (2006-2010). I have pioneered and managed projects in conflict resolution and community relations in Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Turkey, Jordan, and the United States. I recently cofounded the "I Am Your Protector" interfaith campaign and "Project Amal ou Salam," a grassroots relief and educational organization for Syrian refugees in Turkey, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. I coproduced the National Geographic web series "Conflict Zone," which explores the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of Palestinian refugees, the Israeli Defense Forces, and Jewish settlers.

I have been honored to receive numerous awards, including the Goldberg Prize for Peace in the Middle East from the Institute of International Education and the Eliav-Sartawi Award for Middle Eastern Journalism from Search for Common Ground. United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recognized my work during his speech at the 5th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilizations in February 2013, and I have been named one of the "500 Most Influential Muslims" by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre for the past six years.

But I am, at bottom, a Palestinian seeking and working for peace.

### Kelly James Clark

I began writing academic articles on tolerance in the mid-1990s at the instigation of my good Jewish friend, Stewart Shapiro. Stewart and I spent the year together on sabbatical at St. Andrews University in Scotland. On our regular walks, he pressed me to reconsider Christianity's treatment of Jews and asked if Christianity could undergird

genuine tolerance of other religions. So I wrote a series of scholarly articles that analyzed the concept of tolerance, which were read by probably a half-dozen people.

As I approached age fifty, I was growing increasingly aware of the irrelevance of most abstract, academic philosophy and increasingly concerned about events in the world. So I shifted my focus to speaking more directly to issues involving religion and tolerance. To that end, I commissioned essays from fifteen prominent Muslims, Christians, and Jews—including former President Jimmy Carter and Abdurrahman Wahid, the first democratically elected president of Indonesia—to address liberty and tolerance from their own faith perspectives. This resulted in the publication of *Abraham's Children: Liberty and Tolerance in An Age of Religious Conflict* (Yale University Press, 2012) and a conference in Washington, DC on the tenth anniversary of 9/11.

I am often criticized for defending tolerance. "People;" my critics say, "don't want to be merely tolerated, they want to be accepted and loved." But my response is that they need to talk to more people. People who are being killed or imprisoned or denied other basic human rights because of their religious beliefs do want their beliefs and practices to be tolerated. If their societies could move from persecution to toleration, their lives would be vastly better. Would that we were at the stage of human history where we could go beyond tolerance.

Moreover, I do not think that we tolerate (put up with, endure) people. We should tolerate beliefs and behaviors but never people—we should and must respect every human being. Indeed, our respect for other people grounds principled tolerance, that is, it motivates our willingness to allow them to choose their own deepest beliefs and practices (even if we strongly disagree with those beliefs and practices). I think it a lack of respect for other humans, which results in our dehumanizing those who are different from ourselves, that lies at the root of intolerance and violence.

I aim, then, in my chapters, to show that Christianity, best and most deeply understood, demands respect for and even love of stranger. More deeply, it calls

Christians to love others as they love themselves and even more radically, to love their enemies.

### Conclusion

I stand on the beach and watch the rushing water seek out all the low places, its wriggling fingers reaching out to find and fill empty space. Its reach exhausted, another wave follows and fills those empty places. And another. There are always more; more than enough. Abundance. I want to extend my arms in grace and mercy to find and fill the world's empty spaces. When compassion and joy fill in the holes, the cracks and crevices, the nooks and crannies and hidden places, peace and harmony overflow with the rightness of the world.  
<>

[American Intolerance: Our Dark History of Demonizing Immigrants](#) by Robert E. Bartholomew  
And Anja E. Reumschüssel [Prometheus Books, 9781633884489]

This historical review of the US treatment of immigrants and minority groups documents the suspicion and persecution that often met newcomers and those perceived to be different.

Contrary to popular belief, the poor and huddled masses were never welcome in America. Though the engraving on the base of the Statue of Liberty makes that claim, history reveals a far less-welcoming message. This comprehensive survey of cultural and racial exclusion in the United States examines the legacy of hostility toward immigrants over two centuries.

The authors document abuses against Catholics in the early 19th century in response to the influx of German and Irish immigrants; hostility against Mexicans throughout the Southwest, where signs in bars and restaurants read, "No Dogs, No Negros, No Mexicans"; "yellow peril" fears leading to a ban on Chinese immigration for ten years; punitive measures against Native Americans traditions, which became punishable by fines and hard labor; the persecution of German Americans during World War I and Japanese Americans during World War II; the refusal to admit Jewish refugees of the Holocaust; and the ongoing legacy of mistreating African Americans from slavery to the injustices of the present day.

Though the authors note that the United States has accepted tens of millions of immigrants during its relatively short existence, its troubling history of persecution is often overlooked. President Donald Trump's targeting of Muslim and Mexican immigrants is just the most recent chapter in a long, sad history of social panics about "evil" foreigners who are made scapegoats due to their ethnicity or religious beliefs.

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Excerpt: "Lustful priests." "Dim-witted," "dirty, disease-carrying Mexicans" who "multiply like rabbits." The "filthy Chinese"—a "poor, miserable, dwarfish race of inferior beings." The "childlike, barbaric, and otherwise inferior" American Indian. "Japs." "Nips." The "evil, money-hungry" Jewish "conspirators" who destroy everything that Christians hold sacred. The Muslims, a people marked by "arrogance and blood-thirsty cruelty," who are "parasitic" and "live by unproductive labor, petty trading, and graft." Wherever they have gone, they have "exercised a very baleful influence." ... The litany of abusive, defamatory slurs American observers have hurled against dreamers who enter the United States from every continent but Antarctica is mind-numbing. But the authors of *American Intolerance* do not content themselves with an exposition on the country's benighted past; they remind us that these slurs, prejudices, and exclusionary tactics have direct

relevance for the contemporary era. The country has elected a president who, during his candidacy, advocated a wall at its southern border to keep out Mexicans, and laws to exclude Muslims. Bartholomew and Reumschüssel warn us about the moral panics that the irrational fear of aliens has stirred up in the American heart.

In societies around the world and very possibly throughout human history, people have become unduly distressed and concerned that, somewhere, certain categories of humanity are engaged in despicable acts. At times, under certain circumstances, this distress and concern intensifies, breaking out into more exaggerated and overt manifestations. For as long as societies have been reasonably diverse and heterogeneous, observers have noticed this interesting phenomenon, but these early observations produced no analytic traction or intellectual progeny—nor a distinctive designation to describe it—until Jock Young, in 1971, and Stanley Cohen, in 1972, coined a name for this state of affairs, constructed an explanation of how and why such outbreaks occur, and pointed out how they are linked to the larger social structure. Their formulations generated commentary and research that has been continuous since they launched it, and such analysis remains vigorous to this day. To quote Jason Ditton, the moral panic "has been far and away the most influential sociological concept to have been generated in the second half of the twentieth century." Moral panic researchers have illuminated the sudden eruption of fear of pseudo-villainous agents who have ranged from semi-somnolent Chinese opium smokers to the gleeful horror-comic-book-reading children next door.

An essential element of the moral panic is that the concern about a particular threat be disproportional or exaggerated as compared with what a clearheaded, empirical, and factual investigation would tell us. The exaggerations may pertain to the gravity of the threat—the number of victims, the seriousness of the harm, the cost of the damage to the society—or it may even involve whether such a threat exists in the first place. No one questions the right of someone to run away from a screaming, knife-wielding maniac. But the actual menace posed by many supposed threats, objectively assessed, turns out to be minor or

nonexistent. Hence, the moral panics researcher is forced to be a skeptic. Is this fear based on something material? If so, what is the risk? Where is the evidence and what does it say? For the student of moral panics, data counts; facts matter. Let's do some comparisons, these theorists insist. Did the Chinese opium smokers really entice white children to take up the habit, seduce and enslave our wives and daughters, and corrupt and bring down Western civilization? Was it really true that reading comic books turned our adolescent boys into juvenile delinquents? Let's check, then let's find out why such beliefs are plausible at certain times and places. Why this issue? Why this supposed threat? Why these targets?

The most classic panics entail mobilization. Protests, demonstrations, posses, meetings, speeches. They are typically characterized by violence, threats, denunciations, and heated arguments, the formation of political action groups, and social movements. There are laws, bills, prohibitions, arrests, and imprisonments. Articles about the presumed threat are published in newspapers and magazines, the social media, fiction of the day, and angry letters to editors. In the modern era, anxious tales are broadcast about the outrage and threat of the putative menace in television news reports, and in film. Governments often jump on the bandwagon and generate budget allocations to address the problem. Police stand alert to spot and take action against the accused miscreants. In short, what do the members of a society do when they learn of the threat supposedly facing them?

What about immigrants? What makes the arrival of foreign-born folk to our shores a matter of exaggerated concern? As historian Matt Jacobson writes in *Whiteness of a Different Color*, in 1891, anti-Italian riots erupted in New Orleans as eleven Italians were lynched following the outcome of a murder trial that had been rigged by the local Mafia. An editorial in the *New York Times* defended the lynching, declaring that the mob was made up of the city's "best element," wielding the incident to suggest that the behavior of the Italian immigrants was racially determined, and questioning their fitness for citizenship.<sup>1</sup> The editorial referred to "sneaking and cowardly Sicilians" who are ruled by "lawless passions" and

distinguished by "cutthroat practices." Rattlesnakes, the editorial concluded, "were as good citizens as they." In the 1890s, when a journalist asked an American construction worker if Italians were white, "No, sir," he replied, "an Italian is a Dago." In a like fashion, political cartoons published in the nineteenth century depicted Irish immigrants as hot-tempered, savage, and threatening, and looking distinctly swarthy and "Negroid" in countenance. Signs appeared on establishment doors: "NO IRISH NEED APPLY!" To many long-established Yankees of impeccable WASP ancestry, the Irish were not quite white, but rather a species of being categorically and distinctly inferior to themselves and therefore deserving of no rights. And very possibly a threat to the rest of us. Drunkards. Criminals. Papists.

### From Mexicans to Muslims: Stepping out of the Shadow of Fear and Facing the Enemy Within

In learning about the other, about many 'others,' our conception of humanity is enlarged and enriched. We gain insight into the plasticity of human culture. We begin to see that our way of life is determined not so much by nature but by culture and history. Only then can we see that our way of life is just one of many possible ones.... In studying the other, we begin to learn how to separate fact from fiction ... about humanity itself. —David Mayberry-Lewis, [Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World](#), 1992

Excerpt: Throughout its history, America has passed through many periods of intolerance toward outsiders who were believed to pose an imminent threat to the country. Driven by ignorance, bigotry, and a fear of the unfamiliar, foreigners and newcomers have made easy scapegoats for society's ills. At one time in our history, it was widely believed that Roman Catholics were plotting to bring down the government; that German Americans were part of a vast spy network for the kaiser; and hordes of Asians, Jews, Mexicans, and Native Americans were diluting the nation's racial purity. Many of the same fears and prejudices that drove these scares are alive and well today. Donald Trump characterizes Mexican immigrants as teeming with "bad hombres" who are rapists, drug

dealers, and gang members, while Middle Easterners are said to be rife with militant jihadists. Yet immigrants and refugees commit far fewer crimes than nativeborn Americans—regardless of their ethnic background, religious beliefs, or country of origin—and most American terrorists are homegrown.

The unfounded fear of Mexicans, Muslims, and migrants from other ethnic and religious groups has become a reality for many Americans because social panics thrive on public anxieties and uncertainty. As French Cardinal Jean François Paul de Gondy sagely observed over three centuries ago, "fear weakens judgment." There is a fearmongering industry in America that drives the narrative of the menacing outsider: conservative news outlets, publications, blogs, talk shows, and think tanks that are devoted to creating an impression that there is an enemy at our gates, when in fact, the enemy is ourselves. We need to confront our prejudices about foreigners by becoming familiar with America's checkered history of immigration intolerance. Above all, we need to accept the overwhelming consensus of the scientific community that race is a mythical concept. When viewed through the prism of twenty-first-century science, their story becomes our story. This realization will result in a deepening appreciation of what it means to be human, and different.

**Criminal Immigrants: The Sky is not Falling**  
The American habit of demonizing outsiders shows no signs of abating under the administration of Donald Trump. Today, immigrants are blamed for taking jobs, eroding values, breeding crime, and bleeding the welfare system dry. However, the statistics tell a different story. Most immigrants are law-abiding. Both legal and undocumented migrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born citizens are—and the gap is not even close. This pattern has held true for over a century, irrespective.

### Conquering the Enemy Within

This study highlights the perils of using simplistic labels to make sweeping generalizations about entire groups based on their ethnicity, religious beliefs, political persuasions, physical appearance, and skin color. In doing so, we place people in

boxes and reinforce popular stereotypes: "Mexicans are rapists and drug dealers," "Germans are warmongers," "Jews are greedy," "Muslims are terrorists." If we yield to these temptations, we risk dehumanizing those who are different and creating a world of "them" versus "us." Creeds and dogmas are social and cultural creations. The human ethnographic spectrum is breathtaking in its scope and diversity, and confronting to our entrenched beliefs. For instance, in their landmark 1951 study on the patterns of human sexual behavior, anthropologists Clellan Ford and Frank Beach found that from a sample of 185 cultures, in 84 percent men were "permitted by custom to have more than one mate at a time." Such behavior would be deemed a sinful act in most Western societies, and in some cases an arrestable offense under the crime of polygamy. We must learn to accept our differences and cherish our diversity so long as those ideologies and creeds that make the world such an interesting place call for peaceful coexistence.

One of the biggest misconceptions about America's immigration history is that our present reluctance to take in foreigners is an aberration. The truth is, there have been moral panics involving some ethnic group at virtually every point in our history—often several at once. We cannot go back to "the good old days." We have always feared the foreign and the unfamiliar; we have always looked suspiciously upon those who are different from us; and we have always tried to stop people from coming to America, by using arbitrary criteria such as race, color, creed—even physical appearance and sexual orientation. America's fear of Muslims and Central Americans is just the latest chapter in our dark immigration history. It is time to break the cycle of fear and serve as a role model for the world by exhibiting moral leadership.

While moral panics have always been with us, the reaction to them by our political leaders has not always been the same. During the Chinese panic, several prominent senators equated Chinese immigrants with swarms of rats and insects devoid of moral fortitude. Former Speaker of the House of Representatives Maine Senator James Blaine claimed that Chinese and other "Mongolians" reeked of "moral and physical disease." At the

height of the German Scare in 1917, President Woodrow Wilson stoked fear and mistrust by warning that German sympathizers "filled our unsuspecting communities with vicious spies and conspirators." In 1950, Senator Joseph McCarthy claimed that there were no less than 205 Communists in the State Department who were working to undermine the foundations of American democracy. His witch-hunt using the House Committee on Un-American Activities triggered a wave of fear and false accusations that would last for four years. More recently, President Trump has disparaged immigrants from Mexico as rapists and drug dealers, and reportedly asked why we should accept people from poverty-stricken "s—hole countries" in the Caribbean, like Haiti, and certain Africa countries. When he learned of a plan to give legal status to the Dreamers—people who were brought to the United States as children by undocumented parents—he reportedly quipped: "Why do we want people from Haiti here?"

Instead of fueling anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant hysteria, some of our leaders have shown us the blueprint to countering the intolerance that such panics bring. Within a week after the traumatic events of September 11, 2001, President George W. Bush, who was known for his conservative Christian values, grew uncomfortable with reports of discrimination against Muslim Americans and visited a mosque. Instead of sowing seeds of division and suspicion, he reminded the country of the inclusiveness of the American dream and went so far as to quote from the Qur'an. He told the audience: "Women who cover their heads in this country must feel comfortable going outside their homes. Moms who wear cover must not be intimidated in America. That's not the America I know. That's not the America I value." He went on to call for tolerance and calm: "I've been told that some ... don't want to go shopping for their families; some don't want to go about their ordinary daily routines because, by wearing cover, they're afraid they'll be intimidated. That should not and that will not stand in America." Bush's words did much to tamp down the frayed nerves and raw emotions that were prevalent across America immediately after 9/11. Unfortunately, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant sentiments have

resurfaced in recent years and those touting such beliefs have been emboldened by the rhetoric of division and intolerance that has characterized the campaign and election of Donald Trump.

The greatest lesson from America's history of intolerance to immigrants and refugees is the urgent need to address the continuing misuse of the word race, and replace it with "ethnic group." Race is an archaic, scientifically inaccurate term that has brought nothing but misery and suffering to the world. Past attempts to understand human behavior through a set of racial categories has led to widespread discrimination and exploitation. Scientists estimate that the DNA of any two people taken at random contains about three million different sequences or "letters" that tell our cells how to act. While we each have a unique genetic heritage, we are all part of a single species, *Homo sapiens*, who share a similar ancestry. Humans have been around for at least 300,000 years—not long enough to develop into a separate species. We have evolved differences through mutations as we adapted to different environments. It is easy to see how in the past, the notion of race developed given our visible physical differences. But research on the human genome has shown that no matter how different our outer trappings—be it clothing, piercings, tattoos, adornments, or physical features, humans are far more alike than different. Vast tracts of our genetic code are the same, regardless of what we look like or where we come from. According to the Smithsonian Institution, human DNA is 99.9 percent identical. In fact, there is more variation within so-called racial groups than between them. In 1950, the United Nations announced that based on the findings of a panel of some of the world's leading scientists in such fields as genetics, psychology, and anthropology, there was an overwhelming accumulation of evidence to support the conclusion that race is a myth. Ever since the United Nation's statement on race, numerous scientific bodies have reaffirmed this position with evidence from their own disciplines, to the point where anthropologist Robert Sussman observes, this assertion is as valid and true today "as the fact that the earth is round and revolves around the sun."

We must spread the message that race has no standing in modern science, and we must challenge pseudoscientific assertions to the contrary. Race is every bit as mythical as the Nazi belief in a "pure" Aryan people. History has shown that there are harsh consequences when we view others through the lens of racial stereotypes. The problem is, race also is a social reality that continues to be used to label people based on the amount of melanin in their skin and their physical features. While it may seem absurd that any group would discriminate against another using something as superficial as, say, nose shape, the Nazis sometimes used this trait to deduce whether or not someone was Jewish—and hence, whether they lived or died. It is time to abolish the antiquated notion of race and refer to people according to their ethnic heritage and country of origin. This still involves labels, but it is a vast improvement over having our children grow up believing in a fictional world divided into racial categories. The use of such labels contributes to the belief that there is a "them" and an "us," when science tells us there is only a "we." When we view the world through the nuanced lens of twenty-first-century science, there is no enemy at our gate. What we have come to fear is nothing more than our own shadow. It is time to shine a light on our fears and put an end to the illusion of race and evoking it when it comes to determining who should be allowed to migrate to the United States. In the words of American animator Walter Kelly, "We have met the enemy and he is us." <>

[The Lion and the Eagle: The Interaction of the British and American Empires 1783–1972](#) by Kathleen Burk [Bloomsbury Publishing, 9781408856178]

An invigorating history of the arguments and cooperation between America and Britain as they divided up the world and an illuminating exploration of their underlying alliance

Throughout modern history, British and American rivalry has gone hand in hand with common interests. In this book Kathleen Burk brilliantly examines the different kinds of power the two empires have projected, and the means they have used to do it. What the two empires have shared is a mixture of pragmatism, ruthless commercial drive,



a self-righteous foreign policy and plenty of naked aggression. These have been aimed against each other more than once; yet their underlying alliance against common enemies has been historically unique and a defining force throughout the twentieth century.

[The Lion and the Eagle: The Interaction of the British and American Empires 1783–1972](#) is a global and epic history of the rise and fall of empires. It ranges from America's futile attempts to conquer Canada to her success in opening up Japan but rapid loss of leadership to Britain; from Britain's success in forcing open China to her loss of the Middle East to the US; and from the American conquest of the Philippines to her destruction of the British Empire. The Pax Americana replaced the Pax Britannica, but now the American world order is fading, threatening Britain's belief in her own world role.

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### Excerpt: What is an Empire?

Britons have a problem with their empire. They all know that there was one, but they are split between those who think that it was a good thing and those who think that it was benighted. Americans also have a problem, but it differs from that of the British: do they or do they not have an empire? Even posing the question can outrage people. A positive answer does not necessarily condemn the United States to the ninth circle of hell, but it can seem to call into question Americans' self-

identity as citizens of a country devoted to the rights of men and women. Adhesion to historical reality can anger, and many Americans have, conversely, tended to see themselves as outside of, or even above, others' history. Yet, throughout most of recorded human history, empires have been the normal way of organising peoples so that they can be governed or controlled.' This has been true down to very modern times. The United States of America is no different.

Empires have come in different shapes and sizes, with different structures and powers. A brief and basic definition is that it is a state which rules over, or has significant influence over, territories outside its original borders, without incorporating them. It might be a land-based empire, such as that of Austria-Hungary before 1918, or a seaborne empire, as was the British empire. It might be thought that the imperial power must be large, but by no criterion could either the Netherlands or Belgium be considered a large territory. It must be able to require the subordinate territory to do what it might otherwise not want to do. Empires can grow by conquest — the normal means — or by dynastic marriages, but they can also grow by purchase, as with the Louisiana Purchase, Alaska and the Danish Virgin Islands in the case of the United States. Empire can be formal, but it can also be informal, which implies economic domination or great military influence, and overwhelming cultural influence, without full political control, as with most of the twentieth-century American empire. No point in this paragraph is without controversy, since historians and commentators differ widely, and sometimes ferociously, over what an empire is and which country is one. This book is not, in fact, a history of the British and American empires, either jointly or individually. Rather, the intention is to look at what happened when they interacted, particularly out on the edges where the two empires met.

In 1914 there were sixteen colonial empires. The focus in the English-speaking world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has been on the British empire and, increasingly, on an American empire, for the obvious reason that they were, sequentially, the most powerful. But people who concerned themselves about such matters in 1914 also



recognised, and usually called them, the French, German, Belgian, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Ottoman, Japanese, Chinese and Abyssinian empires. Granted, they were not all massively powerful, but empires they were. Spain, whom no one thought of as a Great Power, still owned, most importantly, Spanish Morocco. The Ottoman empire, or Turkey, had been 'the sick man of Europe' for a century, but it still existed. Many Danes felt uncomfortable with their country's status as an empire, and encouraged Iceland, although not Greenland, to declare itself independent. At the end of the nineteenth century, Abyssinia, or Ethiopia, which had grown by conquering neighbouring territories, was the only fully independent territory on the African continent. Therefore, one ought not to consider the American drive for empire as anything out of the ordinary.

Look specifically at the British and American empires: both were dominated by whites, both (eventually) were democracies, both supported private enterprise, both insisted that they were bringing the blessings of civilisation and good government to those who had suffered by their lack, both justified the use of force as a way of providing these blessings. There were also distinct differences. The British had created a seaborne empire, while for most of its existence the American empire was land-based. Most important of all, the British empire was a colonial empire, while the US, once it had conquered the territory from sea to shining sea and gone through its Philippines phase, was much less a colonial empire than the semi-controller of a range of client states. In the nineteenth century, the British dominated a large informal empire as well as its formal one, while the Americans had to wait until the twentieth century for theirs. The British took to extended periods of life abroad and enjoyed exercising political control over colonial territories; the Americans, on the other hand, have always seen abroad as much less desirable than home. Economic interests in particular often brought them into conflict, but partly because of the similarities, and in spite of the differences, the two empires often worked together. It is impossible to understand the modern world without understanding this imperial relationship between the English-speaking empires.

The term 'empire' has, over the centuries, meant different things at different times for both the British and the Americans. When in the mid-sixteenth century England was referred to as an empire, one meaning was that it had dominion over its own territory and was not subject to another — not to France, not to Spain, not to the Catholic Church — rather than that it had colonies elsewhere. It did, of course: Wales and Ireland. By the mid-seventeenth century, a fundamental question had emerged in England: could a country possess both liberty and an empire? The touchstone was Rome: what many Englishmen saw was that Rome had combined liberty and greatness while it was a republic but had suffered tyranny after it became an empire. The two concepts, those of empire and of liberty, would be reconciled by referring to the British empire, a term increasingly used by 1740, as an 'Empire for liberty'. The classical conception of the British Atlantic empire as Protestant, commercial, maritime and free flourished only from about the mid-1730s to the mid-1760s, and was destroyed by the American Revolution and the loss of the thirteen colonies.

The American Founding Fathers then adopted the term 'Empire for liberty', modifying it for a time to become an 'Empire of liberty' to describe their expectations of the new country. It should be noted that, at this time, the term 'empire' had neither positive nor negative connotations; it was a term of description. In 1780, Thomas Jefferson, primary draftsman of the Declaration of Independence, referred to the US as an 'Empire of Liberty'. George Washington claimed in March 1783 that the United States was a 'rising empire'; in 1786 he wrote that 'there will assuredly come a day, when this country will have some weight in the scale of Empires', referring to himself 'as the member of an infant empire'. Benjamin Franklin had been strongly in favour of an enlarged British empire on the North American continent before 1776; afterwards, it was easy to substitute American for British. The term 'empire' also indicated dominion over large spaces, and this is perhaps what they primarily meant. It would be surprising, particularly once they had gained their independence from a territorial empire, if they had claimed that term for themselves.

Yet within a few years a territorial empire is what they meant. Jefferson in April 1809 wrote to President James Madison that the acquisition of Cuba plus 'the North', that is British North America (Canada), would enable the US 'to have such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation'. In October 1823, his mind unchanged, he wrote to President James Monroe that he favoured in due course the acquisition of Cuba, a Spanish colony, which he had always considered 'the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States'.<sup>10</sup> John Quincy Adams, son of the second President, John Adams, and himself then Secretary of State, responded in 1823 to the question of the British Minister in Washington, Stratford Canning, as to whether the US had designs on Canada by declaring that 'there the boundary is marked, and we have no disposition to encroach upon it. Keep what is yours, but leave the rest of this continent to us.' Again, expansion can mean just that, but expansion into territory which is already occupied is another matter entirely. Indeed, the declaration of the Monroe Doctrine in 1823, which asserted that the Western Hemisphere was no longer open for colonisation by external powers, apparently did not preclude the same process by the United States.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787, passed when the US had been independent for nearly four years, set the stage for the way in which the US was to handle most of its continental acquisitions. During the colonial and revolutionary periods, a number of the colonies insisted that their charters extended their boundaries west to the Mississippi River or, in Virginia's case, beyond. Between 1781 and 1785, these states ceded their claims to the federal government; by means of the Ordinance, rules were set out that determined how the Northwest Territories, which comprised what are now Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin, would be organised. Congress divided the land into five territories, appointed a governor, a secretary and five judges to administer each territory, and stated that once a territory had 5,000 free adult males it could establish a territorial legislature; once it had 60,000 males, it could apply for admission to the US as a state. It

was this Ordinance, which produced the pattern by which the continental American empire could develop into a nation-state, that has been used by some historians as evidence that the US was never an empire.

Yet the Territories were already inhabited; they were not *terra nullius*. The belief that North America was *terra nullius* had been part of the English approach to that territory since the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers. As the leader of the Pilgrims, William Bradford, wrote of their decision to emigrate to the New World, 'The place they had thoughts on was some of those vast & unpeopled countries of America, which are frutfull & fitt for habitation, being devoid of all civic inhabitants, whether are only salvage [sic] & brutish men, which range up and downe, little otherwise than ye wild beasts of the same.' This idea was carried further in the writings of the seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke, whose works were read by many of the Founding Fathers. In his *Second Treatise of Government*, he wrote that 'God gave the world to men in common; [but] it cannot be supposed he meant it always to remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational' — and, therefore, land navy no longer a threat (it also enabled the British to pick up the former Dutch colonies of Guyana, Ceylon and Cape Colony). So for almost a century the power of the Royal Navy was dominant. This was a very important element of Britain's power, particularly for the protection of its trade routes and of its merchant marine, the largest in the world, and of its formal and informal empires. But its informal empire was extremely important, because Britain was a commercial nation, and lived primarily by trade and the provision of services. Not only was there mastery in South America, but there was also British commercial dominance in a huge part of China. The crucial element here was the stability of the pound sterling, the world's major transaction and sole reserve currency until after the First World War. The British not only financed their own trading and international financial activities, they also financed those of many others, such as the Argentine railway system and the movement of the Southern US cotton crops to market.

Empires always worry about their borders. One concern is restlessness or turmoil across the border which might threaten their own territories, and which encourages them to expand to control the neighbouring territories to eliminate the threat. This was the case for Great Britain in India, when, for example, it tried to control Persia and Afghanistan in order to deter Russian expansion, and for the US in its continental expansion, when it tried to eliminate successive Indian tribes. The other threat is a challenge by a rival state or empire. This had been the case for the British empire in the nineteenth century, as Britain played the Great Game with the Russian empire over the control of Central Asia, and competed with the American empire in North America. It was the case for the American empire in the post-1945 period: the US wanted to contain the Russian empire's residual legatee, the Soviet Union, within its recognised borders. In this task, the US expected the full co-operation of Britain and what was left of its empire.

When looking at the interrelationship of the British and American empires, whether in conflict or co-operation, it is important to emphasise that like was not necessarily confronting like: they waxed and waned in different periods, and weakness confronted strength. America separated itself from a full-blown empire, an empire which, over the following 130 years, continued to expand. So did that of the United States, but the peak of its empire came considerably later, at the point when the British empire was in terminal decline. By the time that the United States stood at the pinnacle of its own power, from 1945 on, there was not a lot of the planet left to colonise. Thus the US had to be satisfied with an informal empire, but one which was supported by a range and depth of military power which, even relatively speaking, the British empire could not have begun to match in the nineteenth century. An informal empire can be denied, and whether or not the US was or is an empire continues to be a live issue in the United States. What is nowhere an issue is the death of the British empire. Even as late as the 1930s, it was not wholly obvious that it was in irreversible decline, but the Second World War sounded its death knell. Thereafter the UK withdrew from its formal empire,

completing the process by 1972, with its final withdrawal from East of Suez, often to have its place informally taken by the US. Both empires were — and America's still is — being brought down by 'imperial overstretch'. Cicero perhaps put it better when he pointed out that *nervos belli, pecuniam infinitam*: the sinews of war [require] infinite money. The United Kingdom ran out of the money necessary for holding an empire; this may also be the fate of the United States. <>

[Equality for Women, Prosperity for All: The Disastrous Global Crisis of Gender Inequality](#) by Augusto López-Claros and Bahiyyih Nakhjavani [St. Martin's Press, 9781250051189]

Excerpt: A groundbreaking book about the direct relationship between a woman's rights and freedoms and the economic prosperity of her country.

"The authors speak to hearts as well as minds."

—Maud de Boer Buquicchio, UN Special Rapporteur

"Not only timely but profoundly important—a must-read." Jackie Jones, Professor of Feminist Legal studies

The economics of gender inequality is often reduced to equal pay for equal work. But there is much more to it than that. Can a woman, whether married or single, register a business in the same way as a man? Can she sign a contract? Do men and women have equal ownership rights to property? Does she have the right to confer citizenship on her children? Are there criminal sanctions for sexual harassment?

Gender inequality in the fields of education, law, employment and wages lead to incalculable social and political disparities. These disparities in turn give rise to endemic poverty and violence, to individual frustration, social instability and cultural disaffection. When women are deprived of their rights, economies are eroded, democracies weakened, and the fabric of societies radically undermined. This pioneering book shows, once and for all, the direct correlation between the freedoms given to women and the prosperity enjoyed by all.

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### Excerpt: The Riddle of the Sphinx

The disparity between the sexes and their supposed equality has posed a riddle that has perplexed minds great and small, in one culture or another across the planet, since the beginning of time. We cannot quite resolve the conundrum. Men and women belong to the same species; we are all members of the human race. And yet we are clearly different. It is not merely skin deep, this difference; it is not "just" a disparity of race and color. It seems to be a fundamental difference of function, of biology, some would even say of neurology, psyche, possibly soul.

So how can we be "equal"? We have puzzled over this paradox for millennia.

At first glance there seems to be no solution to the enigma, no answer to the riddle. We stare at the sexless features of this weathered Sphinx' and find no clue in its blank gaze, no key to the pitiless differences spawned by its enigmatic gender. Indeed, obsessive scrutiny only complicates matters, for the multiple disparities between men and women can blind our eyes, like sand. And so we have concluded over time that the only way to lay the problem to rest and resolve the riddle is by avoiding it altogether. We have drawn clear demarcations round our separate genders and defined who we are in strict relation to what we are not, just to reassure ourselves of our existence. In other words, we have preferred sex segregation to equality if only to control the threat posed by our differences.

A strict separation between the sexes, of social and political roles, of public and private space, has been one way of resolving the conundrum for many societies and cultures over the ages. It is like

nationalism, racism, even religion. Countries can ignore each "other" and feel no economic or cultural threat, as long as they are miles apart; we can convince ourselves that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet,"<sup>2</sup> as long as there is no outsourcing of the labor force and no international competition over the market. Similarly we have imagined that sex segregation could lay the riddle of gender to rest. As long as men and women kept to their separate spheres, as long as their roles and responsibilities were strictly defined and rigidly regulated by gender-specific laws and customs, we could try to convince ourselves that the problem did not actually exist. The patriarchal order has resolved the dilemma by ignoring the conundrum, and keeping women in their place.

But the Sphinx is a subtle creature. Her riddles have a way of returning to haunt us.

When Sophocles wrote his tragedy *Oedipus Rex* in 429 BC, he conjured what it would be like to live in a city cursed by the Sphinx. The imaginary Thebes of classical antiquity was a place where a man could murder his father with impunity and marry his mother without a qualm. It was a place where a son, standing innocent at the crossroads of choice with his eyes wide open, could still be completely blind to his own and his parents' true identity. And in this city, the wells were poisoned and people were dying because they could not solve the Sphinx's riddle.

Sophocles' play dramatized the terrible price society would pay if sexual taboos were ignored, if paternity was not strictly controlled, and if women were not kept in their place. The answer to the riddle of what walks with four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three in the evening was "man"; it was also a warning against a world in which sisters could be daughters, in which women could rule over their murdered husbands and commit incest with their sons. Sophocles was, in effect, sounding the credo of the patriarchal order.

But perhaps the real curse of the Sphinx is our blindness to the fact that it contains multiple meanings. The curse of our times is no longer what poisoned our wells in the past. The riddle of our age can no longer be solved by the old answers. The plague that is poisoning our civilizations today,

and undermining our cultures, is neither incest, nor the loss of paternal identity. It is the segregation of the sexes. We are living in a world today cursed by gender inequality.

No one has a monopoly on it either. The curse is everywhere: in the public as well as the private sphere, at the domestic as well as the international level. It controls our finances, our information technology, our laws in many a land. It exists in rich countries as well as poor, can characterize every race that calls itself human, and has manifest itself across virtually all cultural traditions. The whole planet, and not just Thebes, lies in its grip.

It is also protean, for gender inequality assumes myriad shapes, a thousand and one different forms and faces: the control of joint income and assets in the household; the violation of basic human rights through enforced female seclusion and domestic violence; the abuse of power in the buying, selling, and inheriting of property; obsolete laws and our inability to implement new ones. Some kinds of inequality can be as subtle as mere misinformation, as invisible as the suppression of essential knowledge, which cripples a person's autonomy.

Other kinds, especially in the private sphere, can masquerade more gracefully, as protection, as security, even as "love." The sheer pervasiveness of this curse is proof of its complex causes, its multiple consequences. The riddle of the Sphinx can only be resolved by its own disparities in our times. Its answer lies in the equality of the sexes.

### Looking for Answers

For more than two centuries, the inequalities prevalent between men and women in the world have been defined in moral terms. The debate for and against gender equality, which began in the late eighteenth century and which is still far from being over, has traditionally been grounded in notions of human dignity and social justice. Many have spoken about how the suppression of women's rights and freedoms is inconsistent with democratic values and international law. We have focused on how it is a violation of ethics, a denial of basic logic, and a subversion of moral philosophy. We have argued about gender equality in terms of rights and wrongs.

But the subject has been pushed beyond the boundaries of ethics in recent decades. It has raised questions about religion and culture, which have provoked intense emotional debate in our times. Gender inequality has brought people out on the streets. It has morphed into a political cause as well as a quasi-religion and mystique. The exposure of physical and psychological abuse, of domestic oppression and emotional violence, has lifted voices and raised banners across the world. Veils have been cast off and reimposed. Women have refused to wear bras and claimed control over their reproductive rights. Much breath and rhetoric have been expended on this subject, and not just ink, but tears and sometimes even blood, have been dangerously spilt.

Lately, however, the discussion has become less heated. Emotion has been overtaken, to some degree at least, by economics. This is a relatively new development. The tone is cooler now, but steelier.

Debates are becoming determinedly measured, in more ways than one. Arguments on the subject are drawing on a growing body of academic research, which claims that the price we are paying for inequality is too high, that "gender inequality in education and employment reduces economic growth. We are starting to assess the costs of inequality to society as a whole and to define women's lack of opportunity on economic rather than ethical grounds. This is a very different approach to the subject.

It has taken millennia for us to admit to this fundamental reality: that gender inequality is a waste of human resources. It has taken centuries to look, fairly and squarely, at the bottom line of women's rights. Although sexual oppression has existed for much longer than the environmental crisis, we have estimated the costs arising from climate change much more quickly, have been willing to evaluate the damage resulting from our ruthless exploitation of natural resources much more readily than we have been able to bring ourselves to account for the losses sustained, the potential squandered, and the myriads of lives ruined on this planet as a result of the systematic repression and abuse of half the human race.

Now we are finally beginning to sum it all up. We are learning to read the equation differently. It is time to recognize that equality for women = prosperity for all.

This book will ask some critical questions about the misallocation of resources and the restrictive laws affecting women, about the relationship between failing economies and the legal status of women, about the long-term consequences for society of ignoring the culture of violence against women. Some of these questions are so complex that they have already resulted in a century of false answers, to the detriment of both sexes. Others are so troubling that we have found ways to sidestep them for millennia, to our mutual cost. But although many of these questions are still challenging, we can no longer elude the answers.

## THE CHAPTERS:

### The People Problem

Where are the missing women of the world and how much are we paying for their disappearance? Who is killing the baby girls and what are the long-term consequences of "son preference"? In the past, we thought the "people problem" simply meant there were too many of us. Now we realize that the dangers posed by a population explosion may be less ominous than those we create when we leave half the population out of the definition of "us." Chapter 1 analyzes the relationship between gender equality and demographics and asks why men always come first.

### The Virus of Violence

Why do the privileges of "son preference" invariably lead to violence against women? How do imbalanced demographic patterns impact the health and survival of women and girls, and what are the exclusively female forms of abuse to which they are subjected in various cultures and societies? Chapter 2 evaluates the root causes and endemic consequences of violence against women and assesses the costs of the physical, psychological, and economic discrimination against them, particularly under the so-called protective guise of provisions and prohibitions of family and labor law.

### Women and Work

What is "woman's work"? Why are women sometimes kept out of the labor force and so often relegated to the least well paid or least prestigious jobs when they choose to join it? What happens to an economy when women who want to work outside the home are given few incentives or are actively discouraged from contributing their talents to society? Chapter 3 looks closely at the consequences of women's exclusion from the economy, at their underrepresentation in decision-making roles, and at whether or not quotas help address the problem of their diminished political and economic empowerment.

### The Culture Question

What if outdated labor laws cannot be changed because of cultural taboos? What if women who try to improve their lot become victims of cultural crimes? Can legislation intervene when religion sanctifies certain interpretations of gender roles and rights and privileges the status quo that is resistant to change? Chapter 4 attempts to address one of the most complex, contentious, and ambiguous aspects of gender inequality: namely, how culture and "cultural exceptionalism" have dominated discussion about the universality of human rights.

### Rights and Wrongs

Can universal rights really have an impact on gender equality? Can international conventions change age-old customs at the grass roots? And have female suffrage and the vote actually empowered women to legislate change over the course of the past century? Chapter 5 explores this history from the mid-nineteenth century until the present day and looks at the ways in which civil law, common law, and, increasingly, sharia as well as traditional Asian laws have influenced women's mobility, protected their marital and inheritance rights, and shielded them from "legal" abuse.

### Education for Equality

Where does education fit into the equation? How does it influence gender equality and have a lasting impact on the economic health of a society? Is it really the ultimate barrier that could resolve the issue of gender inequality, or is it actually the ultimate threat to young girls who seek higher

education in certain cultures? What kind of education can serve the goal of improving gender equality and how far can the fabric of civic society be enhanced and changed by it? In Chapter 6 we gauge the benefits of providing and evaluate the costs of denying education to girls.

### The Costs of Inequality

This book begins by asking why economies fail and what women have to do with it. But it ends by looking at the costs of maintaining systems of governance that license injustice and privilege gender inequality. Chapter 7 looks closely at the data provided by the WBL project at the World Bank in order to assess which laws must change if women's rights are to be upheld, their security protected, their employment access improved, and their education enhanced. It asks whether gender equality can really bring prosperity to all. <>

[Liberated Spirits: Two Women Who Battled Over Prohibition](#) by Hugh Ambrose and John Schuttler [Berkley, 9780451414649]

A provocative new take on the women behind a perennially fascinating subject-- Prohibition--by bestselling author and historian Hugh Ambrose.

The passage of the 18th Amendment (banning the sale of alcohol) and the 19th (women's suffrage) in the same year is no coincidence. These two Constitutional Amendments enabled women to redefine themselves and their place in society in a way historians have neglected to explore. *Liberated Spirits* describes how the fight both to pass and later to repeal Prohibition was driven by women, as exemplified by two remarkable women in particular.

With fierce drive and acumen, Mabel Willebrandt transcended the tremendous hurdles facing women lawyers and was appointed Assistant Attorney General. Though never a Prohibition campaigner, once in office she zealously pursued enforcement despite a corrupt and ineffectual agency.

Wealthy Pauline Sabin had no formal education in law or government but she too fought entrenched discrimination to rise in the ranks of the Republican Party. While Prohibition meant little to her

personally--aristocrats never lost access to booze--she seized the fight to repeal it as a platform to bring newly enfranchised women into the political process and compete on an equal footing with men.

Along with a colorful cast of supporting characters, from rumrunners and Prohibition agents on the take to senators and feuding society matrons, *Liberated Spirits* brings the Roaring Twenties to life in a brand new way.

Excerpt: The rumrunner\* got word on Sunday evening that his ship would soon come in. Roy Olmstead; his business partner, Tom Clark; and nine others drove north out of Seattle as the evening darkness settled, their convoy of eight cars driving fifteen miles on the Edmonds-Seattle paved highway to the rendezvous point, a dock jutting fifty feet into Browns Bay of Puget Sound near a small, little-used station on the Great Northern Railway called Meadowdale. Roy and Tom had both learned the art of bootlegging while working their "day jobs." In 1914, the citizens of Washington State had voted to outlaw the manufacture and sale, but not the consumption, of alcohol, and put the onus of enforcing the statute on their state and local police departments, such as the Seattle Police Department, which employed both Roy Olmstead and Thomas Clark. By the time national Prohibition went into effect, Seattle's cops had watched the inhabitants adapt for almost six years, finding ways to enjoy alcohol on a regular basis, their desires translating into handsome profits for the moonshiners who distilled alcohol and the rumrunners who imported it. While Olmstead never revealed when he got into liquor smuggling, his ability to secure probation rather than jail time for many criminals drew the gratitude of those willing to pay for his influence, his naked ambition following the quickest path to wealth. His ethics already compromised, Olmstead "saw no crime in buying and selling booze," and was unable to reconcile the law's allowance for consumption while forbidding a supply.' He had watched two rival gangs devoted to "rum-running" slowly destroy each other through years of warfare, leaving an open playing field even as the federal government began to enforce the ban on liquor.' The demand for good liquor, Lieutenant Olmstead knew, would continue to seek new sources; the way to profit

from it was to import the best brands from Canada, a little more than a hundred miles to the north: a country where Scotch, gin, vodka, champagne, wine, beer, and so much more were still legally sold, purchased, exported, and consumed. Any boat could take on a load of good Canadian whiskey and steam away, so long as the export duties to Canadian customs had been paid. Islands great and small littered Puget Sound, the grand waterway connecting Seattle with two of Canada's bustling cities, Victoria and Vancouver, offering smugglers a more-than-sporting chance to evade the mere two U.S. Coast Guard ships patrolling the waters. Back in Seattle, bottles bearing brand names commanded almost double the price that Roy Olmstead paid for them, creating the opportunity for extraordinary profits, a river of income that made his new career irresistible. The intelligence, initiative, and competence cited by his superiors as reasons for his rise in the police department served him equally well in his new profession.' Roy Olmstead had the key assets to succeed: a talent for inspiring confidence in business partners for a venture in which no contract or agreement carried the force of law; the ability to manage an organization, a skill cultivated in his years rising through the ranks of the police force; and all the pluck and entrepreneurship of a born capitalist. This March evening found Olmstead and his associates exercising all their talents to bring in a large shipment of choice liquors and wines.

Just after one o'clock on Monday morning, the bootleggers turned left, off the paved road, and drove down the steep hill to the water. Their cars—rear seats removed to make room for the bottles, the cargo space supported by heavy-duty springs, the cars' engines tuned for maximum power—could not fit into the narrow roadway near the dock, so they stopped in a line and waited. Olmstead had one of his men begin flashing a light periodically, facing westward out into Puget Sound. In less than an hour, the engines of the Jervis Island could be heard approaching. With enough cargo space to convey nearly eleven hundred cases from Victoria, Canada, across the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and down Puget Sound, Roy's wooden-hulled boat had not been crafted for speed—it couldn't even make

ten knots—but her stout frame handled the job in workmanlike fashion. As soon as she was tied to the pier, the unloading began.

Roy and Tom watched as their foreman, waving an electric flashlight and hollering profusely, directed the process of toting the cases from the boat and up to the waiting cars, sending each loaded automobile on its way and waving in the next. Satisfied with the arrangements, his own car loaded, Roy drove away up the hill, only to find a barricade of logs at the apex. Men brandishing guns—thieves or cops, he did not know—ordered him to stop. As they neared his

car, Roy spotted a way around and gunned the engine. Shots from their pistols did the men no good as he swerved back onto the dirt road, eventually picking up the pavement and heading south at full speed, surely wondering whether the gunmen were stealing his liquor or arresting his men, who had been instructed simply to turn over the goods if waylaid by hijackers. If the ambushers proved to be revenuers (agents of the federal Internal Revenue Bureau\*), or former revenuers recruited to be members of the brand-new Prohibition Unit, he had a different set of problems. In more than a century of chasing down moonshiners and others not in compliance with government liquor-tax policy, revenuers had built a reputation for unpredictability, some being virulent Prohibitionists smashing stills and bottles, others willing to take a bribe to turn a blind eye. It was unclear how they would handle their new job, enforcing the federal Prohibition law, any change in their tactics imperceptible since the law had gone into effect two months earlier. What exactly would happen to those arrested and what would be the long-term effects of this new force on his operation were serious questions for Olmstead.

Roy had been at home a few hours when the phone rang just after six a.m., his captain announcing that he knew all about the bust, as did the sheriff's office in Snohomish County, where the raid had taken place. The revenuers had recognized Lieutenant Roy Olmstead, a well-known rising star in the Seattle Police Department, and had arrested Sergeant Tom Clark and seven others at the scene. The police car arrived at Olmstead's house minutes



later, one of Olmstead's own patrolmen at the wheel, to take him down to the station. Olmstead told the officer the same thing he would later tell the police chief: he had been excused from his regular shift to care for his sick wife and daughter, knew nothing of the "liquor deal," and stood ready to face his accusers.

The chief did not believe Roy, or Tom Clark, who claimed he had gone to the dock to arrest the bootleggers. Chief Warren fired them both summarily, sending Roy to the county jail to await further questioning and a statement of charges, while Clark, who had been arrested by federal agents, was jailed at the federal immigration detention station, no federal lockup being available.

The newspapers' evening editions spread the news across Seattle. In recent weeks, several landings of liquor had taken place at the Meadowdale dock, alarming the station agent for the railroad, a concerned citizen who had gotten in touch with Donald A. MacDonald, State Director of the new Prohibition Unit. MacDonald had been pleased to get the tip, eager to shift focus from arrests of peddlers of a few bottles to the rumrunner of several hundred.

Olmstead may have counted on the inexperience of the Prohibition Unit, but not on its luck. MacDonald's agents had almost missed the bust, three of them stumbling in the darkness, nearly shooting one another. "As fast as the cars were loaded with liquor and came up the hill we'd stop them, line the men up alongside the road and drive the car out of sight and gather in the next one," exclaimed the son of the railroad station agent. After they secured the cars, they went down the hill and tried to take the delivery boat. The boat captain could be heard trying to start its motors. The railroad agent fired repeatedly into its wooden hull before the engines caught and the hulking shape pulled away. Though the dark had prevented a good look at the boat, the agents thought the Coast Guard or U.S. Customs authorities would be able to identify it by all the bullet holes in its side. <>

[Marooned: Jamestown, Shipwreck, and a New History of America's Origin](#) by Joseph Kelly [Bloomsbury Publishing, 9781632867773]

For readers of Nathaniel Philbrick's [Mayflower](#), a groundbreaking history that makes the case for replacing Plymouth Rock with Jamestown as America's founding myth. We all know the great American origin story. It begins with an exodus. Fleeing religious persecution, the hardworking, pious Pilgrims thrived in the wilds of New England, where they built their fabled city on a hill. Legend goes that the colony in Jamestown was a false start, offering a cautionary tale. Lazy louts hunted gold till they starved, and the shiftless settlers had to be rescued by English food and the hard discipline of martial law.

Neither story is true. In [Marooned](#), Joseph Kelly reexamines the history of Jamestown and comes to a radically different and decidedly American interpretation of these first Virginians.

In this gripping account of shipwrecks and mutiny in America's earliest settlements, Kelly argues that the colonists at Jamestown were literally and figuratively marooned, cut loose from civilization, and cast into the wilderness. The British caste system meant little on this frontier: those who wanted to survive had to learn to work and fight and intermingle with the nearby native populations. Ten years before the Mayflower Compact and decades before Hobbes and Locke, they invented the idea of government by the people. 150 years before Jefferson, they discovered the truth that all men were equal.

The epic origin of America was not an exodus and a fledgling theocracy. It is a tale of shipwrecked castaways of all classes marooned in the wilderness fending for themselves in any way they could--a story that illuminates who we are today., a groundbreaking history that makes the case for replacing Plymouth Rock with Jamestown as America's founding myth.

We all know the great American origin story. It begins with an exodus. Fleeing religious persecution, the hardworking, pious Pilgrims thrived in the wilds of New England, where they built their fabled city on a hill. Legend goes that the colony in

Jamestown was a false start, offering a cautionary tale. Lazy louts hunted gold till they starved, and the shiftless settlers had to be rescued by English food and the hard discipline of martial law.

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#### Excerpt: In the Beginning

A storm at sea. Waves swelling higher than the ship's deck and wind like an ax chopping off their caps and throwing water at the heavens. So much seawater in the air, it seems it will drown the lightning. The sky pours down "stinking pitch," sulfurous smell, and thunder. A "brave vessel" full of "noble creature[s]" climbing the waves and sliding into the troughs, its seams barely holding together.

So opened Shakespeare's *Tempest* in a cold London theater in the winter of 1611.

It was a true story. To use today's common language, Shakespeare ripped this scene from the headlines. Only there were no headlines in 1611. Newspapers had not been invented. The first English-language periodical, a weekly broadsheet, was printed ten years later, ironically enough in Dutch-speaking Amsterdam. News of great events circulated the streets of England's towns in more entertaining, less dependable channels: pamphlets, sermons, songs, notices posted in town squares, private letters passed around from one reader to another. And rumor. Buzzing like the crowd noise

preceding a play, the cacophonous, often contradictory, sailors' stories seeped up from the docks of London, Southampton, and Plymouth. And plays, even those as fantastical as *The Tempest*, dramatized the rumors and publicized what was going on in the world.

This story of storm, wreck, and redemption was the talk of England. Although a century had passed since Columbus first crossed the Atlantic, the open sea still preyed on the sailor's psyche in a way that coast-hugging Europeans had never felt. When a storm came on the western ocean, there was no chance of running to harbor. Voyagers were beyond the frontiers of civilization, encroaching on spaces unlit by Christianity, where dark forces reigned. Anything could happen.

At the height of Shakespeare's play, a few noblemen come on deck demanding to speak with the ship's master.

"f Ylou marre our labour," the boatswain answers. "Keepe your Cabins: you do assist the storme."

The words sound like revolution. At least on the surface, the seaman seems to be a leveler who favors meritocracy over aristocracy.

"You are a Counsellor," the boatswain tells Gonzalzo, "if you can command these Elements to silence ... vse your authoritie: If you cannot ... out of our way I say."

Gonzalzo warns him, "remember whom thou hast aboard." "None that I loue more than my seife," replies the sailor. "[W]hat cares these roarers for the name of King?"

Such stuff might embolden the "common sort" to check their supposed "betters." One might think so, until it is remembered that the common sort was not in the play's audience. *The Tempest* premiered in the elegant, enclosed Blackfriars Theatre. The more democratic and open-air Globe Theatre was always crowded with groundlings, who stood in the pit chewing their sausages. But tickets to the indoor, winterized Blackfriars Theatre were pricier. London's aristocracy sat in their boxes dressed in finery, and the guildsmen and craftsmen and professionals, up to perhaps a thousand patrons, filled the rest of the audience. Rich though they were, they were as eager as any to see onstage

what they'd heard about in rumor: what had happened to the *Sea Venture*.

The players wobble-strut on the stage as if on the heaving and tossing deck of that ship, while the master and boatswain shout instructions into the noise of the wind.

"Take in the toppe-sale!"

At all cost they must keep steerageway. They catch just enough wind to point her bow into those rising seas. If a wave should take them broadside, it might roll the top-heavy ship till the masts kissed the water, and she would not rise again.

"Lay her a hold, a hold, set her two courses off to Sea again, lay her off!"

All labor for naught! The ship does not roll but its very boards come apart, letting in the sea like a sieve. The scene ends with mariners flooding the stage, clothes dripping with salt water, crying in despair and fear: "We split, we split!"

"Farewell my wife, and children," the sailors wail.

"Farewell, brother!"

Elizabethan theater might have skimmed on props and sets and special effects when judged by the standards of our own blockbuster action films. It had to rely on the words of the actors to paint the scene. As Shakespeare himself put it, the breath of those who watched the play must fill the ship's sails with wind. But Shakespeare's words! They whipped up gales in the minds of the viewers. The patrons quaked under the shock of thunder and lightning.

A ship full of a hundred and fifty souls split at sea, in the midst of the most terrible storm, and yet every person lived! This was England's most shocking, unbelievable news.

More than a year earlier, on the fifteenth of May, 1609, the *Sea Venture* set sail from London, the "admiral" of an impressive fleet. The *Diamond*, the *Falcon*, the *Blessing*, the *Lion*, and the *Unity*, as well as a pinnace (a shallow-draft boat designed for coastal exploration) too small to be named, sailed behind her, headed to Virginia, the third and by far largest resupply of two-year-old, fledgling Jamestown, England's tiny, rough-hewn, and hungry little campsite, its only toehold on the vast American

continent. The flotilla was the largest and most expensive and most promising overseas expedition that England had ever organized, and the six hundred people crowded into the vessels would triple or quadruple the population of the colony. It seemed that all England applauded their departure. "Crowds of London's ever-curious spectators," one historian explains, "lined the river's banks and cheered as the seven ships, sails billowing, flags flying, glided past them on the spring afternoon."; Several weeks later, after a stop at Plymouth increased the fleet to nine vessels, they left England's toe, the very westernmost tip of the nation, following the setting sun into the newly charted seas of the vast North Atlantic. Seen from the land's end, they disappeared into oblivion, as if a curtain shut upon them. No one in England would hear from the fleet for ages. No one expected to. Ships that sailed west into the Atlantic reappeared, if they ever did, almost miraculously, many months or even years later.

This time the Atlantic was quiet. Each morning from the second of June to July twenty-third, 1609, the sun rose in a clear sky off the stern, and it chased the squadron all morning long, till in the afternoon and evening the ships chased the setting sun toward Virginia. The seas were calm. It was a relief to Sir George Somers, admiral of the fleet, who did not know what to expect. Previous English expeditions followed the winds south, island-hopping to the Canaries, then the West Indies, and thence to Jamestown. But the Virginia Company had recently scouted a quicker, "more direct line," a northern passage that avoided the Caribbean's hazard of Spanish ships, and Somers followed this unfamiliar route. The month and a half of fair breezes and clear skies seemed to justify the gamble. They made such good time that one of the pinnaces could not keep up. The flagship, the *Sea Venture*, had to tow it across the Atlantic.

The *Sea Venture* was a three-hundred-ton merchant ship about a hundred feet long that had been designed to carry English wool to Dutch dyers. It was broad and "chubby," which suited Holland's trade but made it ungainly on the wide Atlantic Ocean. Fore and aft, high superstructures—wooden castles piled in the style of the carrack, the most common type of oceangoing vessel in the sixteenth

century—rose above the deck. These structures made such ships top-heavy, and the tall forecastle prevented carracks from sailing very efficiently when facing contrary winds. The Spanish and the English both had fixed the defect by developing the galleon, which lowered the forecastle, but the *Sea Venture* was built according to the older design. Further harming her balance were the sixteen cannons mounted on the upper deck. Normally these heavy weapons would have been below the open-air deck and above the hold, but that in-between area housed many of the colonists and their gear in tightly crowded makeshift cabins.

The fleet was just over a week's sailing from Virginia when the sunny days disappeared. In the midst of the Atlantic's emptiness, alone in the world, not another human being anywhere for a thousand miles, dark and terrifying clouds sped in from the northeast. It was the front edge of a gale, a storm that blew worse and longer than even the maddest storms in the familiar waters of northern Europe, the Barbary Coast of Africa, the Levant, or the Adriatic.

The fleet was overtaken by a hurricane. Most ships were demasted. They limped into Jamestown one by one, their holds leaky and their supplies sodden and of little use to the colony. All the ships survived save the flagship, the *Sea Venture*, the biggest and best supplied of them all, containing not only George Somers but also Sir Thomas Gates, the new governor, and the lion's share of provisions. She had disappeared without a trace, swallowed by the storm and presumed to have been swallowed by the sea. So came the news from Virginia. The wives and parents and children of the dead had their mourning. The directors of the Company reckoned their losses. The morale of the nation suffered its blow and moved on.

A year later, a miraculous rumor started to circulate around the docks of England's port cities. Everyone on the *Sea Venture* had been saved. Had no one drowned? All were plucked somehow from a sinking ship in the middle of a hurricane in the middle of the wide Atlantic. The fantastic story sped through the chattering streets of London.

Shakespeare did not get the story from rumors. He had the most credible source: a narrative letter

dozens of pages long and hand-penned by an eyewitness, a survivor of the Sea Venture foundering. It told a harrowing tale of heroic deeds and base mutinies. Written by a gentleman named William Strachey, this remarkable document was, ostensibly, a private missive to some unidentified "Excellent Lady," but it quickly circulated among London's literary crowd in manuscript—as Strachey knew it would—and through the finer houses and government offices of England. Shakespeare read it. The famous playwright was Strachey's friend. They had probably shared drinks at the Mermaid Tavern, if not jokes and jibes. And so at the very end of his career, on the edge of retirement, England's greatest playwright found himself with what we would call today a "scoop": the story of the founding of a brave new world. <>

[The Rise of Andrew Jackson: Myth, Manipulation, and the Making of Modern Politics](#) by David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler [Basic Books, 9780465097562]

*The story of Andrew Jackson's improbable ascent to the White House, centered on the handlers and propagandists who made it possible*

Andrew Jackson was volatile and prone to violence, and well into his forties his sole claim on the public's affections derived from his victory in a thirty-minute battle at New Orleans in early 1815. Yet those in his immediate circle believed he was a great man who should be president of the United States.

Jackson's election in 1828 is usually viewed as a result of the expansion of democracy. Historians David and Jeanne Heidler argue that he actually owed his victory to his closest supporters, who wrote hagiographies of him, founded newspapers to savage his enemies, and built a political network that was always on message. In transforming a difficult man into a paragon of republican virtue, the Jacksonites exploded the old order and created a mode of electioneering that has been mimicked ever since.

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Excerpt: The common people of America adored Andrew Jackson. No matter how far he traveled from his humble origins or how high he climbed above them, they always viewed him as a reflection of themselves. His first world was the frontier of the remote Carolina Upcountry, and the self-reliant folk of places like that could judge his angular face, calloused hands, and sinewed limbs as familiar features of a makeshift and hardscrabble life. Like him, many Americans ended the Revolutionary War with empty chairs by hearths reminding them of the highest toll of all in the quest for liberty. Like him, they endured deprivation with courage and loss with resilience. These plain folk intuitively admired a man who settled disputes quickly and whose horizons were not cluttered by doubt and anxiety, a man with a sense of self so unshakeable and stubborn that it could make him seem right against all corners even when he was wrong—especially when he was wrong.

As a rising man, Jackson entered an honorable profession (the law), attached himself to important people, acquired property, married well (though under strange circumstances), and rose to lead the Tennessee militia. He became a public man—for public men were the dominant people of the American scene—and entered politics though he possessed little political skill and a poor temperament for political life. His militia career

provided him with a constituency, and his military exploits, though brief and limited, were so gaudy that they made him a hero. He first appeared to the public at a time of seeming decline and possible revival. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, most Americans no longer lived on the frontier, and according to some, they were getting soft and losing the pluck that had made them hardy colonizers and happy warriors.

A vague fear arose that the great accomplishments of the American Revolution were fading away because a delicate people, corrupted by comfort and cynical about government, could not remember the cost of liberty. Andrew Jackson's image as the man who could reverse this disturbing drift began with his stunning victory over the British at New Orleans in January 1815. Nine years later, his first attempt to win the presidency saw his supporters insisting that he could renew the nation, and by 1828, most voters agreed that Jackson was crucial to securing America's future, in that he would draw on the best of its humble but energetic past.

In this setting and from these events, the remarkable rise of Andrew Jackson seemed to happen spontaneously, but there was much more to it than that. As early as 1816, a small group of people began working on a grand political project. Jackson's reputation as a peerless military hero fueled their enthusiasm and formed the foundation for his ascendant political career. Jackson's promoters harnessed a previously inchoate political movement spurred by broad discontent. People fumed over government corruption. They blamed the country's central bank for its wrecked economy. They chafed at the disdainful elitism of their "betters," who expected the deference of olden days to survive the passing fancy of democratic politics. Yeomen, mechanics, tradesmen, and small merchants were unembarrassed by the charge that democracy was the cudgel of the mob. They seemed to be yearning for an unshakeable and self-aware man ready to do right against all corners, even if he was wrong.

These ordinary, disaffected Americans voiced their resentment and rancor, but their utterances were so varied as to be discordant, and they were seemingly fated to remain so until the gaunt,

cantankerous man appeared. He was nothing if not unshakeable and self-aware, but the growing mass of his followers at the start were neither, despite their veneer of purpose. Nevertheless, Andrew Jackson's boundless appeal for voters from starkly different social and economic backgrounds energized a broad and diverse population among whom quarrels were unavoidable.

People with different hopes and disparate dreams supported Andrew Jackson not only because of who he had been but also for what he seemed to be. A manufacturer in Pennsylvania who wanted protectionism saw Andrew Jackson as favoring stiff tariffs. A South Carolina planter who wanted free trade envisioned Jackson culling collectors and opening ports to the commerce of the world. Disgruntled Old Republicans nostalgic for Jeffersonian purity saw Jackson as a man intent on limiting the growing government and trimming its expansive Treasury. Federalists marginalized by the War of 1812 and vanishing under the relentless political march of their foes found a man ready to reject the quasi-religious tests of party and faction to allow them again to participate in the public commons and national government. A masterful politician with a scheme to make patronage and influence the bond of an invincible party perceived in Jackson a man who valued loyalty and would embrace ways to encourage it. A purist who believed patronage debased public service and promoted corruption saw a virtuous hero ready to quash special interests and stop their raids on the public till.

As people with opposite views on national issues found themselves in the same political movement, the men organizing it were able to diminish the importance of those differences and control a rambunctious movement while creating the impression that the man they were promoting was its founder. In the beginning, Andrew Jackson's closest friend in Nashville, John Overton, led a group of managers and handlers whose varied backgrounds brought to their task an assortment of valuable skills. The wise and measured Overton first saw the possibilities Jackson's popularity presented in a political setting, and it was Overton who assembled the first team to promote Jackson's candidacy. This group, called the Nashville Junto,

was a committee of talents. Among them was John Eaton, a scribe who wrote a laudatory biography and who later became a senator to protect Jackson's reputation in Washington. Editor George Wilson made his Nashville Gazette the first Jackson newspaper with a flair for disguising propaganda as hard news. Sam Houston was the young lieutenant in Jackson's army who had proven his mettle by surviving wounds that would have killed another man but that only spurred Houston to greater exertion. William B. Lewis, disdained by others for his obsequious manner and oily charm, could listen for gossip and quash it, forge deals without seeming to, and make promises as profitable as they were provisional.

Even with real talent supporting Jackson for high political office, the effort could have foundered on divisions caused by conflicting purposes and differing philosophies. The variety of views, in fact, would only multiply as the movement around the man grew and broadened. Many of the men who worked tirelessly to see Andrew Jackson elected were not what later generations would call Jacksonians. Some wanted to eliminate all property qualifications for the vote, which was a fundamental part of Jacksonian Democracy, but in the 1820s, just as many supporters thought too many people already voted. Men who wanted unimpeded territorial expansion, which became another tenet of Jacksonianism, labored and propagandized alongside men who feared that opening the West would diminish the political influence of the East. For every strict constructionist, there was a man eager to make the federal government less limited and more active. Some Jacksonians masked their artful use of patronage with the euphemism "rotation in office"—one would slip by calling it the "spoils system"—but trading government posts for political support was anathema to other Jackson loyalists in the 1820s. Men who figured prominently in Jackson's bids for the presidency sat on the boards of banks and lobbied for the establishment of Bank of the United States branches in their hometowns, while others would later denounce banks for what they called the manipulation of currency and credit to cheat ordinary people.

Because of these inconsistencies among the men who joined Andrew Jackson's campaigns and those who would govern after his victory, and because of the contradictions within the great mass of people who elected him, we have chosen to call his supporters in the 1820s Jacksonites rather than Jacksonians. Jacksonians supported universal white manhood suffrage, territorial expansion, and the elimination of the Second Bank of the United States; Jacksonites were those willing to use Jackson's popularity to achieve political power. Jacksonites had in common the quest to make Jackson president and to rise to powerful positions in their own right as a result of his victory. Some Jacksonites did not agree with Jackson on any issues but were willing to promote his fortunes to achieve theirs.

Jacksonites could be Jacksonians, and some would become Jacksonians, but the difference between the two, whether slight or wide, had to do with the difference between politics and philosophy. Jacksonians were true believers who knew in their bones that broader democracy benefited the country, that the government in Washington was corrupt, and that the Bank of the United States was unconstitutional. They believed that limiting the power of the national government would go far to cure the nation's ills and that state and local governments were the bulwarks of the people's freedom. Jacksonites believed in winning elections—and in arguments pitting philosophy against practicality, they had a point. Without their most basic impulse to dislodge the traditional ways of politics, the Jacksonian moment might never have happened.

Jacksonites faced a task larger than that of dismantling traditional politics and erecting something in its place. All the talk of promoting the interests of the common people, restoring honest government, expanding democracy, enhancing economic freedom, protecting Indians by relocating them, and curbing the moneyed interests could not completely mask the fact that the man at the center of the political project had a nasty temper, a violent streak, and a past littered with appalling lapses in judgment. Yet scores of operatives, handlers, editors, and politicians would deftly manage their unlikely project, which would

eventually include a political genius in Martin Van Buren. Over the course of fifteen years, they changed American politics by creating an irresistible force out of a man whose sole claim on the public's affections derived from a thirty-minute battle on the banks of the Mississippi River in early 1815. They did this by launching the first modern presidential campaign in American history, the first instance of deliberate image building and mythmaking and of skillful manipulation of public perception and popular opinion.

American politics had from the beginning featured candidates mixing with the people and even holding social events. "Swilling the planters with bumbo" was the custom of plying voters with a rum-based punch, but the scope of such behavior was limited by the small number of men who had the right to vote. Even the largest instance of widespread activity before the 1820 was on a fairly small scale. John Beckley, the first clerk of the House of Representatives, did work in Pennsylvania for Thomas Jefferson during the elections of 1796 and 1800 that foreshadowed Jacksonite practices of the 1820. Beckley enlisted local leaders to write letters and blanketed the countryside with ballots of Republican electors to establish name recognition for Jefferson's ticket. But Beckley anticipated Jacksonite innovations primarily in his willingness to enter the fray of partisan politics, which the Founding generation spurned as unseemly. To be sure, the gentry rule that the presidential office should seek the man rather than the other way around was not always strictly adhered to. But appearing to obey it prevented the use of practices associated with a national campaign.

The broader acceptance of outright politicking in the 1820 disclosed a major shift in attitudes about the proper methods of winning elections. The men who achieved Andrew Jackson's transformation into a political force saw nothing unseemly about the way they went about it. They groomed him, protected him, and belled the cat of his temper. They published quaint stories of his kindness and heroic tales of his courage. They contrived ways to make him seem measured and statesmanlike. They made him the friend of debtors (he dismissed them as deadbeats), the advocate for low tariffs or high

ones (he had no opinion on the matter), and the enemy of grasping bankers (who were some of his best friends). He was made an icon in the tradition of George Washington, though he had been among those most critical of Washington at the end of his presidency. Jackson was made the ideological heir of Thomas Jefferson, though he had openly opposed President Jefferson, and the Sage of Monticello himself was openly dismayed by Jackson's rising popularity.

Such obstacles were minor inconveniences for clever men with supple scruples. At first, armed with little more than intuition and flinty resolve, Jackson's promoters linked him with the spirit of discontent that emerged after 1815. From those initial efforts, a gradual blurring of the movement and the man proceeded until he ceased to be the beneficiary of a popular program and instead became the personification of it. By then, the little group of intuitive and resolute men had become legion, and they were being organized by Van Buren, a mastermind with a national vision and the ability to make all things seem local. By then, Andrew Jackson had become wildly and irresistibly popular. He was meant to be.

The Jacksonites also innovated within existing political practices. Newspapers had been a part of politics in colonial times, though libel laws discouraged direct attacks on opponents, a restriction that vanished by the 1790 when Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton used rival newspapers to promote their views and attack opponents. The Jackson campaign pioneered uses for newspapers during the 1824 campaign. After Jackson lost that election in the House of Representatives to John Quincy Adams, Jacksonites increased their efforts to spend money as no campaign had ever done before. They financed editors to encourage attacks on the Adams administration, and where no papers friendly to Jackson existed, they founded them. Their newspaper network's highly disciplined message appeared in stories and opinion pieces pulled from subscription services and reprinted in local sheets in ways that prefigured the tactics of a modern press syndicate.



This was only one hallmark of a finely tuned and an always improving organization. Starting with the Nashville Junto, Jacksonites became adept at coordinating local activities on a national level. During the 1828 campaign, they set up committees at important hubs and staffed them with influential community leaders who were, in turn, directed and controlled by central committees in Washington and Nashville. These forerunners of Republican and Democratic National Committees instructed localities to hold Jackson rallies and parades, raise (Old) Hickory Poles, and distribute inexpensive likenesses of Jackson along with gimcracks lauding him and denouncing his dwindling number of critics. They organized straw polls after prudently determining favorable results, and they held mass public meetings to pass resolutions the local committee carefully drafted to ensure acceptance. The dutiful Jackson press covered everything with a consistent message rendered in sufficiently different language to create the appearance that support for the Hero was not only massive but spontaneous and diverse.

At a time when political parties were still considered soiled creatures of faction and parasitic entities that divided the nation, Adams men discovered too late that the tight organization of dissimilar coalitions had become the key to victory. Though Jackson's supporters did not constitute a distinct party—everyone called himself Republican during those years—they began behaving like one, and their opponents gradually realized that disdaining the new methods of politics was a sure path to defeat. They watched helplessly as Jacksonites learned from their loss in 1824 and proved amazingly agile and able to attract talented people to their cause.

Though historians have looked at the elections of 1824 and 1828 as culturally, politically, and socially transformative, no one has provided a thorough telling of how Jackson and his managers created candidate and sold him to the American people. Unabashed admirers of Andrew Jackson are fewer now than in times past, but their work still dominates the historical landscape by its sheer volume. Nowadays critics eager to denounce Jackson grow in number because they condemn him as a racist whose attitude toward Indians alone

merits his banishment from the American pantheon as well as American folding money. The admirers have a tendency to lionize Jacksonites as Jacksonians with talk of common men rising and ordinary people gaining political clout. The critics hold in contempt the people who supported Andrew Jackson as racists themselves, as people spitting, scratching, and cussing while skinning their knuckles on the dirt floors of their jerry-built shacks. For our part, we have labored in these pages to move beyond or, better yet, before caricature. Our aim is to understand Andrew Jackson, to comprehend the supporters who shaped his candidacy, and to hear the voters who made him president.

Because there were no formal political parties and factions supported a variety of favorite sons, it is easy to conclude that the campaigns of the 1820s were popularity contests devoid of issues. But doing so misses the point. The cunning men behind Jackson's candidacy convinced a plurality of the American people in 1824 that Andrew Jackson was on their side, whatever side it was. They made the people believe he shared their concerns, whether they planted cotton in the red clay of Georgia, worked a lathe in a moteshot Philadelphia shop, or scored the earth for DeWitt Clinton's Erie Canal. When the numbers those people represented were insufficient for victory in 1824, Jacksonites and the man at their head redoubled their efforts at the methods that had worked, such as mass meetings, partisan coordination of the press, and lionization of their champion as a man of action forged by martial challenges. And after the failure of 1824 seemed to provide irrefutable evidence of corruption, they amplified their earlier calls to flush the sewer of national politics as practiced by the denizens of Washington, DC. They described the men there as having elevated the business of government over the people's interests, confusing the meanings of self-interest and public service. Doubtless, many of them believed this, but others realized that it was enough to act as if they did, which could pass for a reasonable definition of politics in its modern form.

In the summer of 1845, a young portrait painter named George Healy arrived at Henry Clay's home outside Lexington, Kentucky, to paint the

great man's likeness. Healy had just come from Andrew Jackson's Hermitage, where his portrait of Jackson would be the last of the old man from life. Withered and ailing, Jackson died shortly after the work was finished, but Healy had seen the younger champion of a political movement who gave his name to an age, and that is who he painted. This was by then an image of Jackson as imaginary as the one the men who made him president had created decades earlier, and both would prove enduring. Clay, curious about Healy's opinion of a lifelong enemy, asked whether Jackson was a "sincere" man, in the sense of frankness, candor, and authenticity.

"If General Jackson was not sincere," Healy said curtly, with the irritation of an admirer having to defend his idol, "then I do not know the meaning of the word."

Henry Clay nodded with weary resignation over the young man's apparent esteem for Jackson. He sighed. "I see that you, like all who approached that man, were fascinated by him."

An entire generation of Americans would have said, Just so. As we will see, they had their reasons. <>

[Escaped Nuns: True Womanhood and the Campaign Against Convents in Antebellum America](#)  
by Cassandra L. Yacovazzi [Oxford University Press, 9780190881009]

Just five weeks after its publication in January 1836, [Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery](#), billed as an escaped nun's shocking exposé of convent life, had already sold more than 20,000 copies. The book detailed gothic-style horror stories of licentious priests and abusive mothers superior, tortured nuns and novices, and infanticide. By the time the book was revealed to be a fiction and the author, Maria Monk, an imposter, it had already become one of the nineteenth century's best-selling books. In antebellum America only one book, [Uncle Tom's Cabin](#), outsold it.

The success of Monk's book was no fluke, but rather a part of a larger phenomenon of anti-Catholic propaganda, riots, and nativist politics. The secrecy of convents stood as an oblique justification for suspicion of Catholics and the campaigns against

them, which were intimately connected with cultural concerns regarding reform, religion, immigration, and, in particular, the role of women in the Republic. At a time when the term "female virtue" pervaded popular rhetoric, the image of the veiled nun represented a threat to the established American ideal of womanhood. Unable to marry, she was instead a captive of a foreign foe, a fallen woman, a white slave, and a foolish virgin. In the first half of the nineteenth century, ministers, vigilantes, politicians, and writers--male and female--forged this image of the nun, locking arms against convents. The result was a far-reaching antebellum movement that would shape perceptions of nuns, and women more broadly, in America.

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Any institution which prevents a woman from fulfilling those duties as wives and mothers, which God has appointed, should

not be permitted to exist for one instant in any civilized land. -WILLIAM C. BROWNLEE, "Nunneries Are Unconstitutional; 1836

### Excerpt: The American Campaign against Convents

In 1836, two popular anti-Catholic periodicals operating out of New York City published ringing endorsements of a convent exposé by "escaped nun" Maria Monk. The Downfall of Babylon offered an engraving of a "shocking sight" at the Hotel Dieu Nunnery described by Monk:

In one part ... we see a Nun throwing a murdered infant into a deep pit in the cellar of the Nunnery. At a little distance from her, a Priest is seen rising up through a trap door, from the subterranean passage that leads from the Seminary ... to the Nunnery. Against the wall are two solitary cells, in which are confined two Nuns.... The white substance which appears about the mouth of the pit is lime, which is thrown upon the bodies when they are cast into the pit, in order to consume them, and prevent noxious exhalations. Poor, helpless, inoffensive babes ... born but to breathe a few short pangs, then to be strangled by fiends in human shape, called Nuns and Priests!

The Protestant Vindicator also reported on the "great sensation" Maria Monk's book ignited throughout the country. "It is most fiercely assailed by the Catholic periodicals," the article granted, but "the credibility of Miss Monk is powerfully sustained by very vigorous and able writers in some of our most valuable periodicals." Offering one (in a list of eight) reason "for confidence" in the book, the author listed, "They are just what we should expect from a community of unmarried females placed entirely under the control of unmarried men."

Before the Civil War, Maria Monk's Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery became the second-best-selling book in the US, just after Uncle Tom's Cabin. Five weeks from its publication in January 1836, Awful Disclosures sold over twenty thousand copies, making Maria Monk a household name. Her shocking convent exposé, full of licentious priests, tortured nuns, illicit sex, murder,

and infanticide, gripped the nation. By 1860, readers had purchased over three hundred thousand copies. Prominent citizens of the US and Canada took the book's allegations seriously, launching public investigations of the convent. The book occupied newspaper front pages as editors detailed the latest developments of the saga and debated the veracity of Monk's disclosures. Despite the eventual unveiling of Monk as an impostor who never lived in any convent and the revelation that in fact a group of men wrote the book, Awful Disclosures continued to sell well, inspiring a host of spinoffs. Maria Monk herself never profited from the book that bore her name, but she helped launch a campaign against convents that would envelop the country, from reformers, pastors, writers, and politicians to consumers of popular culture, for the next three decades. This book explores that campaign, seeking to uncover why so many Americans loved to hate nuns.

Far from a curious aberration, Maria Monk's book was part of a much larger phenomenon of anti-convent culture. Two years before the book's publication, a group of men attacked Mount Benedict, a convent and female academy in Charlestown, Massachusetts, in one of the worst acts of nativist violence in American history. As women and children scrambled out of their beds, the rioters marched toward the three-story brick building. They torched the convent, raided the mausoleum, and destroyed the grounds, inflicting over \$50,000 in damages that would never be repaid. The "haughty" Mother Superior of the convent and rumors of "imprisoned females" prompted the attack. Following the burning of Mount Benedict, [Six Months in a Convent](#), by former novice there, Rebecca Reed, became an instant bestseller. When Maria Monk's book wildly surpassed the popularity of Reed's, offering a more horrifying and sensational picture of convent life, a new genre was born.

Escaped nun and convent tales saturated the literary market, with titles such as *The Escaped Nun*, *Priests' Prisons for Women*, *The Captive Nun*, *The Haunted Convent*, and *The Convent's Doom*. In the 1840s, as reformers began establishing common or public schools, convent schools came under attack. How could women, who were not themselves wives

and mothers, bring up the nation's female students—"the future ornaments of our most refined society, the future mothers of American citizens"? Books such as *Protestant Girl in a French Nunnery* warned of the perils of convent schools, which only served to "destroy" "feminine sensibilities."

Rather than being eclipsed by the growing antislavery movement, the campaign against convents was bolstered by it. Abolitionists presented slavery as a threat to female purity, the marriage institution, and happy homes, citing the rape of female slaves and the harrowing experience of family separation through sale. While abolitionists relied on factual testimonies, crusaders against convents, relying on unsubstantiated evidence, also presented the nun's life as the antithesis to female virtue, marriage, and domesticity, striking a nerve with middle-class sensibilities. Indeed, many Americans saw no contradictions in their efforts to free African Americans from slavery and to "liberate" women from convents, or what some referred to as "white slavery" George Bourne, who championed immediate abolition before William Lloyd Garrison and inspired the great abolitionist, wrote the first convent narrative to be published in the US in 1832. His antislavery and anti-convent works sounded remarkably similar.

The campaign against convents was also reinforced by a movement to combat corruption in new urban centers. In the face of rapid industrialization and urbanization, Americans at once marveled at the progress of civilization and faced a host of new challenges and temptations. Some reformers took up arms against "dens of vice" that caught the unsuspecting in lives of alcohol, gambling, and sex. No one received more attention as a symbol of city corruption than the prostitute, pictured as both a tempting villain to be scorned and a victim in need of rescue. In a new genre that highlighted the sins of the city, writers contrasted prostitutes with "the pure and gentle woman," the "wife and mother." Like convent narratives, these city mysteries promised to unveil a world of hidden debauchery and unfolded cautionary tales of women seduced into lives of misery and sexual deviance. Convent narratives themselves compared nuns to prostitutes, convents to brothels, priests to seducers, and

abbesses to madams. As the movement to rescue "fallen women" and the campaign against convents merged, the nun-prostitute figure became iconic.

Even anti-Mormonism, culminating in a war between the federal government and the Latter-day Saints on the eve of the Civil War, drew on, merged with, and bolstered the anti-convent movement. Mormon captivity narratives related stories of innocent women who found themselves trapped, tortured, and defiled in polygamous marriages. In this way, plural marriage and convents became interchangeable threats to American womanhood. One Mormon captivity narrative even blatantly echoed Maria Monk's story, being titled *Awful Disclosures of Mormonism*.

Tying together many of these strains of reform or reaction in antebellum America, a growing group of nativists who railed against "foreign influence," also advanced the American campaign against convents. For nativist fraternal organizations, such as the Order of United Americans and the Sons of the Sires, convents symbolized the pinnacle of Catholic dangers, an imperium in imperio from which American daughters needed protection. So entrenched was the anti-convent movement in America that by 1855, even as the country faced a sectional crisis that would tear the nation apart, state legislators formed a "Nunnery Committee" to investigate convents without incriminating evidence and with the full support of their constituents.

There are a number of questions that drive this book. What made Maria Monk so popular? Why did *Awful Disclosures* cause such a sensation, and how has it remained continuously in print? What led otherwise regular citizens to torch convents full of women and children? What kept readers purchasing and turning pages of convent narratives throughout the antebellum era? And how did opposition to nuns and convent life reach such heights as state-sponsored nunnery investigations? In short, what made nuns so offensive to American sensibilities? In attempting to probe these questions, this book explores the American campaign against convents closely, analyzing convent narratives; tracing the story of Maria Monk, her supporters, and her detractors; placing anti-nun rhetoric in the wider context of antebellum reform, gender

ideology, and print culture; and eventually considering this story alongside modern nun kitsch culture reflected in bobble-head nuns, sexy nun costumes, and iconic scary nuns on screen today.

Nun hating was not unique to nineteenth-century America. It dated back to the Protestant Reformation. When Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the All Saints Church door in Wittenberg, he initiated a sweeping revolution in religion, politics, and gender roles. Luther's theology rejected chastity and the nun's life as the ideal role for women, believing celibacy to be nearly impossible for both men and women. In its place Luther upheld the household, rather than the monastery, as the cornerstone of society. This represented a dramatic shift from one of the central expressions of Christianity, especially for women. While the image of Mary had for centuries embodied a virginal model for Catholics, Luther's Protestantism and subsequent Reformation theology looked to Mary as the ideal wife and mother, a picture of domestic obedience. In Luther's mind, this exemplified both the true Christian vocation for women and liberation from a supposedly oppressive system. Yet this redirection removed the only vocational option other than marriage open to women at the time and often rendered the single woman suspect or deviant.

When England formally embraced the Protestant Reformation between 1532 and 1534, under decree of King Henry VIII, one of the biggest transformations related to monastic life. The new supreme head of church and state wasted little time before plundering the over 650 religious houses that dotted the landscape throughout England and Wales. As a result, many women religious, sometimes as an entire house, moved to the continent. While the dissolution of the monasteries was likely more an effort to replenish the nearly bankrupt exchequer than one rooted in theoretical opposition, the nun subsequently became a distinctly foreign and anti-Christian symbol in England, especially as Catholic France and Spain emerged as hated enemies. These views migrated with British colonists to the New World, making their way deeply into British North America, only to be revived in full force in the rapidly changing society of the early nineteenth century.'

Some of the earliest novels in the English language reflected intense loathing of convents. [\*The Monk\*](#) (1796), published in London by Matthew Lewis, became an instant bestseller throughout England and Europe. A gothic novel set in Spain, *The Monk* told of two young men who lost their brides-to-be, Agnes and Antonia, to conniving clerics. During her confinement, Agnes had an erotic encounter with a priest before the jealous abbess murdered her. Unaware, Raymond broke into the convent to rescue her, lifting the veil of his beloved only to reveal the "Bleeding Nun," a decrepit woman dead and punished for her sexual sins. Meanwhile Antonia abandoned her beau after falling for a dissolute and ambitious priest, Ambrosio. Full of lust, violence, and even incest, the novel caught readers' attention. In true gothic form, it also delivered a gloomy medieval environment, complete with church cemeteries, subterranean passages, and vaulted monasteries. Gothic literature operated in the vacuum left by Catholic belief in England and often included distinctly Protestant views of anticlericalism. *The Monk's* near-obsessive focus on Catholic abuses of power, sexual repression, and transgression easily fit this model and would become a mainstay of later convent narratives throughout the nineteenth century. Its message advanced a tradition of suspicion of monastic life, especially for women, in contrast to the domestic vocation of marriage and motherhood.

Other anti-Catholic works published in the eighteenth century prominently featured convents, including *The Master-Key to Popery* (1714). The book went through a series of reprints in England before being translated into German, Dutch, and French. With a telling subtitle—*How Haunted Virgins Have Been Disposed, and Devils Were Cast Out to Let in Priests*—the book promised to unlock the "many errors" of Rome, female monasticism being one of the most grave. The book provided a litany of bitter fruits produced by celibate vocations, including illicit relationships among priests and nuns, illegitimate births, and dangerous attempts to escape by nuns who faced the prospect of the Spanish Inquisition. In explaining why a woman might choose life in a convent, the author concluded dismissively that women were tricked. *The Master-Key* was later republished in the US as

The Great Red Dragon, enjoying wide popularity during the height of the American campaign against convents.'

Anti-Catholicism in America was older than the nation itself, dating back to the colonial era. But a steady influx of German and Irish immigrants to the country in the early nineteenth century and a rapidly changing society wrought by urbanization and industrialization, challenging the status quo, reawakened latent fears of Rome, prompting what Ray Allen Billington dubbed "the Protestant Crusade." From 1800 to 1860, anti-Catholic publications proliferated, with over two hundred books, twenty-five newspapers, forty-one histories, forty works of fiction, thirteen magazines, and a bevy of pamphlets, gift books, and almanacs. Newspapers unambiguously titled *Downfall of Babylon*, *The American Protestant Vindicator*, *Priestcraft Unmasked*, and *The Anti-Romanist* enjoyed steady subscriptions offering weekly tirades against Romanism. National organizations dedicated at once to spreading Protestant Christianity and combating popery sprang up across the country, including the American Protestant Association, the Home Missionary Society, the Protestant Reformation Society, and the American Tract Society. The New York Protestant Association declared its sole purpose to be the promotion of "the Reformation ... which shall illustrate the character of Popery." Its first meeting addressed the topic: "Is Popery That Babylon the Great?" Many of these organizations would publish or promote escaped nun tales, advancing the American campaign against convents into the far reaches of the expanding US.

In the 1830s, immigration to the US increased dramatically. Sixty thousand immigrants arrived in America in 1831, and about as many flowed in each year that decade. Between 1840 and 1844, preceding the Irish potato famine, the number reached almost a quarter of a million. In 1847, numbers spiked to 234,000, and reached 380,000 in 1851. Figures continued at this unprecedented rate until 1854. Most of the 2.75 million newcomers who reached American shores in this seven-year period were practicing Roman Catholics. Germans made up a large percentage and Irish even more, with a quarter-million Irish men and women arriving

in 1851 alone. Beginning as a small minority, Catholics counted only 70,000 in America in 1807. By 1840, church membership swelled to 660,000. Numbers reached 3.1 million in 1860, making Catholicism the single largest religious group in the nation. In thus a short period of time, Anglo-Americans witnessed a dramatic change in their environment, both ethnic and religious, a change that would make the populace susceptible to conspiracy theories and fearmongering as to the fate of the nation.

As the Catholic presence grew, nuns especially stood out. Their distinct dress or habit, their unmarried state, and their self-supporting, communal celibacy, independent from the traditional household modes of female production rendered them directly opposed to domestic civic relationships, middle-class companionate marriage, and Protestant feminine ideals. As Emily Clark put it in her study on the New Orleans' Ursulines, "the nun was an ideological outlaw." She stood in stark contrast to Protestant American constructions of femininity. While revolutionary rhetoric praised what historians now refer to as "republican motherhood" as the bedrock of virtue and civilization in the new nation, nuns appeared superfluous if not outright threatening. One anti-Catholic periodical from the 1830s contended that "nunneries of all places are the most unfit for the preservation of female virtue." That many orders of nuns springing up in nineteenth-century America came from Catholic Europe only contributed to the view of convents as foreign and un-American. Representing religious, gender, and ethnic fears, the nun became one of the greatest targets of anti-Catholic hostility.

During the colonial era, British colonists prohibited religious communities from founding convents. Prior to the nineteenth century, the new nation housed only two religious houses, the Carmelites and the Poor Glares, both in Maryland, a former Catholic stronghold. Soon after the Ursulines of New Orleans entered the nation through the Louisiana Purchase, the number of orders of women religious grew. Between 1803 and 1830, Catholic women founded ten female orders. Indigenous orders constituted five of these, including the American Sisters of Charity founded by Elizabeth Anne Seton

in 1809. New orders assumed the French model of the Ursulines, taking up active apostolates such as teaching, nursing, and running orphanages and other charitable institutions. By 1845, Catholic women religious resided in the nation's North and South, in major cities, agricultural hubs, and the expanding frontier. Beginning in 1812, the Sisters of Loretto and the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth served in the remote frontier area of Bardstown, Kentucky. By the 1840s, the Mississippi Valley—already a haven of French Catholicism before becoming part of the territorial US—housed the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the School Sisters of Notre Dame, and the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, along with a number of other orders. In northern urban areas, some orders included the Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Mercy, and Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur. The number of conventual houses rose to thirty-one by 1850 with 1,941 Sisters.

As the number of convents in America increased, signs of what historian Barbara Welter described as the "cult of true womanhood" were everywhere. In novels, magazines, and prescriptive and religious literature, Americans learned that the ideal woman embodied "piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity." Yet, as many historians have pointed out, gender roles and family structures were in flux. In the wake of the so-called market revolution, more women went to work in northern urban areas. Their labor as domestic servants, seamstresses, launderers, and factory workers led to debates about women's place in society. At the same time, women of more means, part of a new urban middle class, banded together, forming charitable societies to raise money for missionaries, help orphaned children, fight the abuses of alcohol, and end slavery. These women upheld and even based their activism on the ideology of true womanhood and domestic feminism, arguing their piety and purity made them better suited to weigh in on social issues that affected women, children, and the home. In effect, these activist women used the cult of true womanhood to expand their roles.

While the middle class was diverse in a number of ways, historians have pointed to a shared "cultural belief system, including views about women, the family, and republicanism." Subscription to this

belief system often served to delineate the respectable or the genteel from the rest. These beliefs, fears, and values played out on the pages of the printing revolution that swept across the North, making New York City the hub of a new publishing empire. Reform literature, novels, religious tracts, newspapers, and magazines spoke to the concerns of changing gender roles, desires to protect the family, and the impulse to define the character of the republic. At the same time, the proliferation of more affordable penny papers and paperbacks created a growing appetite for entertaining, easily digestible literature. Perhaps more than any other genre, the convent narrative at once reflected middle-class Protestant domesticity, forging acceptable and unacceptable roles for women, while offering readers the sensational stories they were coming to crave."

This work draws heavily from the contributions of Jenny Franchot, Marie Anne Pagliarini, and Tracy Fessenden on the subject of gender and anti-Catholicism in early America. Franchot highlighted the centrality of sexual deviance in anti-Catholic literature of the antebellum era, arguing that such literature at once bolstered Protestant identity while indirectly expressing Protestant fears of and fascinations with Catholicism. Expanding on this, Pagliarini more closely examined the stock figures of the "pure American woman" and the "wicked Catholic priest" in anti-Catholic print culture. When the ideal of the pure woman as wife and mother gained near-religious status, the image of "innocent young women defiled in the confessional or convent" served as a powerful indictment of Catholicism. In turn, the "sexually depraved" priest reflected and reinforced the belief that celibacy was unnatural and dangerous. In rejecting "marriage and family life," the priest morphed into a "social degenerate" fixed on ravaging innocent women. Together these characters rendered Catholicism "a threat to the sexual norms, gender definitions, and family values that comprised the antebellum 'cult of domesticity.'" Fessenden also identified anxiety over female gender roles as the nexus of the "nun-as-whore figure" in nineteenth-century literature. She pointed out similarities among literary depictions of nuns and prostitutes, two kinds of women decidedly outside of the



"Protestant woman's sphere." Despite appearing "to stand at opposite extremes," Fessenden argued that imaginings of both nuns and prostitutes clashed with "constructions of legitimate femininity as domestic, maternal, pious, and separate from the working market." Depictions of convents as clandestine brothels only reinforced this association, helping to preserve the Protestant woman's sphere.

Rather than arguing against this scholarship, my work builds on it. Unlike Pagliarini's analysis, which examines married Catholic women who visited confessionals and nuns, my project focuses entirely on nuns and convents. I ask what it was in particular about the nun herself throughout the antebellum era that invoked such fierce disapproval. In addition to examining the "wicked priest" as a risk to female virtue, I explore the nun herself as a threatening image to dominant gender norms and national identity. While Fessenden hones in on literary depictions of nuns and prostitutes, I expand beyond this to compare nuns to portrayals of enslaved women, Mormon plural wives, and the "Jesuit spy." And while Franchot extended a general depiction of American Protestant fears and fascinations projected through anti-Catholic literature, I concentrate on convents, asking what the emotions stirred by these institutions tell us about American culture, female gender ideals, and notions of nationhood.

While some women used their ascribed piety to justify moving into more public roles, the ideology of domestic feminism could still be used to outcast, typecast, and punish certain women. In the antebellum US, this was no truer than for nuns. At a time when talk of female virtue pervaded cultural, religious, and political rhetoric, nuns were a barometer of American attitudes toward women. The image of the veiled nun appeared as the inversion of the true woman needed to sustain the nation. She was a captive of a foreign power, a fallen woman, a "white slave," "useless drone," and a "foolish virgin." In contrast to the woman who found happiness, usefulness, and security as wife and mother in sentimental literature, nuns appeared miserable, wasted, and in constant danger. It was not merely pursuing what could be described in contemporary terms as a career that placed nuns outside of the bounds of acceptable womanhood; it

was her unmarried state. Only through marriage could women reach their full potential as selfless caregivers, taming the wild passions of men, raising children to be virtuous citizens, and contribute to the household economy. In blatant defiance of this role, the nun appeared to disrupt the cosmic order of things. As Americans wrestled with the nature of their experimental republic, many agreed that the nun had no place for even "one instant in any civilized land." The ensuing campaign against convents would play a crucial role in the battles to define proper womanhood, republican government, and American identity. <>

[Valley Forge](#) by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin [Simon & Schuster, 9781501152719]

*One of the most inspiring—and underappreciated—chapters in American history: the story of the Continental Army's six-month transformation in [Valley Forge](#).*

December 1777. It is 18 months after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and some 12,000 members of America's beleaguered Continental Army stagger into a small Pennsylvania encampment 23 miles northwest of British-occupied Philadelphia. The starving and half-naked force is reeling from a string of demoralizing defeats at the hands of King George III's army, and are barely equipped to survive the coming winter. Their commander in chief, the focused and forceful George Washington, is at the lowest ebb of his military career. The Continental Congress is in exile and the American Revolution appears to be lost.

Yet a spark remains. Determined to keep the rebel cause alive through sheer force of will, Washington transforms the farmland plateau hard by the Schuylkill River into a virtual cabin city. Together with a dedicated coterie of advisers both foreign and domestic—Marquis de Lafayette, Baron von Steuben, the impossibly young Alexander Hamilton, and John Laurens—he sets out to breathe new life into his military force. Against all odds, as the frigid and miserable months pass, they manage to turn a bobtail army of citizen soldiers into a professional fighting force that will change the world forever.

[Valley Forge](#) is the story of how that metamorphosis occurred. Bob Drury and Tom



Clavin, the team behind such bestsellers as [The Heart of Everything That Is](#), [The Last Stand of Fox Company](#), and [Halsey's Typhoon](#), show us how this miracle was accomplished despite thousands of American soldiers succumbing to disease, starvation, and the elements. Here is Steuben, throwing himself into the dedicated drilling sessions he imported from Prussian battlefields. Here is Hamilton, proffering the shrewd advice that wards off his beloved commander in chief's scheming political rivals. Here is Laurens, determined to integrate the Continental Army with freed black men and slaves. Here is Lafayette, thirsting for battlefield accolades while tenaciously lobbying his own king for crucial French aid.

At the center of it all is George Washington, in the prime of his life yet confronting crushing failure as he fends off political conspiracies every bit as pernicious as his incessant military challenges. The Virginia planter-turned-general is viewed by many as unqualified to lead the Continental Army after the humiliating loss of Philadelphia, and his detractors in and out of Congress plot to replace him. The Valley Forge winter is his—and the revolution's—last chance at redemption. And, indeed, after six months in the camp, Washington fulfills his destiny, leading the Continental Army to a stunning victory in the Battle of Monmouth Court House. The momentum is never again with the Redcoats.

[Valley Forge](#) is the riveting true story of a nascent United States toppling an empire. Using new and rarely seen contemporaneous documents—and drawing on a cast of iconic characters and remarkable moments that capture the innovation and energy that led to the birth of our nation—Drury and Clavin provide the definitive account of this seminal and previously undervalued moment in the battle for American independence.

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Excerpt: His troops had never seen George Washington so angry. His Excellency, as most of them called him, had always been the most

composed soldier on the battlefield. But on this sweltering late June morning in 1778 the commander in chief of the Continental Army could not mask his fury.

He reined in his great white charger and trembled with rage. Rising in his stirrups, he towered over his second in command Gen. Charles Lee, the man he had charged with leading the attack. "What is the meaning of this, sir? I demand to know the meaning of this disorder and confusion!"

Nearly two years to the day since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the fate of the American cause lay uncertain, all because the officer cowering before Washington had panicked and ordered a premature retreat. In a sense Washington blamed himself. General Lee had not wanted the assignment in the first place. He should have followed his instincts and left the Marquis de Lafayette in command. Lafayette had been by his side at Valley Forge, had witnessed and absorbed the esprit of the troops who had survived the horrors of that deadly winter. Valley Forge had been the crucible they had all come through together, the very reason the forces of the nascent United States were now poised to alter the course of the revolution. And was that same army now about to be destroyed because of one man's incompetence and lack of faith?

Charles Lee, dust-covered and dazed, gazed up at his superior. His eyes were dull, and his face wore the gray pallor of defeat. "Sir?" he stammered.

"Sir?" The words were nearly unintelligible. He could find no others. Washington dismissed him and spurred his own horse forward.

As he'd approached the rolling green hills and swampy culverts surrounding the small New Jersey village of Monmouth Court House, an astonished Washington had demanded of each brigade and regimental commander he encountered to know why his unit was falling back. None could give a coherent answer, other than that Gen. Lee had ordered it. Now, as Washington galloped up and down the lines before his weary and bedraggled soldiery, the determination on his face was evident. Those who witnessed it would never forget it. "A

gallant example animating his forces," one veteran artillery officer later recalled.

Less than a mile to the east, 10,000 elite British troops had shed their packs, fixed bayonets, and were driving hard in counterattack. The British generals Henry Clinton and Charles Cornwallis could hardly believe their good fortune. After 12 months of a stalemated Philadelphia campaign, here was an opportunity to crush the colonial rebellion. If past was prologue, the mere sight of an endless wall of British "cold steel" would send the Continental rabble fleeing in disarray. A glorious rout would restore the transatlantic equilibrium. King George III would be ecstatic.

Washington knew otherwise. The hellish winter at Valley Forge had taught him so. He and his army had not endured the mud and blood of that winter encampment only to be turned back now. Half hidden in the smoke and cinders of battle, he ascended a rise and gathered about him the remnants of his exhausted army. It was the critical juncture of the war, and the tall Virginian exuded a sense of urgency and inspiration. Thirsty men who had wilted in the hundred-degree heat rose to their feet in anticipation.

"Will you fight?" Washington cried. "Will you fight?" The survivors of Valley Forge responded with three thunderous cheers that reverberated across the ridgeline. Lafayette, riding with Alexander Hamilton beside the commander in chief, was overwhelmed. "His presence," the young Frenchman wrote, "seemed to arrest fate with a single glance."

The skies darkened with cannon shot just as Washington raised his sword and pointed it toward the approaching sea of red. He was about to spur his horse again when Hamilton jumped from his own steed and shouted, "We are betrayed, and the moment has arrived when every true friend of America and her cause must be ready to die in their defense!"

Washington, his aristocratic reserve regained, replied in a calm voice. "Colonel Hamilton," he said, "get back on your horse." <>

[The War before the War: Fugitive Slaves and the Struggle for America's Soul from the Revolution to](#)

[the Civil War](#) by Andrew Delbanco [Penguin Press, 9781594204050]

The devastating story of how fugitive slaves drove the nation to Civil War

For decades after its founding, America was really two nations--one slave, one free. There were many reasons why this composite nation ultimately broke apart, but the fact that enslaved black people repeatedly risked their lives to flee their masters in the South in search of freedom in the North proved that the "united" states was actually a lie. Fugitive slaves exposed the contradiction between the myth that slavery was a benign institution and the reality that a nation based on the principle of human equality was in fact a prison-house in which millions of Americans had no rights at all. By awakening northerners to the true nature of slavery, and by enraging southerners who demanded the return of their human "property," fugitive slaves forced the nation to confront the truth about itself.

By 1850, with America on the verge of collapse, Congress reached what it hoped was a solution--the notorious Compromise of 1850, which required that fugitive slaves be returned to their masters. Like so many political compromises before and since, it was a deal by which white Americans tried to advance their interests at the expense of black Americans. Yet the Fugitive Slave Act, intended to preserve the Union, in fact set the nation on the path to civil war. It divided not only the American nation, but also the hearts and minds of Americans who struggled with the timeless problem of when to submit to an unjust law and when to resist.

The fugitive slave story illuminates what brought us to war with ourselves and the terrible legacies of slavery that are with us still.

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Excerpt: In November 1863, Abraham Lincoln went to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to honor the thousands of men and boys who had died there four months before. In what became the most famous speech in American history, he consecrated the battlefield in the name of a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." For most Americans, and for much of the world, those words have attained the status of scripture. They were, however, not strictly true, and Lincoln knew it.

Five years earlier, he had been more candid. Speaking in Chicago in the summer of 1858, he noted that when the Republic was founded, "we had slavery among us," and that "we could not get our constitution unless we permitted" slavery to persist in those parts of the nation where it was already entrenched. "We could not secure the good we did secure," he said, "if we grasped for more." The United States, in other words, could not have been created if the eradication of slavery had been a condition of its creation. Had Lincoln said at Gettysburg that the nation was conceived not in liberty but in compromise, the phrase would have been less memorable but more accurate.

The hard truth is that the United States was founded in an act of accommodation between two fundamentally different societies. As one southern-born antislavery activist later wrote, it was a "sad satire to call [the] States 'United,' because in one-half of the country slavery was basic to its way of life while in the other it was fading or already gone. The founding fathers tried to stitch these two nations together with no idea how long the stitching would hold.

For nearly a century, the two halves of the so-called United States co-existed relatively

peacefully. In its early decades, the young republic was little more than a business consortium dependent on interstate trade and central financing for infrastructure improvements. Countless transactions took place between North and South without incident. Southern planters supplied northern textile mills with slave-grown cotton, while northern banks supplied southern planters with financial capital. Inhabitants of one section regularly crossed over into the other. The sight of white southerners with their black maids or valets was common in the streets of northern cities and towns.

This book tells the story of how that composite nation came apart. There were many reasons for the unraveling, but one in particular exposed the idea of the "united" states as a lie. This was the fact that enslaved black people, against long odds, repeatedly risked their lives to flee their masters in the South in search of freedom in the North. Fugitives from slavery ripped open the screen behind which America tried to conceal the reality of life for black Americans, most of whom lived in the South, out of sight and out of mind for most people in the North. Fugitive slaves exposed the contradiction between the myth that slavery was a benign institution and the reality that a nation putatively based on the principle of human equality was actually a prison house in which millions of Americans had virtually no rights at all. By awakening northerners to this grim fact, and by enraging southerners who demanded the return of their "absconded" property, fugitive slaves pushed the nation toward confronting the truth about itself. They incited conflict in the streets, the courts, the press, the halls of Congress, and perhaps most important in the minds and hearts of Americans who had been oblivious to their plight. This manifold conflict—under way long before the first shots were fired in the Civil War—was the war before the war.

The problem of fugitive slaves loomed over the Republic from the start. Many of the founding fathers were slave owners themselves, including Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, whose own slaves periodically ran away. The founders made an effort to solve the problem in Article 4, Section 2, Clause 3 of the Constitution, which came

to be known (although it referred to indentured servants as well as to slaves) as the fugitive slave clause:

No Person held to Service or Labour in one State, under the Laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in Consequence of any Law or Regulation therein, be discharged from such Service or Labour, but shall be delivered up on Claim of the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due.

But stating this principle proved to be much easier than carrying it out. Although from the southern point of view, law-abiding citizens were obliged to return a runaway slave just as if they had come upon stray cattle or stolen cash, the fugitive slave clause was erratically enforced. For the most part, slavery was left to the jurisdiction of the states. In 1793, Congress passed a law that tried to strengthen the constitutional requirement, but the federal government remained too weak to enforce it. Over the ensuing decades, northern states adopted "personal liberty" laws that put up further barriers to enforcement, including laws guaranteeing jury trials for accused fugitives and prohibiting state officials from assisting in returning them to the South.

In fact, most runaways never made it out of the South, where chronic offenders were sometimes mutilated—tendons cut, faces branded—as warnings not to try again, and to others not to try at all. But some who did get through to the North or to British Canada gave witness to the cruelties and indignities from which they had freed themselves in the South, and thereby presented a fateful challenge to the political fiction that the two American nations were one.

Southerners, blaming northerners for encouraging slaves to flee or revolt, demanded that the drain of their human property be stopped, while many northerners deplored the idea that human beings could be considered property at all. For some in the North, harboring a fugitive became a moral imperative dictated by the "higher law" that comes not from the Constitution or Congress but from God. By the late 1840s, the problem had become a political and moral crisis, and when Congress attempted to defuse it by passing a fugitive slave law intended to address the issue once and for all,

it had the unintended effect of pushing the nation toward violent conflict with itself.

The final reckoning was set in motion in 1846 with the outbreak of the Mexican War. With strong but not universal support in the South and against strong but not universal resistance in the North, both halves of the United States joined to wage a war of conquest. By the time the fighting ended two years later, the United States had seized a huge swath of land stretching from Texas to California, nearly equal in size to one-third of our present-day nation. This immense expansion of territory under control of the federal government brought back the old question of compromise in a new form. Would slavery be confined to states where it already existed, or would it be allowed to spread into the new territories, which would eventually become states? A growing number of northerners insisted on the former. White southerners, almost universally, demanded the latter. As Lincoln later put the matter, "One section of our country thinks slavery is right, and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended." The fragile political truce that had held the United States together was coming apart.

Then, in 1850, Congress attempted a resolution. The bargain it struck, which came to be known as the Compromise of 1850, belongs to the long history of compromise—beginning with the Constitution itself—by which white Americans advanced their interests at the expense of black Americans. In an intricate balancing act designed to prevent an irreparable rupture between the free states and the slave states, the compromise proposed to keep slavery out of some of the new territories while leaving its future in others to be decided by local referendum.

Many southerners considered the so-called peace measures heavily weighted toward the North, and so, as the price of their consent, they demanded something more: a new and stringent law that would put teeth into the fugitive slave clause of the Constitution and cut off asylum in the North once and for all. In September 1850, Congress sealed the deal by passing what became known as the Fugitive Slave Act. It was meant to be a remedy

and salve, but it turned out to be an incendiary event that lit the fuse that led to civil war.

It was an act without mercy. To those arrested under its authority, it denied the most basic right enshrined in the Anglo-American legal tradition: habeas corpus—the right to challenge, in open court, the legality of their detention. It forbade defendants to testify in their own defense. It ruled out trial by jury. Except for proof of freedom such as emancipation papers signed by a former owner, the Fugitive Slave Act disallowed all forms of exonerating evidence, including evidence of beatings, rape, or other forms of abuse while the defendant had been enslaved. It criminalized the act of sheltering a fugitive and required local authorities to assist the claimant in recovering his lost human property. It put the power of extradition in the hands of "commissioners" appointed by the federal government and limited the disputed issue to confirming the identity of the person who had tried to flee to freedom. If the accused could be shown to have belonged to the claimant according to the laws of the state from which she had fled, she was ordered back to captivity. Everything about the Fugitive Slave Act favored the slave owners.

Even free black people in the North—including those who had never been enslaved—found their lives infused with the terror of being seized and deported on the pretext that they had once belonged to someone in the South. The Fugitive Slave Act forced them to live furtively in dread of every footstep on the stairs and every knock on the door. At any moment, they could be snatched off the street—and some were. As for the millions of slaves still held in the South, the Fugitive Slave Act deepened the despair of the already desperate.

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[“As a City on A Hill”: The Story of America's Most Famous Lay Sermon](#) by Daniel T Rodgers [Princeton University Press, 9780691181592]

How an obscure Puritan sermon came to be seen as a founding document of American identity and exceptionalism

“For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill,” John Winthrop warned his fellow

Puritans at New England's founding in 1630. More than three centuries later, Ronald Reagan remade that passage into a timeless celebration of American promise. How were Winthrop's long-forgotten words reinvented as a central statement of American identity and exceptionalism? In [As a City on a Hill](#), leading American intellectual historian Daniel Rodgers tells the surprising story of one of the most celebrated documents in the canon of the American idea. In doing so, he brings to life the ideas Winthrop's text carried in its own time and the sharply different yearnings that have been attributed to it since.

[As a City on a Hill](#) shows how much more malleable, more saturated with vulnerability, and less distinctly American Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" was than the document that twentieth-century Americans invented. Across almost four centuries, Rodgers traces striking shifts in the meaning of Winthrop's words—from Winthrop's own anxious reckoning with the scrutiny of the world, through Abraham Lincoln's haunting reference to this "almost chosen people," to the "city on a hill" that African Americans hoped to construct in Liberia, to the era of Donald Trump.

[As a City on a Hill](#) reveals the circuitous, unexpected ways Winthrop's words came to lodge in American consciousness. At the same time, the book offers a probing reflection on how nationalism encourages the invention of "timeless" texts to straighten out the crooked realities of the past.

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Excerpt: For the last sixty years, a story has been told about the origins of America. Like many historical stories, it is told as a parable: deep and timeless continuities flow out of the specifics of time and place. It is an uplifting story and a haunting one. And it is at least half wrong.

The setting is a vessel in mid-passage on the Atlantic Ocean. The year is 1630. Fast-forward another decade and a half, and a revolution among those passengers' countrymen would turn the political and religious order of absolutist England upside down. But the voyagers aboard the Arbella were seeking out a new place of settlement in part because they did not believe such a striking break in human affairs was possible. Balancing hope against despair, they were headed instead for North America.

Somewhere in that mid-ocean passage, their elected governor, John Winthrop, confident and commanding in his presence, rose to deliver an address in which he outlined the purpose of their undertaking. "A Model of Christian Charity" Winthrop's text would come to be titled. A "lay sermon," historians since the middle of the twentieth century have called it: "the most famous lay sermon

in all of American history." In it Winthrop confirmed these new Americans' commitment to a new life of obedience, love, and mutual affections. He reminded them that they sailed not on their own whim or private ambitions but under a covenant with God: a commission as clear as God's covenant with biblical Israel. Their responsibilities to each other were intense, and the risks of failure were, literally, terrifying. But in return, Winthrop offered a promise. If they should keep true to their purposes they would not only overcome the hardships the future held for them in New England. The eyes of all people would be upon them. They would be made "a praise and glory." And they would be "as a city upon a hill" to the world.

This story of John Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" has been repeated over and over in the history books and in the civic creed of Americans. It has been celebrated not only for its elements of drama—dangerous ocean passage, inspired words, and exalted sense of purpose—but as the origin story of the nation that the United States was to become. Ronald Reagan made a sentence-long extract from Winthrop's Model—"we shall be as a city upon a hill; the eyes of all people are upon us"—into the signature line of his presidency. Preached to a "little band of settlers" crowded onto the "tiny ship" bearing them across the Atlantic, as Reagan saw the event in his mind's eye, the Model set the vision to which "our people always have held fast ... since our first days as a nation"—that they were destined from their origins to be a beacon of hope and liberty to the world, a model to all nations. "It was right here, in the waters around us, where the American experiment began," Barack Obama told the graduating class at the University of Massachusetts at Boston in 2006 in the same vein. It was right here that the earliest settlers "dreamed of building a City upon a Hill ... and the world watched waiting to see if this improbable idea called America would succeed."

This origin story is so familiar that it barely seems to invite question. Virtually no modern high school or college textbook on American history or the American political tradition fails to mention Winthrop's words or impress upon students their enduring importance. "A Model of Christian Charity" has been heralded as the nation's "point

of departure," as the "founding text in American political rhetoric," and the key script in the "founding moment" of American civic republicanism. "City on a hill" is now an instantly recognizable phrase in the vernacular of American nationalism. Thousands of other lay sermons preached in a future United States would outstrip the original circulation of "A Model of Christian Charity." But Winthrop's Model is the statement that we have made foundational to "the idea called America?" "In relation to the principal theme of the American mind," the immensely influential Harvard historian Perry Miller declared in 1954, "Winthrop stands at the beginning of our consciousness:

There are powerful reasons behind these judgments. The sense of national mission that marks American civic-political culture, its confidence, and its fervent sense of exception from the lot of all other nations: From what source could these have flowed except from that first, origin moment, when a sense of acting on a special covenant with God became fused with the experience of America? Winthrop's "we shall be as a city upon a hill" seems to hold in its grasp what the future would bring for the United States: its magnet status for a world of immigrants, its economic ascendancy, and its rise to world leadership. The nation's moralism, its Wilsonian idealism, the endurance of its religious cultures, and its certainty that it had been granted a unique and special part in the unrolling of human history all seem presaged in Winthrop's text. Critics see less attractive traits of American national culture embedded there as well: the self-righteousness with which the Americans would roll across the continent and project their power throughout the world as if they and God were working hand in hand to expand the special promises of America. All this has been traced to the Puritan origins of America and the mission statement that John Winthrop wrote for it.

No serious observer claims that "A Model of Christian Charity" holds all the elements of the nation the United States would become. There would be trial and error in the American future and furious contention as well. But since the middle of the twentieth century Winthrop's Model has seemed to hold in embryo the nation's most powerful and distinctive threads. To begin at the American



beginning is to begin with a text in its mid-oceanic setting, just before its words and its promise to be a "city upon a hill" would begin to be etched on the land.

Most of this is a modern invention and much of it is wrong. None of those who voyaged with John Winthrop to the Puritan settlement in New England left any record that they heard Winthrop's words in mid-passage. Most likely "A Model of Christian Charity" was never delivered as a sermon at all. Although copies of Winthrop's text circulated in England during his lifetime, by the end of the seventeenth century they had all literally vanished from memory. One of those long-forgotten copies was discovered in a bundle of old sermons and documents of New England history in 1809, but it was not put into print until 1838. And then it lapsed from sight again almost as completely. An occasional nineteenth-century historian mentioned Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity," but most did not and none pulled it—or its "city upon a hill" line—out of the mass of other colonial American documents as especially important. Through the 1970s mention of "A Model of Christian Charity" was a hit-or-miss affair in standard histories of the United States. It was only in the decade of the 1980s, three hundred and fifty years after its writing, that the incongruously parallel work of a conservative Cold War president, Ronald Reagan, and a radical, immigrant literary scholar, Sacvan Bercovitch, combined to make Winthrop's text and metaphor famous. "A Model of Christian Charity" is old, but its foundational status is a twentieth-century invention.

The meanings we now grasp for so eagerly in Winthrop's words are largely twentieth-century inventions as well. John Winthrop never doubted that he and his fellow New England Puritans sailed under the seal of a covenant with God. Of nothing was he more confident than that they had a key part to play in God's scheme of history. But in its own time, the call to greatness in Winthrop's "city upon a hill" line was vastly overshadowed by its reminder of the settlement project's immense vulnerability. Caution saturated his "city upon a hill" metaphor. It did not promise these incipient Americans that they were destined to be a radiant light to the world but that they would need to work

out their ambitions under the world's most intense, critical scrutiny. The core theme that laced the Model's words together, from its opening statement of the mutual relations between rich and poor to its fervent closing peroration, was not nationalistic but local and intense: an insistence on love and the obligations of social solidarity that would be often sharply at odds with what capitalist America would become.

The conventional story of Winthrop's "city on a hill" text is wrong in still other ways. Its current status as a founding statement of American "exceptionalism" to the contrary, almost none of the themes that circulated through Winthrop's text were unique to the nation that would become the United States. Dreams of founding a new and purer Israel circulated all across the early modern Atlantic. During the long nineteenth-century era of economic and imperial expansion, conviction that a nation's people had been uniquely commissioned to lead God's forces of good and civilization played a bedrock role in patriotic cultures far beyond the United States. Even the idea that nations owed their essential character to a foundational moment, to a timeless and enduring origin statement, is far less unique to the United States than is typically acknowledged.

Most conspicuously of all, the phrase "city on a hill" was itself a borrowing, a repurposing for Winthrop's occasion of the one of the Bible's most familiar metaphors, which was to be repurposed hundreds of times again, in and far beyond the United States. The importance of Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" is not that it broached ideas and themes exceptional to the history of the United States but that it was, from the beginning, so deeply enmeshed in the world around it.

Above all, to read Winthrop's "city upon a hill" seriously we need to disentangle ourselves from the lure of simple origin stories. Texts live in and through time. A certain kind of nationalism recoils against that assumption. It strains to fix the nation to a foundational moment or proposition or text as if the idea of the nation—whatever its actual missteps or temporary disruptions—could be held exempt from history itself. But no words or text can be insulated from time. Their occasions change, the



possibilities others see in them change, sometimes radically. Every subsequent use is by necessity a rewriting, a reinvention for new hopes, new conditions, and new contentions. To take a key historical text seriously is not to shove these afterlives aside as a debris of misreadings. It is not merely to sketch a history of "reception," "circulation," or "influence," important as these themes may be. Texts endure only through their continuous reappropriation for inescapably shifting times and purposes.

The point is true of every document a nation holds sacred. The Declaration of Independence whose words reverberate through American culture now is not the Declaration of 1776. It is not the radically different Declaration that Thomas Jefferson's political allies fashioned, taking his "all men are created equal" line out of the sidebar place it occupied in his original text and turning it into a political slogan. Nor is it the yet more sweeping Declaration that antislavery activists would make from a slaveholder's words or rights activists would construct in the twentieth century. Into our own day the Declaration of Independence has been simultaneously an object of veneration and a site for fierce, vitally important contention over the shapes and forms of justice. The "living Constitution" is, by the same token, not simply a phrase for loose constructionists. Even before its adoption, the U.S. Constitution was being reworked, its silences fleshed out, its ambiguities debated, and its elasticities contended for. Reinvention of their core texts is part of the work that nations do. There is potential chaos in this, of course. But without it there can hardly be any serious public life at all.

Pushing back against the origin myths that have obscured it, this book tells the story of the lives of a text that many twentieth-century Americans would construct to be foundational to the "idea" of America. It is a story of disappearance and revival, long absence and neglect, and successive modern reinventions.

Part I, "Text," reconstructs the meanings of Winthrop's words and metaphors in his own seventeenth-century setting. It begins with the occasion of Winthrop's writing and the key terms he injected into "A Model of Christian Charity"—city

upon a hill, chosen people, covenant, charity, and history. Set against the background of an Atlantic culture filled with model cities on a hill, scores of them more prominent in their time than New England, Winthrop's phrases take on much less triumphant meanings than the standard Arbella story has it. "Charity" was the Model's most important keyword. For Winthrop, it meant that the rule of love and mutual obligation must take precedence above mere calculus of price and market return whenever the public weal is at risk. From what occasion did that startling premise arise and how was it worked out in the day-to-day practice of economic life?

In part II, "Nation," a second phase of the story of "A Model of Christian Charity" begins. In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the text itself was all but forgotten. But as nationalism swept across Europe and the Americas, some of the themes that had lodged a century earlier in Winthrop's text sprang into circulation all the more vigorously. Patriotic cultures fanned desires for origin stories and foundational texts. Empires were constructed on new convictions of divine-historical destiny. Critics turned the chosen people idea into a tool of dissent. African Americans carried the "city upon a hill" metaphor to the new black republic of Liberia. On the dying fields of World War I, where part II concludes, these globally circulating reverberations of the covenant idea played themselves out in a key of high tragedy.

Finally, in part III, "Icon," Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" and its "city upon a hill" phrase finally slips into the place that modern nationalism had already made for it: as an invented foundation for the new world colossus that the United States had become. Cold War American writers made the Model into the defining document we now take it to be. They did that in part by canonizing it and in part by unexpectedly remaking Winthrop's New England Puritans, whose reputation had long been buried under the burdens of their religious intolerance and labyrinthine theology, as the nation's true "Founders." Then, in the 1980s, Winthrop's text suddenly swept from the domains of the scholars into the White House and the rhetorical center of modern American politics. No presidents before Ronald Reagan had

used the phrase "city on a hill" to define the very character of the American nation and its place in the world. After Reagan, virtually no serious political figure could escape the obligation to quote it.

But the Model's story had not reached an end. Social scientists attached a new term—exceptionalism—to Winthrop's text, even as the exceptional post-World War II character of the United States was visibly eroding beneath them. Evangelical Protestants struggled to decide if the America to which they were so deeply attached and yet with which they were so deeply in quarrel was properly called a city on a hill. And in 2016, the nation elected to the presidency a man who did not like the phrase at all—who, turning the Model on its head, made not America's shining example but rather the nation's manifold "disasters" his signature trope.

Through these shifts and turns in uses and meaning, the career of Winthrop's text runs as a skein of threads through the American past. A forgotten document would arc, much later, toward iconic status. A biblical image would become a metaphor for a settlement project, a free-floating cliché, an element in the transnationally circulating vocabulary of civic patriotism, a statement of high Cold War purpose, and the creedal foundation of a truly "exceptional" nation. Even in Winthrop's day, his "Model of Christian Charity" carried no single, stable message. "The American point of departure" would be what people would make of it. Braiding together three centuries of making and remaking, this book tells the story of a text that we think we know so well that we barely know it all it.

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